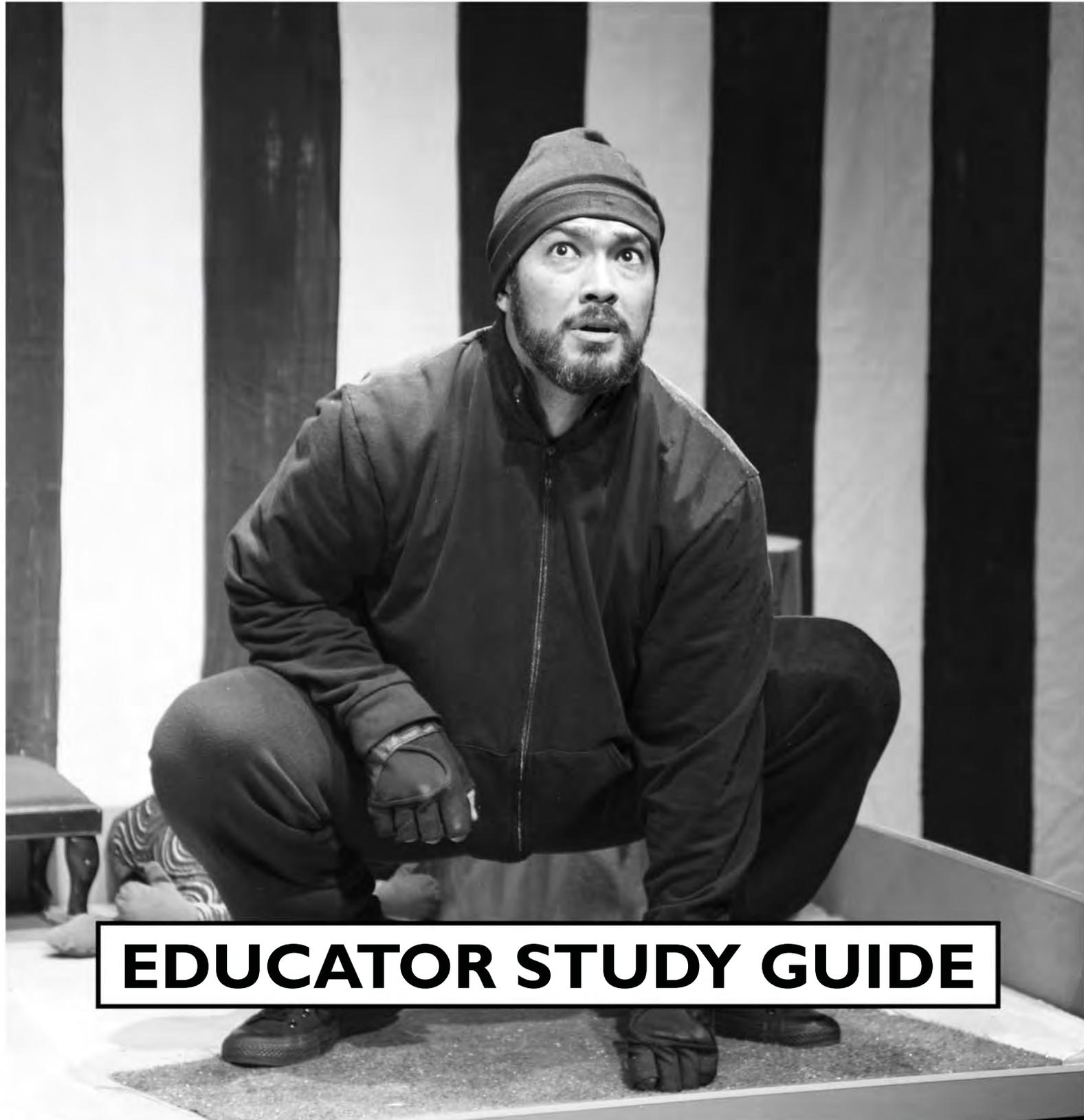


# THE ONE AND ONLY IVAN



## **EDUCATOR STUDY GUIDE**

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# The One and Only Ivan



Based on the Newberry winning book by Katherine Applegate  
Adapted by James E. Grote

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## Introduction

Lifeline Theatre's award-winning adaptations of children's literature inspire a love of reading that will activate your students' imaginations and stay with them throughout their lives. Every year, Lifeline Theatre's Student Matinee Program serves over 3,000 students, 40 schools, 129 classrooms, and 222 teachers with school-day performances of our season productions.

We encourage you to use this study guide to enrich your students' experience of *The One and Only Ivan* and enhance the educational value of the production.

## Preparing for Your Field Trip

### **Before the Play: Discuss Appropriate Behavior**

Have a discussion with your students about proper theatre etiquette. For example, it's okay to clap and laugh, but it's not okay to talk to your neighbor. Have students compare and contrast the difference between watching a movie and watching a play. Ask if students have been to a play before. If so, what play? What was the experience like? Talk about the concentration that performing in a play requires, and ask the students what they find distracting when they are trying to accomplish a task in front of people. How can they help the actors succeed and do a good job? Let students know that in plays, actors sometimes play several different characters, and change roles by simply swapping out costume pieces and altering their voices and bodies.

### **After the Play: Reflect on the Experience**

Ask students if they enjoyed the play. Based on this experience, would they like to see other plays? If they've seen plays before, how did this play compare? What happened that they weren't expecting? How was seeing a play a different experience than seeing a movie?

Have the students write a review of the play. Encourage students to be specific about why they enjoyed a certain part of the play. If they liked a scene because it was funny, have them explain *why* it was funny, what the characters *did* or *said* that was funny, etc. Have the students draw a picture or make a collage of their favorite scene or character. Have them show their picture to the class and explain why that scene or character was their favorite.

## **Traditional Plays vs. Literary Adaptations**

Lifeline Theatre's KidSeries productions are often adaptations of picture books and short stories for children. Sometimes the playwright is very faithful to the source material, and sometimes the original book is simply an inspiration. We encourage you to discuss the elements of each version and compare/contrast the two both before and after you see the play.

### **Before the Play: Get to Know the Original Story**

Read the story to your students, or have them read the book themselves, before the production. After reading the book, discuss it with your students, using these questions as launch pads:

- Who are the characters in the story?
- What happens in the beginning of the story? The middle? The end?
- Is there a character in the story you don't like?
- What makes you dislike this character?
- How do you think he/she might be portrayed in the stage version?
- What do you think you will see on stage as the actors tell this story?
- How might the play be different from the story? How might it be the same?

### **Beginning, Middle and End**

To encourage sequential thinking, have students act out the beginning, middle and end of the story. Split the students into three groups (or more, depending on the number of students in your class) and have one group enact the beginning, another group enact the middle, and the final group the end. Have the students watching the performances help the group to remember any parts they may have left out. Give the groups the chance to redo their performances, including any elements suggested by their classmates.

### **After the Play: Compare/Contrast the Story to the Play**

- How were the book and the play different?
- How were the book and the play the same?
- What elements of the play surprised you?
- Which did you enjoy more, reading the book or watching the play?
- What was your favorite part of the play?
- Was that your favorite part of the book, too?
- Were there any characters in the book that were not in the play, or vice versa?
- Why do you think the playwright added or subtracted certain parts?

## Jobs in the Theatre: Behind the Scenes

### **Before the Play: Prepare Your Students to Observe All Aspects of the Production**

When we create a play at Lifeline Theatre, we have a community of artists working together to make a complete production. Ask students to be particularly observant during the performance for the parts of the show that are done by the various people listed below:

**Playwright/Adaptor/Author** – writes the play

**Composer** – writes the music for the show

**Lyricist** – writes the words (or “lyrics”) for the songs in the play

**Director** – directs the play - makes decisions about costumes, lights, sets, and what the actors do onstage

**Choreographer** – creates and teaches the actors the dances in the show

**Lighting Designer** – designs and hangs the lights for the show; designs lighting effects

**Set Designer** – designs and builds the scenery and props for the show

**Sound Designer** – designs and records the sound effects for the show

**Costume Designer** – designs and finds or makes the costumes for the show

**Stage Manager** – helps the director during rehearsals; sets props and scenery before each performance; runs the sound and lights during the performance

**Actors** – perform the play

### **After the Play: Discuss the Students’ Observations**

Ask the students what they noticed about the “behind-the-scenes” jobs:

- How did the costume designer make the actors look like the characters they were playing?
- What about their costumes helped you to know what kind of people or animals they were?
- Did you have a favorite costume in the show? Which one? Why was it your favorite?
- If there were animal costumes, how did the costume designer create them so that they would look more like animals than people?
- What are some of the locations the play took place in?
- How did the set designer make the settings look realistic?
- What sound effects did you hear in the play? How did those sound effects help you to know what was happening in the play?
- If there was music, why do you think the composer chose the styles of music they did? What sorts of music would not make sense with the story?

## Director's Note

*The One and Only Ivan* is based on the true story of a remarkable gorilla who became a national symbol for animal welfare. The real-life Ivan lived in a cage in a shopping mall near Tacoma, Washington for 27 years until public outcry led to his rescue to a better life at Zoo Atlanta.

Katherine Applegate's fictionalized account invites conversations about animal captivity, experiencing the death of a loved one, and the power of friendship in accomplishing near-impossible goals.

Publisher Harper Collins offers a study guide for conversations with youth on these topics, available to download at:

[http://files.harpercollins.com/HCCChildrens/OMM/Media/OneAndOnlyIvan\\_DG\\_4.pdf](http://files.harpercollins.com/HCCChildrens/OMM/Media/OneAndOnlyIvan_DG_4.pdf)

Because of the young age of Lifeline's audience, our production removed some of the darkest details from the chapter book. And for children who might not be ready for the emotional challenges of the full story, we offered a picture book version (also by Katherine Applegate with illustrator G. Brian Karas) to our audience as an companion/alternative to the chapter book – *Ivan: The Remarkable True Story of the Shopping Mall Gorilla*.

As part of our theatre company's growth, we value the importance of telling stories such as Ivan's, and producing plays that challenge as well as comfort. Thank you for sharing in this story with us.

Dorothy Milne  
Artistic Director  
Lifeline Theatre

## Synopsis of the Play

Ivan is a silverback gorilla who was born in the wild but taken into captivity at a very young age. He was raised in Mack's home until he got too big and started breaking things around the house. Mack is the owner of the Big Top Mall and decided he would build a domain for Ivan there. When Ivan was new to the mall he attracted many visitors and Mack put up billboard advertising that the Big Top Mall was the home of The One and Only Ivan, mighty silverback! Ivan has lived in his small domain at the Big Top Mall ever since.

As time went on Ivan grew older and attracted less and less visitors. Now he spends most of his days watching television, the only place he has ever seen other creatures like him. His main friend is Stella, the retired circus elephant who also lives in a domain at the Big Top Mall. She has a bad foot injury that bothers her and a perfect memory so she is able to tell Ivan stories about what it was like living in the circus where her foot was hurt. Ivan, on the other hand, can't remember much of anything from his past aside from occasional flashbacks that he attempts to piece together throughout the course of the play.

Ivan's other friends are Bob, the stray dog who sneaks into his cage at night to sleep on his belly, George the friendly janitor, and his daughter Julia – a young artist who often brings Ivan art supplies to use. Ivan is an artist as well. He likes to draw pictures of different things in his domain like bananas and beetles.

Mack sells Ivan's art to customers in an attempt to make more money because the Big Top Mall is not doing so well. Mack is always looking for ways to attract more visitors and one day he brings in a new attraction, a baby elephant named Ruby. Stella is distraught at the idea that Ruby will have to spend the rest of her life alone in a tiny domain at the Big Top Mall. Before Stella dies from the infection in her foot, she makes Ivan promise that he will save Ruby.

Ivan does not know what he will do until he sees a commercial for the zoo on his TV and an idea strikes him. He will have to paint a giant picture of a zoo; the place that Ruby should go live! He paints many small pictures that will fit together like puzzle pieces to make a giant poster. He is able to hide these small pictures in his cage and overcome various setbacks until his work of art is complete. Julia is able to understand his drawing and convinces her father to help her cover up the billboard with Ivan's drawing.

The poster attracts so much attention that a zookeeper is brought in to remove all of the animals from the Big Top Mall and take them to the zoo where they will be better cared for. Ivan is able to save Ruby, make new friends, and become the mighty silverback he had always wanted to be.

# My Favorite Animal

*In The One and Only Ivan, Ivan's final home is a zoo, where many wild animals live safely and are protected. What is your favorite animal? Maybe you have seen an animal at the zoo that you love, or in books, magazines, or videos. How much do you know about this animal? See what you know, and what you can still find out!*

What is your favorite animal? \_\_\_\_\_

Why is it your favorite animal? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Where does it live in the wild? \_\_\_\_\_

What does it look like? (size, color, distinctive features)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What kind of foods does it eat? \_\_\_\_\_

What sounds does this animal make? \_\_\_\_\_

If you have seen this animal at the zoo- what are some things this animal likes to have in its domain?

\_\_\_\_\_

If you have seen this animal at the zoo- was it doing when you saw it?

\_\_\_\_\_

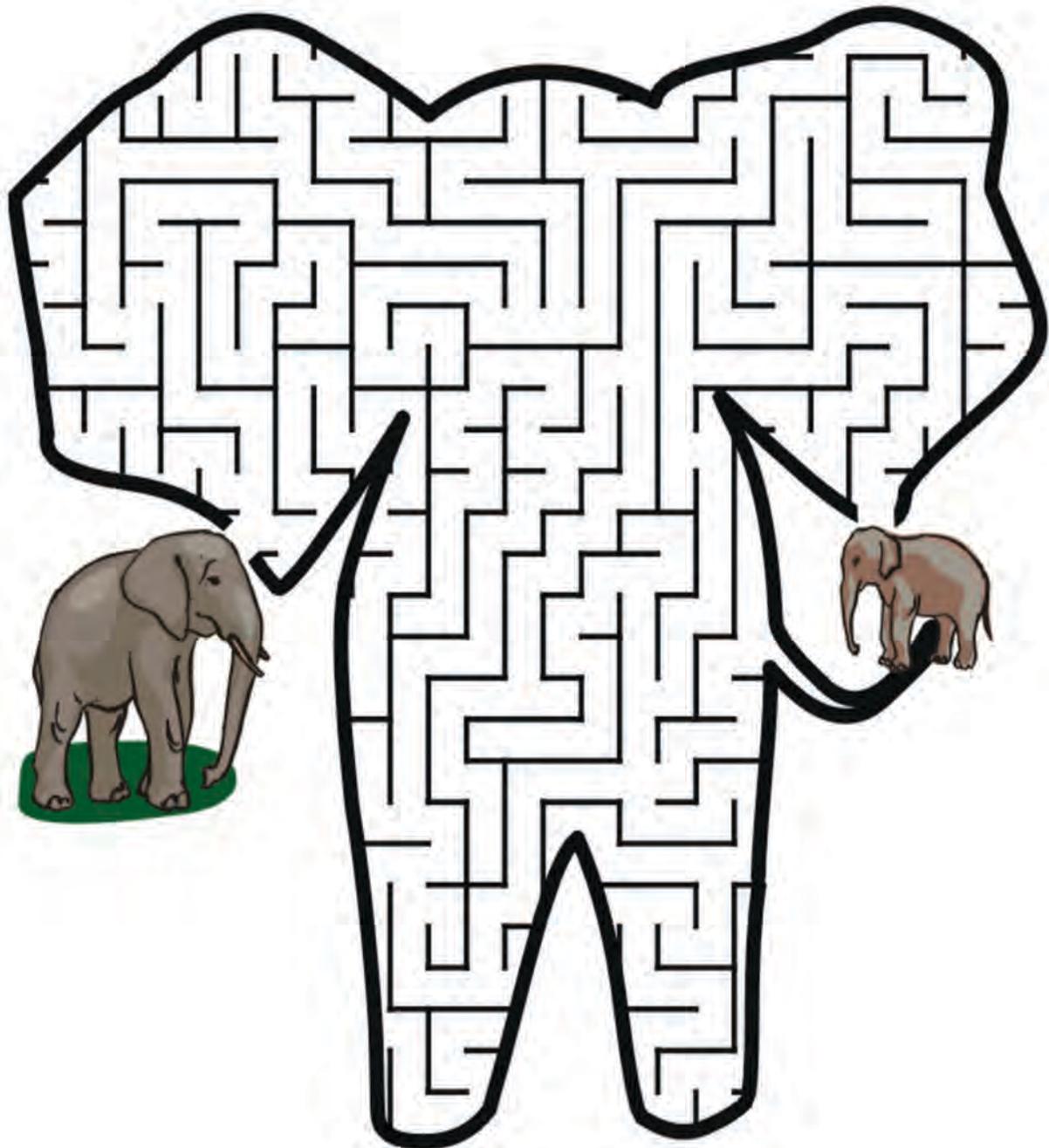
Do you know any other facts about your favorite animal?

\_\_\_\_\_

ON THE BACK: Draw a picture of your favorite animal!

# HELP STELLA FIND RUBY!

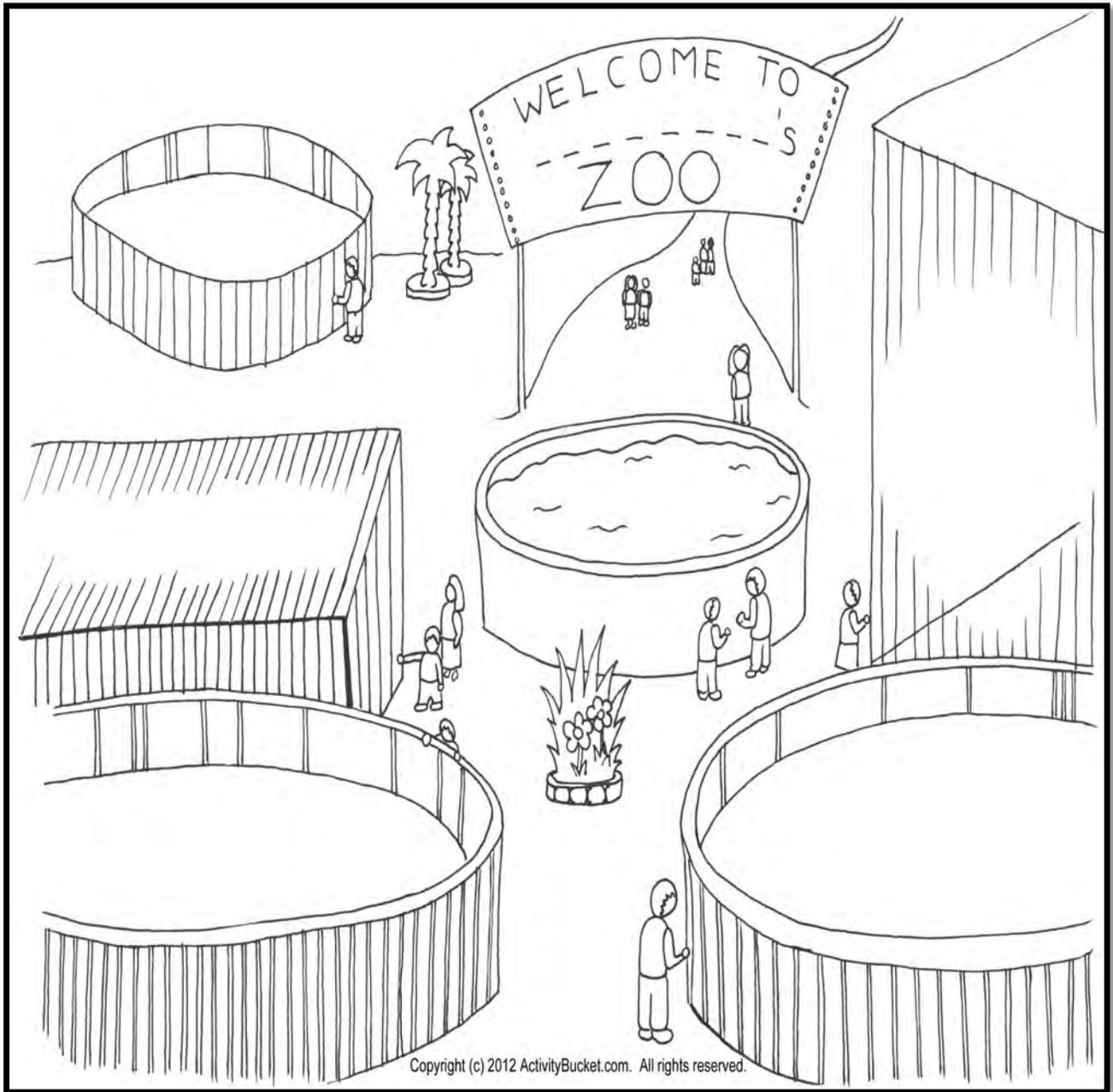
In *The One and Only Ivan*, Stella become like a mother to baby Ruby, even though they are not related. What if they got separated? Help momma find baby!





# Create Your Own Zoo

In the play, Ivan paints a picture of his dream home for Ruby at the zoo. Now it's your turn to draw the ideal habitats for your favorite zoo animals. Think about what kinds of things different animals need to have in their homes and fill in this zoo!



## Student Review of *The One and Only Ivan*

By: \_\_\_\_\_

I give this play a (circle the number of stars): ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

My favorite part of the play was \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

because \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ .

My favorite character was \_\_\_\_\_

because \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ .

If I had choose what I liked best, I would choose (circle one)

the story    the characters    the music    the costumes    the scenery

because \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ .