

**Book Title: The Gus Chronicles: Reflections from an Abused Kid**

**Author: Charles D. Applestein and Gus E. Studelmeyer**

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This book is a fictional account of Gus E. Studelmeyer, a 13-year-old boy who shares his personal dealings with sexual and physical abuse, foster care, residential treatment facilities, relationships, neglect, family, and other sensitive topics. Most of the book is a narrative from Gus' point of view. The author, Applestein, interjects on a few occasions to share some thoughts of the fictional Gus Studelmeyer.

This book is an easy-to-read account of the daily struggles that a teen in a residential treatment facility may face. Gus doesn't hold back when he tells it like it is for him and others in the residential treatment facility. The descriptions are detailed and intense, as is some of the language he uses, but it gives the reader a raw feeling of the pain and emotions that the character is facing. Although a relatively short book (145 pages), the author touches on numerous difficult topics that are talked about in real-life terms and situations. There is no "sugar-coating" or dancing around the issue in *The Gus Chronicles*. Gus tells it how it is and tells the reader how he feels.

The graphic language and details may turn off the reader at first, but eventually it actually provokes emotions from the reader that are not felt from most other books. I was somewhat relieved when I was finished reading the book because it was such an intense experience. However, I think that this is an excellent book for those working with adolescents facing such obstacles or for anyone who wants the "real" story of an abused child.