

Romulus and Remus

A long time ago, there was a king named Numitor who ruled an ancient city in Italy called Alba Longa. Numitor had a younger brother named Amulius who one day overthrew Numitor and took over Alba Longa. However, Amulius did not want to cause any conflict, so he killed Numitor's male heirs and forced Numitor's only daughter, Rhea Silvia, to become a Vestal Virgin, so she could not marry or have children. Amulius was worried that Rhea would have a son who would eventually overthrow him.

However, Rhea Silvia fell in love with Mars, the Roman God of War and they had twin sons. Rhea Silvia had betrayed her vows of being a Vestal Virgin, and the penalty was usually death. However, Amulius feared the wrath of Mars and did not want to kill Rhea Silvia. Instead, King Amulius imprisoned Rhea Silvia and ordered a servant to put the twins in the River Tiber. Amulius reasoned that if the twins were to die from the elements, the city would be saved from the angry god.

When the servant reached the river bank with the twins, he could not throw them in. He looked down at the babies sitting together in the basket, their tiny arms wrapped around one another and he thought about his own young sons. Instead, he placed their basket into the river and let the current carry the basket, in hope that someone would see the twins and rescue them.

Eventually, a compassionate she-wolf came across the basket in the river and pulled the babies out to safety. The wolf cared for the twins and protected them from dangers such as other wild animals. A friendly and cunning woodpecker helped the twins to find food.

Soon, the twins were found by a caring shepherd who was out walking by the turbulent river. He took the twins back home, out of the howling winds of the night to his wife in their cosy cottage. They decided to call the boys Romulus and Remus.

The shepherd and his wife brought the twins up like their own children. Romulus and Remus grew up to become shepherds like their father. One day, while the twins were herding their sheep, they were met by shepherds of King Amulius who started a fight with Romulus and Remus. Remus was captured by the shepherds and taken to King Amulius.

Romulus watched as they took his beloved brother away. He was shaking uncontrollably, his cheeks burned bright red and he gritted his fierce teeth. He resolutely gathered a group of shepherds and set out to rescue Remus. King Amulius believed that Rhea Silvia's children were dead, so he did not recognise Romulus and Remus. Romulus managed to free his brother, and in the process killed King Amulius. When the city learned who the boys were, they offered to crown them as joint kings.

However, the twins turned down the crown because they wanted to found their own city. The twins left their hometown in search of a perfect place to build their city. They eventually came

to the place where Rome is located today. They both liked the general area, except they both wanted to build the city on a different hill. Romulus wanted the city to be on top of Palatine Hill while Remus preferred Aventine Hill.

They agreed to wait for a sign from the God Augury to determine which hill they should build their city on. Remus saw the sign of six vultures first, while Romulus claimed to have seen twelve. Each claimed that they had won. Romulus ignored his brother and went on to build a wall around Palatine Hill. However, Remus was jealous and began to make fun of his brother. They ended up getting into a fight.

Romulus killed Remus during the fight and he was now to be the founder of his own city. With Remus dead, Romulus returned to where he started to build his wall on Palatine Hill and continued to build his city.

He officially founded the city on April 21, 753BC, making himself king and naming the city Rome after himself. He then began to organise his city. He divided his army into legions of 3,300 men. He called his 100 most noble men the Patricians and the elders of Rome the Senate. The city grew and prospered into one of the most powerful cities in the world, and would be for another 1,000 years.

