

# Ida, Always

By Caron Levis



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Ida, Always By Caron Levis

A beautiful, honest portrait of loss and deep friendship told through the story of two iconic polar bears.

Gus lives in a big park in the middle of an even bigger city, and he spends his days with Ida. Ida is right there. Always.

Then one sad day, Gus learns that Ida is very sick, and she isn't going to get better. The friends help each other face the difficult news with whispers, sniffles, cuddles, and even laughs. Slowly Gus realizes that even after Ida is gone, she will still be with him—through the sounds of their city, and the memories that live in their favorite spots.

*Ida, Always* is an exquisitely told story of two best friends—inspired by a real bear friendship—and a gentle, moving, needed reminder that loved ones lost will stay in our hearts, always.

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## Ida, Always By Caron Levis Bibliography

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# **Editorial Review**

#### Review

"Inspired by two real-life polar bears, Gus and Ida, who were residents of New York City's Central Park Zoo, this wonderful story about the loss of a loved one is beautifully told. It's an example of children's books at their best. Santoso's dense, luscious paintings give the couple a solid, reassuring world to live in.... This is a difficult story to tell for both children and adults, but "Ida, Always" does it with simplicity and grace." (Dan Yaccarino *The New York Times Book Review, February 12, 2016*)

### A Bank Street College of Education Best Children's Book of the Year (5-8 category)

"I am in awe of this wise, endearing, tender and beautiful—so very beautiful—book, which is sure to become a classic of children's literature.... The words and the pictures meld perfectly to explore the emotional journey of love and loss, breaking your heart and then beginning to mend it." (Judith Viorst, author of the bestselling Alexander books and The Tenth Good Thing About Barney)

**\*STARRED REVIEW\*** "Inspired by two polar bears that lived in New York City's Central Park Zoo several years ago, Levis (*Stuck with the Blooz*) takes readers on a reassuring emotional journey that explores friendship, love, and loss.... Levis's characterization of caring, supportive friends is spot on.... The description of Ida's passing is brief, poignant, and gentle, as is Gus's adjustment to life without his best friend. Santoso (*I Don't Like Koala*) creates gauzy backgrounds featuring the city skyline and the zoo's greenery, and his slightly anthropomorphic bears convey a wealth of feeling through their expressive eyes, smiles, and body language." (*Publishers Weekly, November 2015, \*STARRED REVIEW\**)

**\*STARRED REVIEW\*** "Loosely based on Gus and Ida, the polar bears who lived at the Central Park Zoo until Ida's death in 2011 and Gus's death in 2013, this frank yet sensitive work explores loss and affirms the power of friendship.... While the tone is gentle, Levis is honest about the turmoil and anguish of terminal illness.... The quiet, lyrical text is complemented by the soft, evocative visuals.... Santoso's design is particularly inspired, with good use of the gutter and perspective.... Although Gus experiences real loss upon Ida's death, the book ends on a hopeful note, emphasizing the strength of the friendship and Gus's memories of Ida. VERDICT A tender and honest portrayal of coming to terms with death." (*School Library Journal, January 2016, \*STARRED REVIEW\**)

**\*STARRED REVIEW\*** "In an honest and upfront manner, [Caron Levis] gracefully reflects the complicated emotions of not only dealing with loss afterward, but living with the dying. In Levis's soothing narrative, Ida will always be with Gus, because, as Ida told him,"You don't have to see it to feel it." The polar bears are sweetly and expressively drawn, and the sky, clouds, shadows, sunshine and rain in Australian illustrator Charles Santoso's (*I Don't Like Koala*) softly luminous digital paintings all beautifully mirror the story's joy and sadness." (*Shelf Awareness, February 2016, \*STARRED REVIEW\**)

"*Ida, Always*...stands out as that exceptional issue book that expands the audience into the realm of being a book everyone should read.... More than any other book on loss, *Ida, Always* manages to tell a story that is just as good at comforting a child experiencing loss as it is at explaining loss to a child who has yet to experience it. This second quality lifts *Ida, Always* into being "a book for every child."" (Kenny Brechner *Publishers Weekly ShelfTalker, April 7th, 2016*)

"This is a picture book about loss and grief, so it is probably not a coincidence that it is pictorially dominated

by skies. Santoso paints amazing skies. There's a spectacular view of the sky on almost every page of the story.... The book is very blunt about what's happening: "one day, when her body stopped working, Ida would die." Levis writes about death and the bears' mutual devotion with surprising beauty.... But some of the most affecting passages are hardly poetic at all... the pictures are so simple they're heartbreaking." (*Kirkus Reviews, December 2015*)

"This simple story of bereavement and friendship is made even more affecting by its richly colored, quiet illustrations.... A heartfelt and powerful depiction of loss and recovery." (*Booklist, January 2016*)

"This thoughtful story is a good way to introduce a discussion of death to young children.... The soft gentle illustrations perfectly complement the understated, quiet text. This would be a good addition to library collections on death and dying for children." (*School Library Connection, May 2016, Recommended*)

#### About the Author

Caron Levis enjoys working with kids, using drama and writing to develop social, emotional, and literacy skills. She was inspired to write *Ida, Always* by the brave students, teachers, and parents she met during visits with her first book, *Stuck with the Blooz*. She is an MSW candidate at Hunter College, with an MFA in creative writing from the New School, where she now teaches. She lives in New York City, where she grew up near the real Gus and Ida. Some sounds that remind Caron of people she loves and misses are: the squeak of a sticky candy jar opening, the whir of a rotary phone dial, and the *crash-swoosh* of the ocean. You can visit her online at CaronLevis.com.

Charles Santoso loves drawing little things in his little journal and dreaming about wondrous stories. He gathers inspiration from his childhood memories, and curiosities he discovers in his everyday travels. He has illustrated several picture books, including *I Don't Like Koala* by Sean Ferrell. Charles also works as a visual development artist, creating illustrations for feature film projects. He lives and works in Sydney, Australia. You can visit him at CharlesSantoso.com.

## **Users Review**

#### From reader reviews:

### **Edward Knudsen:**

What do you concerning book? It is not important with you? Or just adding material when you really need something to explain what your own problem? How about your free time? Or are you busy person? If you don't have spare time to perform others business, it is give you a sense of feeling bored faster. And you have extra time? What did you do? Every person has many questions above. They have to answer that question simply because just their can do that. It said that about book. Book is familiar on every person. Yes, it is right. Because start from on guardería until university need this specific Ida, Always to read.

## **Rene Pina:**

This book untitled Ida, Always to be one of several books that will best seller in this year, that's because when you read this publication you can get a lot of benefit upon it. You will easily to buy that book in the book store or you can order it through online. The publisher on this book sells the e-book too. It makes you more easily to read this book, since you can read this book in your Smartphone. So there is no reason for your requirements to past this publication from your list.

#### **Albert Collins:**

Playing with family within a park, coming to see the coastal world or hanging out with friends is thing that usually you could have done when you have spare time, and then why you don't try factor that really opposite from that. A single activity that make you not sense tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you are ride on and with addition associated with. Even you love Ida, Always, you can enjoy both. It is fine combination right, you still need to miss it? What kind of hang-out type is it? Oh occur its mind hangout men. What? Still don't understand it, oh come on its referred to as reading friends.

#### Sheri Williams:

This Ida, Always is brand new way for you who has interest to look for some information because it relief your hunger associated with. Getting deeper you upon it getting knowledge more you know otherwise you who still having little bit of digest in reading this Ida, Always can be the light food for you personally because the information inside this specific book is easy to get by simply anyone. These books develop itself in the form which can be reachable by anyone, that's why I mean in the e-book application form. People who think that in e-book form make them feel drowsy even dizzy this guide is the answer. So there is not any in reading a e-book especially this one. You can find actually looking for. It should be here for you. So , don't miss the idea! Just read this e-book kind for your better life and knowledge.

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