

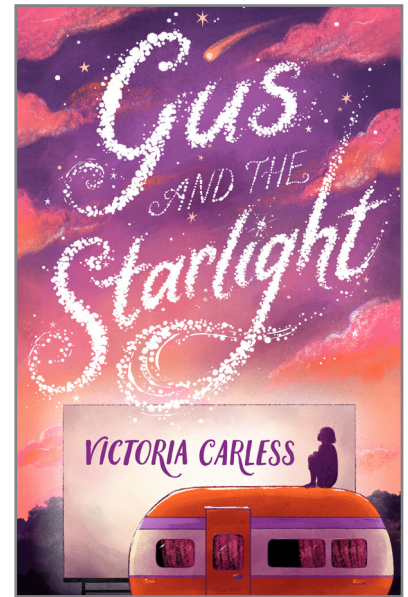
Gus and the Starlight

AUTHOR

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SYNOPSIS

A spine-tingling and heart-warming story about friendship and finding your special place in the world.

Gus doesn't want to make friends. She also doesn't want to be intrigued by the cat-lady teacher at her new school, or the Riley's Comet project that she and her seaweed-eating science partner are working on together.

And she definitely doesn't want to fall in love with her job as the projectionist at the Starlight, a drive-in movie theatre that her family is reviving.

Because, knowing Gus's luck, she and her family could be moving on in a day, or a week, or a month. When the ghosts that haunt Mum catch up with them. Or if the Starlight doesn't succeed.

Then she'll have to say goodbye. Again.

And saying goodbye is too hard.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Victoria writes works of fiction and for theatre. Her novel for young adults, *The Dream Walker*, was nominated for the Queensland Literary Awards and the Children's Book Council of Australia Awards.

Recently Victoria was commissioned by the Museum of Brisbane to write a work for *The Storytellers*, an interactive exhibition celebrating the layers of the city's history.

Victoria lives in Brisbane with her family and a blue heeler who is 98 in dog years. She often googles rescue cats, even though she is allergic. When not writing stories, Victoria works as a communications nerd.

Gus and The Starlight is her first book for Middle Grade readers.

QUESTIONS FOR GUS AND THE STARLIGHT

- Stars, starlight, the cinema, the movies, stories, movie stars, constellations, ghosts, magic, families and comets form a very powerful extended metaphor in this text. How do these metaphors add meaning to the text? How do they influence the audience?
- List three images that have stayed with you after reading the book. Why did they have an impact?

- Go to a thesaurus and look up the following words to see all the alternative words and meanings that come up. Select one of these words, and other similar words you have found in the thesaurus, and write a poem about your family, using one of the words as an extended metaphor:
 - Star
 - Movies
 - Comet
 - Cinema.
- Authors use contrast and metaphors to increase the power of a story to influence a reader. Examine the shape of the story—how does it begin? How do you feel when you read these chapters?
 - Chapter One – what do you feel when you read this chapter? What words generate that feeling in you and why? What do you feel about Gus and her family?
 - Chapter Three – what do you feel about Gus and her family now? Why? What has the author done to influence your feelings?
 - Chapter Four – the family arrives at the Starlight Cinema. The cinema will become a place of transformation. How do you feel as a reader for Gus and her family now? What do you think this place will become? Why is home important? What do humans need?
- As the story progresses, what does the Starlight Drive-In Movie Theatre (and drycleaners) become a metaphor for? How does the metaphor of the movies and the cinema influence readers? How does the shape of the story increase the power of the metaphor of the stars, the cinema, constellations and a sense of belonging and family?
- How does Gus change and develop over the story?
 - What is the impact of the ending?
 - Who helps Gus change over the course of the story?
 - Why are there ghosts in the story?
 - What element do the ghosts or possible ghosts add to the story?
 - Using at least three textual references, write a paragraph explaining the journey Gus has taken over the course of the novel.