



The One & Only Ivan by Katherine Applegate Discussion Questions

1. What does Ivan mean when he says, “in my size humans see a test of themselves” (p.4) and “I am too much gorilla and not enough human” (p.7)?
2. What are the characteristics of Stella & Bob that make Ivan call them his best friends? Why is each of them important to Ivan?
3. Discuss the special bond between Julia and Ivan. Why is she different than all the other children who come to see his shows?
4. What is the importance of the television in Ivan’s cage? What does he learn from watching television? What do you learn from television?
5. Compare the personalities of Mack and George. How are they alike, how are they different? What is the meaning of family to each of them?
6. What is Ivan’s initial reaction to the arrival of Ruby? Compare Ruby’s arrival with that of a new baby in a human household.
7. Why does Ivan promise Stella that he will take care of Ruby when he knows how hard it will be to keep that promise?

8. Discuss the importance of memory in the story. How does Ivan's perception change when he begins to remember more of his own history?
9. What is the turning point in the story? When does Ivan start to believe that he will be able to help Ruby, and perhaps himself as well?
10. Discuss the theme of belonging in this story, from the point of view of each of the characters. What does the idea of belonging mean to you?

(<https://www.harpercollinschildrens.com>)

Find additional copies of printable discussion questions here:

www.sussexlibraries.org/one-only-ivan

