

# The Story of Romulus and Remus

Long ago, before Christianity, in the fine city of Alba Longa, Italy, lived King Numitor. All was not well in Alba Longa because the king's younger brother, Amulius, wanted the throne for himself and took it from the king. Amulius was adamant that nobody should threaten his new position so just to make sure, he had Numitor's sons killed and made his only daughter,



Rhea Silvia, become a Priestess of Vesta where she was not allowed to marry or have children as Amulius was worried that she might have a son one day to threaten his throne.

However, the plan backfired as Rhea Silvia fell in love with Mars, the Roman God of War, and they had twin sons. Usually, the punishment for going against the rules of the Priestesses of Vesta was death, but Mars was a hugely powerful man and Amulius feared him. Instead he imprisoned Rhea Silvia and ordered a servant to take the twins and put them in the River Tiber.

Unbeknown to Amulius, when the servant arrived at the river, he could not bring himself to throw the babies in so he left them in their basket and let them float downstream, where he hoped they might be rescued.

Good fortune was on the side of the twins as a she-wolf found them and pulled them to safety, where she protected and cared for them while a friendly



woodpecker helped them to find food. The animals looked after the twins until a passing shepherd found them and took them home to be cared for by him and his wife. They named the boys Romulus and Remus.

The shepherd and his wife loved and brought up the two boys as their own, both becoming shepherds like their father.

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One day, whilst the boys were with their sheep, they came across some shepherds of King Amulius and the men ended up fighting. Remus was captured and taken back to King Amulius, who did not recognise him as he believed they had died a long time ago.

Meanwhile, Romulus gathered a group of shepherds to go and rescue Remus. Eventually, Romulus managed to free Remus but in the process, killed King Amulius.

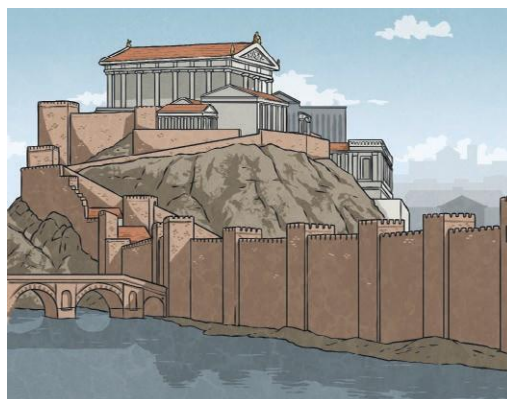
You'd have thought that the city people would be angry with the two boys, but they found out their real identities and offered to crown them as joint kings. Surprisingly, the boys turned down the offer as they wanted to build their own city.



They finally found the place they wanted as their city – where Rome stands to this day. However, it wasn't plain sailing as the two boys disagreed as to which hill the city should be built on. Romulus favoured Palatine Hill, whereas Remus preferred Aventine Hill so they decided to wait for a sign from the God Augury to tell them where to build.

The sign came in the shape of a number of vultures, although Romulus saw six and Remus saw twelve so each brother thought they had won. Not managing to see eye-to-eye, Romulus went on to build a wall around Palatine Hill but Remus, being jealous, taunted his brother and they ended up in a fight where Remus was killed by Romulus.

Romulus, being alone, was now free to build his city as he wished. The city was finished on the 21st April 753BC; Romulus made himself king and named the city 'Rome' from his own name. This was the beginning of the growth of one of the most powerful cities in the world for the next thousand years.



# Questions

1. Name Romulus and Remus' birth father, birth mother, grandfather and great uncle.

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2. Where did the city of 'Rome' get its name and on which hill is it situated?

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3. In paragraph two, which word tells us that King Amulius' plan did not work?

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4. In the text, the author uses the word '**adamant**'.

Which word or words most closely match the word '**adamant**'? Tick one angry

determined

☐

not bothered

☐

charming

☐

5. Why did the people of Alba Longa think that Romulus and Remus should be kings?

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6. Why was Rhea Silvia punished?

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7. According to this story, how old will the city of Rome be in the year 2020?

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8. What sign did God Augury send Romulus and Remus?

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9. How come there was only one brother who built a city?

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10. Do you think the servant of Amulius did the right thing? Give reasons for your answer.

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