Charlotte Farrell, "Entry on: Farticus Maximus: Bottomus Burps of Britannia (Farticus Maximus, 3) by Felice Arena", peer-reviewed by Elizabeth Hale and Lisa Maurice. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2022). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/1422. Entry version as of September 14, 2026.

Felice Arena

Farticus Maximus: Bottomus Burps of Britannia (Farticus Maximus, 3)

Australia (2010)

TAGS: Architecture Colosseum Gladiator Games Latin (Language) Neptune Roman Empire Rome

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

General information	
Title of the work	Farticus Maximus: Bottomus Burps of Britannia (Farticus Maximus, 3)
Country of the First Edition	Australia
Country/countries of popularity	Australia
Original Language	English
First Edition Date	2010
First Edition Details	Felice Arena, *Farticus Maximus: Bottomus Burps of Britannia*. Sydney: Scholastic, 2010, 146 pp.
ISBN	9781407129051
Genre	Short stories
Target Audience	Children (young)
Author of the Entry	Charlotte Farrell, University of New England, charlottefarrell@gmail.com
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Creators

Felice Arena , b. 1968
(Author)

Felice Arena is an Australian children's author born in Kyabram, Victoria. He has written best-selling and award-winning books including the "Andy Roid" series, *Sporty Kids and the Besties*, and the "Specky Magee" series (co-authored with Garry Lyon). In the 1990s he was a school teacher before working professionally as an actor: first on the Australian television show, *Neighbours*, and then in West End musicals in the UK.

Arena has been the recipient of six Australian Children Choice Book Awards, and his Children's Book Council of Australia (CBCA) Notable Books include *The Boy and the Spy*, *Fearless Frederic*, and *A Great Escape*. In 2013 he received the Koala Legend of the Year at the Kids Own Australian Literature Awards and the YABBA Graham Davey Citation Award for his contribution and impact on Australian children's literature.

Source:

Author's website (accessed: August 30, 2021).

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Additional information

Sequels, Prequels and Spin-offs

Felice Arena,*Farticus Maximus and Other Stories that Stink!*, Sydney: Scholastic, 2008.

Felice Arena, *Farticus Maximus: Stink-Off Battle of the Century and More Stories that Reek!*, Sydney: Scholastic, 2009.

Summary

There are several short stories in *Farticus Maximus: Bottomus Burps of Britannia*, bookended by adventures of the eponymous character. In the first and last stories in this third installment of the three-part *Farticus Maximus* series, young boys Rex and Antonius play in the streets of Ancient Rome pretending to be Farticus Maximus and Gassius Brutus, the infamous gladiators from the previous books. Bettius, one of the boys' mothers is concerned about her son's rough play, but Jennius responds that "boys will be boys" (2). Bettius' sister, Dora, drops by with her friend, Petra who is very ugly. Petra says that she doesn't know who Farticus Maximus is, so the women proceed to tell her all about him. Farticus and his family have not been seen since they fled Rome six months ago, the women explain. Seven legions of the evil Emperor's army continue to be in pursuit of them, suspecting that they have absconded to Brittiania which is where Gassius is from. Bettius shares a secret with the women: she heard that Farticus and Gassius were in Gassius's secret hideaway in a farmhouse just outside of the Brittainian town, Aquae-Sulis. As in previous books in the series, there are accompanying images in a cartoon style.

Petra, who in fact is a man, Martius, disguised as a woman reports this back to the evil Roman Emperor Bullius. Martius asks for gold as payment for the information, a request to which he responds by sending him to be eaten by vicious lions. The emperor plots to lure Farticus and Gassius back to Rome to kill them.

In a dreary hut, Farticus' family feasts on roast 'Badgerus' for the seventh night in a row. Rhina is upset with her dull, monotonous life in Aquae-Sulis. After dinner, Gassius, Farticus and Sinus (Rhina's father) head to the local tavern. They sit near the open window so they can fart unnoticed. A large man, Trevorus, and his friend suspect the men's true identities, and the gladiators stink out the tavern before

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returning to Gassius' farmhouse. They find Farticus' mother, Helena, Rhina, and Rottenegus (one of Rhina and Farticus' three sons) missing, taken captive by Emperor Bullius' soldiers.

As in the other books in the *Farticus Maximus* series, the story pauses at this point. A combination of short stories, comics and interactive games follow: 'Bump and Stink in the Night', 'Art Rhymes with Fart', 'The Moo-Fart Game', 'On the Count of Three…', 'Fartoons', 'Blame the Dog!' and 'Fart-Tunes'.

In *Farticus Maximus: Bottomus Burps of Britannia* Part 2 at the end of the book, Farticus and Gassius travel to Rome in a wooden boat. After farting continuously to put wind in their sails, the natural wind picks up and the sea becomes tumultuous, with twenty-meter high waves. Gassius reveals how frightened he is because he cannot swim, before he is engulfed by waves and disappears.

Meanwhile, in Rome, Rhina, Helena and Rottenegus are being held captive by Emperor Bullius. They are treated to luxuries like delicious food and foot massages. Rottenegus takes a shine to the Emperor who manipulates him against his father. In a hushed conversation with a soldier, the Emperor learns that Farticus is on his way to the palace, as is a Druid who has a special flower to stop someone from being able to fart for a few hours.

Upon entering the palace, Farticus is surprised to be met by friendliness and generosity from Emperor Bullius. He is given refreshments, presumably laced with flowers from the druid. After consuming some pomegranate juice, Gassius turns on Farticus and his family, taking them prisoner. Much to the Emperor's surprise, Farticus lets out a terrible fart. The druid removes his wig revealing himself to be Gassius. Gassius and Farticus defeat the legionaries with their farts. The Emperor takes Rottenegus hostage. Farticus defeats Bullius with his son's (smelly) help. Yesmanus, the Emperor's assistant, becomes the new emperor of Rome, allowing Farticus and his family to live peacefully because they endorse his campaign.

Analysis

A standout moment in this book in relation to classical mythological references is when Farticus enters the Emperor Bullius' palace and passes by a statue of Neptune. There is an accompanying illustration in this part of the book, where the statue appears to be a classical

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Roman figure. Pigeons sit atop the sculpture and fall off, stunned from the strength of Farticus' flatulence. This figure of Neptune does not drive the plot forward in any way, so is an addition that embellishes the story with an 'atmosphere' of ancient Rome.

The version of Rome represented in this story is influenced by Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, with its emphasis on conspiracy and intrigue. This influence may help contextualise the cross-dressing element in the book, considering female character in Shakespeare's plays were performed by men.

Another continuation from the previous books in the series is that it includes playfully Latinized words, evident for example in the book's subtitle: "Bottomus Burps". As in other books, the author Latinizes everyday words by making them end in 'us': for example, when Bettius exclaims "that's enough roughus play!" (2), or when they refer to their meal of roast badger as "badgerus". The author's approach to the dialogue in this respect also situates the narrative in some playful version of Ancient Rome.

The boat journey Farticus and Gassius embark upon recalls imagery from Odysseus's sea travels. In Homer's *Odyssey*, Aeolus gifts Odysseus a sack of winds that blows him off course. This is another ancient mythological trope that is nestled in *Farticus Maximus: Bottomus Burps of Britannia*, rather than overtly acknowledged. This aspect adds to the drama of the book, and having Gassius reappear after presuming he was lost at sea reminded me of the end of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, when siblings Sebastian and Viola are reunited. These inferred intertextual elements give the book greater depth than one would expect from a story about farting.

Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Architecture Colosseum Gladiator Games Latin (Language) Neptune Roman Empire Rome
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth	Adventure Adversity Animals Boys Conflict Death Heroism Historical figures Humour Journeys Revenge Siblings Violence

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Culture

Further Reading

Blank, Trevor J., "Cheeky Behavior: The Meaning and Function of 'Fartlore' in Childhood and Adolescence", *Children's Folklore Review* 32 (2010): 61–86.

Curry, Ann, "Bums, Poops, and Pees: A Scholarly Examination of Why Children Love and Adults Censor the Scatological in Children's Books", *Proceedings of the Annual Conference of CAIS / Actes Du congrès Annuel De l'ACSI*, 2013 (accessed: March 30, 2022).

McKenzie, John, "Bums, Poos and Wees: Carnivalesque Spaces in the Picture Books of Early Childhood. Or, Has Literature Gone to the Dogs?", *English Teaching: Practice and Critique* 4.1 (2005): 81–94.

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