

THE ONE AND ONLY IVAN

CAST: Narrator, Ivan (gorilla), Bob (dog), Stella (elephant) Ruby (baby elephant)

NARRATOR: Ivan is known as the Freeway Gorilla. The Ape at Exit 8. The One and Only Ivan. Mighty Silverback. Ivan lives in a concrete and glass cage inside The Big Top Mall off of I-95. He has lived here with his animal friends, Bob the dog and Stella the elephant for 9,855 days.

STELLA: (sniffing the air) A change is coming... A new animal is coming to the Big Top Mall!

BOB: Stella you are always the first to notice the change. If I sit still long enough, I can feel it too... right in the air.

IVAN: I smell it too guys! Humans always smell odd when change is in the air. (sniffing) Like rotten meat, with a hint of papaya.

BOB: Oh no! What if it's a giant cat with slitted eyes and a coiled tail?

STELLA: Nah. That's not it, Bob. I know this smell all too well. A truck will arrive this afternoon carrying a baby elephant.

IVAN: How do you know, Stella?

STELLA: I can hear her. She's crying for her mother....

NARRATOR: Bob and Ivan strain to listen. They don't hear anything but the cars on the highway roaring past.

BOB: I don't hear any elephants, Stella.

IVAN: Me neither. Are you sure?

STELLA: I am positive.

IVAN: You're just hoping for another elephant.

STELLA: (sadly) No... I'm not hoping at all...

NARRATOR: Later that evening, the animals are still anticipating an arrival. Stella is rubbing her foot against the wall. It is deep red and very swollen.

IVAN: Stella, my TV is off. How about you tell us a story? If you're not feeling well you can take a nap and tell us later then.

STELLA: (Sighs) I'm fine.

IVAN: Tell us the Jambo story, Stella. It's my favorite. I don't think Bob every heard it.

BOB: Nope. I don't know of any Jambo.

NARRATOR: Because she remembers everything, Stella knows many stories. The animals love to hear Stella's stories and they aren't very picky when it comes to which ones she tells.

STELLA: Once upon a time.... There was a human boy. He was visiting a gorilla family at a place called a zoo.

BOB: Wait - - What's a zoo?

STELLA: A good zoo is a large domain. A wild cage. A safe place to be. It has room to roam and humans who don't hurt. A good zoo is how humans make amends.

NARRATOR: Stella moves, and her foot aches. She groans a little, but goes on.

STELLA: The boy stood on a wall watching, pointing, but he lost his balance and fell into the wild cage.

IVAN: Humans are clumsy... I see it from my cage. If only they would knuckle walk, they wouldn't topple so often.

STELLA: A good point, Ivan.

NARRATOR: Stella went on to tell the true story of how the boy lay in a motionless heap, while the humans gasped and cried.

STELLA: The silverback, whose name was Jambo, examined the boy, as was his duty, while his troop watched from a safe distance. Jambo stroked the child gently. He smelled the boy's pain, and then he stood watch.

IVAN: I bet the crowd was expecting the worst.

STELLA: Yes they did. When the boy moaned, the crowd waited and screamed "Stay still! Don't move! Stay Still" because they were certain Jambo would crush the boy's life from him.

BOB: Humans are always certain about things.....

IVAN: Jambo was looking out for the boy, right Stella?

STELLA: Yes, Ivan. He was. That was his job as the silverback.

BOB: Then what happened?

STELLA: Men came down on ropes and whisked the child into the arms of his family.

BOB: Was the boy alright?

STELLA: He wasn't hurt, although I wouldn't be surprised if his parents hugged him many times that night, in between their scolding.

BOB: (shaking his head) Is that a TRUE story, Stella?

STELLA: I always tell the truth. Although I sometimes confuse the facts.

NARRATOR: Ivan had heard the Jambo story many times. Stella had told him humans found it odd that the huge silverback didn't kill the boy.

IVAN: Why was that so surprising? The boy was young, scared and alone. He was, after all, just another great ape.

BOB: (whispering) Pssst! Hey Ivan... why aren't you and Stella in a zoo?

NARRATOR: Stella and Ivan look at one another. Stella smiles sadly with her eyes, just a little, the way only elephants can do. She answers...

STELLA: We're just lucky I guess.

NARRATOR: The new neighbor arrives after the four-o'clock show. A truck comes lumbering toward the parking lot, Bob scampers over to inform Stella and Ivan.

IVAN: Bob, you always know what's happening. You are a very good and useful friend for a gorilla who can't leave his domain.

BOB: It's what I do, Ivan.

NARRATOR: Mack, the mall manager, lifts the sliding metal door near the food court, the place where deliveries are made.

IVAN: What do you see out there Bob? What is it?

BOB: I see a big white truck backed up to the door. There's lots of smoke... I can't really see what's in it.

NARRATOR: When the driver opens the truck, Ivan knows that Stella is right.

IVAN: I see her! I see it's a baby elephant! Her trunk is poking out. Look there Stella! Look!

NARRATOR: Ivan is glad for Stella, but when he looks over to her, he can see that Stella is not happy at all.

BOB: She can be your friend, Stella. She is an elephant like you.

IVAN: Yeah, Stella. She will keep you company.

NARRATOR: Mack told everyone to stand back and introduced the new arrival. He said this baby elephant was named Ruby and she was going to bring back ticket sales for the animal mall circus. Mack tried to coax Ruby out. She wouldn't budge.

RUBY: (crying).. Waaaaahhhhhh!

STELLA: I don't like this I don't like this I don't like this

IVAN: Relax Stella. It will be ok.

STELLA: Ivan, it will never, ever be okay.

NARRATOR: Mack and the driver are yelling at Ruby. Ruby is fighting to stay in the truck.

BOB: I'm starting to like this elephant.. she's got spunk!

STELLA: That's it... I'm going over there to help.

NARRATOR: Stella rushes, limping heavily toward the open back door of the truck. She catches her swollen foot on the edge of the ramp and she winces. Blood trickles down. She enters the truck.

STELLA: (in a sweet voice) Sweetie.. it's OK. Come follow me down the ramp. You can do it.

RUBY: I,.... I.... I don't wanna go.

STELLA: It'll be just fine. Take your time. I'll stay with you.

NARRATOR: Slowly Stella makes her way down the ramp. It's clear her foot is hurting her terribly. A tiny gray trunk appears. Shyly it reaches out and tastes the air. Stella curls her trunk around Ruby. They step gently down the ramp.

BOB: There she is! Look at how small she is Ivan!

IVAN: She doesn't look so healthy. Stella will take care of her.

BOB: She looks so scared. Poor kid. Welcome to the Exit 8 Big Top Mall, Ruby. Home of the One and Only Ivan.