Anna Mik, "Entry on: Looney Tunes (Series): Roman Legion-Hare by Friz Freleng", peer-reviewed by Elżbieta Olechowska and Daniel A. Nkemleke. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2021). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/1321. Entry version as of July 12, 2026.

Friz Freleng

Looney Tunes (Series): Roman Legion-Hare

United States of America (1955)

TAGS: Colosseum Nero Rome

We are still trying to obtain permission for posting the original cover.

General information	
Title of the work	Looney Tunes (Series): Roman Legion-Hare
Studio/Production Company	Warner Bros.
Country of the First Edition	United States of America
Country/countries of popularity	worldwide
Original Language	English
First Edition Date	1955
First Edition Details	*Looney Tunes* (Series): *Roman Legion-Hare.* Dir. Friz Freleng, Warner Bros., November 12, 1955, 7 min.
Running time	7 min
Format	VHS, DVD
Date of the First DVD or VHS	VHS: Bugs Bunny's Wacky Adventures (Golden Jubilee 24 Carrot Collection) - date unknown. DVD: Looney Tunes Golden Collection, Volume 4, Nov. 14, 2006.
Genre	Animated television programs
Target Audience	Crossover
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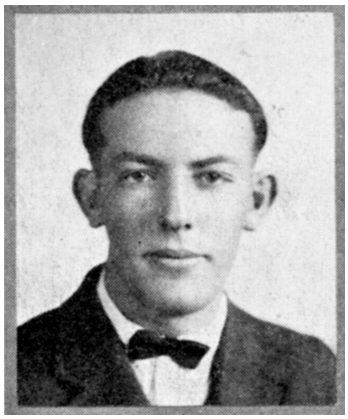
Creators



Friz Freleng yearbook photo, 1923. Retrieved from Wikipedia, public domain (accessed: February 7, 2022).

Friz Freleng , 1906 - 1995
(Animator)

Friz Freleng, actually Isadore "Friz" Freleng, was an American animator and producer of cartoons, working mainly for Warner Bros. "Looney Tunes" series. He was born in Kansas City, Missouri. His first cartoons were published in the local college newspaper, while he still was in high school. After getting acquainted with Walt Disney, Ub Iwerks, Hugh and Fred Harman, he worked for Walt Disney and his company. After that he joined Warner Brother's animation department headed by Hugh Harman. Later on, he became the head of animation department in Leon Shlesinger's studio (at Warner Bros.) and developed the character of Porky Pig (1935). Freleng worked for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (1937–1939) and was responsible for several propaganda cartoons during WW2. Later, he came back to Schlesinger and Warner Bros. and developed more characters: Yosemite Sam (1945), Sylvester the Cat (1945), Rocky and Mugsy (1946/1954) and Granny (1950), as well as the series "Tweety and Sylvester" (1947) and "Speedy Gonzales" (1955). He was one of the most successful animators in the industry. He also developed Daffy Duck and Bugs Bunny for Warner Bros. Cartoons. He won five Academy Awards and three Emmies. Freleng worked on the series about Bugs Bunny, Porky Pig, Tweety, and many other well-known characters from "Looney Tunes". Later on, he co-founded DePatie-Freleng Enterprises, which produced e.g., *The Pink Panther Show* (with Freleng as co-creator).

Sources:

Mark Arnold, *Think Pink! The Story of DePatie-Freleng*, Albany, GA: Bear Manor Media, 2016, 9–14.

lambiek.net (accessed: August 9, 2021).

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Additional information

Casting	Bugs Bunny/Yosemite Sam/Emperor Nero/Guard/Commentator – Mel Blanc.

Summary

The episode opens with the introduction to Rome of 54 CE and to the Colosseum adorned with an ad: "Coliseum Today Detroit Lions in Season Opener. Undefeated Lions Out For First Taste of Victory". This is evidently a big event; not only the Colosseum is packed with people, it is also joined by the Emperor Nero. He is presented as a dull, obese man with too much power. He demands to let the "victim" out in the arena, however, one of the soldiers informs him that there are no victims left. Nero throws a tantrum and demands a victim anyway. Yosemite Sam (a reoccurring character in "Merry Melodies" series) and other soldiers panic and sets off for search of someone to be fed to the lions. Bugs Bunny hears the soldiers marching and mocks Sam to chase him. They all go back to the Colosseum, where Bugs opens the cage with the lion and now Sam is attacked by the big cat. Bugs and Sam continue their slapstick chase, and eventually, Bugs ends up in the arena. Nero releases the lions, but the animals ignore the rabbit, as they are furious with the emperor and his soldiers. Big cats chase people, and Bugs shrugs his shoulders and ends the episode saying: "E Pluribus Uranium" ("Out of many, Uranium", implying the similarly sounding "urine" – a basic lavatory joke).

Analysis

Roman Legion-Hare is set in ancient Rome, however, the time is (54 CE) historically incorrect, as the Colosseum was built between 72–80 CE; in 54 CE, Nero was only 17 and still under Seneca's influence. It was 10 years before the Great Fire of Rome. The episode features two classic Looney Tunes characters: Bugs Bunny and Yosemite Sam. The rest of the characters, including the Emperor Nero, are inspired by the actual historical figures and events. Nero became famous for his cruelty and here this trope is revisited. The man behaves like a spoiled child, as his soldiers need to grant his every, even the most brutal, whim, like the massacre in the arena of the Colosseum, with the participation of wild animals. Creators of the cartoon allude here to real historical events, such as Nero's persecution of Christians allegedly responsible for the fire of Rome, with a twist: here the

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emperor is punished for his cruel excesses. The episode ends with a Latin phrase, paraphrasing the American motto: "E pluribus unum", meaning "Out of many, one". It is a popular phrase, known to every child in the US, as it figures on the country's Great Seal. Here, Bugs Bunny paraphrased the motto, showing the absurdity of the Emperor's ideas and ultimately, the consequences of his foolish actions. Originally, the American nation was formed from thirteen states. In Looney Tunes' Rome, there are thirteen lions.

Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Colosseum Nero Rome
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Animals Authority Character traits Conflict Punishment

Further Reading

Arnold, Mark, *Think Pink! The Story of DePatie-Freleng*, Albany, GA: Bear Manor Media, 2016.

Furniss, Maureen, *Animation: The Global History,* London: Thames&Hudson, 2017.

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