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How To Live Like a Roman Gladiator

Kiersten Carr

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Book Review

Title: How To Live Like a Roman Gladiator

Author: Anita Ganeri

Illustrator: Mariano Epelbaum

Reviewer: Kiersten Carr

Publisher: Hungry Tomato

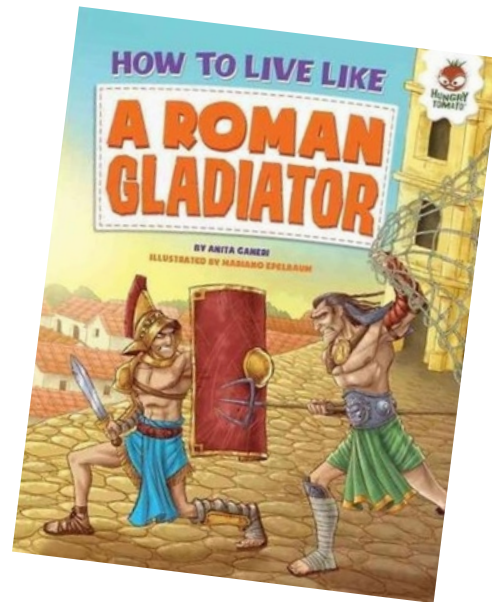
Publication Year: 2015

ISBN: 9781467772112

Number of Pages: 32

Interest Level: Primary, Intermediate

Rating: Excellent



Review

This picture book follows the adventures of Felix, a Gaulish rebel who is captured by the Roman army and sent to Rome to be sold as a gladiator. It is divided into short sections that cover the history, lifestyle, training, and techniques of Roman gladiators from Felix's perspective. It relates Felix being bought at the slave auction, where he is told tales of the slave revolt led by Spartacus, and then shifts to his training and life at the school for gladiators, including a close look at the Coliseum and the tradition of gladiator fighting in ancient Roman culture. The book ends with Felix's first match, in which he fortunately is able to beat his opponent without killing him.

The "day in the life of" type narrative is accompanied by short text boxes that provide additional facts and information, and features colorful illustrations of Felix's path to the arena and his companions, weapons, and gear. Although the subject matter could be considered pretty grim, the cartoonish artwork and upbeat delivery keep it lighthearted and fun. While rendered child-friendly, the author has clearly done their research into what made gladiator combat such a unique part of history. A short glossary and list of facts in the back of the book contains further information, making this an excellent resource for young readers.