

# KIRKUS REVIEWS

## TITLE INFORMATION

### **GUS BECOMES A BIG BROTHER**

*An Adoption Story*

Heather S. Lonczak

Illus. by Claudia Varjotie

Self (44 pp.)

\$16.00 hardcover, \$8.99 paperback, \$3.99 e-book

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## BOOK REVIEW

When a canine family gets ready to adopt, a young dog learns about being a big brother in this picture book.

Although the Barker family—Buford, Winnie, and 3-year-old Gus—is a happy one, something is missing. Gus would love a puppy to cavort with, and his parents would like an addition to the family. So when Mr. and Mrs. Barker tell Gus they’re adopting, he exults: “I’m going to be a big brother!” As his parents go through the process, they tell Gus what to expect. After his new brother, Pacco, arrives, Gus has more changes to navigate, such as sharing toys and attention. But he loves playing with Pacco. When others think that Pacco is a friend, Gus replies proudly: “Nope, I’m his *big brother!*” Lonczak, in her latest children’s book focused on teaching resilience, does an admirable job of helping prepare kids for a family adoption. Adults, too, can benefit from how the work thinks through possible problems and offers effective solutions; for example, while Gus will give some of his toys to Pacco, he can keep his favorite ones. Warmth and affection underlie the story, as when Gus is reassured that “your parents have *oodles* of love for you. And when we add a new pup to a family...the love just grows *even bigger.*” Varjotie creates a friendly, relaxed atmosphere with her soft colors, rounded edges, and animals that combine realistic and anthropomorphic features.

Sensitive, thorough, loving guidance that helps smooth the adoption process for siblings-to-be.

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