Miriam Riverlea, "Entry on: See You Later, Gladiator (The Time Warp Trio, 9) by Adam McCauley , Jon Scieszka", peer-reviewed by Elizabeth Hale and Elżbieta Olechowska. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2018). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/355. Entry version as of November 11, 2026.

Adam McCauley , Jon Scieszka

See You Later, Gladiator (The Time Warp Trio, 9)

United States (2000)

TAGS: Colosseum Gladiators Latin (Language) Rome Vestal Virgins





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

General information	
Title of the work	See You Later, Gladiator (The Time Warp Trio, 9)
Country of the First Edition	United States of America
Country/countries of popularity	Worldwide
Original Language	English
First Edition Date	2000
First Edition Details	Jon Scieszka, illustrated by Adam McCauley, *See You Later, Gladiator*. New York: Penguin, 2000, 87 pp.
ISBN	0670893404
Genre	Action and adventure fiction, Historical fiction, Illustrated works, Magic realist fiction, Time-Slip Fantasy*
Target Audience	Children
Author of the Entry	Miriam Riverlea, University of New England, mriverlea@gmail.com
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Creators



Adam McCauley , b. 1965
(Illustrator)

Adam McCauley's parents were both artists. Born in Berkeley, he spent his childhood in Columbia, Missouri. As a child he was inspired by Dr. Seuss, Maurice Sendak, and JRR Tolkien. In 1983 he moved to New York to attend Parsons School of Art and Design. He now lives in San Francisco and is a Professor in the Illustration Department at the California College of the Arts. In addition to illustrating children's texts, including the later books in Jon Scieszka's *Time Warp Trio* series, his work has also appeared in advertising and editorial contexts, both in the United States and Japan. He plays drums in a band called the Bermuda Triangle Service with his wife, designer and musician Cynthia Wiggington.

Bio prepared by Miriam Riverlea, University of New England, mriverlea@gmail.com



Photograph of Jon Scieszka taken by photographer Marty Umans, 2008. Retrieved

Jon Scieszka , b. 1954
(Author)

Jon Scieszka was born in Flint, Michigan, United States in 1954. He was the second of six sons born to his parents, who had emigrated to America from Poland. In his autobiography, *Knucklehead: Tall Tales and Almost True Stories of Growing Up Scieszka* (2008), he reveals that many of his writing ideas originate from his childhood experiences. His mother was a nurse and his father the principal of an elementary school. Scieszka considered becoming a doctor and studied both Science and English at Albion College, Albion, Michigan, before moving to New York as an aspiring writer. In 1980 he graduated from Columbia University with a Master of Fine Arts. He taught at an elementary school and worked as a house painter while seeking publishers for his children's stories. He met and began

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from Wikipedia (accessed: February 2, 2022).

collaborating with illustrator Lane Smith. After numerous rejections, *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* (1989) was published by Viking Press, and has since won many awards, sold over three million copies, and been translated into fourteen languages. Scieszka's books often employ parodic and intertextual elements to rework traditional fairy tales, including *The Frog Prince Continued* (1991) *The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales* (1992) and *The Book that Jack Wrote* (1994). T*he Time Warp Trio* series (1991-2006) contains lighthearted depictions of various historical epochs, as well as engaging with literary classics. The series includes a book on Greek mythology, *It's All Greek to Me* (1999) as well as *See You Later Gladiator*. Scieszka is a passionate advocate for boys' literacy and is the founder of the Guys Read program (guysread.com). In 2008 he was named as America's first National Ambassador for Young People's Literature by the 13th Librarian of Congress, James H. Billington.

Bio prepared by Miriam Riverlea, University of New England, mriverlea@gmail.com

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Additional information

Adaptations

In 2005 *See You Later, Gladiator* was adapted as an episode in the animated TV series *Time Warp Trio* series, created by American/Canadian producers Soup2Nuts.

Summary

See You Later, Gladiator is the ninth installment in the *Time Warp Trio*, a comic time-travel adventure series written for boys. In this story, friends Joe, Sam and Fred are play fighting in Joe's bedroom, emulating the moves of their favourite World Wrestling personalities. Their antics cause *The Book*, a magic time travel text given to Joe by his uncle, to tumble from the bookshelf. Just as it has before, *The Book* transports the boys through time and space, this time to ancient Rome, where they find themselves in the arena, facing off against Brutus, a trident-wielding gladiator. Their bravado and Pig Latin curses fail to subdue their opponent, but the encounter is merely a practice session for the real fight to come, as part of the group of eighty gladiators who will perform at the opening of the Colosseum. From their previous adventures, the boys know that they must locate *The Book* in order to get home. They befriend the Professor, a Carthaginian teacher who has been sold into slavery. Though small and untrained as a gladiator, he is determined to win his fight in order to be granted Roman citizenship. After Joe embarrasses Brutus and his sidekick Horridus with a demonstration of brain over brawn, the Professor accompanies them to Rome, educating them along the way about Roman culture and landmarks. Joe comes up with a plan to impress the Emperor and the crowd with the 'Time Warp Trio Blind Ninja Smackdown'. But as they are being granted their freedom, Brutus and Horridus attack, and the boys escape through the city streets, finally taking refuge in the Temple of Vesta. Though their entry is forbidden, the young priestess welcomes them. Reciting a prophesy that foretells their adventure, she hands them their *Book*. The boys return to their own time, and before long resume their three-way wrestling match.

Analysis

The text features a light-hearted depiction of Ancient Rome, including jokes about doing arithmetic with Roman numerals, and characters with comically Latin names like Dorkius and Doofus. But Scieszka's

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representation goes beyond the superficial in referencing Juvenal's famous line about bread and circuses (p. 27) and weaving accurate historical, cultural and topographical details into the narrative. A section at the back of the book features a glossary of basic phrases of 'Latin for Time Travellers'.

McCauley's black and white cartoons exaggerate the physical bodies of the gladiators. Grizzled and muscly, hairy and scarred, they tower over the three skinny boys. Notions of masculinity are an ongoing preoccupation of the *Time Warp Trio* series, which is clearly written for boys, and aims to engage unwilling readers in particular.

Friendship is also a key theme of the text. In spite of the danger, Joe leaps in to save Fred from Horridus, knowing that his friend 'would have done the same' (p.35). It is clear that the boys care for each other in spite of their different personalities. Joe, the narrator, hatches clever plans to get them out of trouble. Fred's obsession with food impresses the gladiators when he triumphs in a burping competition. Bespectacled Sam is the most cautious of the three, and the most anxious to return home. He is the one who wonders 'How come this sign is in Latin, but we can understand when people talk?' (p. 77). This troubling element of time travel logic remains unexplained as the boys' fast-paced adventure continues.

As a time travelling device, *The Book* has significant implications, particularly given Scieszka's interest in promoting literacy. Joe describes it to the Professor as 'a very old book of things that have happened in the past and things that will happen in the future.' (p. 51) Just as *The Book* allows Joe and his friends to experience history first hand, the text celebrates the notion that books more generally allow readers to journey to other times and places. Reading is represented as a means of problem solving when the boys must navigate the streets of Rome.

Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts

Colosseum Gladiators Latin (Language) Rome Vestal Virgins

Adventure Boys Friendship History

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Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture

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