

Gus

AUTHOR

LIZ MURRAY

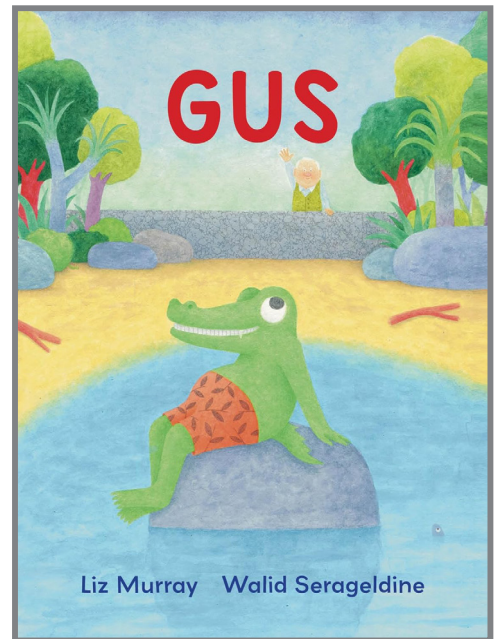
ILLUSTRATOR

WALID SERAGELDINE

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RECOMMENDED FOR: Lower Primary



SYNOPSIS

Gus is the star of the reptile house. He enjoys putting on a show for visitors, and no-one adores seeing Gus more than Edward. They don't just share a bond; they share a birthday. So, Edward decides to become a zookeeper, looking after all of the reptiles, but especially Gus. Over the years, they spend every birthday together, but one day Edward doesn't show up for their shared celebration. Naturally, Gus decides to leave the zoo and find him.

Don't worry, readers. Edward is okay, and Gus is determined to make sure he stays that way. Birthday buddies and true friends stick together.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Liz Murray is a teacher and library director from Melbourne's south-east. She lives with three lovely boys (one husband, two sons) and loves the beach, playing board games with her friends and baking wonky biscuits. She also serves on the committee for YABBA (Young Australian Best Book Awards). *Gus* is her debut children's book.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Walid Serageldine is a Swiss illustrator, living and working in Lucerne. He was a finalist in the Golden Pinwheel Young Illustrators Competition for his debut picture book. *Gus* is his second children's book.

THEMES

- Friendship
- Animals
- Birthdays
- Ageing
- Bonds

STUDY NOTES

- Show the class/group the cover of the book and ask the following questions:
 - What do they think this book will be about?
 - Who do they think will be the main characters?
 - Will it be an imaginative story or an information book?
 - Will it be happy or sad?

Revisit these answers after reading the book.

- Gus is born by hatching out of an egg. What other animals can you think of that are born this way?
- How does the illustrator show Edward and Gus getting older?
- Gus and Edward are best friends. What does 'best friends' mean to you? Can you have more than one best friend? Brainstorm a list of words to describe what a best friend is.
- Edward's favourite animals are crocodiles. What is your favourite animal? Have you ever seen one at the zoo or in nature? Why is it your favourite animal?
 - Draw a picture of your favourite animal.
- When Edward grows up he becomes the reptile keeper at the zoo. What do you think he has to do as the reptile keeper?
- How does Gus feel when Edward doesn't show up on their birthday? How can you tell? Why does he feel that way?
- How does Edward feel when Gus shows up to find him? What kind of place does Edward live in now? Why do you think he moved to this new place?
- Ask an older person in your life, such as a grandparent, about their best friend when they were younger. How did they become friends? Did they stay friends for a long time?
- Imagine you are Gus when he and Edward are older and don't see each other as much. Write a letter to Edward to tell him about what you have been doing or to ask him a question about his life.
- What do you think Gus and Edward would like most for their birthday gifts? Draw a picture of the gifts you would like to give them. What made you select the gifts you chose for them?
- Randomly pair up students in the class/group and have them make friendship bracelets for each other using beads and string. Discuss how friendship bracelets can symbolise commitment to a friend.