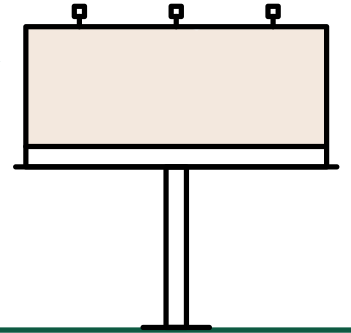


THE ONE AND ONLY IVAN: NOVEL DISCUSSION GUIDE #2



Encourage critical thinking and support your students' literacy development by asking questions during reading. Here are some questions you can ask your readers to engage them in a discussion. **Sample answers**

Chapters: arrival - home of the one and only ivan

Comprehension

- ✦ What is the baby elephant's name, and where is she from?
The baby elephant's name is Ruby. She is from a circus out west but was born in the wild before her family was killed.
- ✦ How does Mack get Ruby to come out of the truck?
When Ruby will not get out of the truck, Mack gets Stella out of her domain to help. Stella helps calm Ruby as she leads her out of the truck and into the domain.
- ✦ When Julia realizes Ivan feels ignored, what does she give him to make him feel better?
Julia gives Ivan a piece of paper and a pencil.
- ✦ What does Stella say is the reason that the circus trainers chained Ruby to the floor?
Stella says that the circus trainers chained Ruby to the floor to "break her spirit" so she could learn to do tricks, like balancing on a pedestal, standing on her hind legs, and having a dog on her back while she walked in circles.
- ✦ Describe the relationship between Stella and Ruby.
Stella and Ruby have an instant special relationship. Stella is gentle as she cares for Ruby, and Ruby looks to Stella for comfort. Ruby refers to her as "Aunt Stella."
- ✦ How does the billboard change after Ruby arrives?
After Ruby arrives, the billboard features a picture of a little elephant with a lopsided smile, a red hat, and a curly tail. Ivan says that "she doesn't look like Ruby. She doesn't even look like an elephant."

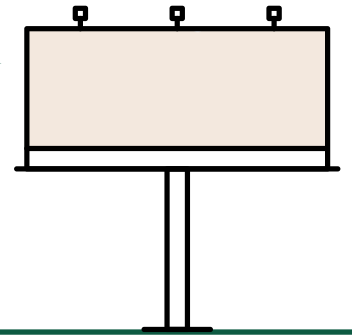
Analysis

- ✦ When Ruby arrives, Stella paces around her cage, grumbles, and shows that she is angry. Why does she feel this way?
Stella is angry to see another elephant brought to the Big Top Mall because elephants and other wild animals are not meant to live in a circus. She is especially upset because Ruby is a baby elephant who is scared and alone. Because of Stella's experience, she knows that the life Ruby will live at the mall will not be a good one.
- ✦ What type of mood does Mack create when he tries to get Ruby out of the truck? How might the animals feel?
Mack is yelling when he tries to get Ruby out of the truck. There is a lot of noise and scuffling, which shows that Mack is getting frustrated. Mack and the other men yell at each other and Ruby. This creates an uneasy mood in the story, and might make the other animals feel stressed and nervous.
- ✦ Based on the way Stella describes Ruby as "too thin," what can you tell about Ruby's life before she got to the Big Top Mall?
Before Ruby arrived at Big Top Mall, she was underfed and not well-cared for. She was in the truck for days and was probably uncomfortable, hungry, and scared.

Personal Connection

- ✦ When Ruby arrives at Big Top Mall, she asks a lot of questions. Think about a time when you were new somewhere. What questions did you have?
Student answers will vary.

THE ONE AND ONLY IVAN: NOVEL DISCUSSION GUIDE #2



Encourage critical thinking and support your students' literacy development by asking questions during reading. Here are some questions you can ask your readers to engage them in a discussion. **Sample answers**

Chapters: art lesson - ruby's story

Comprehension

- ✦ Why does Ivan love to draw?
Ivan loves to draw because it helps him feel quiet inside.
- ✦ What treat does George bring Stella?
George brings Stella a carrot.
- ✦ How does Mack react when George tells him about Stella's infected foot?
Mack says that her foot never heals right, which shows that he is frustrated. Instead of calling the vet, he says that he will keep an eye on Stella's foot because money is tight.
- ✦ What does Ruby's laugh remind Ivan of?
Ruby's laugh makes Ivan think of the song of a bird he remembered from a long time ago. He described the bird as "a tiny yellow bird with a voice like dancing water."
- ✦ Why are more people coming to the mall?
More people are coming to the mall to see Ruby. Mack thinks it's a result of the billboard's picture of Ruby.
- ✦ What did the humans do after Ruby fell in the hole?
After Ruby fell in the hole, the humans grabbed ropes and pulled her out of the hole. They saved her, fed her, and led her back to her family.

Analysis

- ✦ Why does Ivan continue to draw pictures for Ruby?
Ivan's drawings make Ruby laugh, and Ivan says "it's a good feeling, making Ruby laugh." Because he knows Ruby is scared and sad, Ivan keeps drawing so he can cheer her up.
- ✦ According to Ivan, Stella would make a great mother. What qualities does Stella have that would make her a great mother?
Stella is a good friend to others, and she cares about their well-being. Stella is gentle and caring, which we see in her relationship with Ruby. She is also wise, which we see when she listens to her friends and shares stories.
- ✦ Why is Bob so surprised by Ruby's rescue story?
Bob is so surprised by Ruby's rescue story because his experience with humans has been mostly negative. He doesn't understand how some humans can be good, while others can be bad, like the ones who threw his siblings and him out of a truck on the freeway.

Personal Connection

- ✦ Bob sleeps when he is bored. What do you do when you are bored?
Student answers will vary.

THE ONE AND ONLY IVAN: NOVEL DISCUSSION GUIDE #2



Encourage critical thinking and support your students' literacy development by asking questions during reading. Here are some questions you can ask your readers to engage them in a discussion. **Sample answers**

Chapters: a hit – once upon a time

Comprehension

- ✦ Why does Ruby perform without Stella?
Stella is in too much pain to perform, so Ruby has to perform without her.
- ✦ How does the audience react to Ruby?
The audience loves Ruby. They coo and clap for her. Ruby is “a hit”.
- ✦ Why does Julia sit by Stella’s domain until it’s time to go home?
Julia sits by Stella’s domain until it’s time to go home because she sees that Stella is not feeling well. Julia is worried about Stella.
- ✦ What promise does Ivan make?
Ivan promises to make sure that Ruby has a different life than Stella has had. He promises to help Ruby live in a safe place, rather than the Big Top Mall.
- ✦ Who is the first to know what happened to Stella?
Ivan is the first to know what happened to Stella. He said, “I know it the way you know that summer is over and winter is on its way. I just know.”
- ✦ How does Ivan react when he learns that Bob told Ruby about Ivan’s promise?
Ivan panics a little when he learns that Bob told Ruby about the promise he made to Stella. He tells Bob that he shouldn’t have made the promise because he believes there’s no way he can save Ruby.

Analysis

- ✦ Stella says that “gorilla hearts are made of ice.” What does that mean?
Stella thinks that gorillas do not feel joy and grief the way elephants do. A “heart of ice” is cold and unable to feel emotions, whether they are happy or sad.
- ✦ Why does Ivan think saving Ruby would be harder than not being a gorilla anymore? Why does he make the promise to Stella anyway?
Ivan cannot even save himself from the Big Top Mall, so he has no idea how he can save someone else. He decides to make the promise to Stella because he loves her. He wants to make Stella happy and help her feel better.
- ✦ Based on what you know about Mack and his behavior in the crying chapter, how does he probably feel about what happened to Stella?
Mack probably regrets not taking better care of Stella. When he shrugs and his shoulders droop, he leaves without saying a word. He is probably sad that Stella is gone.

Personal Connection

- ✦ Bob encourages Ivan to be confident in himself. Think about a time someone encouraged you. What did they say, and how did it make you feel? Explain.
Student answers will vary.



Encourage critical thinking and support your students' literacy development by asking questions during reading. Here are some questions you can ask your readers to engage them in a discussion. **Sample answers**

Chapters: the grunt - my place

Comprehension

- ✦ Where was Ivan born?
Ivan was born in a rainforest in central Africa.
- ✦ What were Ivan and his sister's names when they were little, and why were they given those names?
Ivan's name was Mud when he was little. His parents gave him that name because all day long, every day, he used mud to draw pictures on rocks, bark, and his mother's back. Ivan's sister was named Tag because she loved to chase Ivan around the forest.
- ✦ What happened to Ivan and Tag when the humans came?
The humans captured Ivan and Tag, put them in a cramped, dark crate, and shipped them somewhere. Tag passed away in the crate.
- ✦ In what ways did Mack and Helen treat Ivan like he was their own child? List at least three ways.
Mack and Helen raised Ivan like he was their human baby. They gave him a bed in their home, fed him human food, and took him places they'd take a human child. Mack and Helen took Ivan to fast-food restaurants, baseball games, grocery stores, movie theaters, and the circus. Ivan even blew out candles on a birthday cake.
- ✦ What did Ivan miss about his old life?
Ivan missed the touch of a grooming friend, play fighting, and the safety he felt when he was with his troop. Ivan also missed simply being and living in nature with other gorillas.
- ✦ How did Ivan feel when he saw his new domain?
Ivan was thrilled when he saw his new domain because he had his own place where he couldn't break things, like furniture.

Analysis

- ✦ How does the life of a baby gorilla in the wild compare to a human baby's life?
Both gorilla and human babies are cared for by their parents. They play, learn, and make mistakes as they go.
- ✦ When Ivan was raised by Mack and Helen, he dealt with conflicting, or mixed-up, feelings. Why did Ivan say that he needed to let his old life die?
Even though Ivan liked things about his new life and he knew that he was well-cared for by Mack and Helen, he thought of his old life as a "perfect life." He missed certain things about that life, but he tried not to think about them. He realized that if he held on to his old life, he would never be happy or able to adapt. He thinks that the loss would make him unable to survive his journey, like Tag.
- ✦ How did life change for Mack and Ivan when Helen left?
When Helen left, Mack was gloomy. He must have finally realized that Ivan was too big to live in the house, and he moved Ivan to the new domain at Big Top Mall.

Personal Connection

- ✦ If human babies were named in the same way gorilla babies were named, what would your name be? What would your family members' names be?
Student answers will vary.