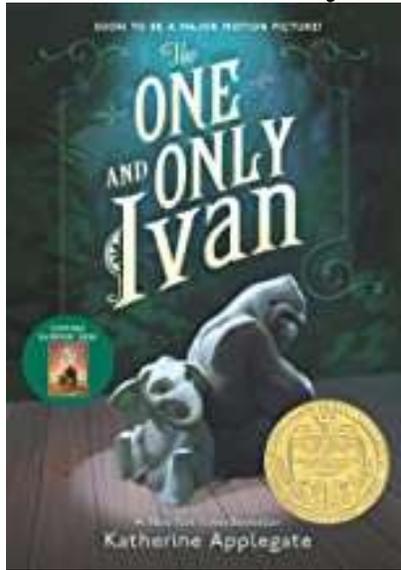


The One and Only Ivan



By Katherine Applegate

Reviewed by Esther J. Hildahl

The One and Only Ivan is a wonderful story. It won the Newberry Medal in 2013 and will soon be a movie. It's a work of fiction, but was inspired by the true story of a gorilla who lived for 27 years at the B&I Shopping Center in Tacoma, Washington. During that time, he never saw another of his own kind. Finally, he was moved to the Zoo Atlanta in Atlanta, Georgia, where he lived for 23 more years until his death in 2012 at age 50. He liked to paint and was known for his paintings. In 2016, a 600 lb. statue of him was placed outside Point Defiance Zoo in Tacoma, Washington. An interesting point of information for me was that my husband saw him when he lived in Tacoma in the 60s.

The author tells the story of her main character in his own voice. It begins with him saying, "Hello, I am Ivan. I am a gorilla. It's not as easy as it looks." Thus, he tells his story of how he has lived in a shopping mall in a glass enclosed cage for 27 years. He tells how he spends his time looking back at mall customers as they curiously watch him through the thick glass, how he likes to draw and paint, and watch TV. He makes friends with a small, stray dog named Bob, Stella an elephant, Ruby a baby elephant, and Julia, the janitor's daughter, who comes many nights to sit outside his cage to do her homework and draw pictures. After Stella dies, he becomes obsessed with a plan to have him and Ruby moved to a zoo.

This story is very well written and is a page turner. Ms. Applegate has created wonderful characters that make you care about them, while at the same

time taking the reader into the cruel world of exploiting animals without any thought to their well-being. I recommend this book for children or adults who like to read about animals. It would also be an excellent read-aloud book to children at home or in the classroom.

(Available on Amazon or Kindle at: www.amzn.com/dp/0061992275 or www.amzn.com/dp/B005DIB5GG)



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