

Selecting a book for your reading program is an important decision. To help you select the right book for your young readers and your community, we are providing the following context related to potentially sensitive content to help make a well-informed decision. As always, we encourage and recommend that book selections come after a full read of the book by multiple decision-makers or stakeholders.

The One and Only Ivan
by Katherine Applegate

Read This Book to Discover...

The redemptive story of the truck-stop silverback gorilla who, through the support of human and animal friends, manages to find a home in a humane environment. The story is told in carefully etched first person prose that makes Ivan's voice as clear and memorable as Wilbur in Charlotte's Web. Ivan's true story continues inspiring readers to support similar efforts to rescue animals in confinement in the real world.

What to Watch Out For...

There are two occasions where Ivan recalls how he was taken from Africa and arrived at the Exit 8 Big Top Mall and Video Arcade. In one of them, we learn that Ivan's sister lost hope and dies in the crate in transit from Africa. (p. 129) We also learn that Ivan's father was shot and killed and his hands and feet chopped off. And Ivan is aware there is a souvenir gorilla hand ashtray in the gift shop. (pp. 170-171)

There is also implied animal abuse of an elephant, Stella. (e.g 151-152 and 174) These images are troubling but create sympathy for Stella, Ivan, and all the other captive animals. They help motivate Ivan and the other animals (and humans) at the truck stop to band together to protect a new, younger elephant, Ruby - and to change Ivan's life.

