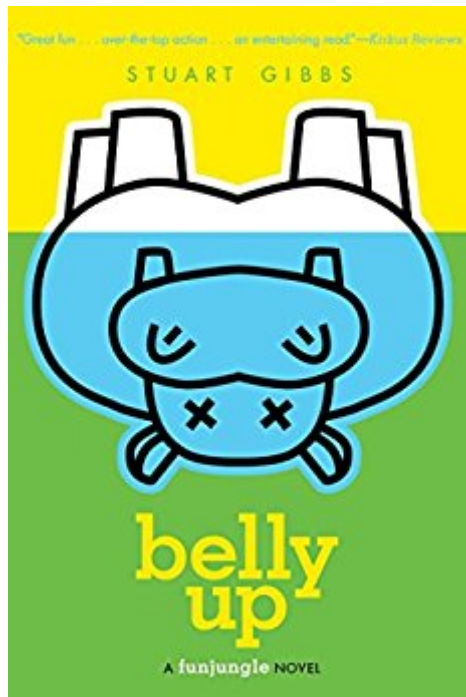


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# Belly Up (Teddy Fitzroy Series Book 1)



## Synopsis

Twelve-year-old Theodore "Teddy" Roosevelt Fitzroy believes that Henry, the hippopotamus at the brand-new FunJungle, has been murdered. The zoo's top brass claim the hippo went belly up the natural way, but Teddy and his feisty friend Summer McCracken have other ideas. Could the culprit be FunJungle's animal-hating head of operations? Or is it FunJungle's owner "Summer's dad" a man who is much more concerned about money than animal welfare? The deeper Teddy and Summer dig, the more danger they're in because when it comes to hippo homicide, the truth can't be caged!

## Book Information

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Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

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## Customer Reviews

The basic premise behind this story is fun, quirky, and appealing for both boys and girls. As an elementary school media specialist, I was excited to pick this book up and read through it, expecting it to be a good pick for reluctant readers. Unfortunately, this is not the book for elementary school! There were numerous instances of foul language throughout the book, beginning within the first couple of chapters as a character is identified as "p..... off." Thankfully, the author stops short of dropping the most offensive four letter bombs, however the story is still riddled with numerous

expletives. The story would have been just as enjoyable (even more so, in my opinion) without this. The story seems a bit juvenile...hence a good match for elementary...but the language issues supersede the juvenile story line and therefore place this book as more appropriate for middle school.

Teddy Fitzroy is the precocious narrator of Stuart Gibbs' *BELLY UP*, a novel about a 12-year-old boy's attempts to determine the killer of FunJungle's star mascot, Henry the Hippo. Having spent the majority of his young life in the African wilds with his field biologist mother and nature photographer father, Teddy's knowledge of animal behavior and matter-of-fact delivery of nature facts, skepticism of corporate and consumer life, and naivete regarding human behavior make an inviting mix for his narrative voice. Basically, his family has been hired to help with the development of FunJungle, which Teddy describes as a mash-up of the San Diego Zoo and Disneyland, with all the attendant merchandising and corporate concerns. While his parents have been lured there to help secure the welfare of the animals, as have many of the other professionals, these interests conflict with the management of the facility, including the need to preserve good press. This situation provides Gibbs a platform to mention a wide range of social issues without turning his novel into a soapbox. While the book contains a number of technical terms, this book should be easily accessible to kids who have read the Harry Potter books and enjoy watching *JIMMY NEUTRON*. Teddy's experiences have given him a broad vocabulary. My eleven year old laughed so hard at passages of this book that he rolled off the couch. *BELLY UP* can be earthy and gross in places, and there are some mild oaths in a couple of places, and there are a couple of convenient coincidences, and there are a couple of two-dimensional characters, but as a whole the novel offers a fun, engaging read and will give readers a new perspective the next time they visit a zoo. I highly recommend this book, and I encourage all to read it before a film version appears, because, believe me, Hollywood will tone down a number of elements. If Teddy Fitzroy has further adventures, I will want to check them out.

*Belly Up* is a book about a hippo named Henry, the mascot at FunJungle, who is mysteriously murdered. Teddy, the kid who was born in the Congo in Africa, lives at the zoo in a trailer park behind the zoo because both his parents work there and they're basically out in the middle of nowhere. Teddy is curious to know who murdered Henry, so he goes investigating, with lots of near-death experiences. Along to help him is Summer McCracken, who gave her father, J.J. McCracken, the idea to build FunJungle. Will Teddy and Summer catch the culprit? Find out in this

thrilling mystery. I suggest you do not read this if you are younger (maybe 9 and under), because some words are offensive (curse words, drugs, etc.). This book may have been geared towards older people (10 plus). Thanks for reading my review!

I started reading this to see if my cousins (who are between 7 and 11) would like it-- and I ended up loving it. It's a fun, mysterious, animal-friendly book. It not only keeps the reader on edge as an exciting whodunnit but also touches on deep questions of animal welfare and consumerism. The characters, both the children and the adults are touchingly real, filled with flaws and always given the chance to redeem themselves. Although it takes place in an imaginary zoo and much of the book is comedy, everything that happens feels so authentic. I'd recommend it to both kids and adults-- everyone will get something different out of it.

After winning this book in a raffle, my son asked me if I wanted to read it too. I agreed, not knowing what to expect. I will agree that early on in the book when he uses "p\*\*sed" in his verbage I was a little taken aback. It was disappointing, however, despite a few bleeps, which I hope he will take out of his futher books, I loved this little book. Really loved it. It was a page turner, Gibbs develops his characters very well, and it is a very easy read, with excitment and intrigue. It is unfortunate that authors forget that not everyone allow their children to use this language even though it is part of our dwindling society. I don't know what to say except that maybe our schools could black out the few offensive words so that it can be in the schools. OR, maybe just maybe Stuart Gibbs will read some of the "constructive" comments and make some changes in the future, I certainly hope so because I think it would be a shame for kids not to enjoy his creative writing. I will buy his next book with fingers crossed!

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