**The story of the Horiatii and Curiatii**

During the reign of [Tullus Hostilius](http://dante.udallas.edu/hutchison/Seven_kings/Hostilius/tullus_hostilius.htm) (c. 670 BC), the Romans found themselves at war with the Albans, their close relatives.  Because of these close ties, when their two armies met in the field [Hostilius](http://dante.udallas.edu/hutchison/Seven_kings/Hostilius/tullus_hostilius.htm) and the king of Alba Longa decided avoid unneeded bloodshed.  Each army happened to have a set of triplets. It was decided that these brothers should fight as champions for each side.  The Horatii Brothers fought for the Roman side, and against them stood the Curiatii brothers.  The home city of the losing side would be defeated.

In the initial battle, all three of the Curiatii were wounded. But two of the Roman Horatii were killed.  The sole remaining Roman champion was left to fight the three Curiatii.  He however, was the only one not wounded.  Not able to fight three men at once, the remaining Horatius turned and ran.  The three Curiatii pursued him.  One, who was only slightly wounded, managed to keep up.  Another, who was wounded more seriously, lagged behind.  The third, seriously wounded, fell far behind.

Now that the brothers were separated, Horatius turned around and dispatched of the fastest brother.  Then, he met the second brother and killed him as well.  The third brother, seriously wounded, was no match for the healthy Horatius.  Declaring that he had killed the first two to avenge the loss of his own brothers, and that he would now kill the third for Rome.  Horatius then plunged his sword into the neck of the helpless man.

Upon returning to Rome, Horatius met his younger sister, who happened to have been betrothed, or engaged, to one of the Curiatii.  When she realized her fiancé was dead, she began to grieve for him.  Enraged, that she would cry for an enemy but not for her two brothers, Horatius took out his sword and stabbed his sister in the heart.

Horatius was arrested and put on trial for his crime.  As per the law, he was convicted of murder and sentenced to death.  At that moment, however, Horatius' father stepped forward and begged for his son.  He said that his daughter deserved what she got.   On top of that, he said that he had already lost two sons, and it would be unjust to deprive him of the third. Remembering Horatius' heroic actions in the battle and his father's moving words, Horatius was set free.