



Gus Becomes a Big Brother: An Adoption Story

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Gus Becomes a Big Brother aims to help children navigate the complex feelings they might encounter when welcoming a new sibling—adopted or otherwise—into their home.

The book starts when the title character Gus (an anthropomorphic dog) learns that his parents (also dogs) plan to adopt a new puppy. Their excitement is infectious, and Gus is eager to share his home with a new pup, showing his enthusiasm by choosing toys of his own to pass down and helping prepare the bedroom.

Eventually, the family is interviewed by an adoption agency rep and matched with Pacco. Gus welcomes home his brother and grows to love him, despite some of Pacco's irritating behaviors, including playing with Gus's toys and following him around. Regardless of these hiccups, the family learns to negotiate the challenges of a new member of the family and become tighter and happier as a result.

Author Heather S. Lonczak does a commendable job of guiding families, especially young readers, through the process of adoption. The book highlights the challenges, including the long wait for a match, navigating moments of sibling jealousy, and having a child with a different physical appearance than the rest of the family.

The story is complimented by bright, whimsical illustrations that draw in readers and easily convey both action and emotion. The pages, however, are often text heavy, and challenging words like "generally," "familiarize," and "jetlagged" may require an adult presence for young readers.

Such issues aside, this is a thoughtful and compelling read. *Gus Becomes a Big Brother* reminds both children and grown-ups that while adoption can be challenging, rewards await those who approach the situation with patience and love.

Also available in paperback and ebook.