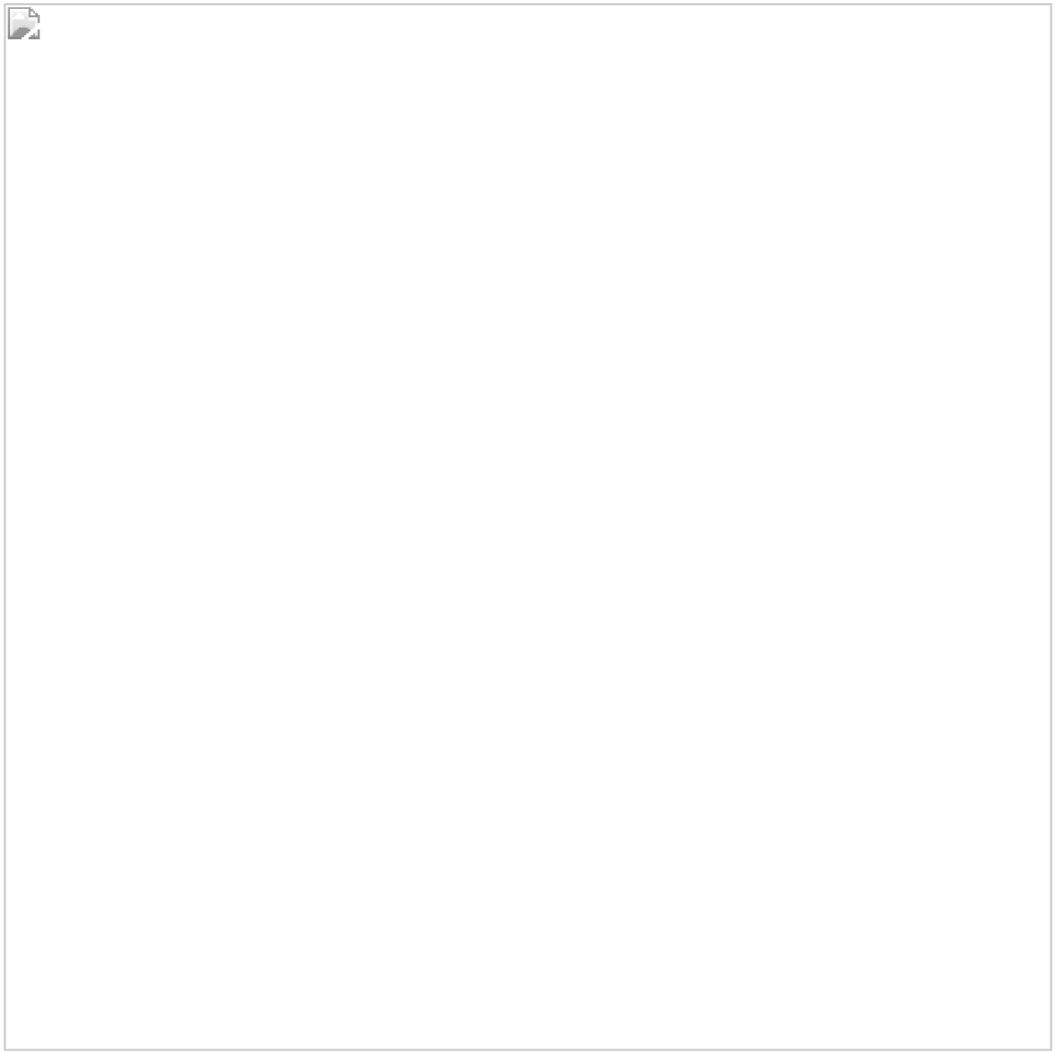
COLORING THE CLASSICS

How Cincinnatus Saved Rome

A Hero of Rome



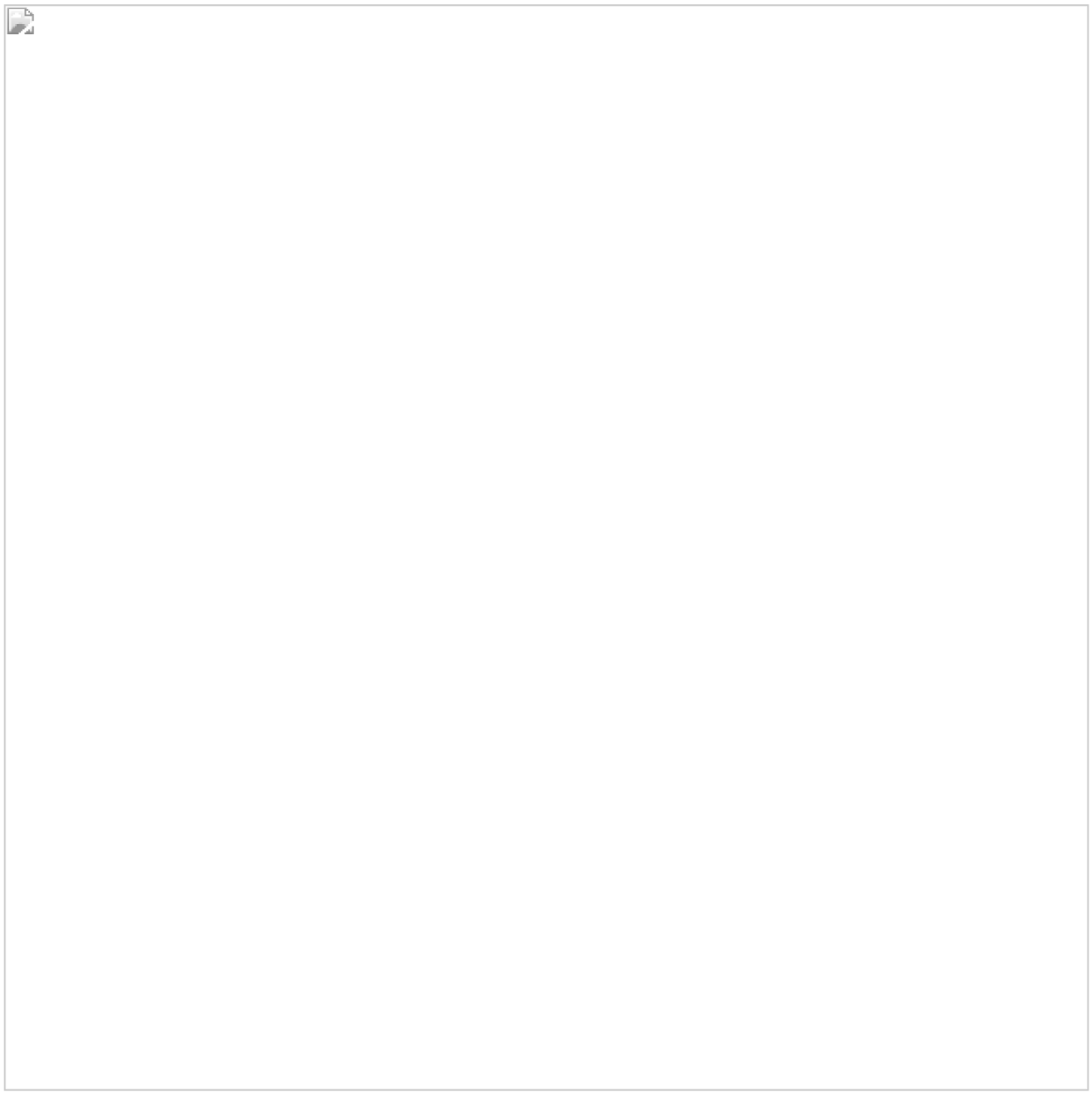
Long ago, a people called the Aequians broke the peace they had promised to Rome. They marched into the land of Tusculum and took everything they wanted. Then they set up a camp on Mount Aegidus.

TALK ABOUT IT

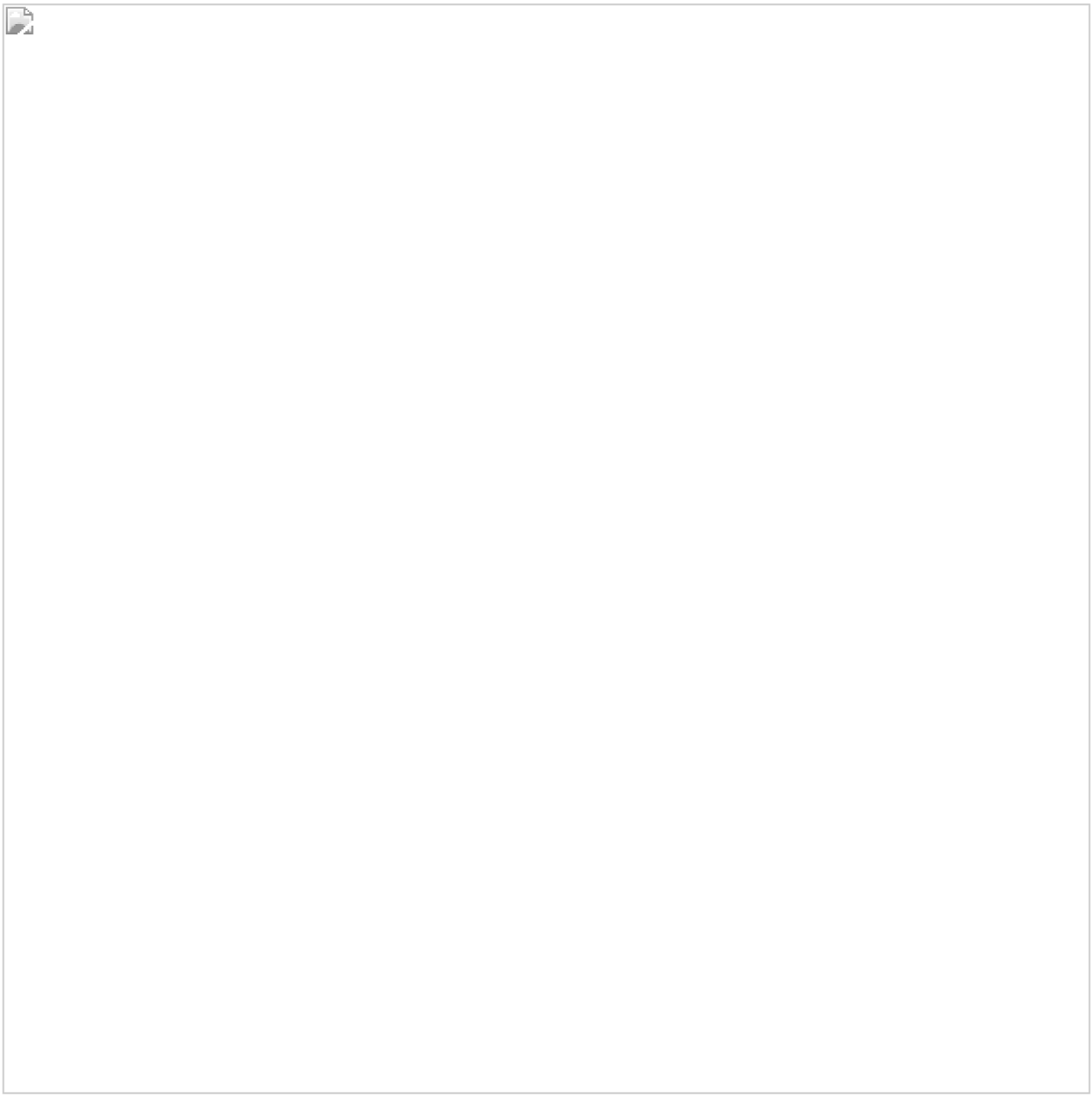
The Aequians broke a promise. What do you think happens to a neighbor when a promise is broken?

This book belongs to _____

How Cincinnatus Saved Rome · another picture



Tell It to the Oak



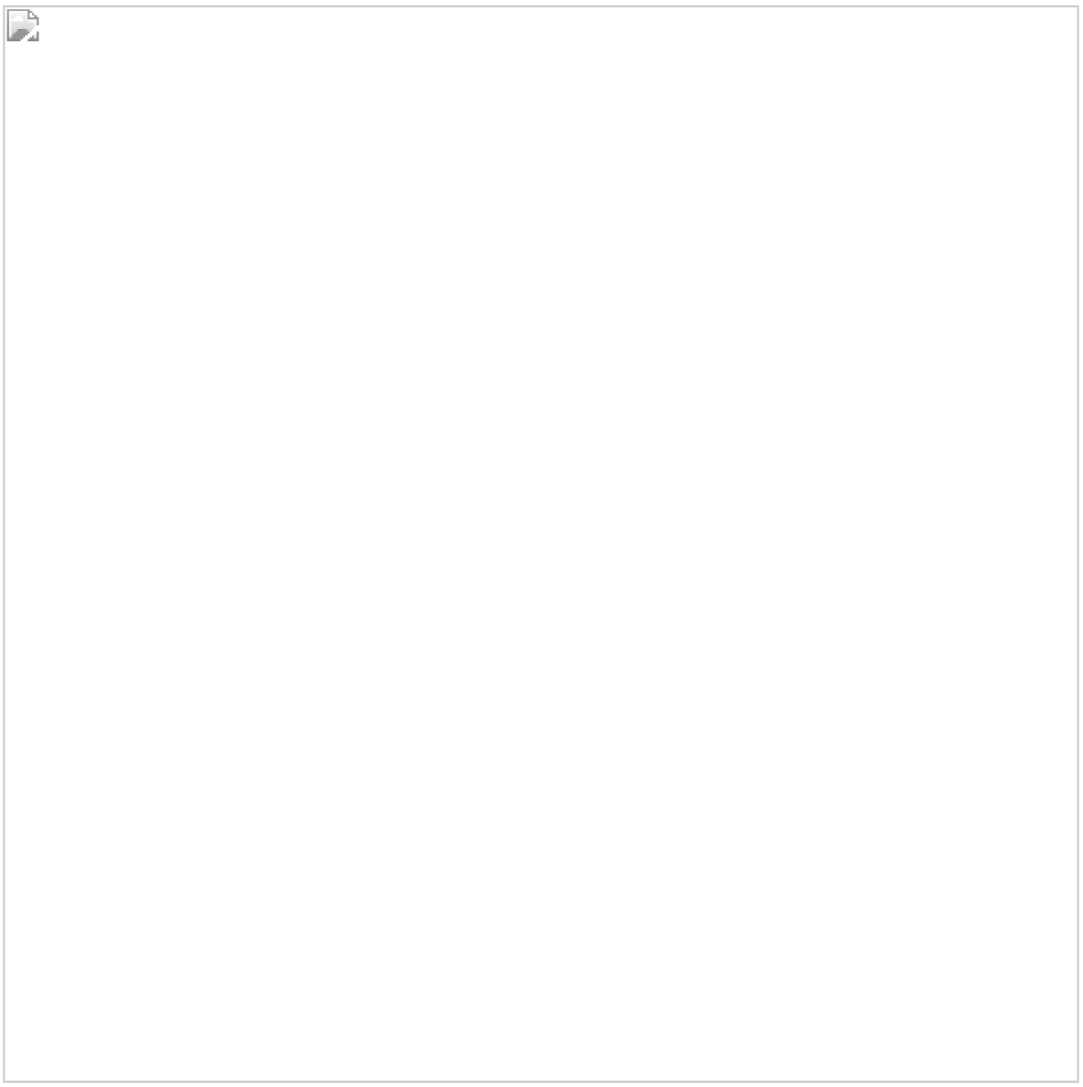
Rome sent three messengers to the Aequian camp to complain and to ask them to make things right.

But the Aequian leader, Gracchus, would not listen. He said, “tell it to this oak.” A great oak tree stood next to his tent.

As the messengers turned to go, one of them said that the oak and all the gods in heaven had heard how the Aequians broke the peace. Then they went home.

TALK ABOUT IT

Gracchus would not even listen. How do you think the messengers felt?

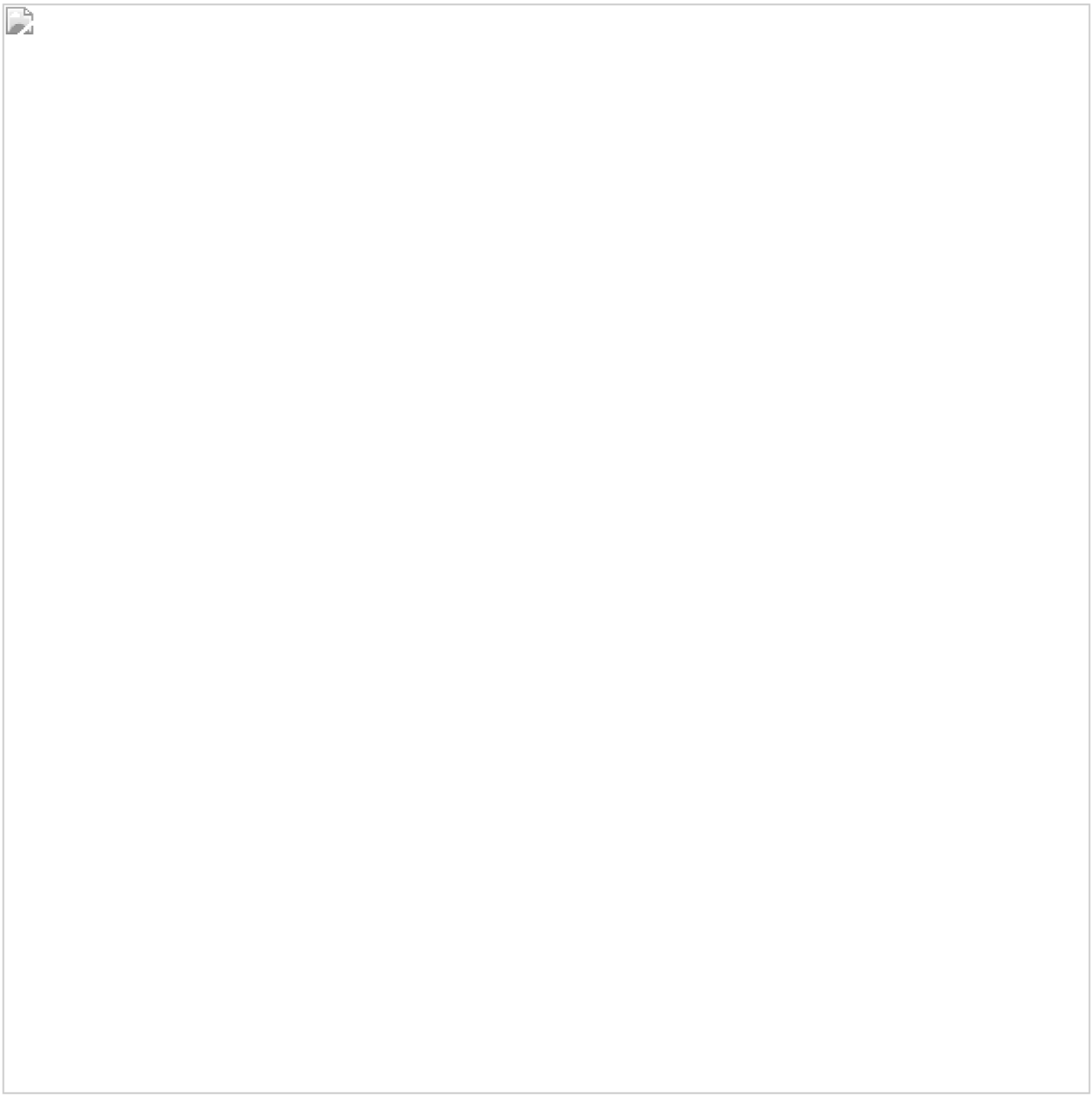


Think about it

1. What did Gracchus tell the messengers to do?

- ○ Come in for dinner
- ○ Tell their message to an oak tree
- ○ Stay all night

Trapped on the Mountain



Rome gathered two armies. One was led by the Consul Minucius, and he marched toward Mount Aegidus.

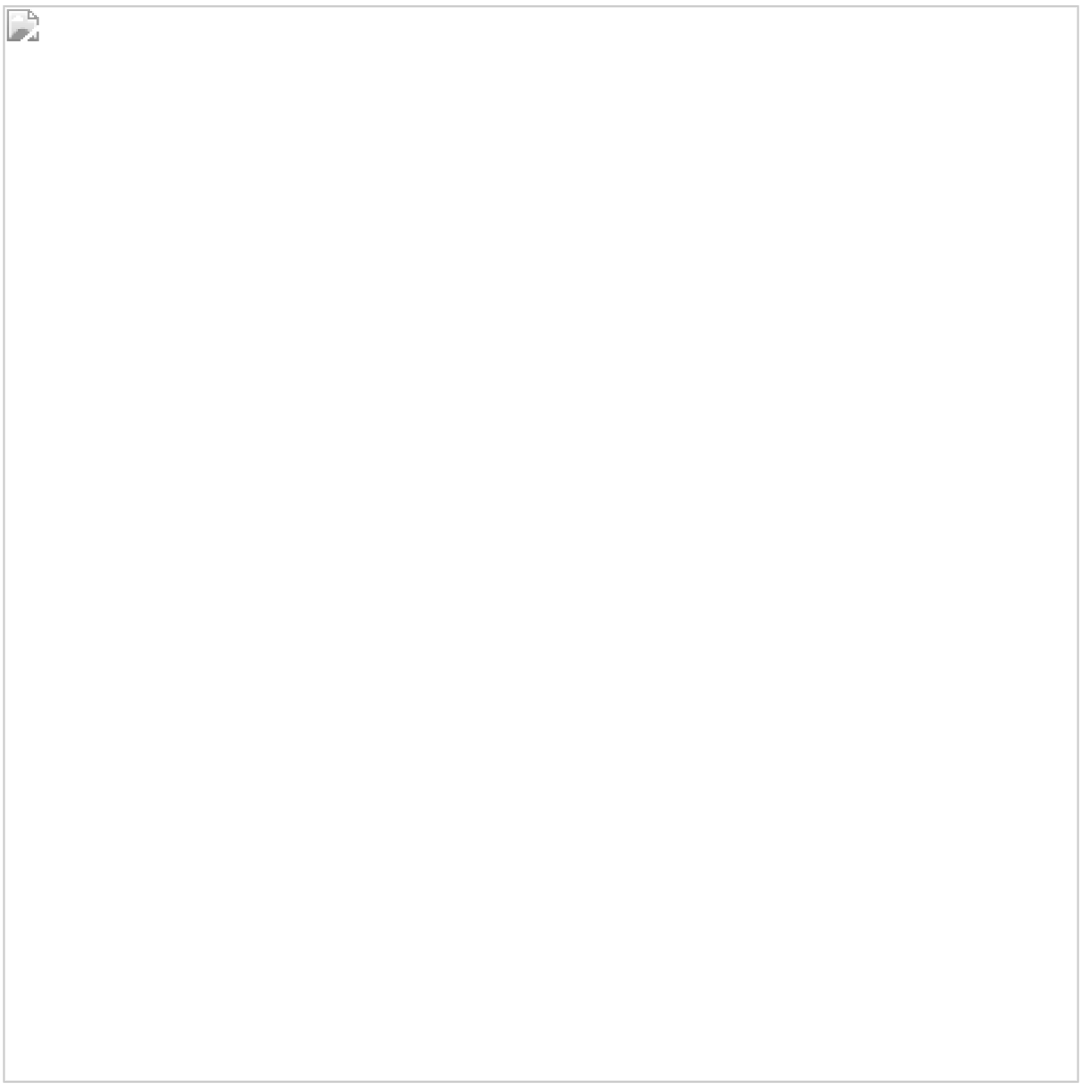
But Minucius was afraid, and he stayed behind his walls. The Aequians saw that he was scared, so they grew bolder and surrounded his camp.

Five horsemen slipped away and rode to Rome with the news. The people were dismayed. They looked around for someone who could help.

TALK ABOUT IT

The Roman army was trapped. Why do you think being afraid made things worse?

Trapped on the Mountain · another picture

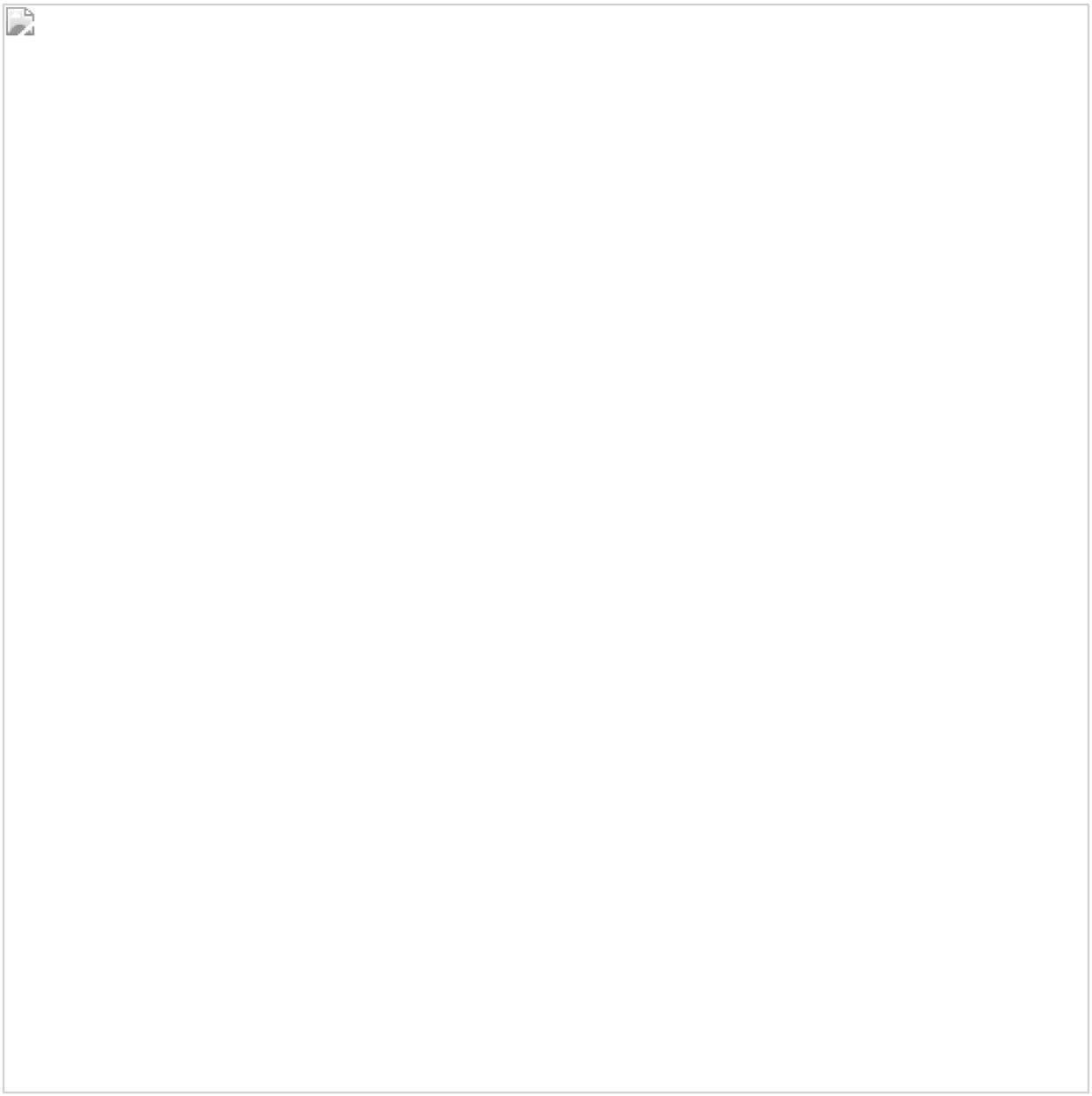


Think about it

1. What happened to Minucius's army?

- ○ It won
- ○ It went home
- ○ It was surrounded

A Man at His Plow



There was only one man the Romans thought could save them: Cincinnatus. They chose him to be Dictator, a leader with great power, for six months.

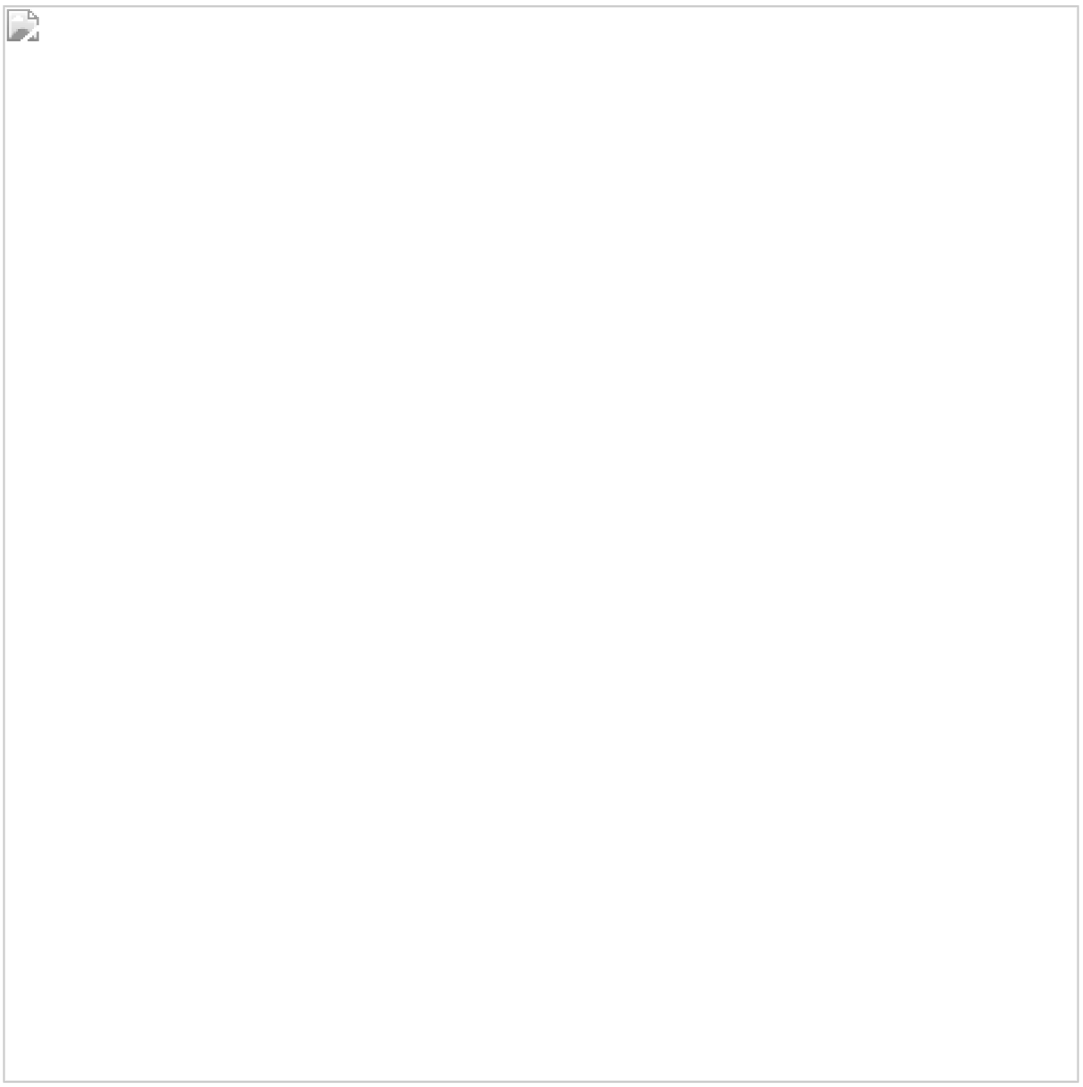
He was not rich. He worked a little farm of scarcely three acres, with his own hands. The old book says this is worth noting by anyone who thinks that only the rich can do great things.

When the messengers came to find him, he was plowing.

TALK ABOUT IT

"Whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted" (Matthew 23:12). What do you think makes a person a good leader?

A Man at His Plow · another picture

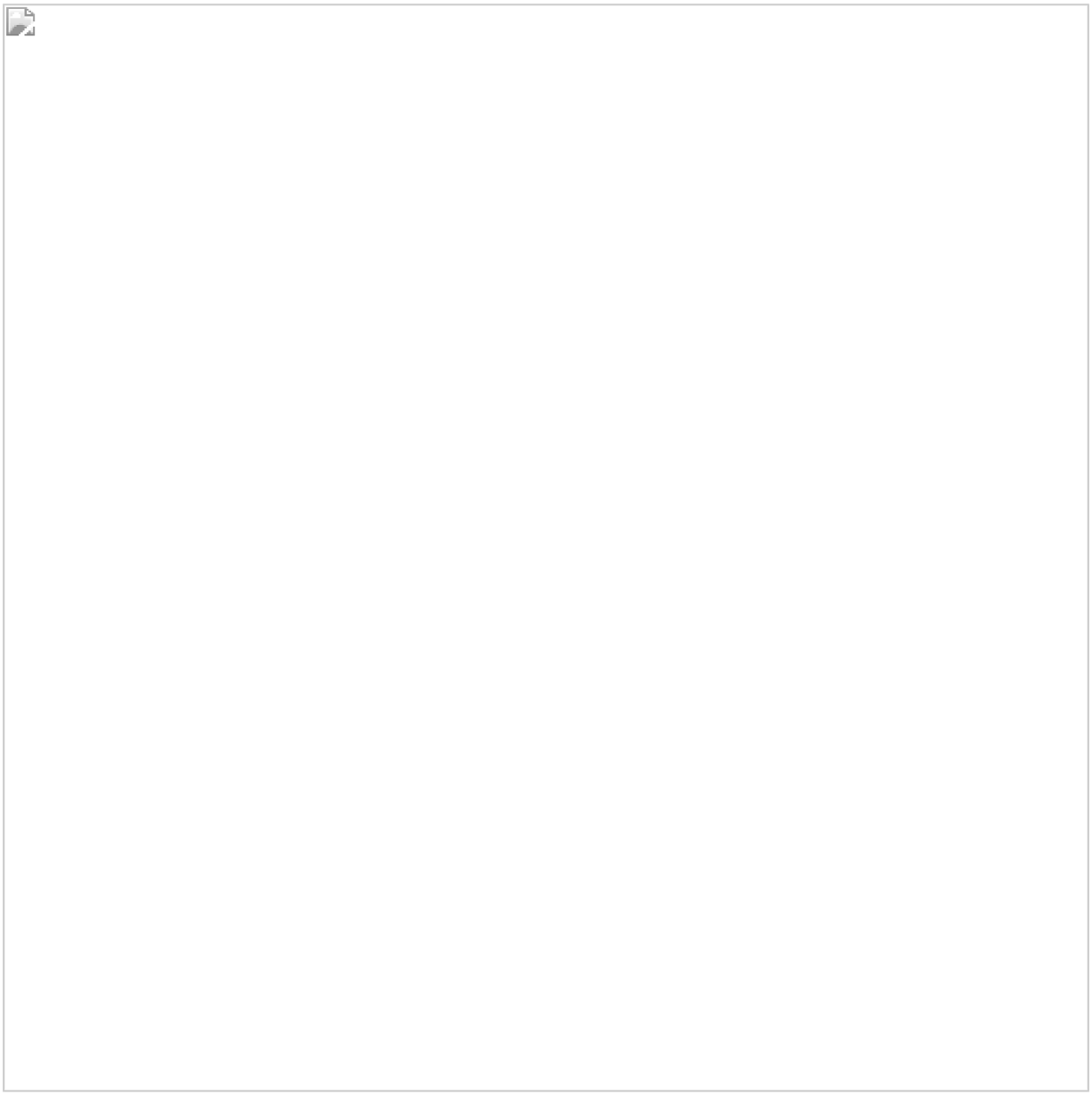


Think about it

1. What was Cincinnatus doing when the messengers came?

- ○ Plowing his field
- ○ Sleeping
- ○ Riding a horse

The Robe



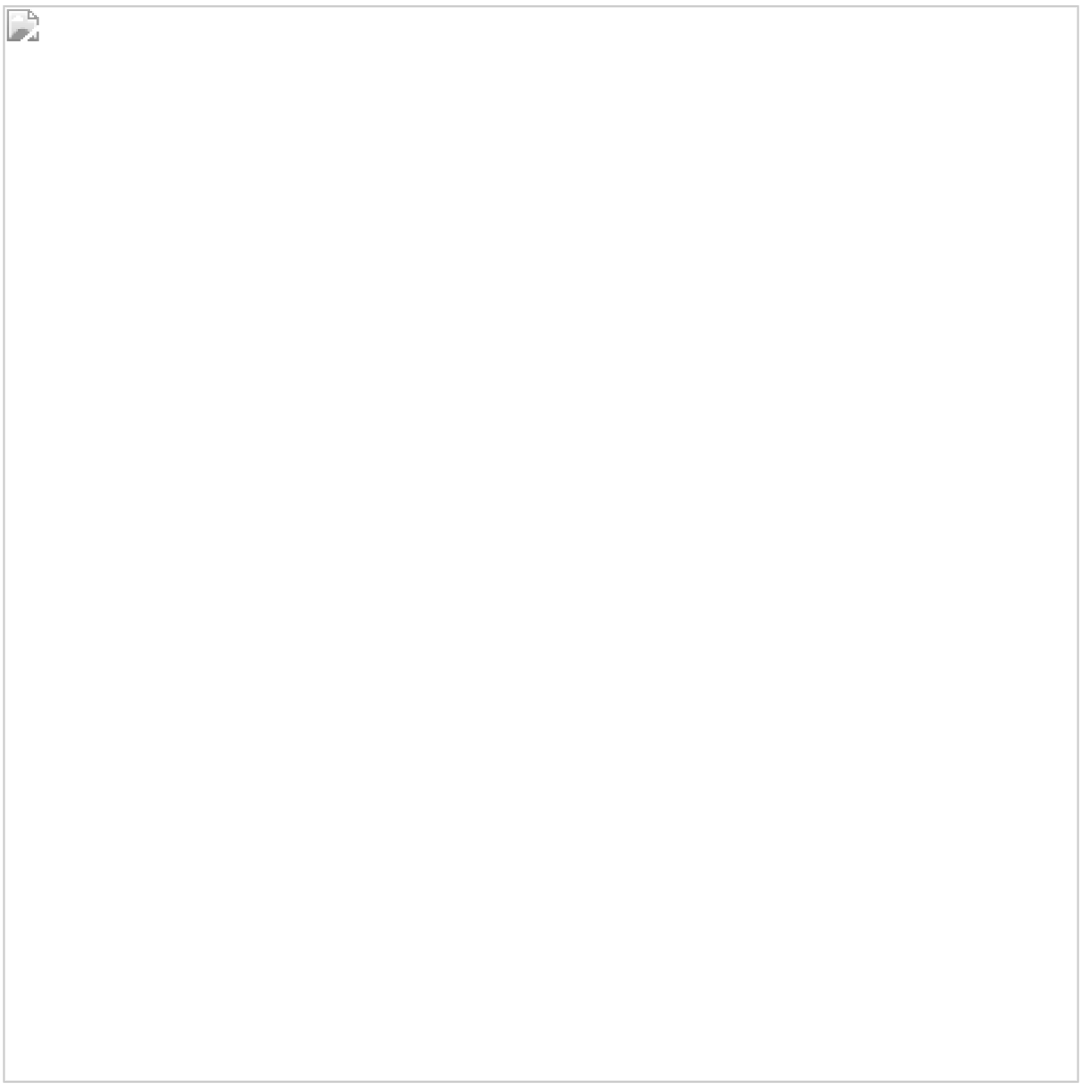
The messengers greeted him. “Put on thy robe and hear the words of the people,” they said.

Cincinnatus was surprised. “Is all well?” he asked. He called to his wife, Racilia, to bring his robe from the cottage.

He wiped the dust and sweat from his face, and put it on. Then the messengers told him that the people of Rome had made him Dictator, and that the Consul and his army were trapped.

TALK ABOUT IT

Cincinnatus wiped off the dust and went right away. What would you have done?

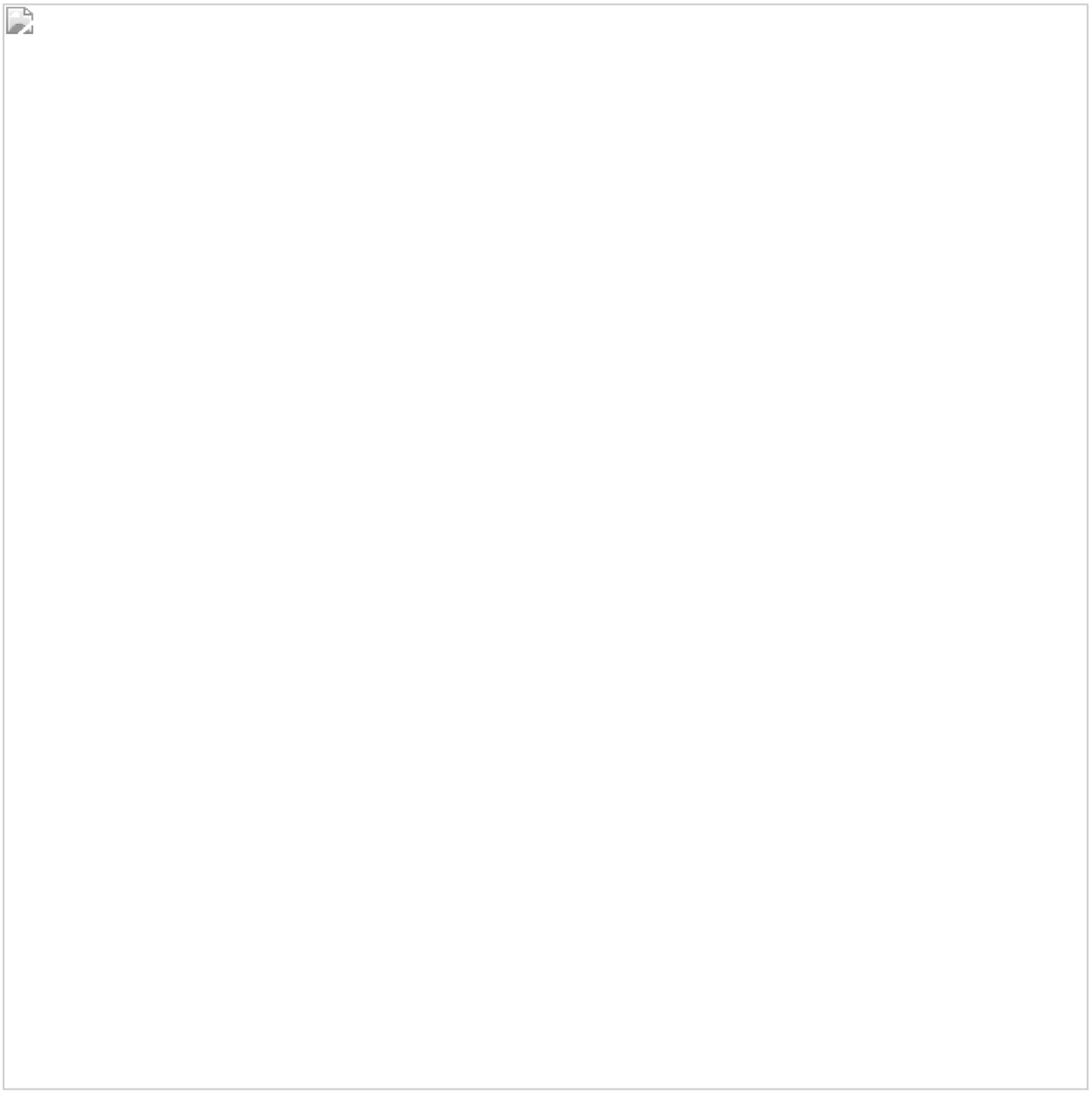


Think about it

1. What did Cincinnatus ask when he heard the messengers?

- ○ How much will I be paid?
- ○ Is all well?
- ○ Who sent you?

Welcome to Rome



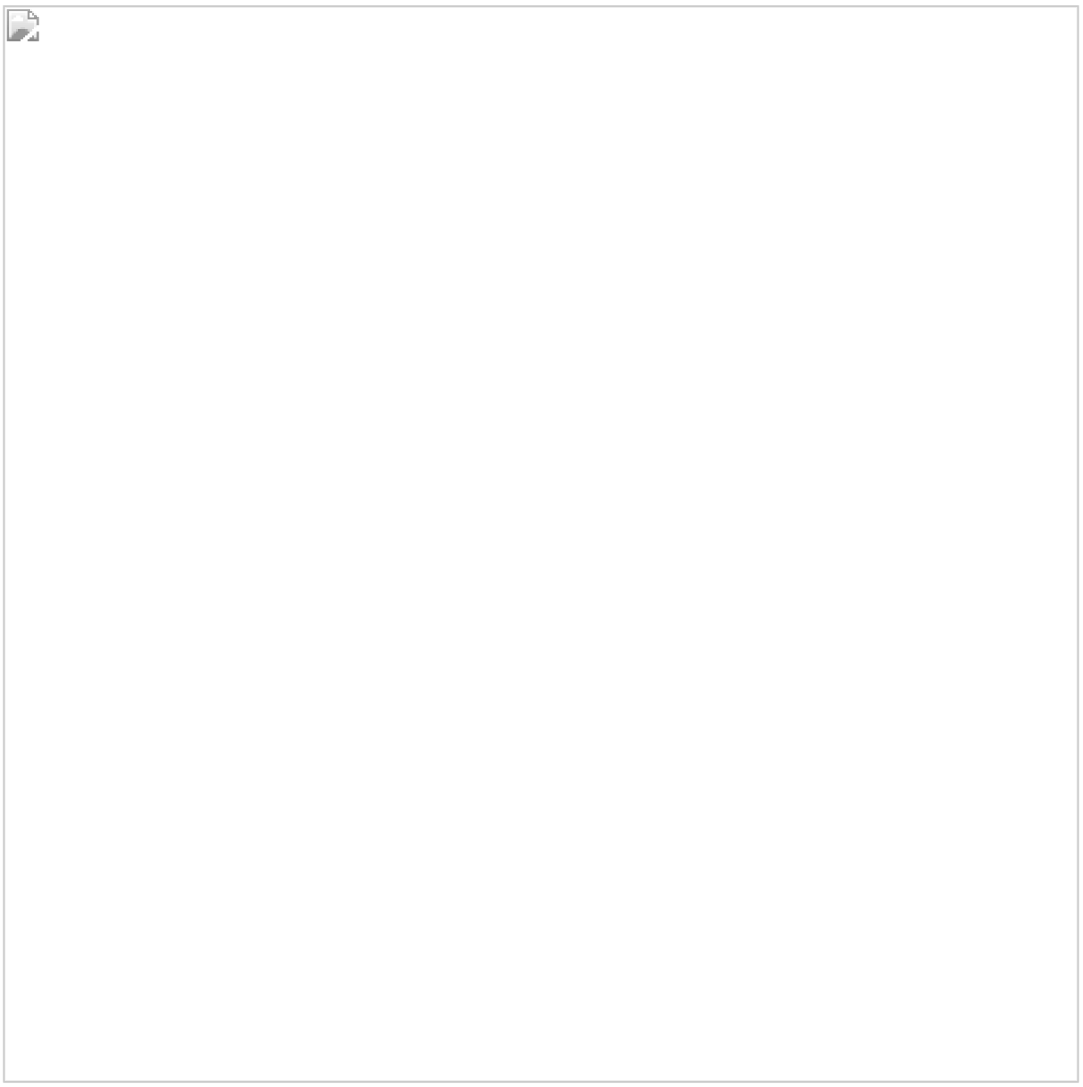
Cincinnatus went to Rome. On the other side of the river Tiber, his three sons met him, then many of his friends and kin, and then a great crowd of nobles.

They walked with him to his house, with twenty-four officers marching in front.

A great crowd gathered. They knew what kind of man he was, but they also knew a Dictator could do anything he wanted.

TALK ABOUT IT

Everyone knew Cincinnatus had great power. What would you want a person with great power to do?

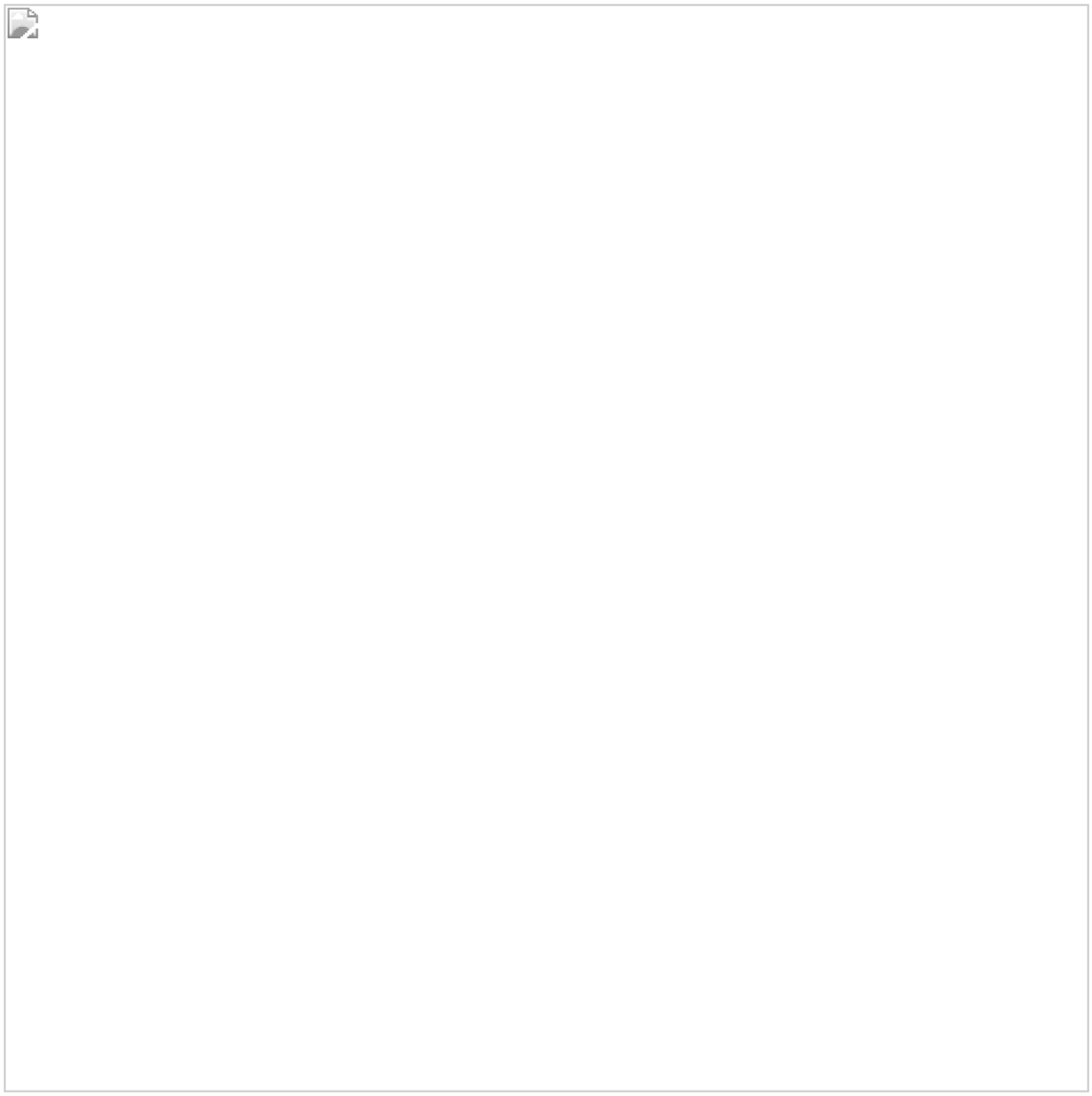


Think about it

1. Who met Cincinnatus on the other side of the Tiber?

- ○ His three sons
- ○ The enemy
- ○ The king

Before Dawn



The next day, before sunrise, Cincinnatus went to the market-place. He named a man to lead the horsemen, and he called a meeting of the people.

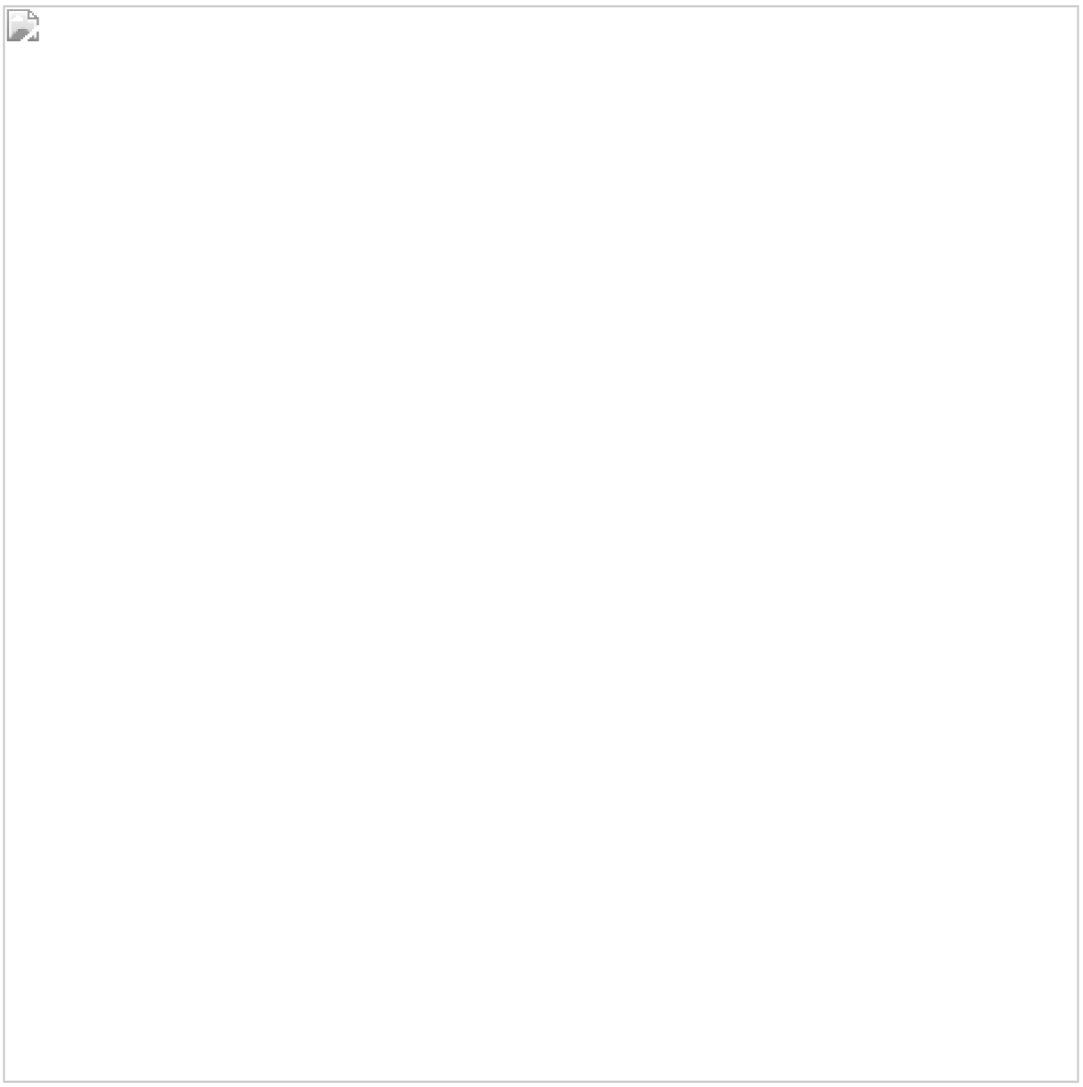
He ordered all the shops closed. Everyone old enough to fight must be in the Field of Mars by sunset, with cooked food for five days and twelve stakes. Those too old to fight would cook the food.

When the time came, all were ready. They marched off with Cincinnatus in the lead, each telling the others to hurry. “We must needs come,” they said, “to our journey's end while it is yet night.”

TALK ABOUT IT

Everyone in the city worked together, even the people too old to fight. What do you think they did to help?

Before Dawn · another picture

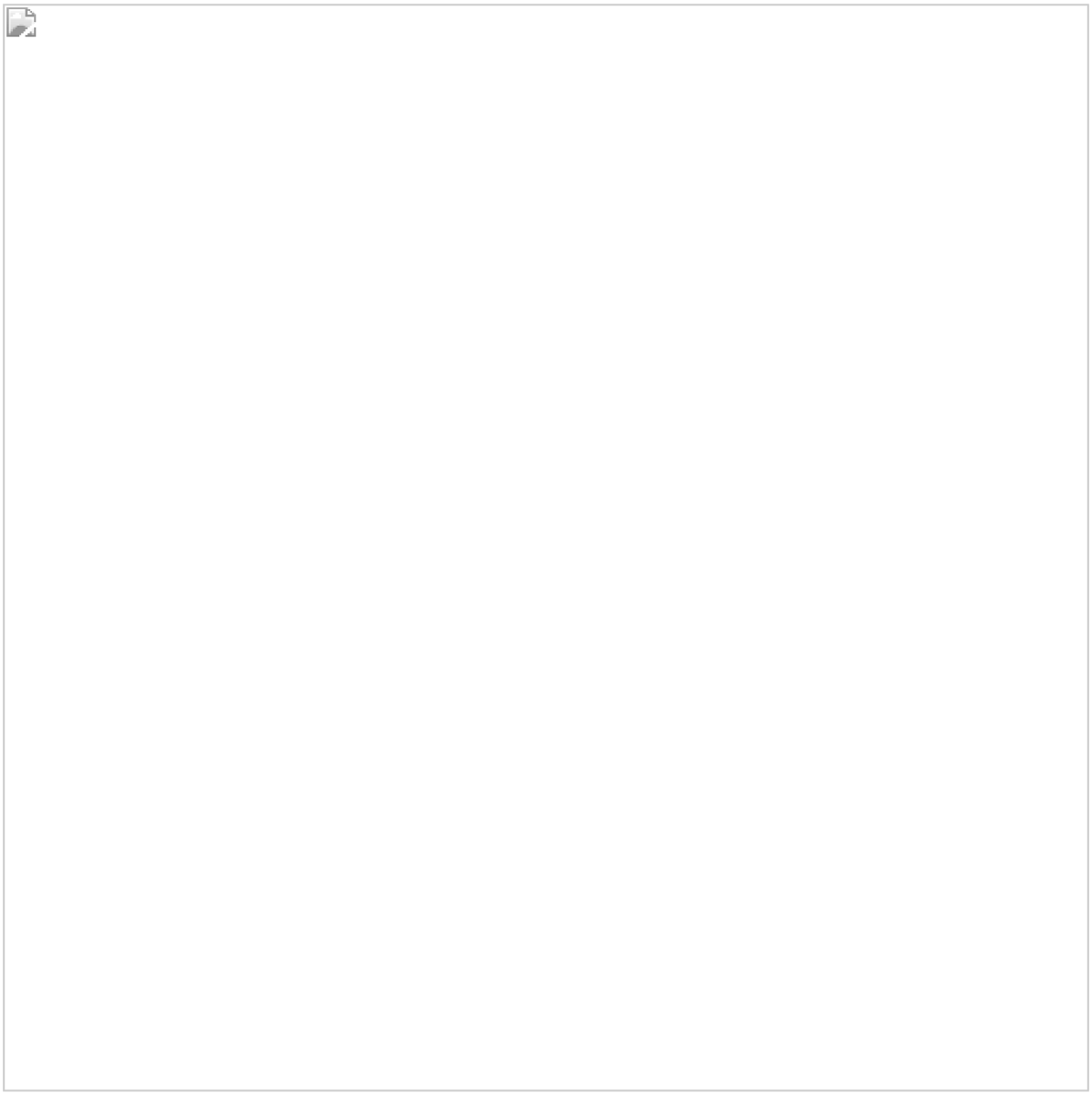


Think about it

1. What did the older people do?

- ○ Stayed in bed
- ○ Led the soldiers
- ○ Cooked food for the army

A Great Shout



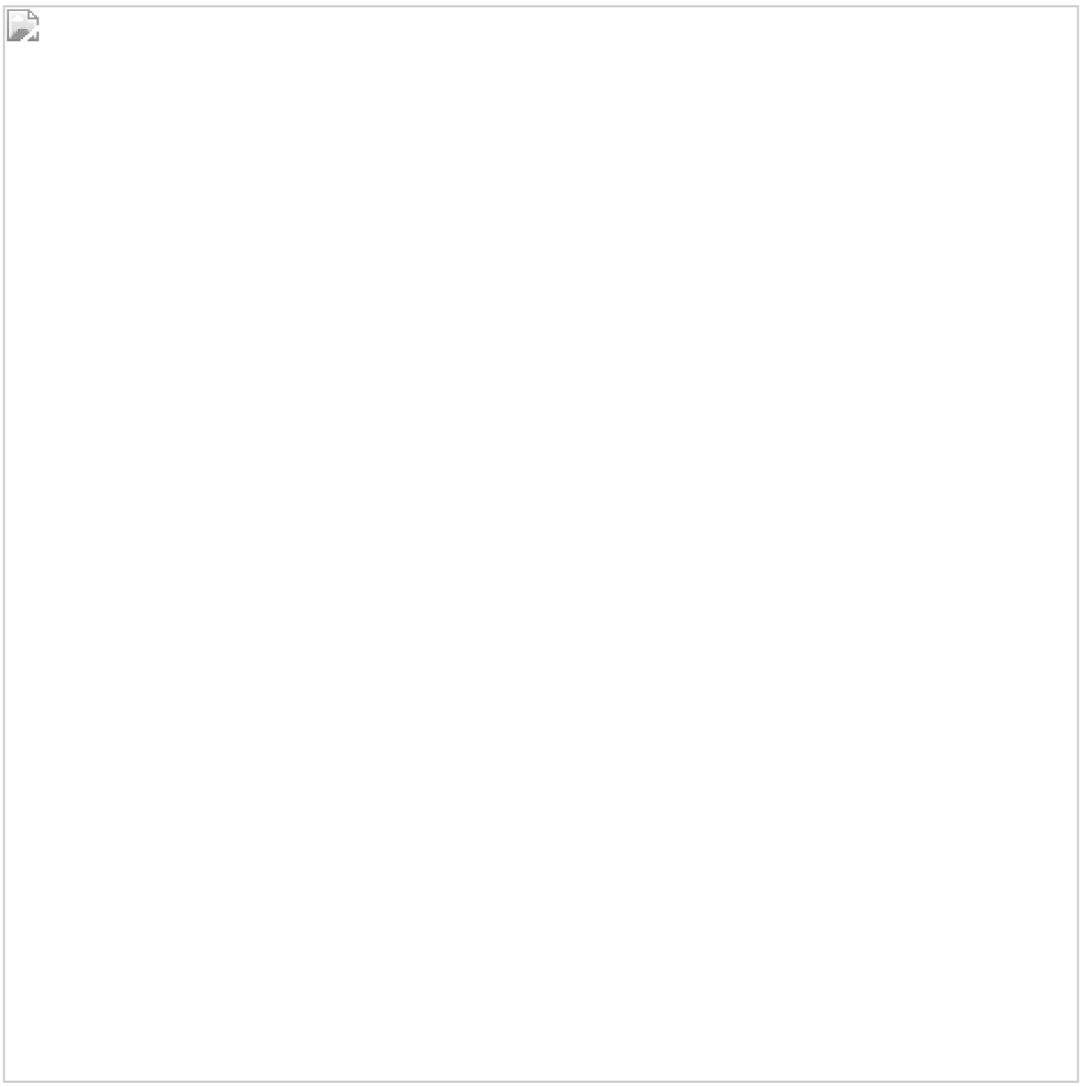
They reached Mount Aegidus at midnight. Cincinnatus rode ahead in the dark to see the enemy camp. Then he made a plan.

He spread his soldiers all around the enemy. At a signal, they all gave a great shout. Then they dug a trench and set stakes into the ground.

The shout carried into the besieged camp. “These be our countrymen and they bring us help,” the Romans cried. The Consul said they must follow him at once, and they marched out to the battle.

TALK ABOUT IT

A shout told the trapped soldiers that help had come. When has hearing a friend's voice helped you, just by letting you know they were near?

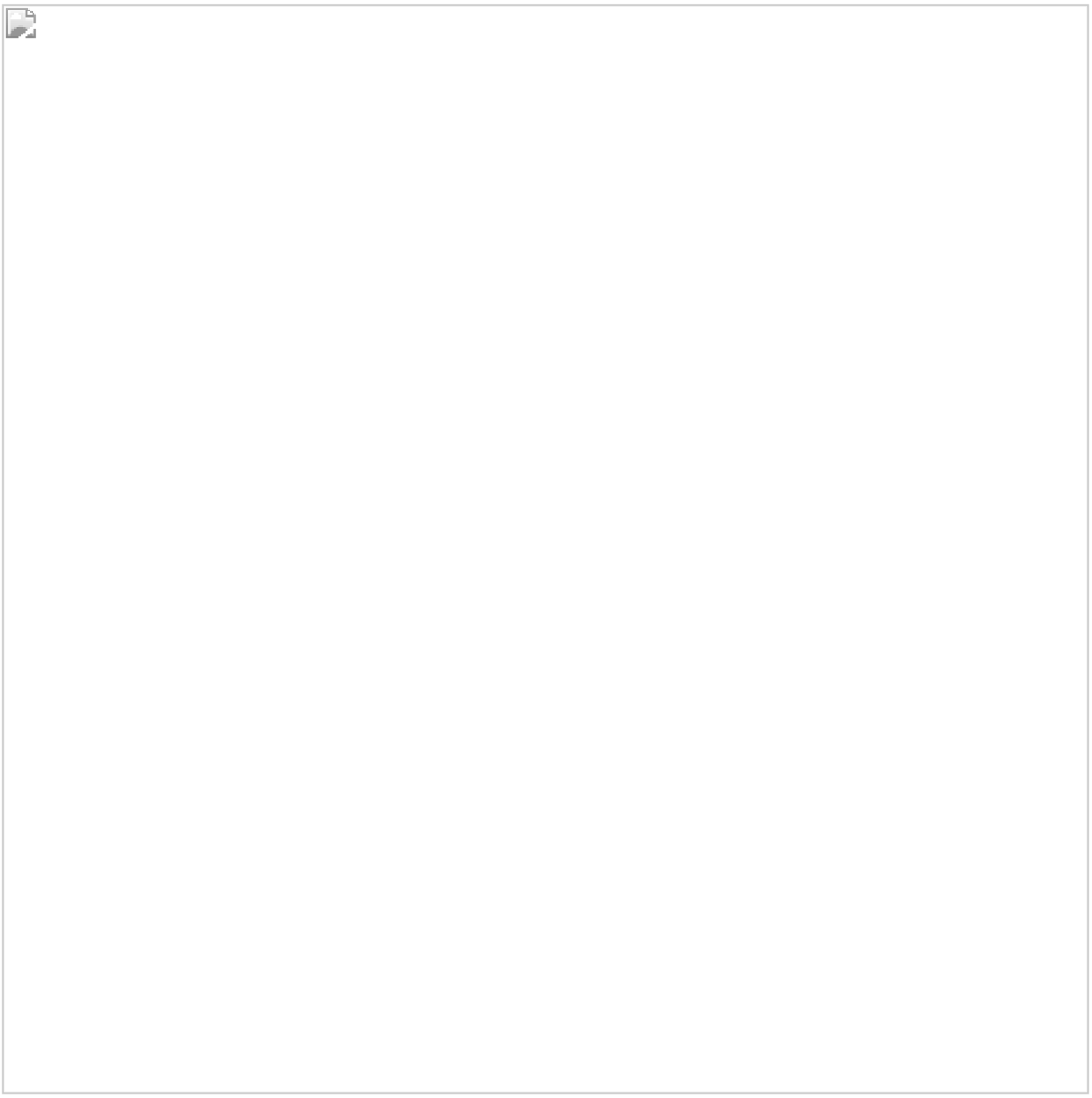


Think about it

1. How did the trapped soldiers know help had come?

- ○ They saw a flag
- ○ A messenger told them
- ○ They heard a great shout

Mercy



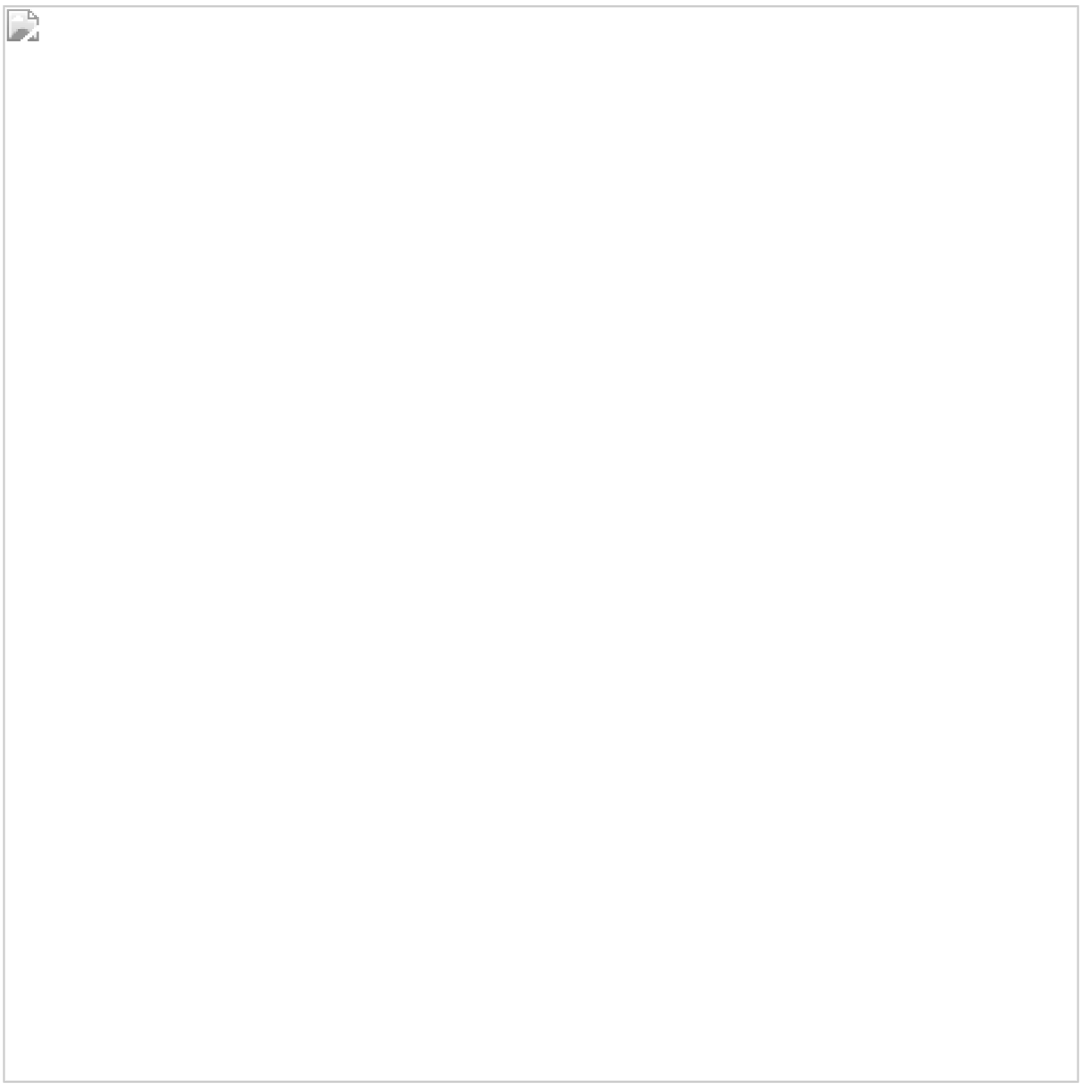
The Aequians tried to stop the Romans from building the trench, but the Romans on the other side attacked from behind. By morning, the Aequians were completely shut in.

They sent messengers to beg for peace. “Ye have prevailed; slay us not,” they said, “but rather permit us to depart, leaving our arms behind us.”

Cincinnatus answered, “I care not to have the blood of the Æquians.” He let them go. But first they had to walk under two spears with a third tied across the top, the yoke, to show that they were beaten.

TALK ABOUT IT

Cincinnatus could have punished them harder, but he chose mercy. Why do you think he did?

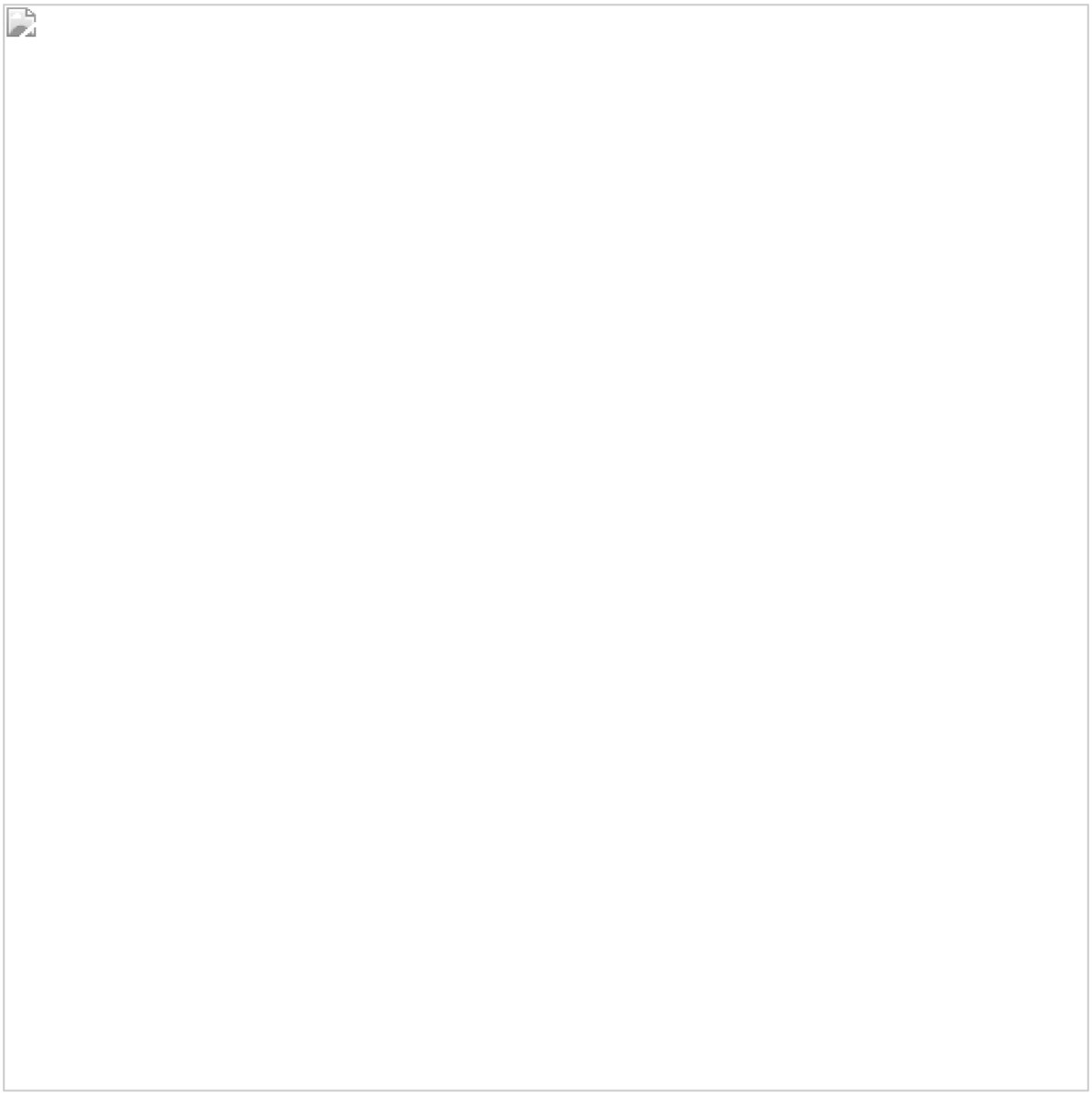


Think about it

1. What did Cincinnatus say to the Aequians?

- ○ You will never go home
- ○ I care not to have the blood of the Æquians
- ○ Take all our gold

Who Gets the Prize?



In the Aequian camp the Romans found a great deal of treasure. Cincinnatus gave all of it to his own soldiers.

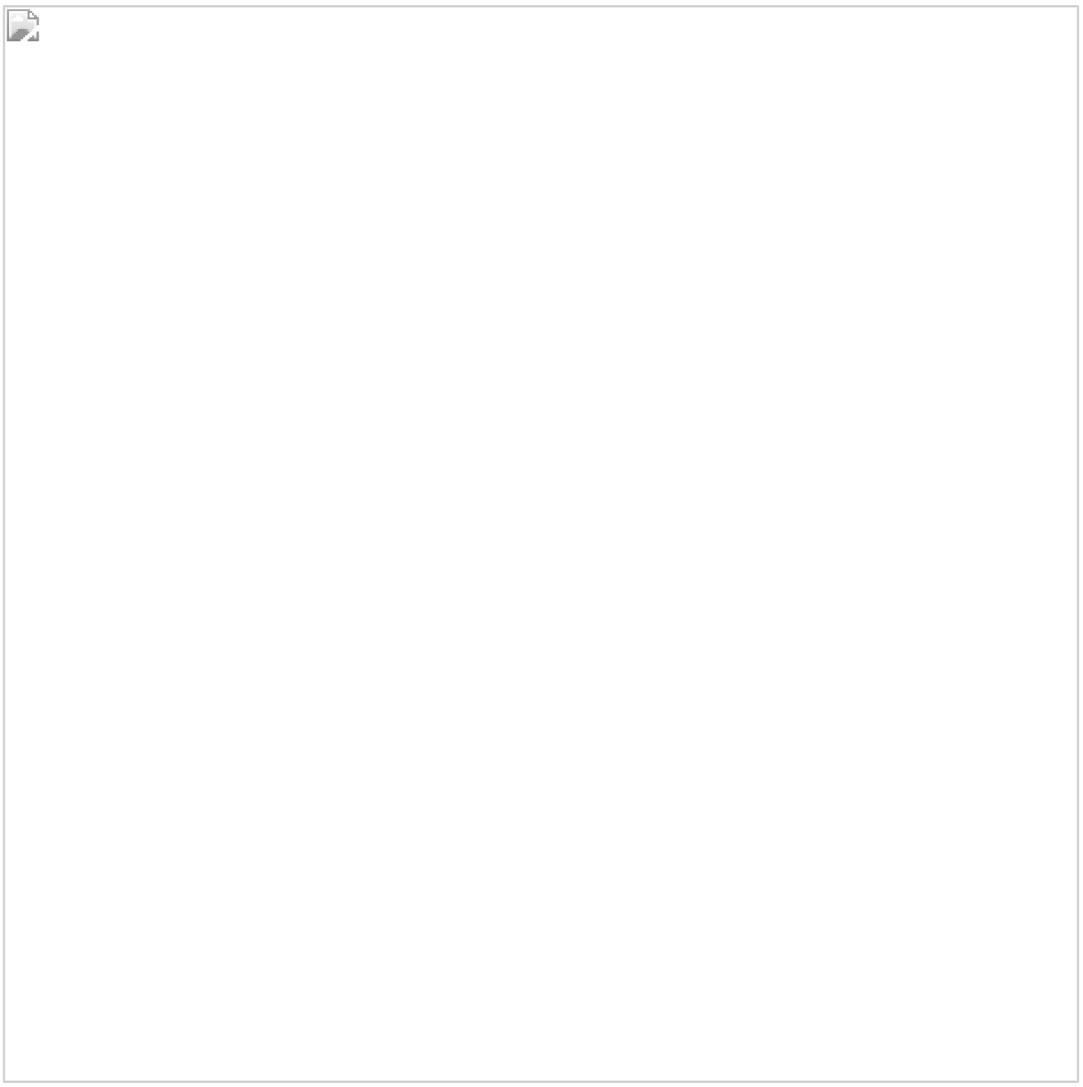
He told the Consul's army that they would not have a share. “Ye were well-nigh a spoil to the enemy,” he said. He told Minucius to be a lieutenant only until he had learned “how to bear thyself as a consul.”

That day Rome held a great parade. Every family set out a feast in front of their doors.

TALK ABOUT IT

Cincinnatus gave the treasure to the soldiers who had marched all night. Do you think that was fair? Why or why not?

Who Gets the Prize? · another picture

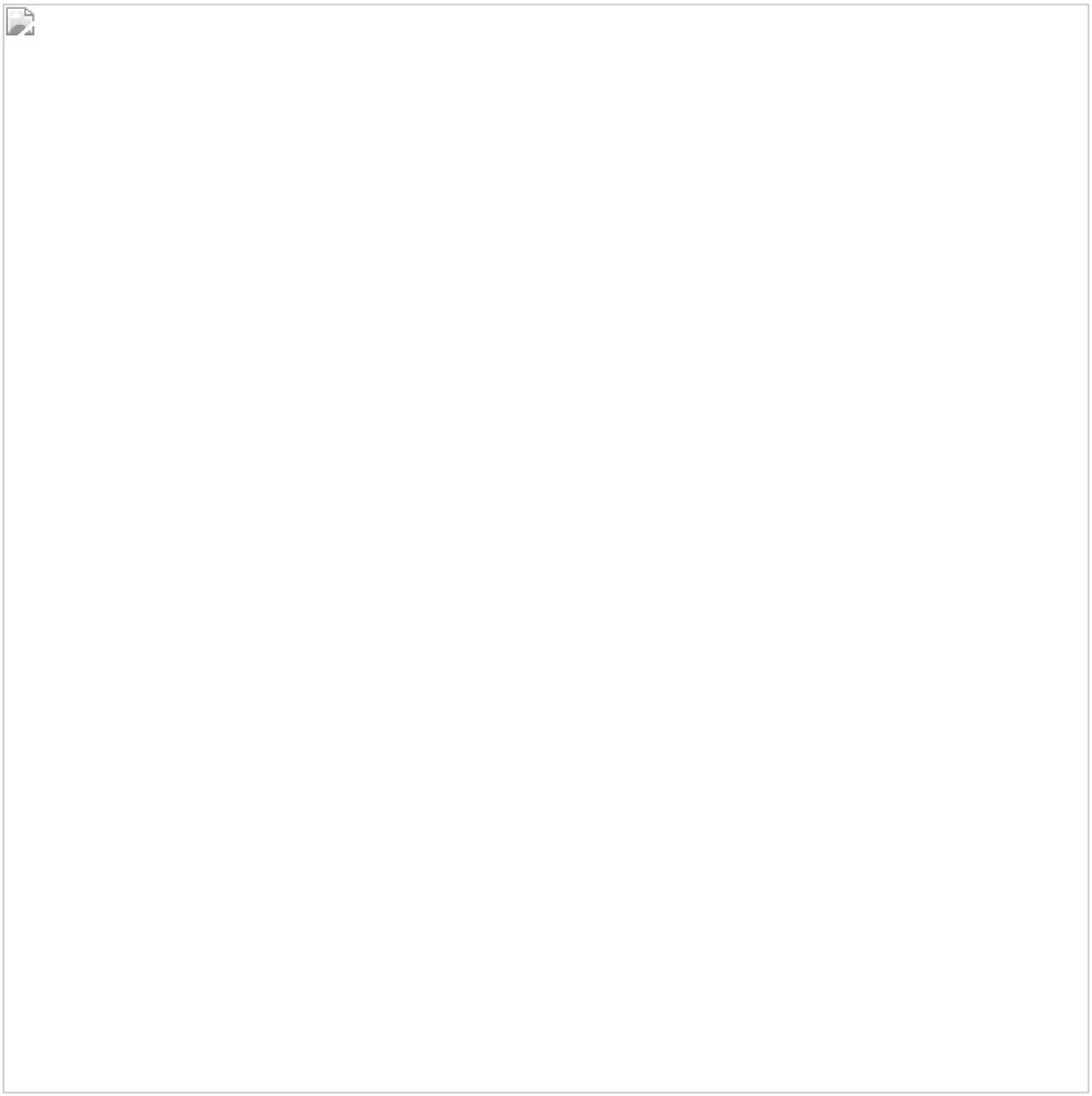


Think about it

1. Who got the treasure from the enemy camp?

- ○ Cincinnatus's own soldiers
- ○ Minucius
- ○ The Aequians

Sixteen Days



A man named Virginius had lied in court against another man, Caeso. Now he was found guilty of lying and sent away from Rome.

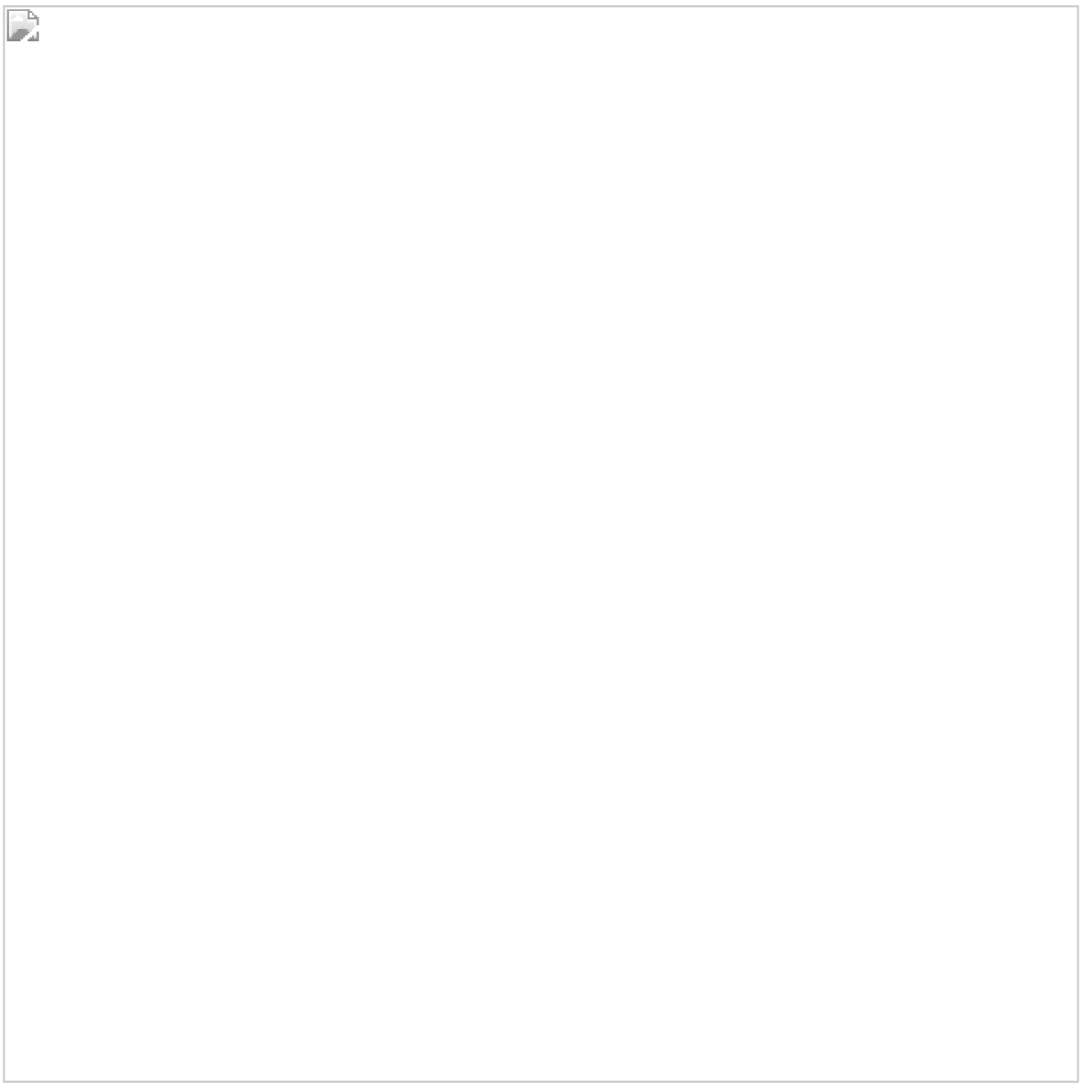
When Cincinnatus saw that justice had been done, he gave up his power as Dictator. He had held it for only sixteen days.

The 1909 book stops there. Many people who tell this story say he went straight back to his little farm and his plow.

TALK ABOUT IT

Cincinnatus could have kept the power for six months, but he gave it up after sixteen days. Why do you think he did?

Sixteen Days · another picture



Think about it

1. How long was Cincinnatus Dictator?

- ○ Six months
- ○ Sixteen days
- ○ Six years

2. Cincinnatus saved Rome, then gave the power back. What makes someone strong enough to do that?

“There is no greater love than to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.”

— Yeshua HaMashiach

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