**“Introduction to Ancient Rome” Readers Theater**

Welcome to your introduction to Ancient Rome. There are 3 acts, or parts, to this play. The first act talks about the geography and surroundings of the land that will be Ancient Rome. The second and third acts are 2 different accounts of the origins of the city of Rome.

**Characters**

Narrator 1 (male) Narrator 2 (female) Romulus Remus

She-wolf Shepherd

**Act 1: Welcome to Ancient-Almost-Rome**

*Narrator 1*: While Ancient Greece is in its Golden Age and then in its decline, a new civilization was brewing in another part of the Mediterranean, about 50 miles away. The land we are talking about is now known as Italy. Look at it here. (*show map*) See how it looks like a boot? (*show boot*)

*Narrator 2*: Give me back my boot. Who said you could use my boot for this? (*glare*) ... Anyway, this country has rivers, mountains, and it sticks out into the Mediterranean Sea…

*Narrator 1*: …and looks like a boot (*smiles*)

*Narrator 2*: (*rolls eyes, annoyed*) Yes, it looks like a boot. But what is even more important is its perfect position in the Mediterranean Sea. The fact that it sticks out, and in the center of the Mediterranean, means that it was perfect for being a center of power, keeping it within them, and for expanding outward to get more power.

*Narrator 1*: (*fake coughing*) Boot.

*Narrator 2*: (*sighs*) Just hold up the next sign.

**Act 2: Origins of Rome-Real Life**

*Narrator 1*: (*leans in to the camera/audience, whispering*) Now, I personally don’t believe what I’m sure she’s about to tell you. I mean, ha, facts, evidence, and history are so overrated. It all seems kind of random that they would choose this one spot that happens to turn out to be the famous city of Rome. These early people were just farmers, not much city-building power in that.

*Narrator 2*: Hush. It’s my turn. The early settlers were called the Latins and they came to the area when the Ancient Greeks were still going strong. There were just small farming villages filled with simple farmers. Their first city was in 1000 BC called Alba Longa.

Why’d these people even want to build cities? Why’d they choose that location for the city of Rome? They needed fresh water, access to the sea, good land, and protection. The area where Rome is has all of these. Alas, a city was born.

*Narrator 1*: (*in warning tone*) You better be careful, you’re insulting the gods. You haven’t even mentioned Mars. You’re going to get punished. You can make up for it by holding up my Act 3 sign.

*Narrator 2*: We know this background from historical evidence we have found. And *I* say simple farmers *can* do more change than you think. Now here’s the other side of the story is. (*Holds up sign*)

**Act 3: Origins of Rome-The Myth**

**Scene 1**

*Narrator 1*: I pray to Mars, or Ares as you Greeks might now him as, that I get this story right, after all, he does play a part in it.

It all started in northern Italy with true love, as it always does. Princess Rhea of Alba Longa and the god of war, Mars, had two twins, Romulus and Remus. Her uncle, the king, ordered the boys to be drowned in the river. But Rhea put the babies into a basket and sent them down the river instead. A she-wolf and woodpecker happened upon them.

*She-wolf*: (*in wolf speech)* These little human babies are just like my cubs. I will take care of them, feed them, protect them. Mr. Woodpecker can help gather supplies for them to eat.

*Narrator 2*: (*speculatively, doubting*) So a magical wolf is taking care of some babies and a little woodpecker can carry food…with what? His fingers?

*Narrator 1*: The gods can make anything happen, thank you very much. You are going to start WWIII if you keep doubting Mars’ children and their story. Anyway, from this day forth, the woodpecker and the wolf became important and sacred animals for Mars.

**Scene 2**

Shepherd: (*walking along, tending to his flock of animals*) Hmm, two little boys are all by themselves. (surprised) I’ll take them home and my wife and I can take care of them.

*Narrator 1*: Many years passed and the twins grew up.

**Scene 3**

*Romulus*: (urgently *to Shepherd*) Father, some bandits have taken Remus. I’m scared that he will be brought before the king, the one who wanted us drowned, and he will find out about Remus and I.

*Shepherd*: (urgently *to Romulus*) Let’s gather some of the other shepherds and rescue Remus.

*Narrator 1*: When they manage to track down Remus’ whereabouts, he has been taken before the king, their evil uncle, and the king had discovered their whereabouts. Through luck and the help of Mars, they defeated the king. But instead, of taking the throne for themselves, they left the kingdom to build their own city, near the river where they were found by the she-wolf and the woodpecker.

**Scene 4**

*Remus*: I think we should build our city on that hill. (*points to place off scene*)

*Romulus*: No. We should build our city on this hill. Look, I’ve already started making the wall that will surround the city.

*Remus*: (*in a mean, jealous tone*) Psh, that wall is horrible. It is too small and would be very easy to cross. Enemies would take over your city easily. (*Goes to the wall and jumps over it to make his point, knocking some of it over*).

*Romulus*: (*angrily and with a glare*) You’re just jealous that my city will be great! (He shouts the end and attacks Remus)

*Remus*: Uhhhh!! (*make sounds of dying*)

*Narrator 1*: Romulus finished building his city and as he was the surviving brother, the name Rome was given, after its creator, Romulus. Thus the city of Rome was founded. It was 753 BC. We do not know what happened to Romulus. Some say he died naturally. Others say he mysteriously disappeared in a whirlwind. And others say he was turned into a god and went to live on Mount Olympus with his father Mars. Here ends the *true* (*looking pointedly at narrator 2 and the audience*) story of the origins of Rome, which I will add is what the Ancient Romans actually say happened.

*Narrator 2*: That’s because they didn’t know any better and believed in magic.

*Narrator 1*: That’s because they were right.

Narrator 2: Okay, so that is your introduction to the origins of Rome. Stay real. (*Getting even more serious, widening eyes, looking at the camera/audience*) Please—ignore him and his version and stay real.

Questions

About the History:

1. Which civilization came first, Ancient Rome or Ancient Greece?
2. What was the first city in the area?
3. According to the “real life” story, what were the reasons the settlers chose the spot for Rome?
4. What made Act 3 a myth?
5. Romulus and Remus were the sons of which Roman god?  
     
     
   The Romans got their gods and goddesses from which civilization?
6. According to the myth, how did Rome get its name?
7. Which of the 2 stories did the Ancient Romans believe was the origins of Rome?

About the Readers Theater Format/Style:

1. Looking at the script, how can you tell the difference between what someone says and what they do?
2. Of the 4 types of roles you can have in scripts, circle the ones that this script had:
   1. Character
   2. Narrator
   3. Silent Character
   4. Sound Effects Person
3. What did the readers do when she messed up?

What questions does this bring to your mind about your project/assignment?