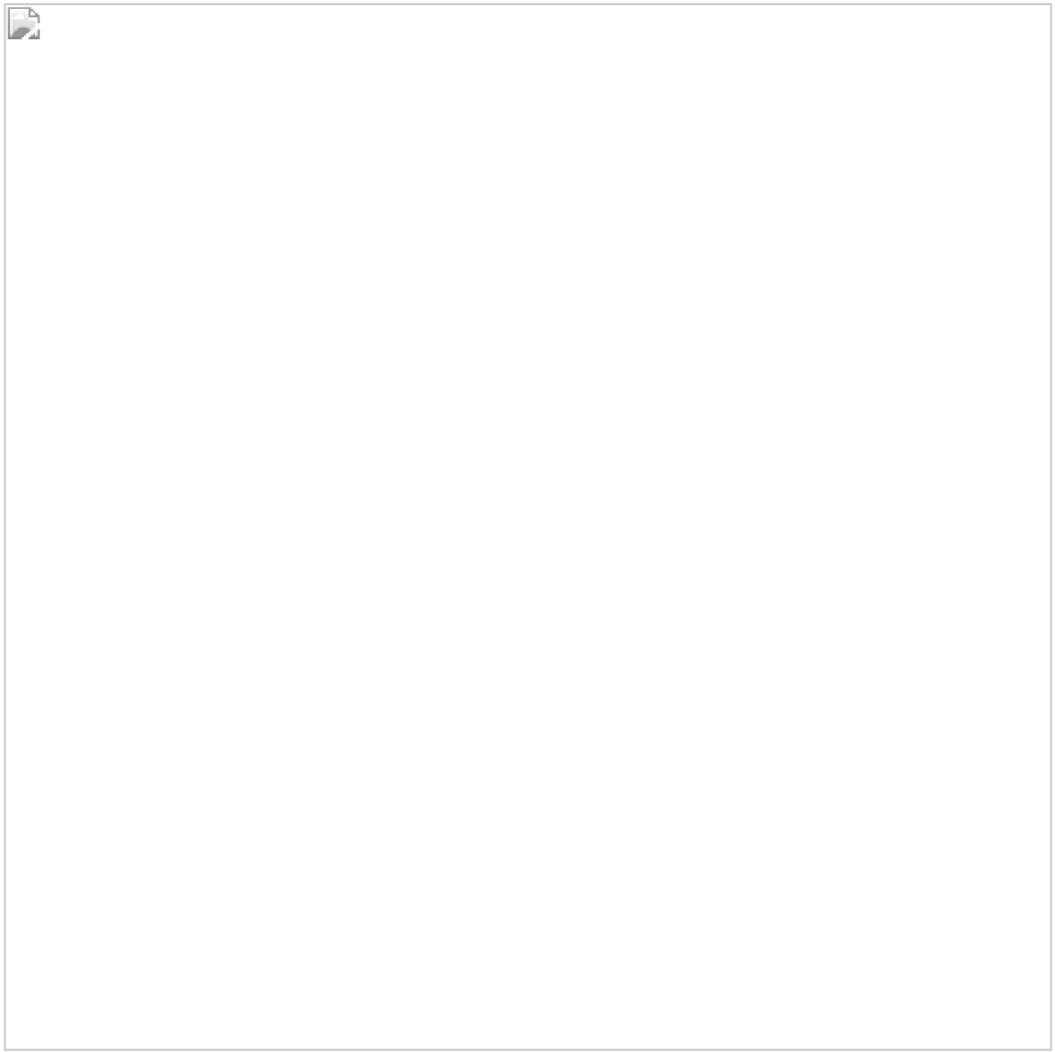
COLORING THE CLASSICS

How Horatius Held the Bridge

A Hero of Rome



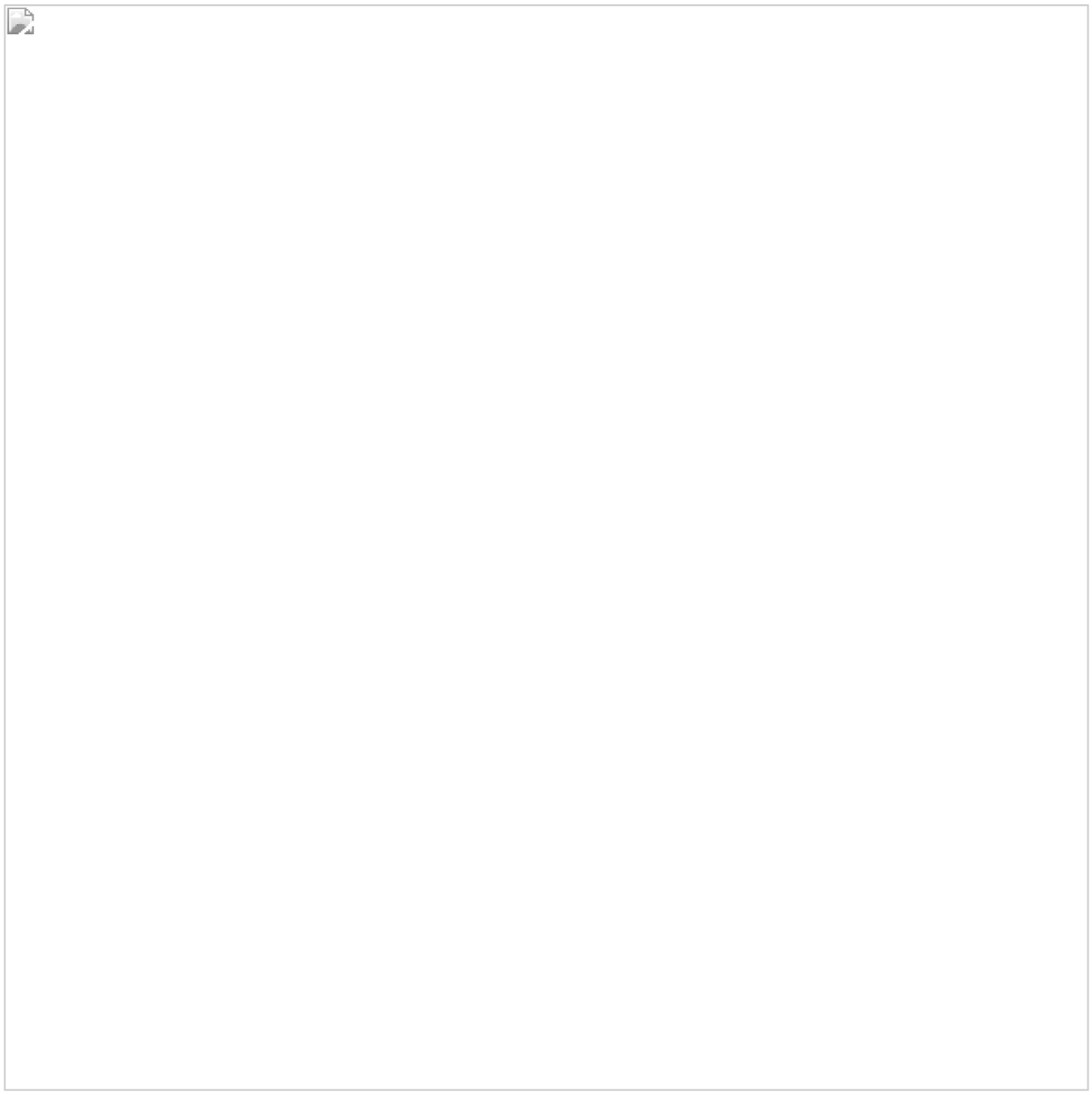
A great army was marching toward the city of Rome. It was led by King Porsenna of Clusium, and it was so mighty that when the Romans heard of it, there was "such fear as had never been before."

TALK ABOUT IT

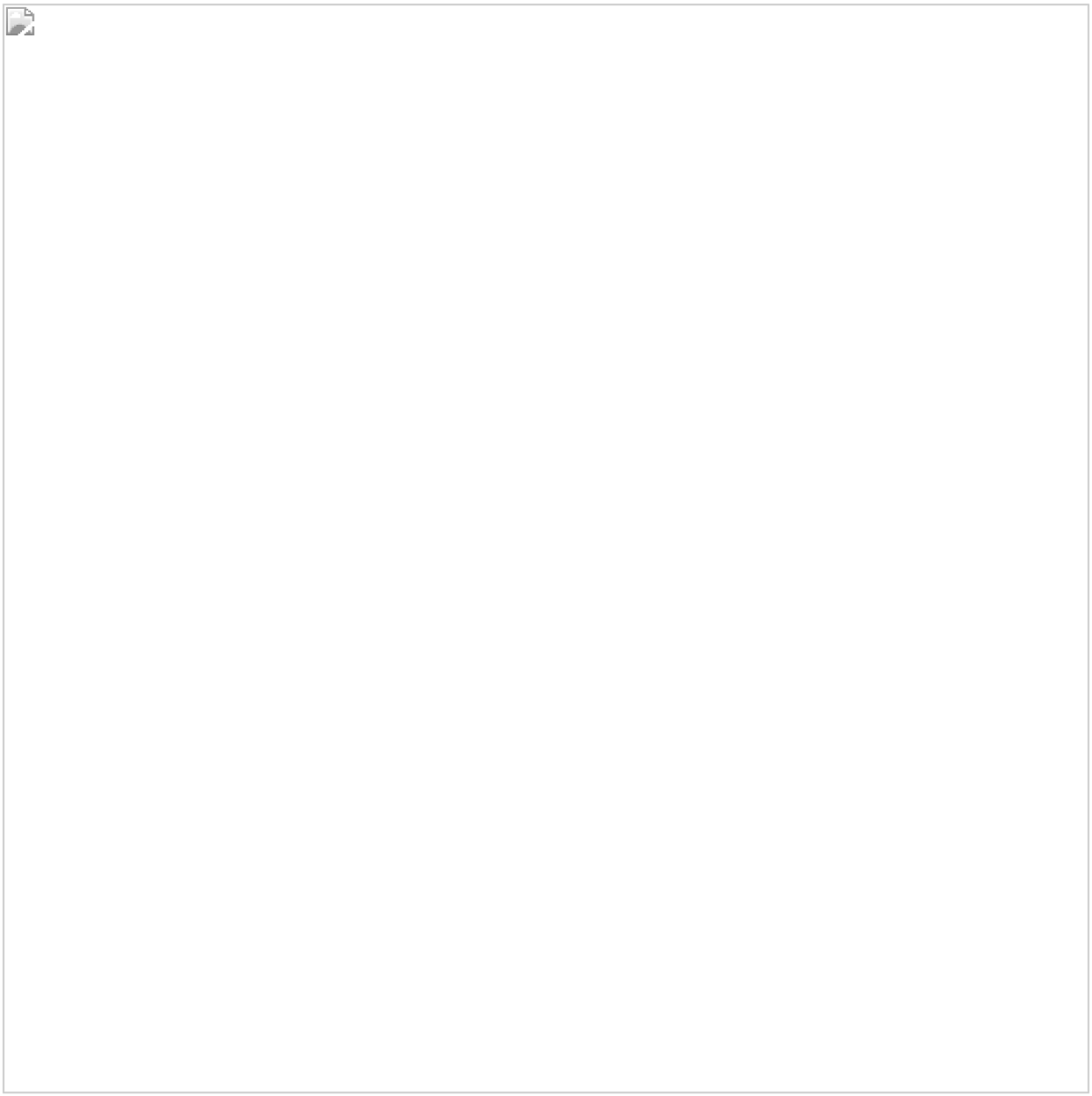
The Romans heard that a huge army was coming. What do you think was going through their minds?

This book belongs to _____

How Horatius Held the Bridge · another picture



Why the Army Came



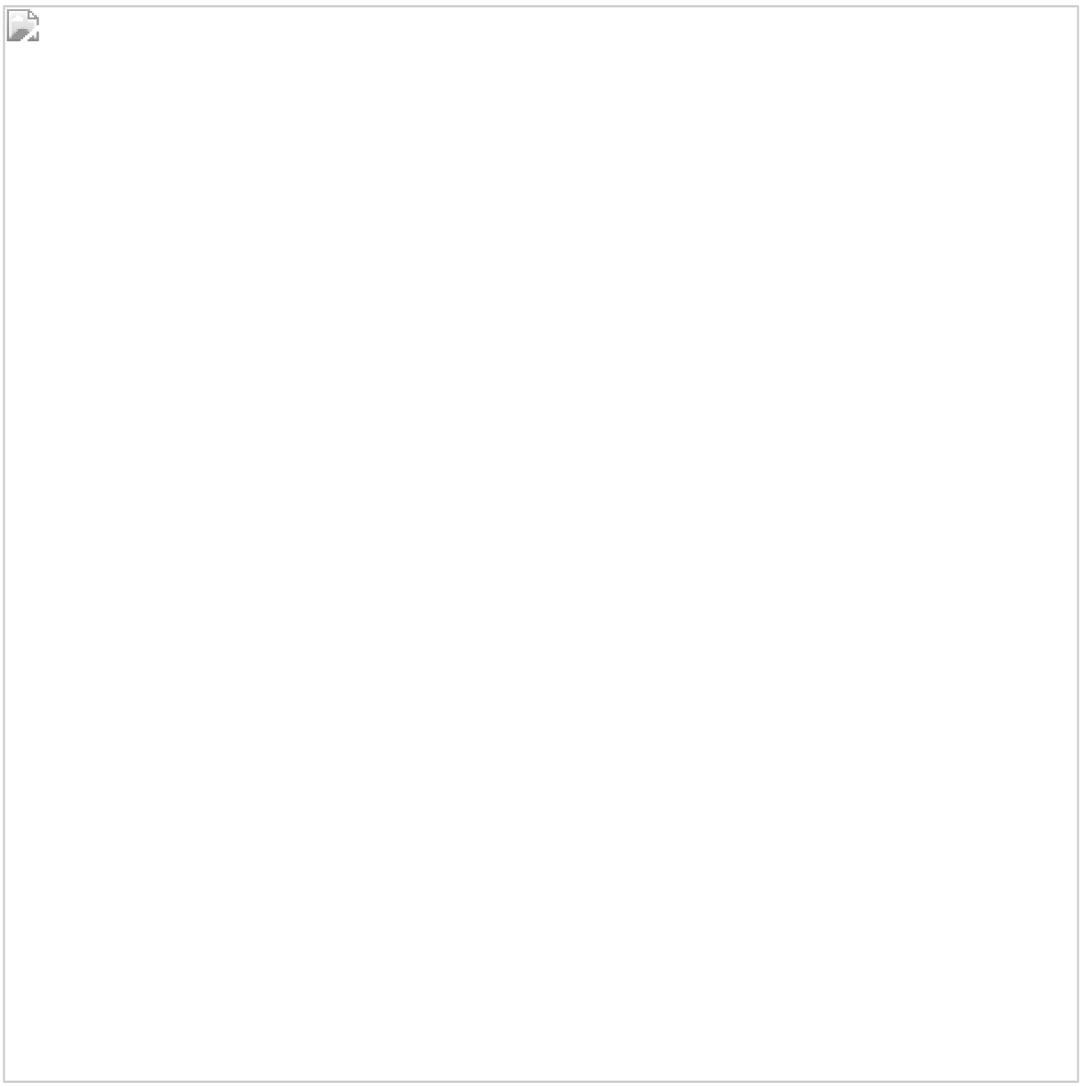
Rome had once been ruled by a king named Tarquin, who was so harsh that the people drove him out of the city. Tarquin and his son went to King Porsenna and asked for help getting back in.

King Porsenna agreed and gathered a great army. All the people who lived in the countryside fled behind the walls of Rome. Guards were set around the city.

The people were frightened, but they had made up their minds to hold out.

TALK ABOUT IT

The people of Rome had sent away a king who was not kind to them. Why do you think they were willing to stand up for that, even though they were afraid?

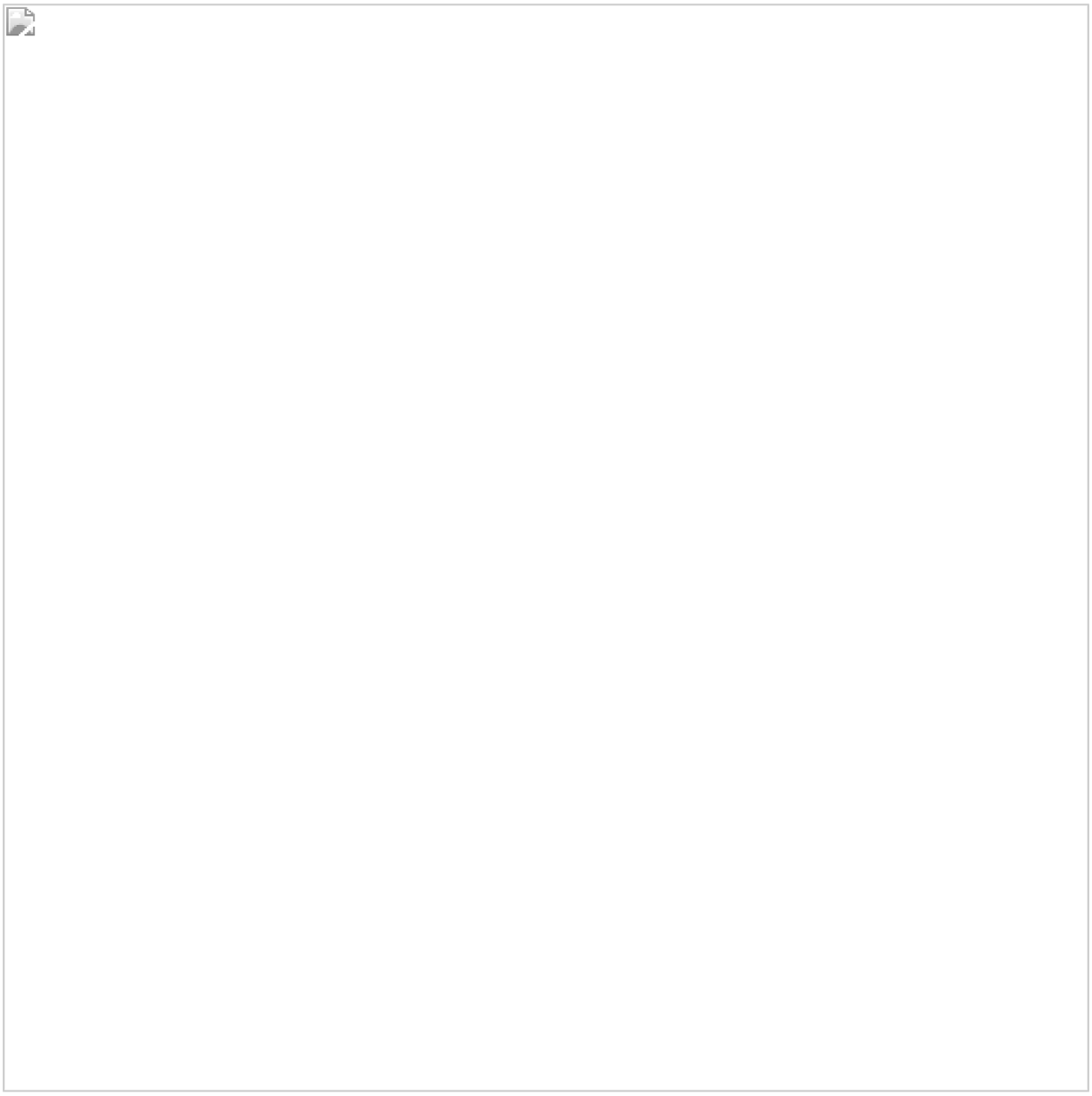


Think about it

1. Why was King Porsenna's army marching on Rome?

- ○ To trade goods
- ○ To help Tarquin return as king
- ○ To see the city

The Wooden Bridge



Part of Rome was guarded by strong walls, and part was kept safe by the river Tiber. But there was a wooden bridge across the river, and the enemy could cross it into the city.

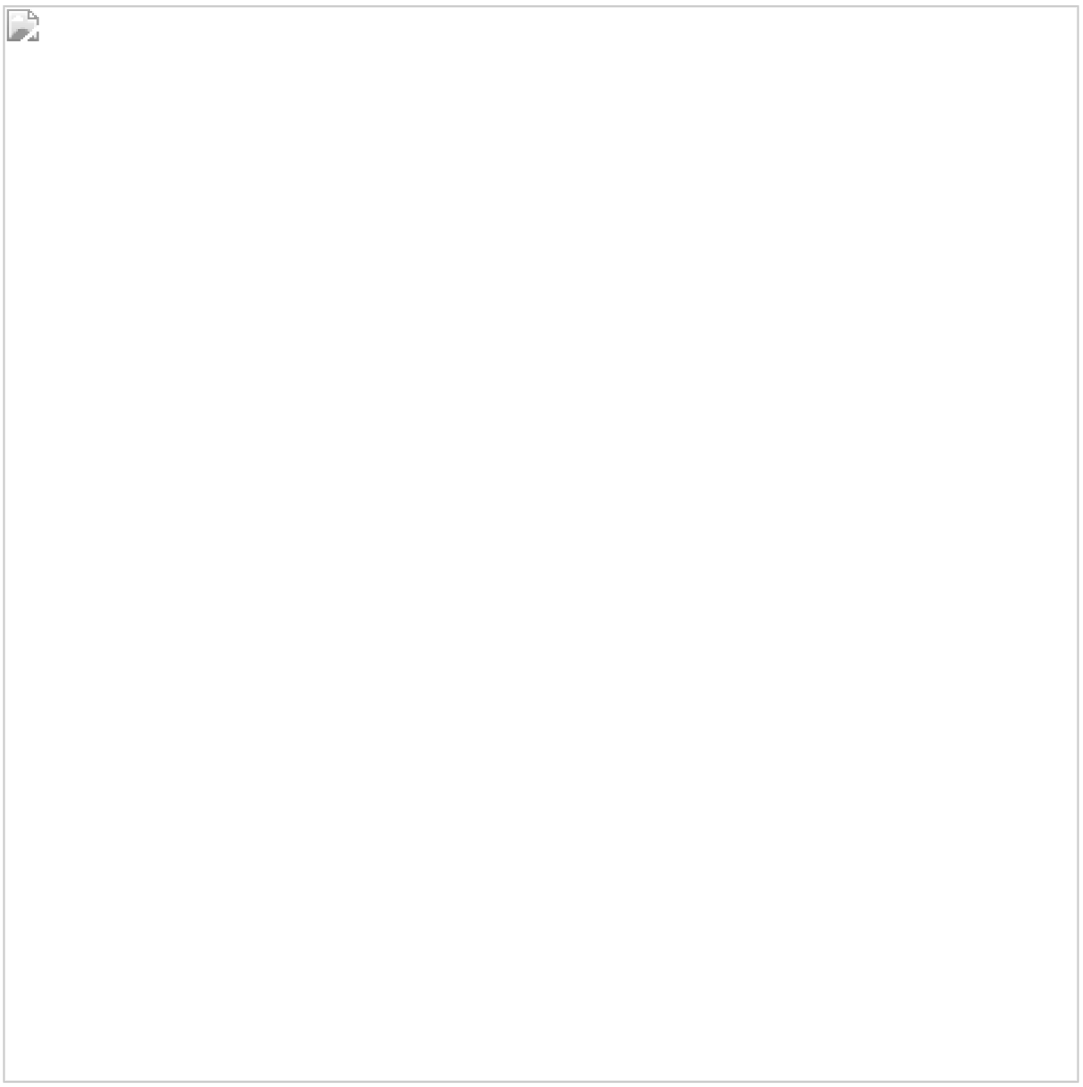
On a hill across the river called Janiculum, King Porsenna's army made a sudden attack and took the hill. The Roman soldiers panicked and ran, throwing down their weapons.

One man had been set to guard the bridge. His name was Horatius Cocles.

TALK ABOUT IT

When everyone else ran away, Horatius stayed. What do you think made him different?

The Wooden Bridge · another picture

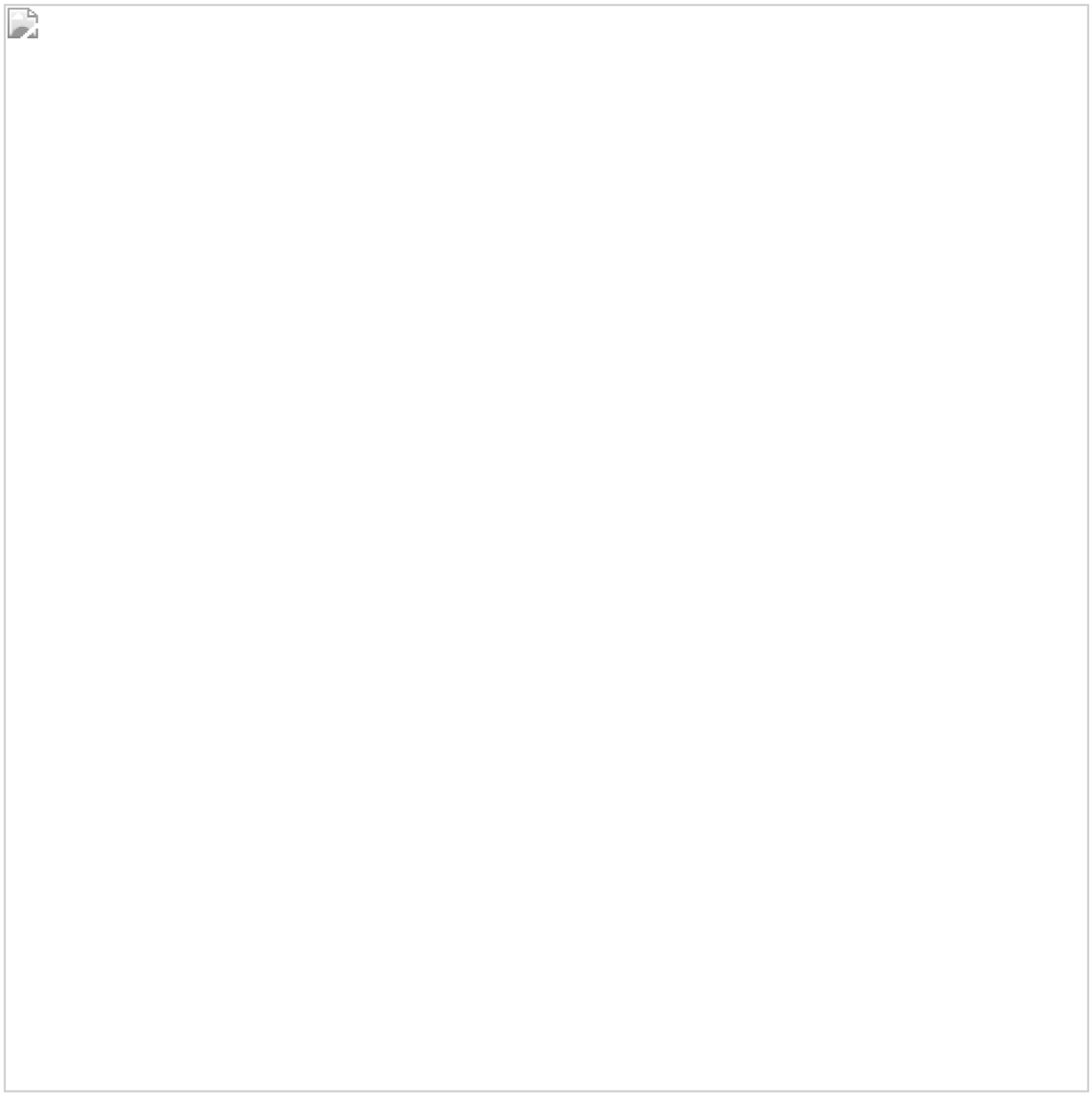


Think about it

1. What did Horatius guard?

- ○ A castle gate
- ○ A hill
- ○ The wooden bridge

A Voice on the Bridge



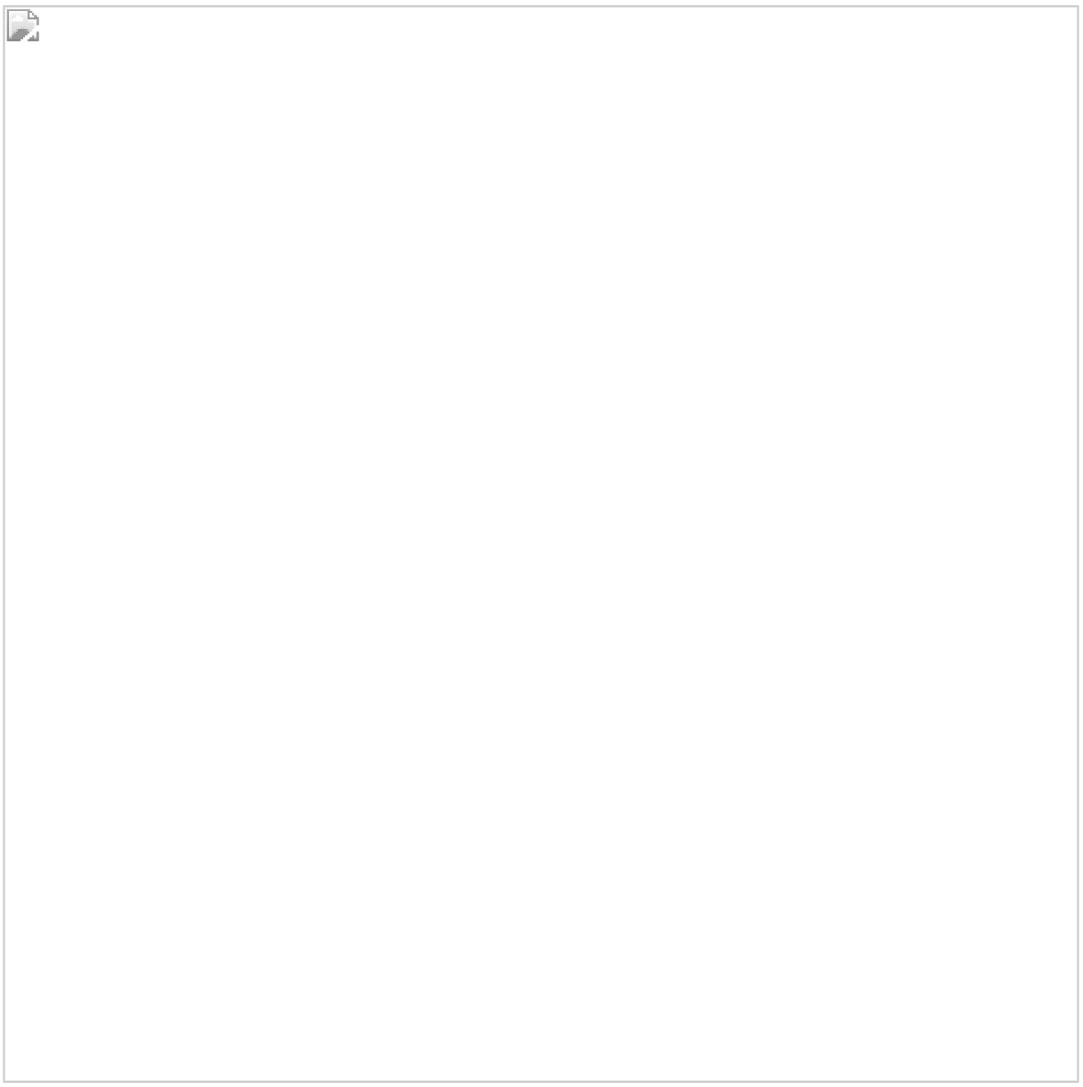
Horatius saw the enemy running toward the bridge and his own side running away. He called out in a loud voice, “Men of Rome.” If you leave the bridge, he said, the enemy will cross it, and soon you will have more enemies in your city than on that hill.

“Do ye therefore break it down with axe and fire as best ye can,” he told them. And he said, “In the meanwhile I, so far as one man may do, will stay the enemy.”

Then he ran forward to the far end of the bridge, ready to hold the way.

TALK ABOUT IT

“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13). What do you think Horatius was risking for the people of Rome?

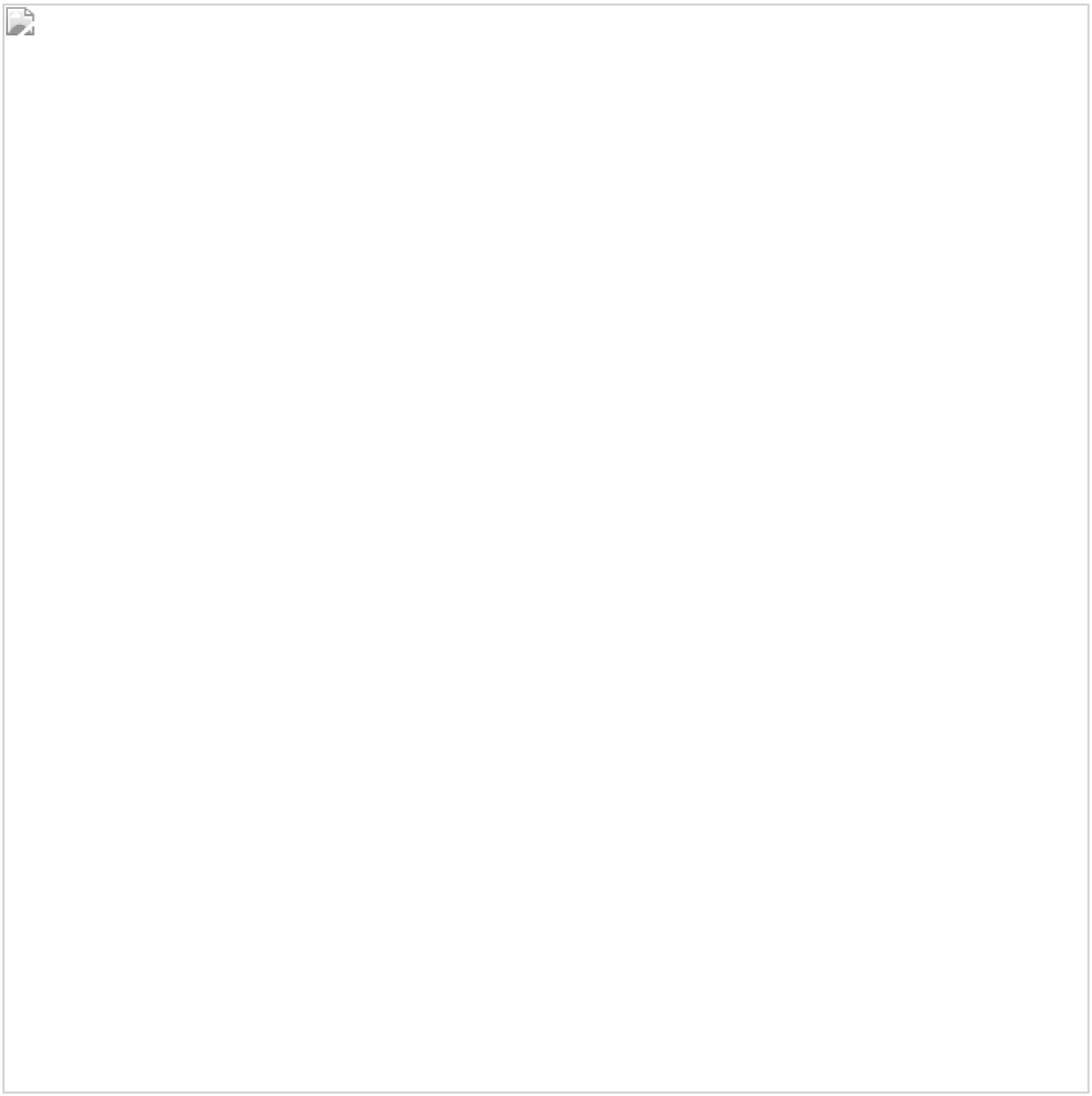


Think about it

1. What did Horatius tell the Romans to do to the bridge?

- ○ Break it down
- ○ Paint it
- ○ Build it bigger

Three at the Bridge



Two brave men came and stood beside him: Lartius and Herminius, both famous in battle. Now three stood together on the far end of the bridge.

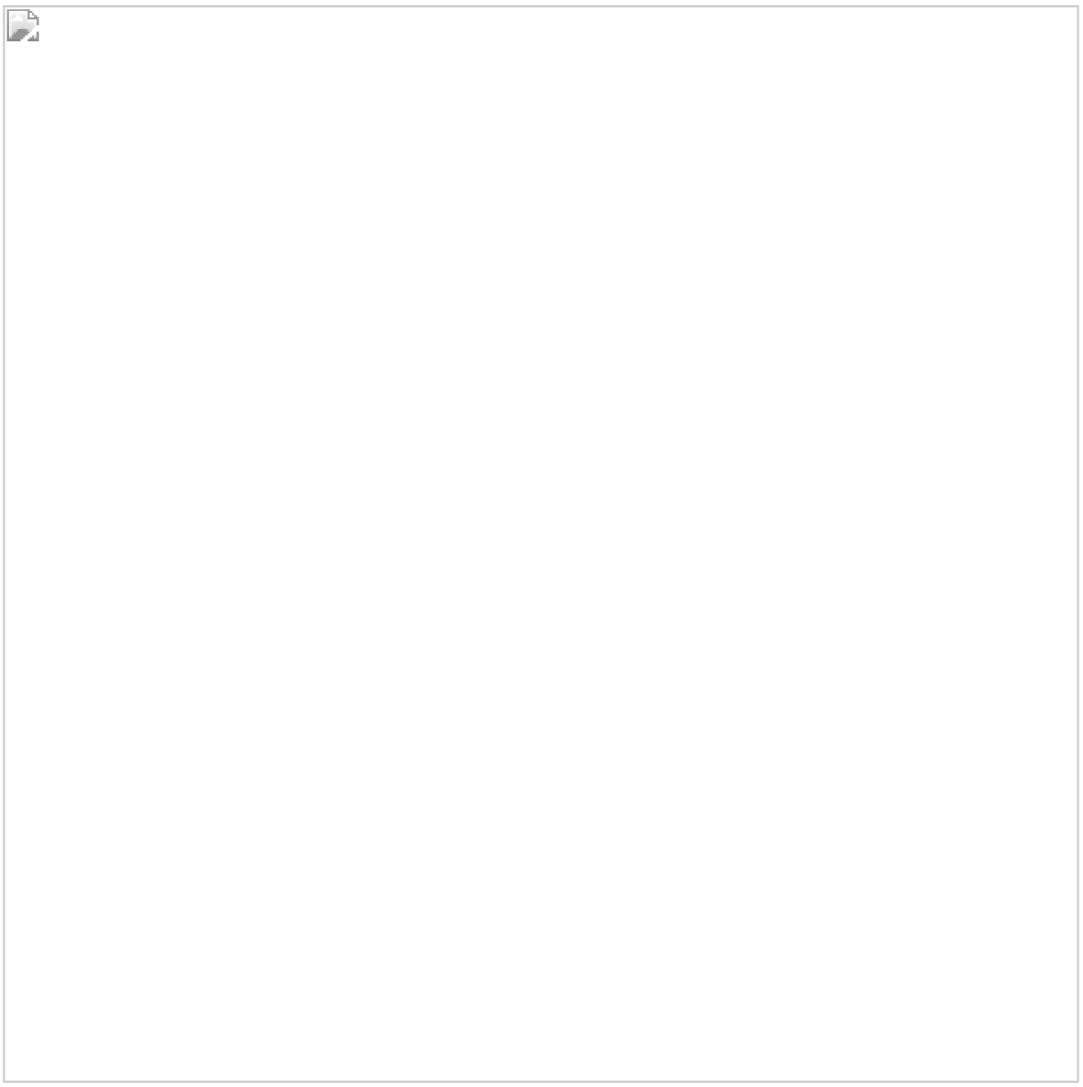
For a while the three held off the first rush of the enemy. Behind them, the people of Rome chopped away at the bridge.

When only a small part of it was left, the workers called out to the three to come back.

TALK ABOUT IT

Horatius did not have to ask for help, but two friends came and stood beside him. Why do you think they did?

Three at the Bridge · another picture

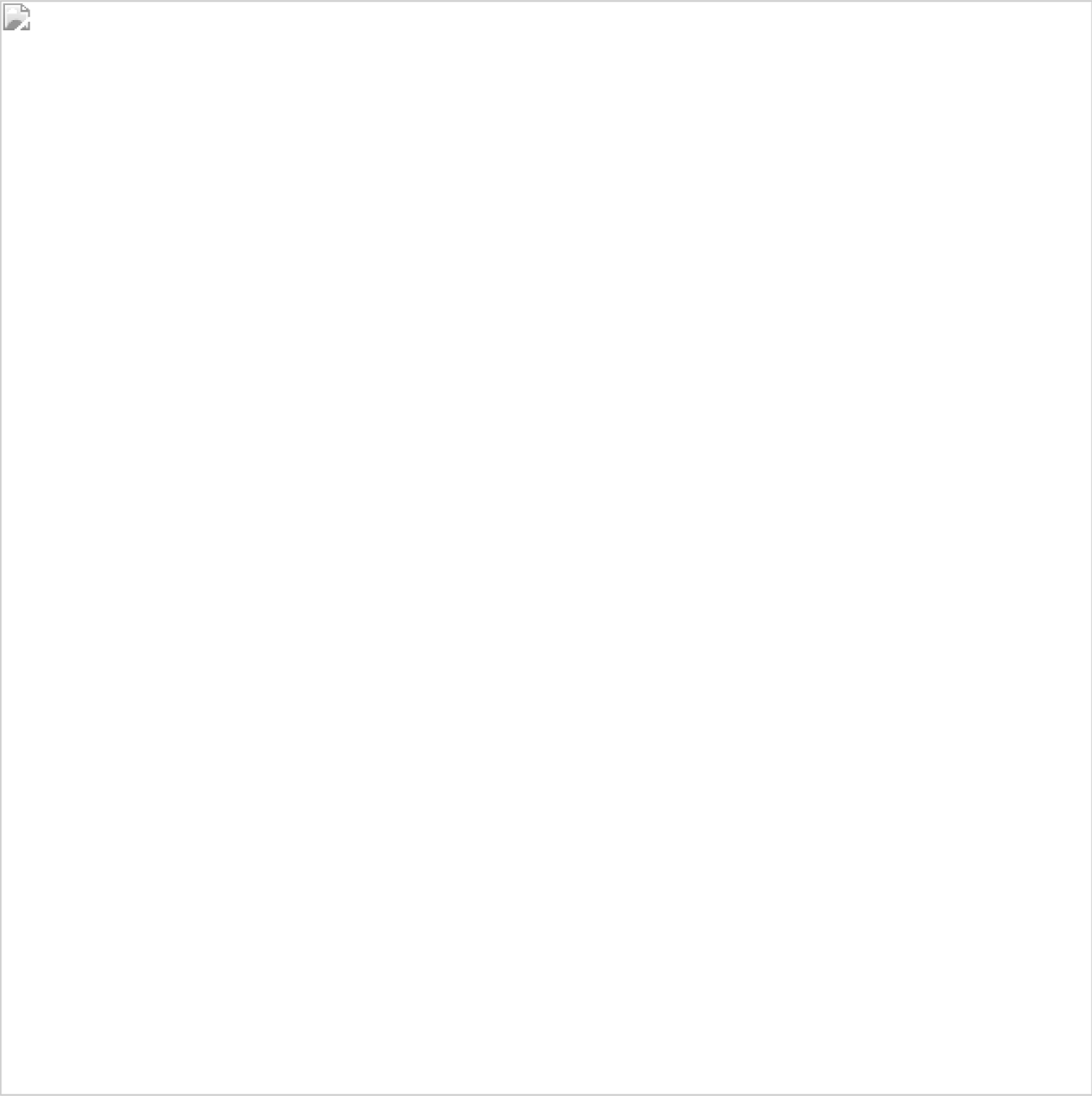


Think about it

1. How many men stood at the end of the bridge at first?

- ○ One
- ○ Three
- ○ A hundred

One Man Left



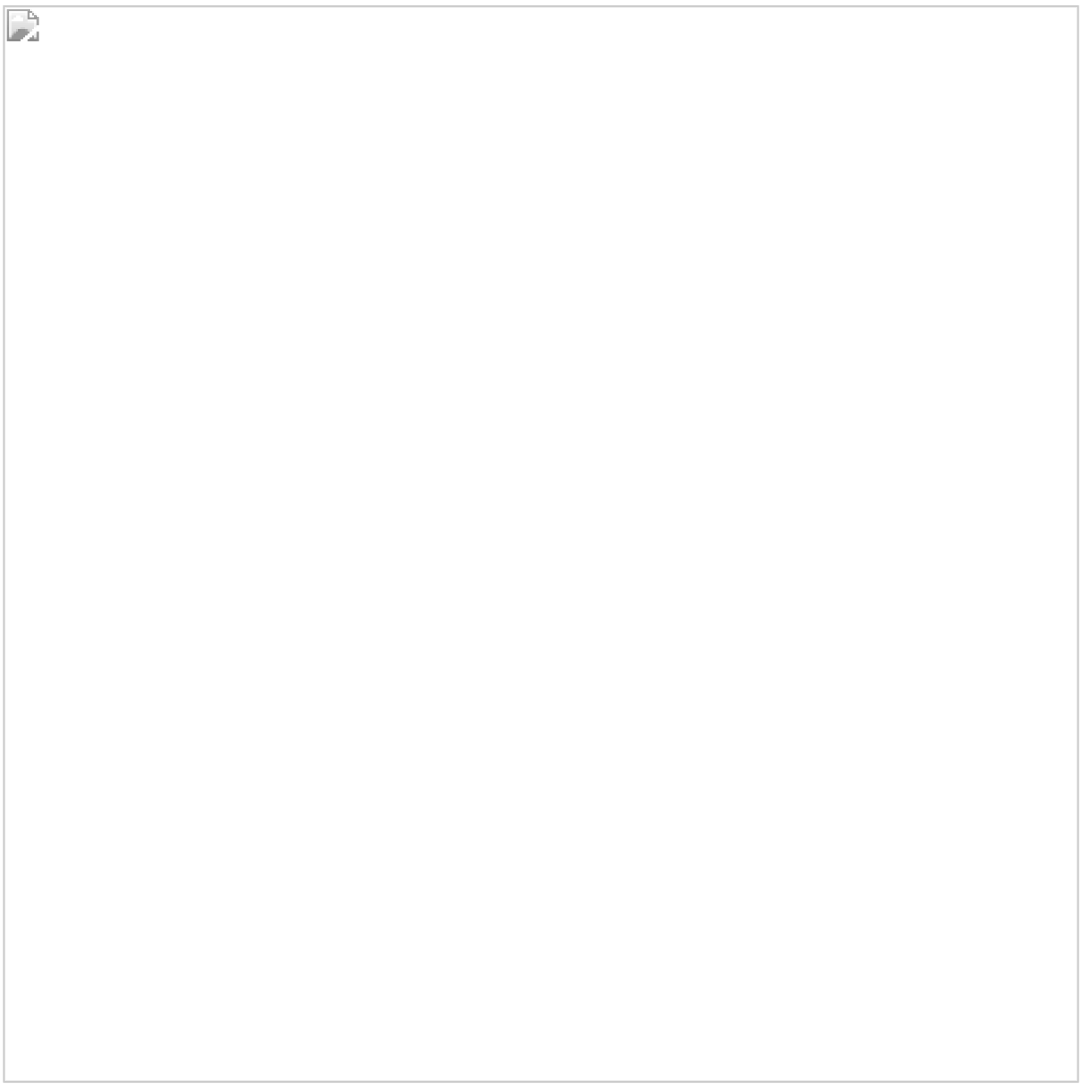
Horatius told Lartius and Herminius to run back across before the bridge fell. But he stayed on the far side by himself.

He looked at the enemy leaders, and called out, “Dare ye now to fight with me?” For a moment, they looked at each other. Who would go first?

Then, for shame, they all ran forward, shouting, and threw their spears at him.

TALK ABOUT IT

Why do you think Horatius sent his friends back, and stayed alone?

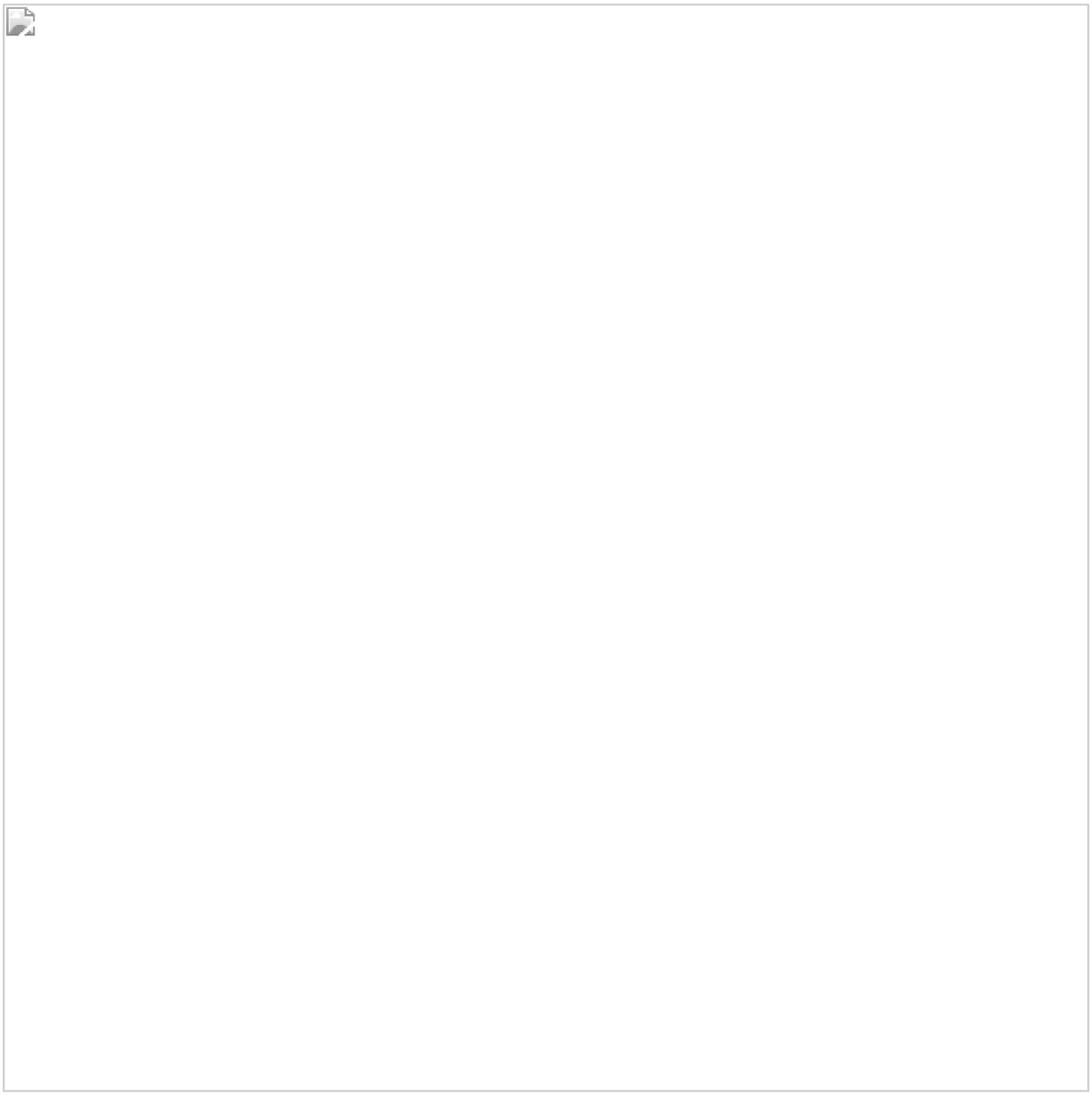


Think about it

1. Who stayed behind on the far side of the bridge?

- ○ Horatius
- ○ Herminius
- ○ Lartius

The Shield



Horatius caught every spear on his shield. He did not move from his place on the bridge.

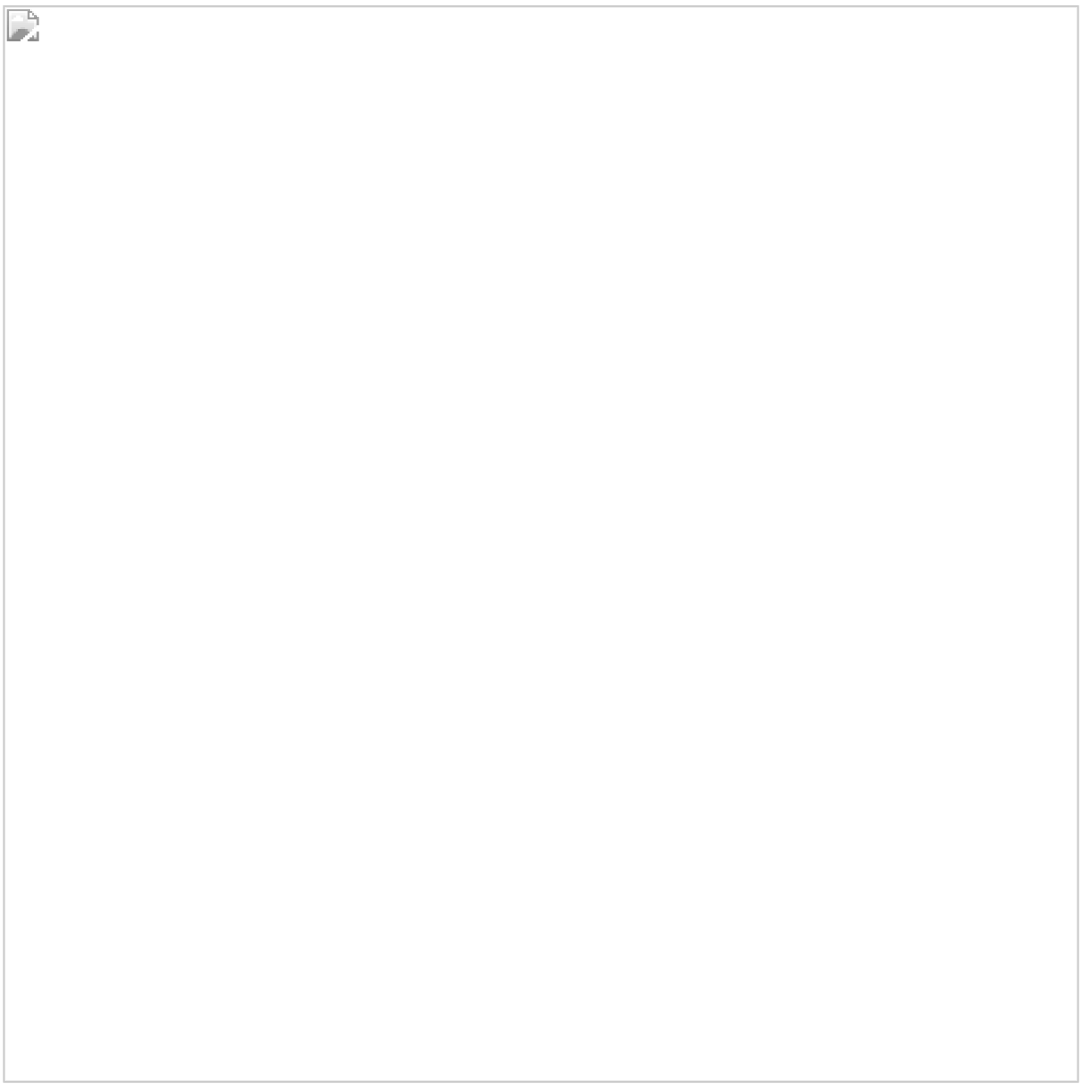
The enemy tried to push him off the bridge by force. Then suddenly the Romans behind him raised a great shout. The bridge was broken at last, and it fell with a crash into the river.

Now the enemy could not cross, and the city was safe. But Horatius was still standing on the other side.

TALK ABOUT IT

How do you think the people of Rome felt when they heard the bridge fall?

The Shield · another picture

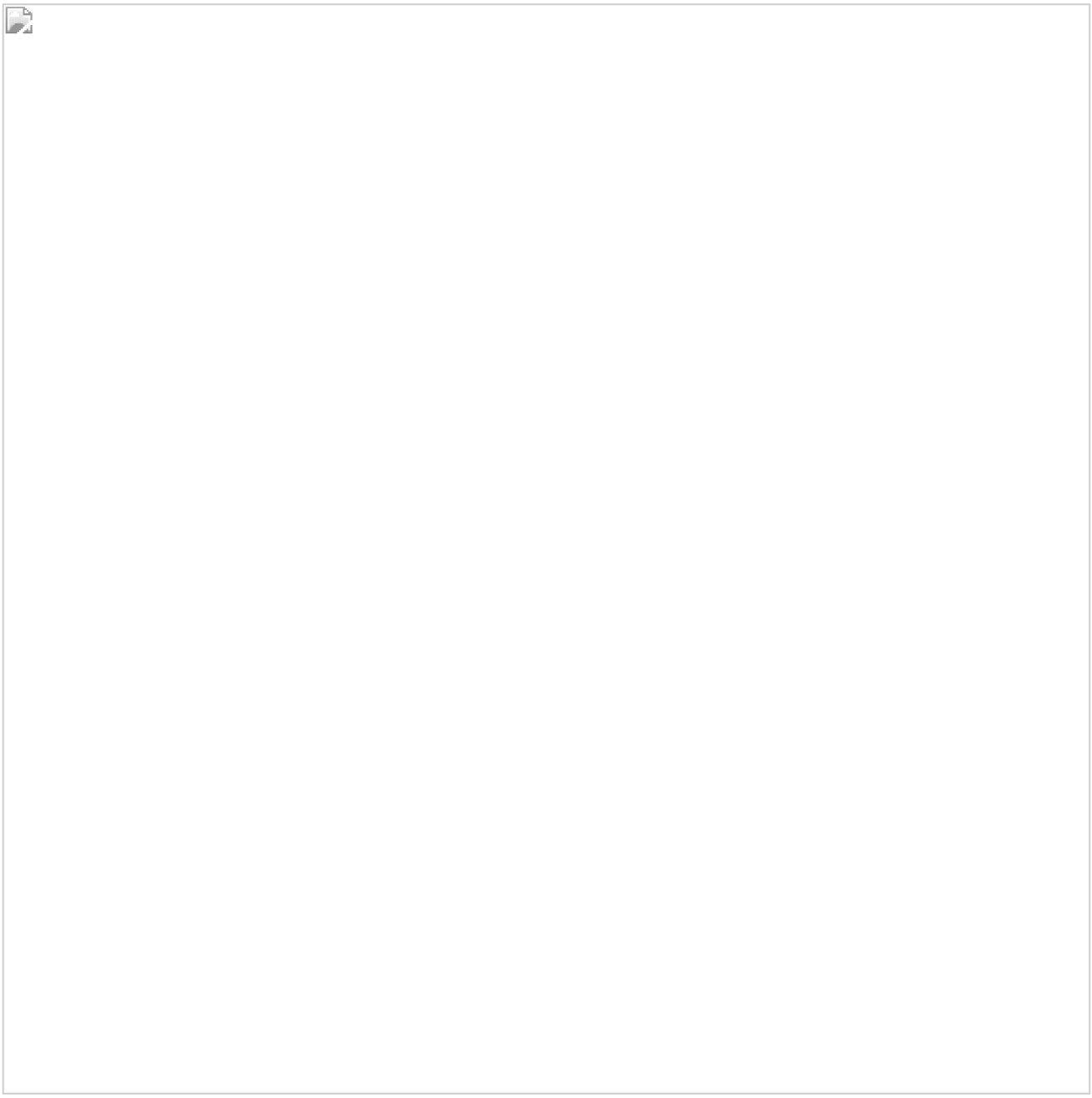


Think about it

1. What did Horatius use to catch the spears?

- ○ His hat
- ○ His hands
- ○ His shield

Into the River



Horatius turned to the river and prayed: “O Father Tiber, I beseech thee this day with all reverence that thou kindly receive this soldier and his arms.”

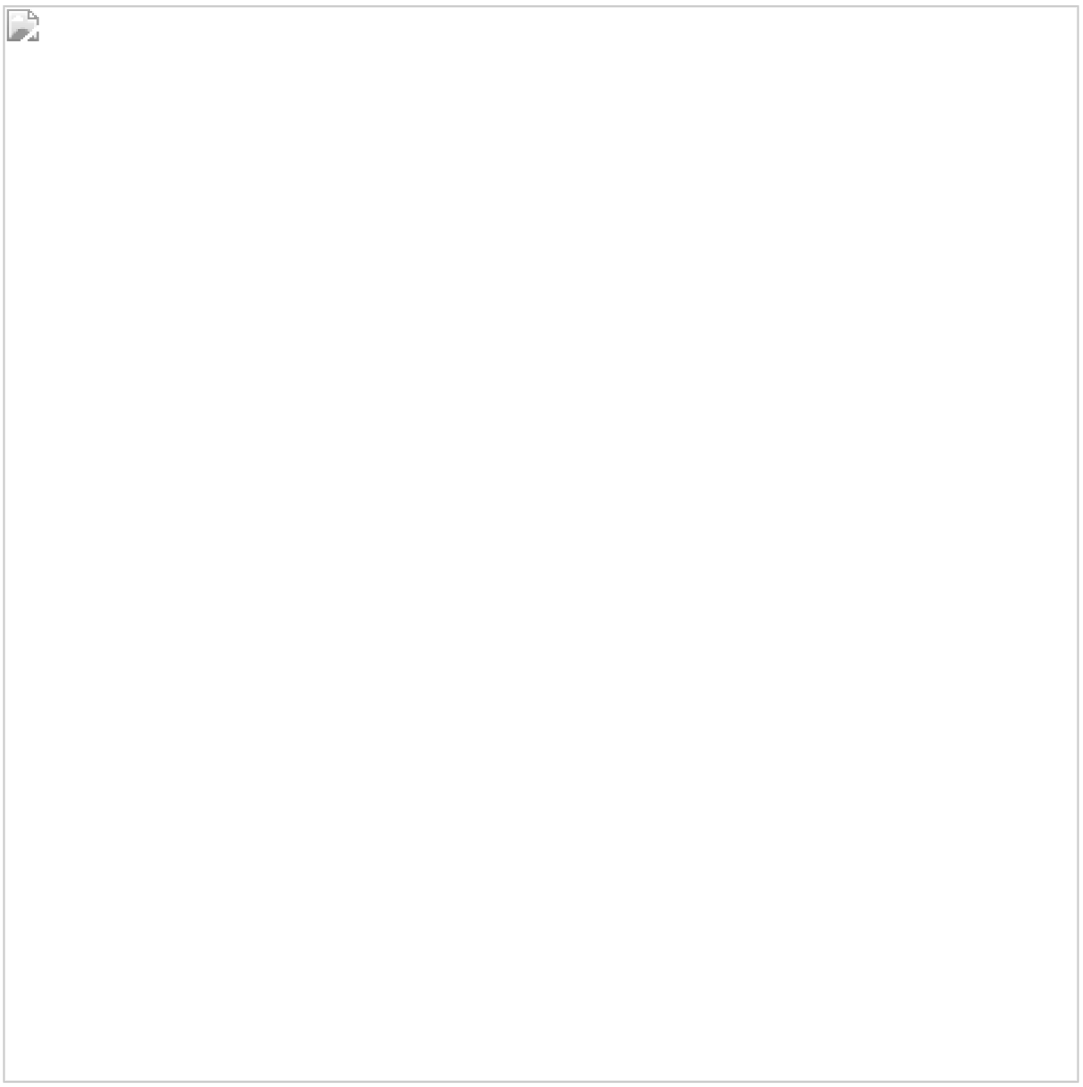
Then he jumped into the water with all his armor on and swam across to his own people.

The enemy's spears fell all around him, but he was not hurt at all.

TALK ABOUT IT

Horatius asked the river for help. When you need help, whom do you ask?

Into the River · another picture

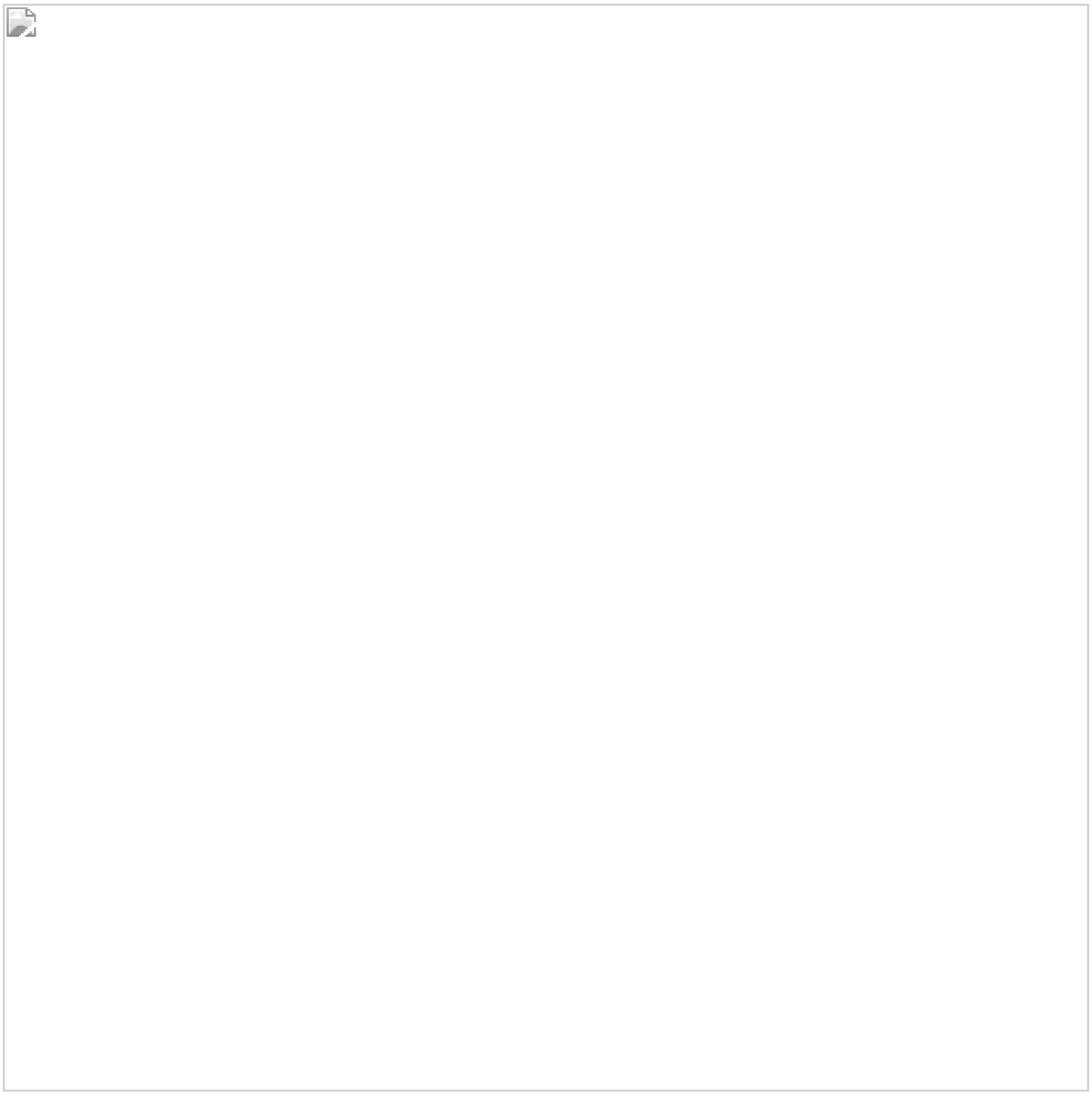


Think about it

1. How did Horatius get back to Rome?

- ○ He crossed the bridge
- ○ He rode a horse
- ○ He swam across the river

A Thank-You from Rome



Rome did not forget what Horatius had done. The people set up a statue of him in the market-place.

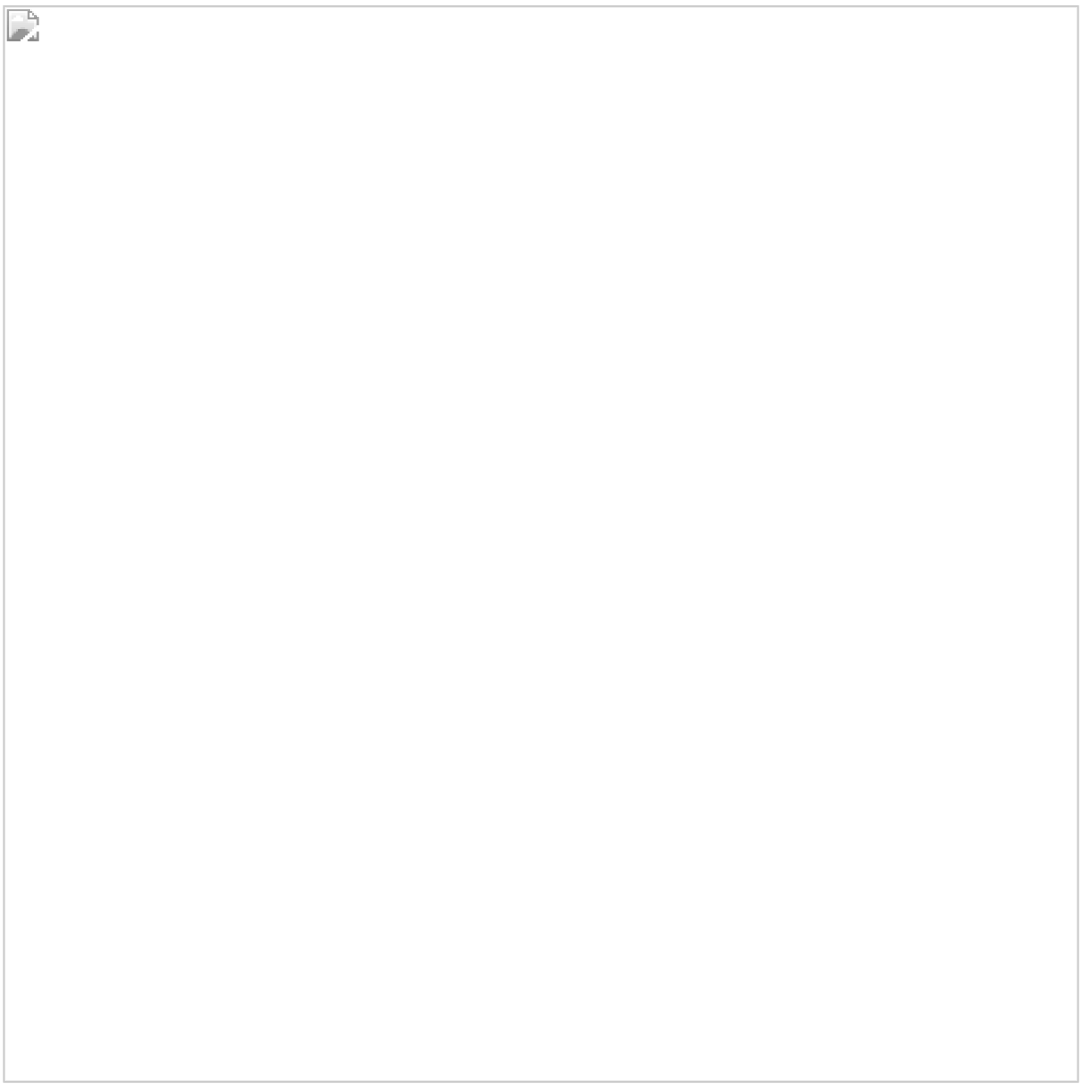
They gave him as much of the public land as he could plow around in a single day.

And each person took something from their own store of food and brought it to him, because food was scarce in the city during the siege. They were giving up their own food to thank him.

TALK ABOUT IT

The people gave up some of their own food to say thank you. How can you say thank you to someone who has helped you?

A Thank-You from Rome · another picture



Think about it

1. What gift did each citizen bring to Horatius?

- ○ A sword
- ○ Some of their own food
- ○ A crown

2. Horatius stood on the bridge for everyone in the city. Who stands up for you, and for whom could you stand up?

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

— Yeshua HaMashiach

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