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## **Building Fluency through Reader's Theater: World Myths**

**This sample includes the following:**

**Teacher's Guide Cover** (1 page)

**Table of Contents** (1 page)

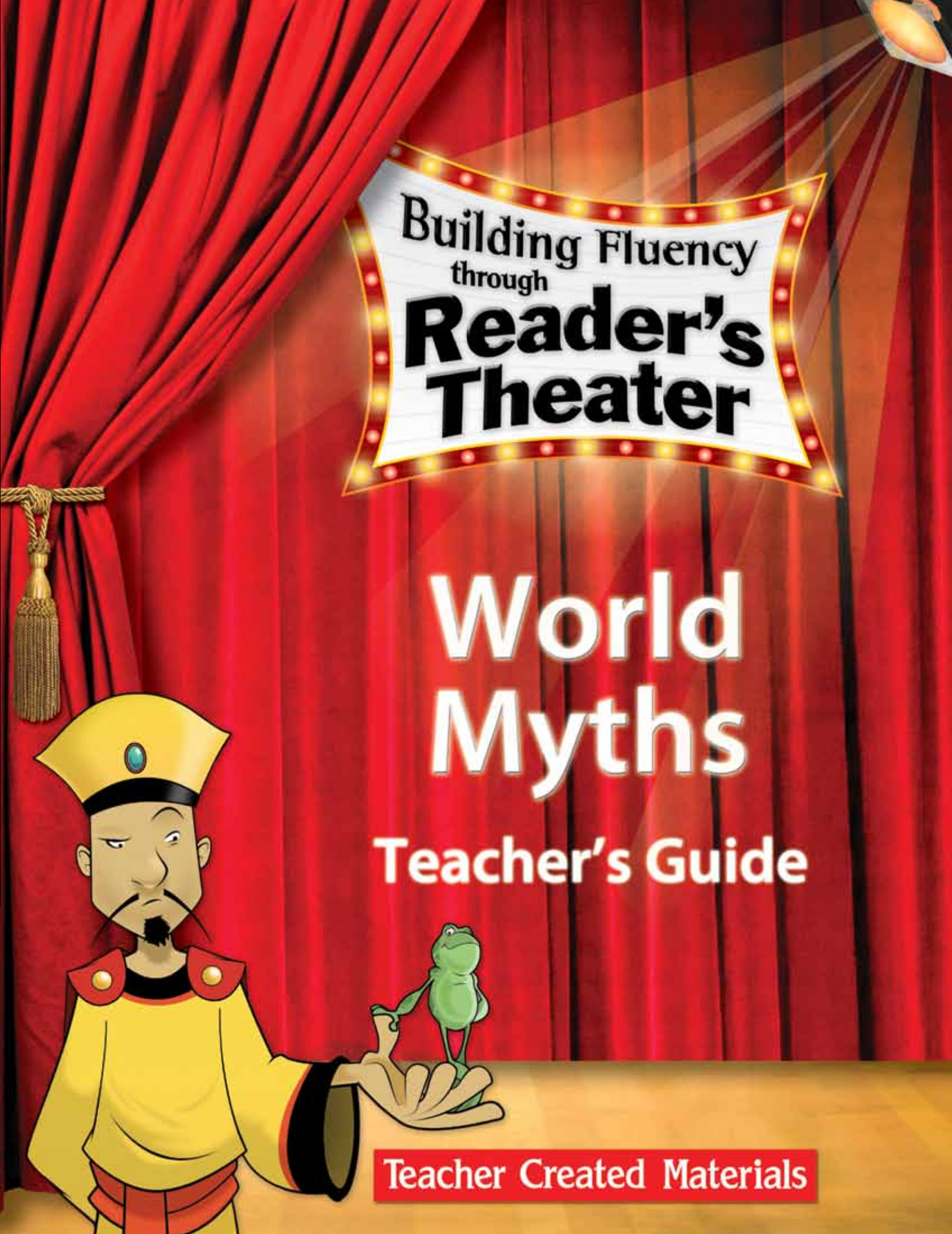
**What's Included in Each Lesson** (7 pages)

**Lesson Plan** (6 pages)

**Script** (14 pages)

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Building Fluency  
through  
**Reader's  
Theater**

**World  
Myths**

**Teacher's Guide**



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# What's Included in Each Lesson

## Objectives

The objectives state the purpose of each lesson and communicate the desired outcome of the lesson related to fluency and the content area. The objectives are taken from the Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) compilation of content standards for K–12 curriculum. As stated on the McREL website (<http://www.mcrel.org>), the purpose of the standards compilation is “to address the major issues surrounding content standards, provide a model for their identification, and apply this model in order to identify standards and benchmarks in the subject areas.”

## Summary

Within each lesson, there is a summary section that describes the script and provides information to share with students to prepare them for the reader's theater performance. To decide which scripts to complete with students, read the summaries to determine how each fits in with your teaching plans. As a convenience, the summaries for the scripts are also provided below.

***The Trojan Horse***—This script tells a story about a war that took place long ago. According to the myth, the war was between the Greeks and the Trojans. It is said that the war began when the Trojans kidnapped Helen, the queen of the great Greek state, Sparta. You see, Helen was so beautiful that the people of Troy wanted her all to themselves. The effort to get her back caused one of the greatest wars in history that lasted over a decade. How did it end? Who was behind the master plan? Read on to find out.

***Anansi***—Two spiders, a fairy, a leopard, a python, and a sky god are the stars of this great world myth. They all call the African jungle and rainforest home. Under normal circumstances, this group of characters would never be friends; in fact, they would most likely be just the opposite. However, this story is anything but normal! It is a story about finding common ground for the sake of preserving the cross-cultural need for storytelling—something that has brought people together for many generations.

***The Frog Who Became an Emperor***—A hardworking couple anxiously awaited the birth of their child. But when the big day came, a baby wasn't born: a frog was. Giving birth to a frog sounds strange enough, right? It gets worse, or maybe better—you be the judge. The frog talks and insists that he is supposed to save China from an invading army. Will he succeed? Read on to find out.

***Popocatépetl and Iztaccíhuatl***—This is a true love story centered in an ancient Aztec city. It begins with a sweet princess who wishes to marry a noble commoner, but of course, the emperor only wants her to marry a victorious warrior. Who will prevail—the good guy or the bad guy? The answer is not so straightforward. Read on to discover how it all works out, and so much more.

# What's Included in Each Lesson *(cont.)*

## Summary *(cont.)*

**Vishnu**—Vishnu is one of the great and powerful Hindu gods. He is a protector. Whenever the world is in danger, he comes down to Earth and saves the day. Vishnu appears in many different forms, called *avatars*. Sometimes he comes to the rescue as a fish, an animal, or a human.

Vishnu is most often shown in pictures with blue skin and four arms, sitting on a coiled cobra and floating on the ocean. Whatever form he takes, he is greatly loved and respected by Hindus. Read on to find out the many reasons he is revered as a great hero by so many.

**Romulus and Remus**—According to the ancient myth, Romulus and Remus are twin brothers and the founders of Rome and the Roman Empire. A woodpecker and a she-wolf raised the boys until they were adopted by more suitable parents—humans. The odds were certainly stacked against the boys for much of their lives. However, their strength and determination never ceased. Join them on their wild adventure to find where they came from and get to know the land they “discovered” along the way.

**Atrahasis**—This myth from ancient Mesopotamia has it all! There is a good god, a bad god, an obedient king, and a witty queen—and that only covers the characters! You will read about a battle between good and evil, humans and gods. Who shall be victorious? Be prepared for destruction, heroism, survival, and so much more.

**The Prince and the Sphinx**—Thutmose and Menes were princes, sons of the great Egyptian pharaoh Amenhotep. One of them would be the next ruler of Egypt. Thutmose was a man of great character and strength—qualities that pleased Amenhotep, but made Menes and his wife, Neferu, quite nervous. They were so afraid of losing the throne to Thutmose that they spent much of their day scheming to bring him down. They orchestrated attempts on his life and constantly slandered his name to anyone who would pay attention. Who will triumph? Read on to find out.

## Materials

All of the materials needed to complete a lesson are listed in this section to assist you in preparing for each lesson. In addition to these materials, each lesson has a copy of the Practice and Performance Tips (Performance CD [audio] and Teacher Resource CD [text]).

## Introduce the Literature

Each script in this kit is based on a particular world myth. You are encouraged to provide context for the myth by discussing relevant historical events, people, places, etc. Providing background information will assist students with comprehension of the script.

# What's Included in Each Lesson (cont.)

## ELL Support

Reader's theater can be used effectively in classrooms with English language learners to enhance students' proficiency in the areas of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Furthermore, the program can be adapted to scaffold and model language usage to meet students' needs at multiple levels. Through this program's ELL support activities and other various components of the lesson plans, students will become actively engaged in authentic language development activities. As a result, students' motivation to utilize the English language will increase.

The drama component of reader's theater helps students feel less inhibited in both speaking and reading the English language, and thus fluency in both areas will increase. In *Stage by Stage: A Handbook for Using Drama in the Second Language Classroom* (2002), authors Ann F. Burke and Julie C. O'Sullivan state that "Drama is simply a good way to get students' whole selves involved with language and it is fun" (xiii). The authors also emphasize that once students feel less inhibited, their fluency will increase, because within the context of reader's theater there is an inherent opportunity to do repeated readings and practice skills, such as pronunciation, in an authentic context.

Jennifer Catney McMaster (1998), in her review of research studies involving literacy and drama in the classroom, emphasizes the benefits of drama for emergent readers. Drama provides prior knowledge and rich literary experiences that emerging readers need, as well as a scaffold for literacy instruction. It helps students develop symbolic representation, new vocabulary, knowledge of word order, phrasing, and metacognition, and introduces them to various forms of discourse, all of which contribute to the construction of meaning from text.

Each script in this kit is accompanied by a musical piece and a corresponding poem. Both of these components have also been shown to facilitate students' language acquisition. Educator Tim Murphey (1992) analyzed the lyrics of pop songs and found several common language characteristics that would benefit language learners: the language is conversational; the lyrics are often sung at a slower rate than dialogue; and there is a repetition of vocabulary and structures. Moriya (1988) found that music provided Asian learners a forum to practice pronunciation and learn the phonemic differences between Asian languages and English. Speakers of various languages can benefit from the language experience that the music selections will provide.

The poetry component to the program can be used in many creative ways to enhance students' language acquisition in reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Gasparro and Falletta (1994) assert that using poetry in an ELL classroom provides students with the opportunity to explore both the linguistic and conceptual facets of text without focusing on the mechanics of language. Choral reading of the poem builds fluency and provides practice in pronunciation. Some of the vocabulary words used in the script are reinforced through the poem, providing the opportunity to see the words used in multiple contexts.

# **What's Included in Each Lesson** *(cont.)*

## **ELL Support** *(cont.)*

The accompanying poems can also serve as models for students to write their own poems. Depending on students' levels, a framework or template can be developed for each poem to structure the writing process and provide students another opportunity to use the vocabulary and word order they have learned from the script and the poem. Additionally, the poem can also serve as a medium for discussion of the themes and concepts presented in each script. Moreover, students and teachers can create action sequences to facilitate visualization and comprehension of the text. Gasparro and Falletta (1994) emphasize that dramatizing poetry enables the learner to become intellectually, emotionally, and physically engaged in the target language; therefore, language is internalized and remembered.

Students' listening comprehension will also develop as a result of using reader's theater. According to Brown (2001), some characteristics of speech make listening difficult, such as clustering, redundancy, reduced forms, performance variables, colloquial language, rate of delivery, stress, rhythm, intonation, and interaction. Brown proposes methods for helping second-language learners overcome these challenges. Reader's theater utilizes authentic language and contexts, is intrinsically motivating, and supports both bottom-up and top-down listening techniques. Illustrations in the scripts, along with the possible inclusion of realia and gestures, will assist students in understanding unfamiliar vocabulary and idiomatic phrases.

In addition, the professional recording of the scripts on the Performance CD will provide another opportunity for students to enhance listening comprehension and reading ability. The voices on the CD are articulate and expressive, and they serve as models for accurate pronunciation and fluent reading. By listening to the CD, students will be able to practice visualizing text and speech. One best practice suggested by second-language teacher-training programs is for the students to hear an oral reading of the piece of literature prior to reading it aloud themselves. The CD can be used for this practice as well.

Reader's theater provides a medium for English language learners to interact with other students in the classroom and will facilitate the development of a strong community of language learners. The experience will increase students' motivation and diminish their inhibitions to learn the new language. The components of the program will provide the necessary support and scaffolding that teachers need in order to provide effective instruction to English language learners in the areas of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The program will engage students and serve as a model for fluency, pronunciation, and overall language usage.

# **What's Included in Each Lesson** *(cont.)*

## **Involving All Students**

Even though each script has only six roles, all students can be involved in each reader's theater performance in a variety of ways. This section of each lesson suggests ways to include all students.

## **Reading the Script**

This section of each lesson explains how to introduce the reader's theater script to students and offers suggestions for introducing unfamiliar vocabulary and understanding the characters. As you read each script with students, you may try to use the following performance tips.

## **Performance Tips**

Reader's theater performance can be a frightening experience for some students. Assist them by reviewing the following suggestions:

- Relax! Breathe deeply and speak slowly to avoid a quivering or breathless voice.
- Stand with one foot in front of the other and with your weight balanced to avoid that feeling of shaking and trembling.
- Do not rush through your lines or speak too rapidly. Take your time and say each word distinctly.
- Movement is good for emphasis or to help you look relaxed, but do not move back and forth or develop nervous mannerisms. Avoid wringing hands, tugging at clothing, or twisting hair.
- Mistakes are a normal part of any learning experience. If you make one, correct it and go on.

Getting to know your character will make your performance more believable. Use these questions to get in character as you rehearse.

- How old do you think the character is?
- What kind of voice do you think the character should have? Is the voice soft, loud, high pitched, or low pitched?
- How does the character stand or use his or her hands when speaking?
- Does the character seem happy, proud, or excitable?
- Do you think this character is serious or silly?
- Is the character kind?
- Do you think people would like this character?
- What can you do to communicate this character's personality to others?



# What's Included in Each Lesson (cont.)

## Assigning Roles

Each script contains six character roles. Each of the roles is written for a different reading level. The chart below lists the reading levels for all the characters in the eight scripts.

Script Title	Second Grade 2.0–2.9	Third Grade 3.0–3.9	Fourth Grade 4.0–4.9
<i>The Trojan Horse</i>	Priam Laocoön	Odysseus Helen	Narrator Sinon
<i>Anansi</i>	Mmoatia Osebo	Anansi Nyame	Aso Onini
<i>The Frog Who Became an Emperor</i>	Man Woman	Frog Princess	Narrator Emperor
<i>Popocatépetl and Iztaccíhuatl</i>	Popocatépetl Warrior	Iztaccíhuatl Emperor	Narrator Ambassador
<i>Vishnu</i>	Matsya Hiranyaksha	Varaha Manu	Narrator 1 Narrator 2
<i>Romulus and Remus</i>	Romulus Remus	Youth 1 Youth 2	Woodpecker She-wolf
<i>Atrahasis</i>	Enlil Enki	Eanna Atrahasis	Narrator 1 Narrator 2
<i>The Prince and the Sphinx</i>	Menes Ako	Narrator Amenhotep	Neferu Thutmose

# What's Included in Each Lesson *(cont.)*

## Assigning Roles *(cont.)*

### Reading Levels Correlation Chart

Grade Level Range	Guided Reading	Early Intervention	DRA
2.0–2.9	I–M	17–20	18–28
3.0–3.9	M–Q	21–23	30–38
4.0–4.9	Q–S	24–26	40–44

## Meeting the Fluency Objective

Each lesson focuses on a specific fluency objective, such as reading with accuracy or reading with expression. This section provides procedures for teaching the fluency objective related to the featured script.

## Content-Area Connection

Each reader's theater script focuses on a specific content area: language arts, history/social studies, mathematics, or science. This section of each lesson explains the content and provides suggestions for introducing this content to your students. The content in the scripts can be quite sophisticated and warrants specific instruction to help students understand it.

## Fine Arts Connection

Each script has a song and a poem to accompany it. Students will perform the song and poem at designated places within the reader's theater performances. The kit includes Performance CDs containing all of the songs and poems related to the eight scripts. This section of each lesson offers suggestions for using these CDs to learn the songs and poems.

## Performance

The reader's theater performance may be as simple or as complex as desired. This section in each lesson provides basic information for the actual performances, including the use of the provided masks.

# Romulus and Remus

## Lesson Plan

### Objectives

- **Fluency:** Students will use repeated readings to increase reading rate and accuracy.
- **Content Area—Social Studies:** Students will gain a deeper understanding of Rome through an overview of its history, geography, famous leaders, landmarks, and architecture.

### Summary

According to the ancient myth, Romulus and Remus are twin brothers and the founders of Rome and the Roman Empire. A woodpecker and a she-wolf raised the boys until they were adopted by more suitable parents—humans. The odds were certainly stacked against the boys for much of their lives. However, their strength and determination never ceased. Join them on their wild adventure to find where they came from and get to know the land they “discovered” along the way.



### Materials

- *Romulus and Remus* script booklets
- *Romulus and Remus* Character Masks (pages 86–91 or Teacher Resource CD)
- copies of the Take-Home Script (Teacher Resource CD)
- transparency of the song “My Four Little Johnny-Cakes”
- transparency of the poem “The Early Morning”
- *PowerPoint*® slide show (Teacher Resource CD)
- map showing ancient Rome
- map and/or globe showing modern-day Rome
- Performance CD and CD player or computer with a CD drive and speakers

### Introduce the Literature

Write numerals 1–5 on a piece of chart paper. Ask your students if they know what the Roman numerals are for numbers 1–5? Have volunteers come up and write the Roman numeral equivalent next to each number (e.g., 1=I, 2=II, 5=V). Repeat for numbers up to 20. You may need to teach or review some of the Roman numerals. Have each student write his or her age and phone number using only Roman numerals.



### ELL Support

Pair each student with a more proficient classmate. Have pairs complete the activity together. If necessary, write their ages and phone numbers on index cards and have them find and write the corresponding Roman numerals.

### Involving All Students

There are six roles in this script. To ensure that each student is given the opportunity to participate, assign multiple students to each role. Then break students into groups to practice reading the scripts. Each group will perform in front of the class. If you have students in your class with reading levels below those provided in the scripts, give those students one or two of the easiest lines to practice and recite. Do the same for English language learners. Regardless of how many lines students have, they all should be included in the practice and performances.

### Reading the Script



1. The scripts in this program focus on myths from around the world. This script focuses on a myth from ancient Rome. Before reading the script with students, explain that myths are stories told by ancient cultures to explain natural phenomena. Myths were created so that people could make sense of what was going on around them—things they could see but not necessarily explain.
2. Before reading the script, introduce selected glossary words to students. Write the words on the board. Have students help you define them in familiar student-friendly language. Then have students work independently or with a partner to illustrate and/or write a sentence for each word.
3. Play the professional recording of the script. Have students listen, paying close attention to the tone, voice, and expression of each character. Assign each student a role. Play the recording again, only this time students should pay attention to their character's lines specifically. Play the recording one last time and have students chorally read their lines.
4. Why is the story of Romulus and Remus referred to as a legend or myth? Facilitate a discussion on the key elements of a myth. Go through the pages of the script and have students identify the aspects of the story that are clearly not based on historical fact. This could be completed in small groups by assigning each group one act from the script to evaluate.



### ELL Support

Pick an act from the script and complete step 4 in a small-group setting with students. Begin by introducing the terms *fact* and *fiction*. Point out and ask students to underline examples of fiction in the script.



### Assigning Roles

Assign roles to students based on reading proficiency. When students practice fluency, it is important that they read materials at or below their reading levels so they can focus on accuracy, expression, and reading rate. If a student reads text that is too difficult, his or her attention will be focused on decoding words and comprehending the text rather than reading with fluency.

Approximate reading levels for the roles in this script are:

❖ **Romulus:** 2nd grade

❖ **Youth 1:** 3rd grade

❖ **Woodpecker:** 4th grade

❖ **Remus:** 2nd grade

❖ **Youth 2:** 3rd grade

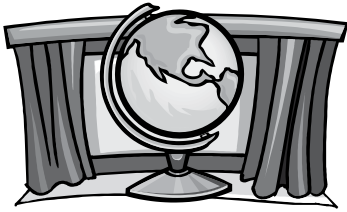
❖ **She-wolf:** 4th grade

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### Meeting the Fluency Objective

The fluency objective for this script focuses on the use of repeated readings to increase reading rate and accuracy.

1. Provide each student with a copy of the script. Tell students to highlight their lines and circle punctuation marks. These visual cues will make practicing easier.
2. Allow students plenty of opportunities to practice reading the script. They can practice with their character groups (all the she-wolves together, all the woodpeckers together, and so on) as well as in their performance groups.
3. Play the professional recording of the script prior to daily practice. Proper pacing, pronunciation, expression, etc., are characteristics of a fluent reader. Hearing the professional recording will provide a model for fluent reading as well as give students a goal to work toward. Encourage students to read their lines chorally with the recording.
4. Divide students into their character groups and have them practice reading only their lines. Tell students to give each other feedback on what they are doing well and what they could do better.
5. As students practice in their character and performance groups, walk around to monitor for participation and accurate readings. If you hear a student struggling, help him or her read the line with you until it is right. This applies to mispronouncing a word, not reading fluidly or with proper expression, etc.



### Content-Area Connection— Social Studies

Students will gain a deeper understanding of Rome through an overview of its history, geography, famous leaders, landmarks, and architecture.

The class overview of Rome's history should include, but is not limited to, the topics below. These are just a few ideas to get you started. You may add to or take away from the list as needed.

1. Build students' knowledge about Rome.
  - Locate ancient Rome on a map.
  - Point out major rivers, such as the Rhine, Danube, Tiber, etc.
  - Find Rome on a globe.
2. Discuss the Roman Empire. Refer to the map of the Roman Empire. What countries were considered to be part of the Roman Empire?
3. Introduce and discuss famous Romans. What did they do? How were their roles pivotal in Rome's rise? Rome's fall?
  - Augustus (Octavian)—first emperor
  - Julius Caesar—general; politician
  - Constantine the Great
  - Nero
4. Introduce and discuss famous Roman landmarks. When and how were they built? What type of actions and events took place there? Can you visit them today?
  - Roman Coliseum
  - Roman baths
  - Circus Maximus
5. Introduce and discuss the Roman advances in architecture (columns, arches, domes, use of brick and concrete, etc.). Use books, magazines, and the Internet to show students pictures of the fascinating architecture the Romans are known for.



### ELL Support

Help students with step 1. Let them touch and manipulate the globe. Have a few students

point to where they live and point to Rome. Is Rome nearby or far away? What bodies of water are between them? Show the group pictures of Rome (landmarks, architecture, etc.). Encourage them to discuss what they see. Would they want to travel there? Why or why not? How would they get there (airplane, train, car, ship, etc.)?

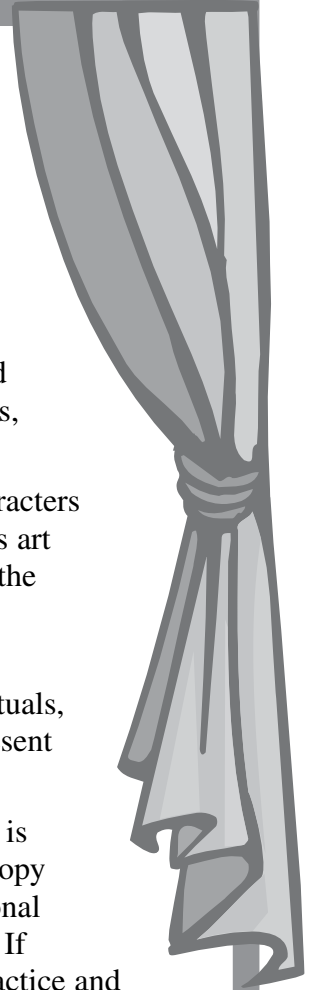
### Fine Arts Connection

1. The script contains a song and a poem: “My Four Little Johnny-Cakes” and “The Early Morning.” Both the song and the poem are directly related to the *Romulus and Remus* script, but they are not limited to use only with this script.
2. Using old shoeboxes and other art supplies, have students make dioramas of their favorite scenes from the script. It is important that the setting and characters are portrayed accurately. Students can present their finished projects to the class. Display all the dioramas around the room for students, staff, and visitors to see.
3. Make props for the performances. Have students make props for their characters and for the scenery. Students can be creative and make items using various art supplies, bring in appropriate clothing from home, use various items from the classroom, etc.
4. Have students work in small groups to research aspects of Roman culture. Groups can study food, social classes, religion, art, architecture, clothes, rituals, holidays, etc. Groups will create posters to illustrate their findings and present the information to the class.
5. “The Early Morning” is a great poem for students to recite individually. It is short and, for most students, simple to read. Provide each student with a copy of the poem and use the transparency for daily practice. Play the professional recording for students so they can hear proper use of tone and expression. If necessary, English language learners and below-grade-level readers can practice and recite the poem as a group.

### Performance

Students may perform their renditions of the script for the class or for a larger audience. If desired, allow the audience to share in the reader’s theater experience by reciting the poem and singing the song at the appropriate places. Display the song and poem for the audience to follow, using the provided transparencies.

The performers may also wish to prepare masks for their parts, which are included within this lesson. Allow students to color their masks. Cut out the eyeholes, punch holes at the Xs, and attach string to tie the masks to the performers’ faces.



### Performance CD

Description	Track
Characters, Setting, and Script Reading, pages 6–9	Volume II, Track 09
Song: “My Four Little Johnny-Cakes”	Volume II, Track 10
Script Reading ( <i>cont.</i> ), pages 9–19	Volume II, Track 11
Poem: “The Early Morning”	Volume II, Track 12
Script Reading ( <i>cont.</i> ), pages 19–21	Volume II, Track 13

### Teacher Resource CD

Description	File Name
<i>Romulus and Remus</i> Character Masks	masks_Romulus&Remus.pdf
Take-Home Script: <i>Romulus and Remus</i>	THS_Romulus&Remus.pdf
PowerPoint: <i>Romulus and Remus</i>	PP_Romulus&Remus.ppt
Poem Transparency: “The Early Morning”	poem_Romulus&Remus.pdf
Song Transparency: “My Four Little Johnny-Cakes”	song_Romulus&Remus.pdf



# ROMULUS —AND— REMUS



Melissa Fitzgerald

# ROMULUS -AND- REMUS



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# Romulus and Remus

## Story Summary

Romulus and Remus are the twin children of Rhea, a human princess, and Mars, the Roman god of war. Rhea's father, King Numitor, has lost his throne to his brother, Amulius, who now rules the kingdom. Amulius tries to lock away Rhea so that she will never have children who may take over the kingdom. When Amulius learns of the birth of Romulus and Remus, he orders them to be thrown into the Tiber River and drowned. But Rhea places them in a basket instead and sends them down the river. The babies are found by a she-wolf and a woodpecker, both of which are animals of special importance to Mars.

In time, the boys are found by peasants—a husband and wife. The couple believes that the boys have been abandoned and adopts them as their own children. The boys grow up well, but they have questions about their birth. Their journey to find answers leads to the building of the city of Rome—and to tragedy. What happens? Read the story to find out!

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# Tips for **Performing** Reader's Theater

## Adapted from Aaron Shepard

- Don't let your script hide your face. If you can't see the audience, your script is too high.
- Look up often when you speak. Don't just look at your script.
- Talk slowly so the audience knows what you are saying.
- Talk loudly so everyone can hear you.
- Talk with feelings. If the character is sad, let your voice be sad. If the character is surprised, let your voice be surprised.
- Stand up straight. Keep your hands and feet still.
- Remember that even when you are not talking, you are still your character.
- Narrator, be sure to give the characters enough time for their lines.

# Tips for **Performing** Reader's Theater *(cont.)*

- If the audience laughs, wait for them to stop before you speak again.
- If someone in the audience talks, don't pay attention.
- If someone walks into the room, don't pay attention.
- If you make a mistake, pretend it was right.
- If you drop something, try to leave it where it is until the audience is looking somewhere else.
- If a reader forgets to read his or her part, see if you can read the part instead, make something up, or just skip over it. Don't whisper to the reader!
- If a reader falls down during the performance, pretend it didn't happen.



# Romulus and Remus

## Characters

Romulus  
Remus  
She-wolf

Woodpecker  
Youth 1  
Youth 2

## Setting

**Our story begins on the banks of the Tiber River in the year 771 B.C. The action then moves years ahead, when Romulus and Remus are grown and leave home in search of answers to long-held family secrets.**



## Act I

**She-wolf:** Woodpecker, do you hear crying?

**Woodpecker:** Yes, She-wolf, it sounds like human crying.

**She-wolf:** It is coming from the banks of the powerful Tiber River. Why . . . it is a human-made basket cradling twin baby boys!

**Woodpecker:** Holy Zeus! Imagine that. What should we do with them?

**She-wolf:** They look hungry and frightened. We must feed them and care for them, for that is what the gods would want.

**Woodpecker:** You are right, She-wolf! I will look for something tasty that humans would like.

**She-wolf:** And I will feed them some milk to nourish them. Humans like milk, they say.

**Woodpecker:** Here are some berries for the little ones. How do you suppose they came to be at the river's edge?

**She-wolf:** There is a terrible rumor among the people that our new king, Amulius, exiled the children of Rhea. In fact, some say he wanted the children dead! And look at the fine clothes they are wrapped in. I believe that the rumor is true!



**Woodpecker:** No, that cannot be! Who would want to harm innocent children such as these? It is against the laws of nature and of the gods.

**She-wolf:** It is said that Amulius is afraid for his throne. He will do anything to protect it—even kill his kin.

**Woodpecker:** Then it is good that we found these youngsters and can keep them safe . . . for now.

## Act 2

**She-wolf:** Woodpecker and I took the babies and raised them as best we could. But one day, when they were playing in the sun near my den, they were discovered by a peasant husband and wife. The couple thought that the boys were abandoned, and having no children of their own, they adopted the twins. Woodpecker and I thought it best that the babies remain with the humans.

**Woodpecker:** They named the boys Romulus and Remus.

**She-wolf:** The boys grew tall and strong. But as they grew, so did their questions. They wanted to know who they were.

**Woodpecker:** And so they left their home to find answers.

**Remus:** I'm going to miss our home and our parents.

**Romulus:** I know, Brother. I will also, but we could not stay there forever. There is much we do not know, and neither do our parents.



**Remus:** I suppose that is true, but how I will miss Mother's cooking!

**Romulus:** These sweet cakes are the last of it, but we are almost to the river. We can catch some fish for supper.

## Song: My Four Little Johnny-Cakes

**Woodpecker:** These old eyes must be deceiving me! You strapping young men cannot be the wee ones I cared for those many years ago. Lads, what are your names?

**Romulus:** I am Romulus and this is my brother, Remus.

**Woodpecker:** Why, you are indeed my little ones! I helped raise you when you both were just babies.

**Remus:** You? Our parents don't know where we came from.

**Woodpecker:** Yes, She-wolf and I made sure that you had a safe human home.

**Remus:** Then you are a friend indeed!

**Woodpecker:** It was our pleasure. Where are you headed, boys? Are you looking for fortune or maybe an adventure?

**Romulus:** Adventure is calling us, Woodpecker! We wish to learn where we came from.



**Woodpecker:** Ah, you wish to hear of your beginnings, do you? Well then, you are in luck, young adventurers, for I know that story well!

**Remus:** You do? Then please tell us.

**Woodpecker:** As you wish, but the truth may be hard to swallow.

**Romulus:** Go on, Woodpecker. We are all friends now.

**Woodpecker:** You had best sit down for this. Your beginnings are loftier than most. Your birth father is the god Mars, and your birth mother, Rhea, is the daughter of King Numitor of Alba Longa.

**Remus:** We are of royal blood? See, I told you, Romulus! We are destined for great things.

**Romulus:** Remus, hush. Woodpecker has important things to tell us. Please go on.

**Woodpecker:** As I was saying . . . you were banished by King Amulius. Your mother tried to protect you by sending you in a basket down the river. That is how She-wolf and I came to find you.

**Remus:** You saved us?

**Woodpecker:** We cared for you before you found a human home. But now that you have grown, you should go back to your roots!



**Romulus:** Perhaps, you are right, Woodpecker. Maybe it is time to go back home.

**Remus:** Yes, home. Uh, in which direction would that be, Woodpecker?

**Woodpecker:** Follow the Tiber River until you reach the large “Welcome to Alba Longa” sign. It is rather hard to miss, dear ones.

**Remus:** And what will we find when we reach it?

**Woodpecker:** You will meet King Amulius. He is not a kind man, and you should take care when in his presence.

**Romulus:** Who is King Amulius? And how did he become king?

**Woodpecker:** He is a relative of yours! He is your grandfather’s younger brother.

**Remus:** Are you saying we still have relatives left within the city walls?

**Woodpecker:** You will find that your grandfather, the former king named Numitor, is still in residence. I am unsure of the whereabouts of your dear mother, but try not to think ill of her. She did not wish to be parted from you.

**Romulus:** But why did you give us away?



**Woodpecker:** When the humans found you, we knew that we could not care for you as they could. Even though it pained us to part from you, we did what was best. But we have always hoped that we would meet again.

**Remus:** Where is She-wolf now?

**Woodpecker:** She is not far from here, but remember that she is more animal than human and would be put off by young men. She may be hard to find. I think it is best if I come with you.

**Romulus:** Thank you, Woodpecker. Show us the way!

**Woodpecker:** We traveled for a distance. But then we came to She-wolf's den. She was not there. "Stay here while I scan the forest for her," I told Romulus and Remus.

**Romulus:** Do you suppose she is hunting for humans?

**Remus:** Do not joke, Romulus. I hope for our sakes that is not the case.

**Romulus:** Remus! Look behind you!

**She-wolf:** How did you get here, young men, and what do you want of me? State your business fast or face the consequences! I do not welcome strangers—unless they smell delicious.

**Woodpecker:** She-wolf, they mean you no harm. These lads are the same ones that we cared for as babies!



**She-wolf:** No . . . can it be? Come closer. Why, it is my boys! How I have missed you. How you have changed!

**Romulus:** We wanted to voice our gratitude to you in person.

**Remus:** Woodpecker told us how you cared for us.

**She-wolf:** It is true that we saved you from an ill fate, but we only did what was right. What are your plans now?

**Romulus:** We have a score to settle with King Amulius. We wish to go back to Alba Longa to confront the king and see our grandfather.

**She-wolf:** King Amulius is crafty and sly. You both must be wary of him and his advisors, for they have tried to kill you before. Your lives may be in danger again.

**Remus:** We are ready for the challenges that await us.

**Woodpecker:** Lads, you will need to be brave, but do not be foolish. Be sure that you are heavily armed when you enter the lion's den, and keep an eye on each other.

**Romulus:** Do not worry! We have never left each other's side.

**Remus:** I can vouch for that!

**She-wolf:** Together is always best, little ones. May the wind guide you safely home and warn you of trouble ahead.

**Romulus:** Thank you again, Woodpecker and She-wolf. We would not be alive without you, and we are grateful.





**Remus:** We shall come back when our task is done.

**She-wolf:** Yes, little ones, set things back to the way they were meant to be. We have always known that you were destined for great things.

**Romulus:** Farewell, Woodpecker and She-wolf.

**Remus:** Yes, we will meet again.

**She-wolf:** Goodbye, dears. Care for one another.

### Act 3

**Youth 1:** Ho there! What do we have here?

**Woodpecker:** A youth surprised Romulus and Remus and held a knife to Remus's throat!

**Remus:** Watch the hair, friend. It takes a little work to look this good, you know.

**Youth 2:** Well, aren't you the fancy one—and awfully calm despite my blade at your throat?

**Youth 1:** I would not be as concerned with my hair as with whether my head stayed attached to my shoulders.

**Romulus:** If you unhand my brother, I would be happy to tell you what we are planning.



**Youth 1:** All right, but do not attempt anything. My comrades and I have been waiting for some excitement. Now that it's at our fingertips, we are not eager to have it end quickly by being forced to end your lives.

**Romulus:** Understood. My brother Remus and I are headed to Alba Longa. We have a twisted family tale to straighten out.

**Youth 2:** Hmm . . . family upheaval, huh? That's not unusual for Alba Longa, since King Amulius has made a mess of things.

**Youth 1:** He has cut wages and raised taxes, and in doing so, has made life far too challenging for us common folk. But what do you brothers know of hardship?

**Youth 2:** Obviously not much. They look strong and healthy enough, and just look at the quality of clothes they are wearing. Their lives have been charmed, I imagine.

**Remus:** Looks can be deceiving. My brother and I have a wrong to make right, and our actions may help you in the end.

**Youth 1:** What wrong could you make right that would matter to us?

**Youth 2:** Choose your words carefully, and do not make promises that you cannot keep.

**Romulus:** Amulius took the crown from our grandfather, and we want to see the crown back where it rightfully belongs.



- Youth 1:** Ah, now *there* is a plot to interest us. It may require more hands than just your four, don't you think?
- Youth 2:** Luck must be in your favor, for we happen to be part of a rebel gang, and our camp is nearby.
- Romulus:** I would be very grateful for your help. My only request is that I lead this adventure.
- Youth 1:** I think we can accommodate that. What are your names, friends?
- Romulus:** My brother is Remus, and I am Romulus.
- Youth 2:** What say you then? Do we shake on it?
- Remus:** Deal. And now that our business is done, do you have something to feast on and maybe a gentle stream close by that I may bathe in?
- Romulus:** Sorry. My brother often thinks of nothing else but his stomach and his looks.
- Youth 1:** Right. Come, we have meat roasting on the pit and a cool stream for bathing to your heart's content.
- Youth 2:** Let us celebrate, for we may have a new king by sundown tomorrow!



## Act 4

- Woodpecker:** Romulus, Remus, and their new friends devised a plan to get past the king's guards, surprise Amulius, and take back the kingdom. They disguised themselves as women, and their plan worked!
- Romulus:** That was easier than I thought it would be!
- Remus:** Yeah, good idea! That was genius.
- Youth 1:** And did you see the look on Amulius's face when he realized who you were?
- Romulus:** It was priceless. He got what he had coming to him, and now grandfather can rule in peace.
- Remus:** And it will make all of our lives easier. Woodpecker and She-wolf, what are you doing here?
- Woodpecker:** The entire forest is buzzing about a pair of brothers and a gang of rogues who defeated Amulius. Tell me, did we hear correctly?
- Remus:** We only vanquished Amulius hours ago. How could you know already?
- She-wolf:** News travels fast around here! Did I hear correctly?
- Romulus:** Yes, we defeated Amulius and reinstated our grandfather as the rightful king.



**Woodpecker:** That is good news indeed! You have saved us from an uncertain future, and we can be hopeful again.

**Youth 1:** Not only will the creatures of the forest rejoice—

**Youth 2:** —but so will the poor folks who have lived and slaved under his rule!

**She-wolf:** Amulius was a tyrant, and the creatures of the forest were glad to hear that he was defeated. We have had many a bad winter under his rule.

**Remus:** Now that we have put the kingdom in right order, what will we do?

**Romulus:** I want to explore the land around Alba Longa.

**Remus:** Explore? When are we going to settle down?

**Romulus:** Maybe we will find a place to make our home, but to find that, we must move on.

**Remus:** But I just found a good barber I liked.

**Romulus:** We only just got here this morning!

**Remus:** A good hairdresser is hard to find.

**Woodpecker:** Maybe you will find what you are searching for where your journey began.

**Romulus:** What do you mean, Woodpecker?



**Woodpecker:** Would you like me to show you where She-wolf and I found you and your brother?

**Romulus:** Yes, let's start there in our quest for a home.

**Woodpecker:** Then follow me. It is a few days' walk, but with good company, it may feel like a much faster journey.

## Poem: The Early Morning

### Act 5

**Woodpecker:** This is the spot where it all began.

**She-wolf:** And now that we have shown you your beginning, we must say farewell for now.

**Woodpecker:** Good-bye, lads!

**Romulus:** So, this is where we might have perished?

**Remus:** It is not how I pictured it.

**Youth 1:** It isn't scary.

**Youth 2:** It's rather pleasant.

**Romulus:** It is green, lush, and unspoiled. We should settle here.

**Remus:** Here? Why here? It is in the middle of nowhere.



**Romulus:** Our story began here. By building a city, we can show Amulius that he holds no power over us.

**Remus:** He stopped having power over us the day we dethroned him. And anyway, I think it would be best if we settled about a mile downriver.

**Romulus:** If you would rather be somewhere else, then go.

**Remus:** Fine! Maybe I will.

**Romulus:** Fine.

**Youth 1:** Fine.

**Youth 2:** Fine.

**Woodpecker:** The brothers—although never before separated—went their separate ways. While Remus was away, Romulus built a wall to set his city boundaries. Then Remus came back to check his progress.

**Youth 1:** What shall we call your city, Romulus?

**Romulus:** We will call it Rome.

**Remus:** Ha! Rome? A city named after you. How original!

**Romulus:** Hello, Remus. Have you come back to stay?

**Remus:** Yes, I've been thinking. I always knew that royalty was in my blood. I shall rule this new city.



**Romulus:** You? You left! I am building this city.

**Remus:** Thank you for your hard work, but now it's my turn.

**Romulus:** I don't think so!

**Remus:** Step aside, Brother. Just rest while I take it from here.

**Romulus:** Not on your life! This is *my* city!

**Youth 1:** What has happened to the two of you? Stop this before you do something you'll regret!

**Youth 2:** Remember that you are friends and brothers!

**Remus:** He's no friend of mine!

**Romulus:** You said it!

**Woodpecker:** And though it breaks my heart to say it, Romulus picked up a rock in anger and threw it at his brother!

**Romulus:** What have I done?

**Youth 1:** You've killed Remus!

**Youth 2:** Romulus, your brother is dead.

**Woodpecker:** You are probably shocked by this outcome. So were we all. The brothers who were never apart were now separated forever. Yet despite this tragedy, the great city of Rome was founded on the very spot where their story had begun.



## The Early Morning by Hilaire Belloc

The moon on the one hand, the  
dawn on the other;  
The moon is my sister, the dawn is  
my brother.  
The moon on my left and the  
dawn on my right—  
My brother, good morning; my  
sister, good night.



## My Four Little Johnny-Cakes Traditional



Hurrah for the Lachlan, boys, and join me in a cheer;  
That's the place to go to make a check every year.  
With a toadskin in my pocket, that I borrowed from a friend,  
Oh, isn't it nice and cozy to be camping in the bend!

*Chorus:*

With my little round flour-bag sitting on a stump,  
My little tea-and-sugar bag looking nice and plump,  
A little fat codfish just off the hook,  
And four little johnny-cakes, a credit to the cook.

I have a loaf of bread and some murphies that I shook,  
Perhaps a loaf of brownie that I snavelled off the cook,  
A nice leg of mutton, just a bit cut off the end,  
Oh isn't it nice and jolly to be whaling in the bend!

*Chorus*

*This song has been abridged.*



## Glossary

**banished**—sent away from one’s country or home

**exiled**—forced to leave one’s country for political reasons

**dethroned**—removed from a throne or place of power

**quest**—adventure in which someone is looking for something

**loftier**—higher in status; superior

**murphies**—potatoes

**perished**—died

**reinstated**—put back into power

**rogues**—unpleasant characters, possibly outlaws

**snavelled**—took or stole in a friendly, teasing way

**tyrant**—a cruel ruler who has complete power

**vanquished**—totally destroyed

**vouch**—prove or verify

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