Charlotte Farrell, "Entry on: Farticus Maximus: Stink-Off Battle of the Century and More Stories That Reek! (Farticus Maximus, 2) 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/1423. Entry version as of November 07, 2026.

Felice Arena

Farticus Maximus: Stink-Off Battle of the Century and More Stories That Reek! (Farticus Maximus, 2)

Australia (2009)

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



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

General information	
Title of the work	Farticus Maximus: Stink-Off Battle of the Century and More Stories That Reek! (Farticus Maximus, 2)
Country of the First Edition	Australia
Country/countries of popularity	Australia
Original Language	English
First Edition Date	2009
First Edition Details	Felice Arena, *Farticus Maximus: Stink-Off Battle of the Century and More Stories That Reek!* Sydney: Scholastic, 2009, 146 pp.
ISBN	9781407120560
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: Bottomus Burps of Britannia*, Sydney: Scholastic, 2010.

Summary

Farticus Maximus: Stink-Off Battle of the Century is the second book in a series by the same title by Australian author, Felice Arena. The book is divided into eight sections of short stories. The first and last chapters are a continuation of the story of Farticus Maximus, an ancient gladiator who defeats enemies with terrible farts. The story is set in Ancient Rome where teenage boy cousins, Rufus and Cornelius, are pig hunting in the forest before they come across the "greatest and smelliest gladiator of all time" (4), Farticus Maximus. After relaying the story of the first book in the *Farticus Maximus* series to Rufus because he didn't know who Farticus was, Cornelius concludes that the gladiator will be going "butt-to-butt" (12) in a battle at the Colosseum against Gassius Brutus. Gassius is his wife, Rhina's ex-boyfriend, and brother of a gladiator he defeated and killed in a previous battle, Black Dog Brutus.

The crowd cheers as Farticus enters the arena, and boo when Gassius enters. In the battle, Gassius begins most strongly, before Farticus shoots him down with a fart. For most of the battle, though, they are equal opponents, and upon realising that they are matched in their (farting) abilities, they resort to old-fashioned gladiator wrestling. In a surprising twist, there is a horde of animals released into the arena to attack them. The gladiators realise that they have been set up by Emperor Bullius who wants them killed. The story pauses here, building suspense for its continuation at the end of the book.

The following chapters, 'Little Old Grannies Don't Toot!', 'Stinklock Holmes', 'Phwwwoohh!', 'Fartoons Version 2' and 'Felix Fibly's Foo-Foo Dilemma' are short stories and cartoons on the topics of farts in more contemporary settings. In the final section, "the Roman smell-o drama" of Farticus Maximus recommences, where Gassius and Farticus team up against the deadly animals, knocking them out with their combined farts. While Gassius is pinned to the ground by a bear,

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Farticus defeats several others and then saves Gassius' life. They escape through a tunnel beneath the colosseum as an army of soldiers pursue them. Cornelius and Rufus from the first part of the book reappear and offer to help Fartius and his family and Gassius flee Rome. The final page of the book builds suspense for the next book in the series, Farticus Maximus: Bottomus Burps of Britannia, posing questions of whether Farticus and Gassius will indeed escape Rome, and will Gassius keep his "eyes off" Rhina.

Analysis

Set in Ancient Rome, the battle between the gladiators, Farticus Maximus and Gassius Brutus is the focus of the book. The gladiators' names point to the ancient historical figures, Spartacus for Farticus, and a hybrid of Cassius and Brutus for Gassius Brutus, ancient Roman political figures who plotted to kill Julius Caesar. There are several parallels with the first book in the *Farticus Maximus* series in relation to its classical references, including the ancient Roman practice of bestiarii, where gladiators went into combat with ferocious animals. For preshow entertainment before Farticus and Gassius fight, for example, ten nervous criminals are thrown into the arena with hungry lions and tigers who violently attack them. The ambush of animals against Farticus and Gassius, and their need to defend themselves against an oppressive dictator, are also familiar tropes of the classical Roman period. Further, the colosseum is the venue where the battle is performed in the book; the same venue where many deadly gladiator fights were staged in Ancient Rome.

As in other books in the series, the author Latinises everyday words by making them end in 'us': for example, "Shutus your biggus mouthus, cousin!" This is a playful engagement with Latin that, although the words are invented, differentiates the world of Ancient Rome from the more contemporary settings of the other stories in the book. While the comedy of this language-play may be more relevant to adults reading the books than their children, it is an aspect that some children may find entertaining. The historical reference, however, will likely be lost on child readers given that in Australia at least (where the author is from), Latin is seldom taught in schools.

Throughout the book, there are accompanying images in a cartoon style. The words 'kill' and 'stab' are censored here, as in all books in the *Farticus Maximus* series, and replaced by 'butterfly kiss' and 'hug'. In the case of this book, these words do little to censure the

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	violence of some of the more bloody scenes, particularly when the animals attack the criminals as pre-show entertainment. These moments would certainly provide interesting talking points for children and their caregivers about what aspects of this story is historically accurate and what parts are (often humorous) riffs on facts, showing creative license in relation to history.
Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Architecture Colosseum Gladiator Games Latin (Language) Roman Empire Rome Spartacus
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Adventure Adversity Animals Boys Conflict Heroism Historical figures Humour Journeys Revenge Violence
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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