

HOW GUS

WAS LOOKING FORWARD
TO HAVING A NEW BABY BROTHER



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THE SPARROW IS ONE OF THE MOST COMMON BIRDS IN EUROPE.



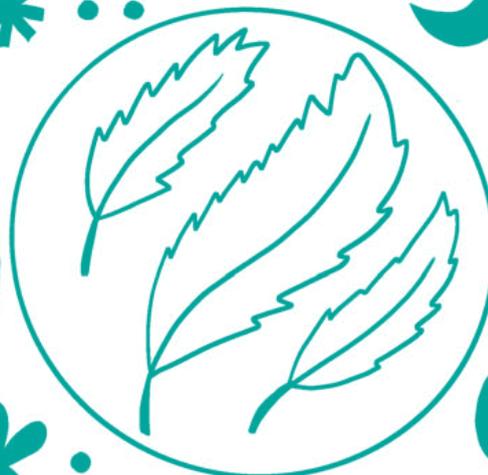
A SPARROW'S NEST LOOKS LIKE A HEAP OF STRAW. THE BIRD ENTERS THROUGH A SIDE ENTRANCE AND THE WHOLE INTERIOR IS LINED WITH FEATHERS.



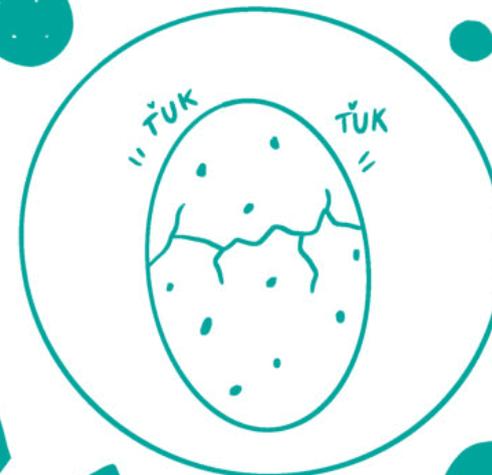
SPARROW EGGS ARE WHITISH IN COLOUR WITH DARK SPOTS.



THEY BUILD THEIR NESTS IN TREE TOPS, BUSHES, GNARLED TREES, IN THE ROOFS OF BUILDINGS OR IN HOLES IN WALLS

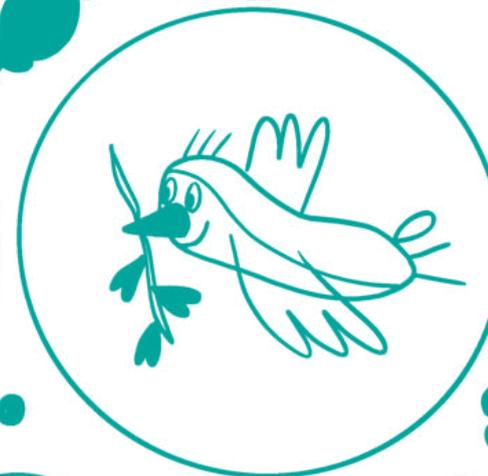


THE MOTHER SPARROW USUALLY LAYS 5 TO 6 EGGS TWO OR THREE TIMES A YEAR.



THE YOUNG SPARROWS LEAVE THE NEST 17 DAYS AFTER THEY HATCH.

IN AUTUMN, SPARROWS AND OTHER SPECIES FORM FLOCKS IN WHICH THEY SPEND THE WINTER TOGETHER.



BOTH PARENTS BUILD THE NEST AND LOOK AFTER THE EGGS TOGETHER.

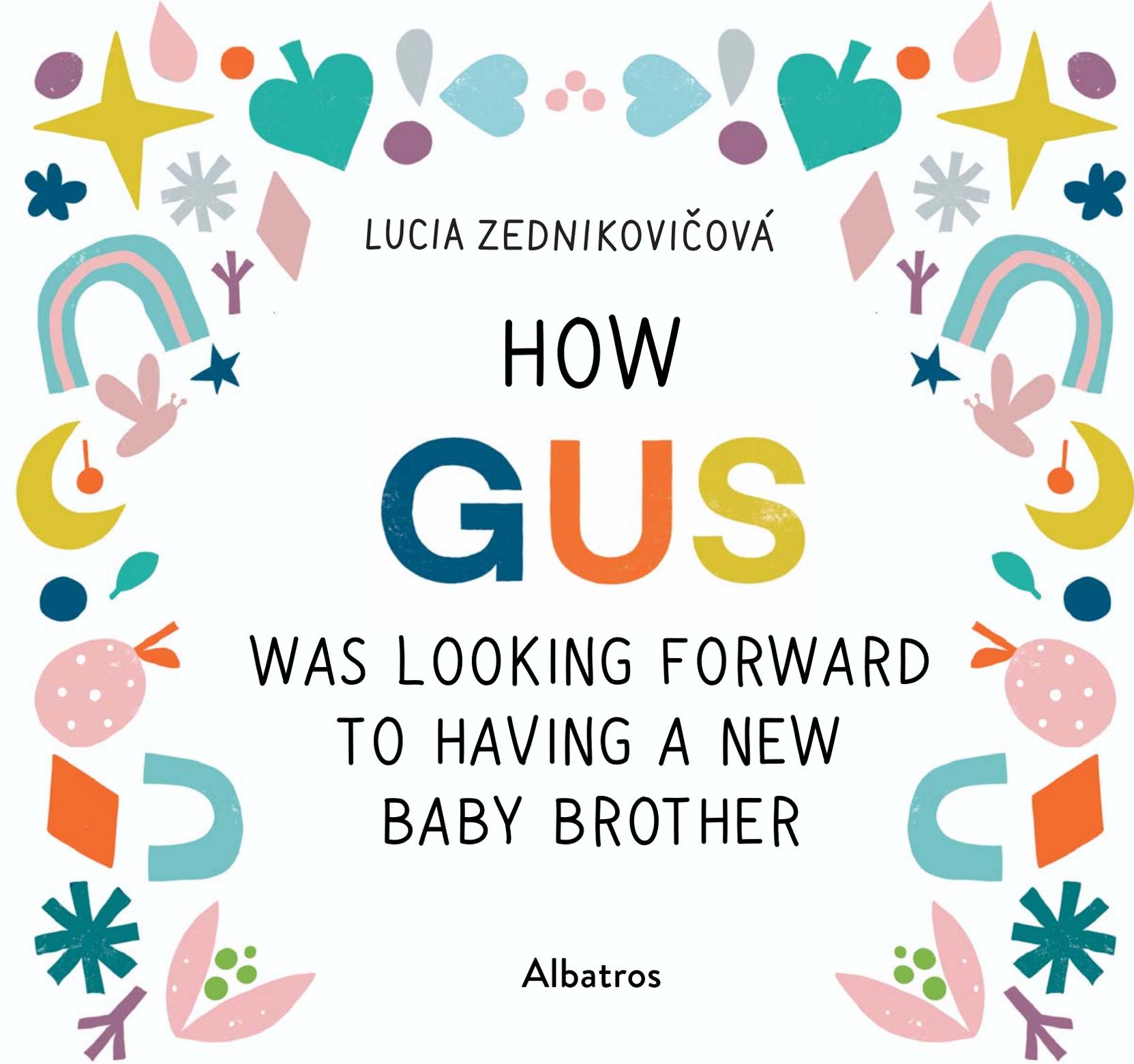


THE YOUNG BIRDS HATCH FROM THE EGGS IN AROUND 12 TO 14 DAYS.





FOR ALÁNEK AND MILI



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Albatros

This is Gus – the sparrow who became a pilot. You may be asking, “How is it possible for a sparrow to become a pilot?” Well, as a matter of fact, it’s not that difficult at all. All you need is a big dream and the courage to go for it. Then, even an ordinary sparrow like Gus can become anything he chooses and fulfil his dream of becoming a pilot.



Gus didn't even have his own aeroplane. He had to borrow one secretly from the children in a nearby garden. It was a remote-controlled aircraft and the sparrow trained on it nearly every day, in secret, of course.



When he wasn't training, Gus spent his time in his room, leafing through his grandpa's old books on flying. His parents were happy that he liked to read so much. But they never imagined that Gus was a real pilot.

Sometimes Gus felt lonely.

“I would love to have somebody to talk to about flying,” he sighed one day, on his way to the playground.

“But who can I talk to? The other sparrows are only interested in pecking at pinecones?”



His cousin Emil, who was passing by with another ruffled sparrow, quipped mockingly, “What’s that thing on your head? Are you off to the carnival?”

“For your information, it’s a real flying helmet. It was my grandpa’s,” objected Gus.



“And are you a great pilot, then?” asked Emil, continuing to tease him.

“You bet I am,” responded Gus, who didn’t like people making fun of him.

“A proper pilot,” he added proudly.

He thought the sparrows would now treat him with respect.



But instead they burst into loud fits of laughter:
“What a lot of nonsense! Wearing a helmet doesn’t make you a pilot.”
“If you don’t believe it, come with me,” insisted Gus.
“I’ll show you how to fly a real plane, and I’ll even take you
along as passengers. If you’re not too scared, that is.”



“Us, ... scared? We’re not afraid of anything!” the sparrows responded defiantly.
They followed Gus to the garden where he normally trained. From a distance,
they could see that the children were playing with the aeroplane.
“We’ll have to wait until they go for lunch,” whispered Gus solemnly,
“then I show you what I can do.”

And so the sparrows sat impatiently in the grass a little way away, waiting eagerly
for the right moment. But before Gus was able to demonstrate his flying skills,
something else happened, something completely unexpected.

Let’s go, you two!

The children’s mother called them.
They gathered up their toys and jumped
into the car, which was packed with luggage.





The devastated Gus watched sadly as the car departed, wondering where they were going with his beloved plane. “Well, Mr. Pilot, where’s your famous plane gone?” laughed Emil and his friend. And then, with hop and a sudden rush of wings, they were gone.



Gus felt deflated. His plan to find friends who he could show his aviation treasures to was in pieces. “If only Grandpa were here. He’d certainly know how I feel,” he sighed sadly and went back home to his books.

"I don't have a friend who really understands me," Gus confided to his mother one morning.

"Don't worry, Sweetheart, you won't be on your own much longer. We're having another baby," she announced with excitement. Gus smiled, looking curiously at his tiny old baby clothes that were drying on the line in the sun. "With all those books, we're not going to fit another little bed in your room," Mum continued, "so we'll have to move them to the living room."

You can't!

"My books?" exclaimed Gus, in surprise, the smile draining from his face. "You can't do that! Grandpa's books are my treasures, and I'm not moving them anywhere," he added gloomily and hopped off.

Gus hopped aimlessly from branch to branch, sighing unhappily with each bound.

Hey! Hi! Hello!

After a while, he ran into the squirrel sisters. “What have you been up to today?” they asked. “Oh, it’s not worth talking about,” he snorted. “My plane’s gone, I don’t have any friends, and, on top of that, I’m going to have to share my room with a baby,” he complained.

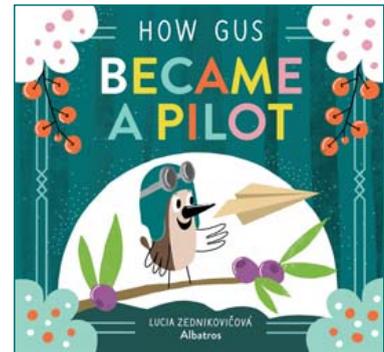


“How lovely! You’re going to have a sibling,” the squirrels giggled. “That’ll be wonderful! You’ll have a friend, somebody to play with, and you’ll also have somebody you can teach all kinds of things to,” they pointed out, trying to raise Gus’s spirits. “Do you think so?” considered the sparrow. “There’s no doubt about it! We do everything together,” the squirrel sisters giggled. And off they hopped into the forest. Gus hurried home in a state of excitement.



**Come and meet Gus
again in his next book.**

Don't forget to read about Gus's first
adventure:



How Gus was looking forward to having a new baby brother

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The sparrow family is expecting a new addition. Gus is certain it's going to be little brother and talks to the egg about aeroplanes and flying. However, the egg hatches and out pops a little sister. Gus is angry and disappointed, but not for long. Girls are full of surprises.

No, no!



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