

One and Only Ivan, The

Applegate, K



Inspired by a true story, this is the beautifully written tale of how a mighty gorilla, Ivan, wins freedom for both himself and a baby elephant called Ruby. Told from the perspective of Ivan, this novel has an important message for readers about the plight of animals in captivity.

Collections ARC-BC Novel

Subject English Language Arts

Grades 4-5

Primary Identifier 9780062135797

Evaluation Date Apr 2013

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Resource Evaluation

CURRICULUM FIT

Does the resource support BC curriculum?

Moderately

This product supports the Core Competencies of the BC curriculum:

- Reading
- Social Responsibility

This novel strongly supports expectations for fostering social responsibility and connects to the science topic of habitats. Teachers could also use this novel and the true story that inspired it to address strands of the Social Studies curriculum as examples of public protest and changing sensibilities.

SUGGESTED CLASSROOM USAGE

This novel would be best used in a way that allows learners to read at their own pace and then discuss. Its strength lies in its exploration of themes and perspective, not in its plot, making it less engaging as a read-aloud. If used for literature circles, the discussions would likely be richest if the reading was broken into not more than two chunks, due to the style and size of the novel.

SOCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ability:

An elephant is made to work when ill, dying of infection and poor living conditions.

Violence:

A sharp blade is used to get a young elephant to obey owner; human anger is portrayed with throwing objects and raised voices.

Ethical:

Wild animals are captured, sold and kept in in small cages.

Do the social considerations support, rather than detract from, student learning?

Extensively

Social Considerations Comments:

The examples of abuse and neglect are necessary to help the reader develop empathy for captive animals whose needs and feelings are not adequately considered.

GENERAL CONTENT

Content

Is the resource engaging?

Moderately

Is the content current for the intended curriculum and grade?

Extensively

Is the content accurate for the intended curriculum and grade?

Extensively

Is the content timely and important for student broad understandings?

Extensively

Audience:

Is the content appropriate to the emotional maturity and cognitive level of students?

Extensively

Does the resource provide opportunities for creative and critical thinking?

Moderately

Can the content be differentiated?

Moderately

Can reading level be adjusted?

Moderately

Is the level of detail appropriate?

Extensively

Is the content of particular interest to male students?

Moderately

Is the content of particular interest to female students?

Moderately

Is the language use appropriate to the emotional maturity and cognitive level of students?

Moderately

The large font size and simple vocabulary make the novel accessible to lower intermediate readers and English language learners while readers with more sophisticated skills will understand more of the nuances of the animals' perspectives.

TECHNICAL DESIGN

Is the location of illustrations appropriate?

Moderately

Is the use of font, text size and presentation uniform?

Moderately

31 small black and white illustrations are located throughout the novel, adding interest and supporting the understanding of less fluent readers and English language learners.

PRINT NOVEL

Does the text show insight into the complexity of the human condition?

Moderately

Does the text broaden students' experiences and understanding?

Extensively

To what degree is this text stylistically rich?

Extensively

Plot description:

Ivan is captured as an infant, initially living with an American couple until he becomes too big and he is relocated to a tiny cage as the featured star of a mall menagerie. When a baby elephant moves to an adjacent cage, Ivan is determined to find a way to get her a fuller, happier life. He uses crayons to draw a better home for her and an attentive child interprets and posts his art, launching a public outcry that results in relocation to better environments for both the elephant and Ivan.

Related Comments:

This story is inspired by the true story of a gorilla who was caged alone until a public outcry led to his relocation to a more enriched environment. Themes include creative problem-solving, determination, and friendship. Ivan accepts his own monotonous life but the plight of his baby elephant neighbour rouses him to action. The novel is presented from the perspective of the animals, creating both humour and poignant reactions. The predictable outcome may diminish engagement for some readers.

Genre:

Contemporary

Literary Highlights:

- Well-developed themes
- Point of view

Type:

Novel

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS**Readability:**

- At intended grade level(s)

2013 Newbery Award Medal

Resource URL

<https://focusedresources.ca/en/k-12-evaluated-resource-collection/one-and-only-ivan>