BE IVAN



BY CHILDBOOK.AI

Eight-year-old Earl walked into the shopping center with his mother. Behind a big glass window, something huge moved. "Look!" Earl gasped. A gorilla sat quietly, watching shoppers pass. "His name is Ivan," a sign read. Earl pressed his hand to the glass. Slowly, Ivan lifted his own hand and touched the glass too. Earl's heart thumped with wonder. "Hello, Ivan," he whispered. From that day, Earl knew this gentle giant would become his friend.


Ivan

Every Saturday, Earl returned to see Ivan. He noticed Ivan was incredibly strong, yet always soft with his movements. "He's gentle," Earl told his mom. Ivan would wave slowly when Earl arrived, almost like a greeting. Earl waved back every single time. Sometimes Ivan beat his chest, not in anger, but just to say hello in his own big way. Earl giggled and copied him, beating his small chest too. Their friendship grew stronger with each visit.


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PIMKEL

One day, a zookeeper let Ivan paint with his fingers. Earl watched in amazement as colors swirled onto paper. "Can I paint too?" Earl asked. The zookeeper smiled and gave him a brush. Side by side, Earl and Ivan painted together, though a thick glass wall stood between them. Ivan held up his colorful painting proudly. Earl held up his too. They matched their paintings together, laughing without any words needed. It was the best art class ever.


CURE

Years passed, and Earl grew taller, but Ivan stayed behind his glass window. Earl noticed something sad in Ivan's dark eyes. "Do you miss the jungle, Ivan?" Earl asked softly. Ivan pressed his big hand against the glass, and Earl pressed his hand right back. There were no trees for Ivan to climb, no other gorillas to play with. Earl realized Ivan was very alone. "I wish I could help you," Earl whispered, wondering what a boy could possibly do.



Earl learned that Ivan had lived in this small room since he was just a baby gorilla. No forest, no family, only concrete walls and glass. "That's not fair," Earl said, frowning. He told his teacher about Ivan's lonely life. His teacher nodded kindly. "Maybe you can be his voice," she said. Earl thought hard. If Ivan couldn't speak for himself, maybe Earl could speak for him instead, loud enough for grown-ups everywhere to finally listen.



That night, Earl wrote a letter about Ivan to newspapers and zoo experts. "Ivan deserves trees, sunshine, and gorilla friends," he wrote carefully. He asked his classmates to sign the letter too. Many other children who had met Ivan added their names. Together, their voices grew louder than one boy alone. Earl mailed the letter, hopeful but nervous. "Please listen," he whispered to the envelope before letting it go. He had made Ivan a promise he intended to keep.



Weeks later, wonderful news arrived at Earl's school. Zookeepers and scientists had listened to every letter. Ivan would move to a real zoo with grass, trees, and other gorillas! Earl jumped with joy, hugging his mother tightly. "He's finally getting a real home!" Earl cheered. His teacher smiled proudly at the whole class. Their letters had truly made a difference. Earl could hardly wait to visit Ivan in his brand-new jungle home.



Earl visited the new zoo with his family. Green trees stretched high above a grassy yard. There was Ivan, climbing happily with other gorillas nearby. "Ivan!" Earl shouted, waving excitedly. Ivan looked up and beat his chest joyfully, just like old times. He looked stronger, happier, truly free. Tears of happiness filled Earl's eyes. "You did it, Ivan," Earl whispered. "You finally have everything you deserve."



Earl grew from a boy into a young man, but he never stopped visiting Ivan. Every year, he brought drawings and told Ivan about his life. Ivan always greeted him with gentle eyes, remembering his old friend. "You're still my favorite gorilla," Earl laughed each visit. Seasons changed, leaves fell and grew again, yet their friendship remained the same steady, warm comfort it had always been since that very first day at the glass window.



One autumn day, Earl received sad news. Ivan had grown very old and had peacefully passed away. Earl felt tears roll down his cheeks. He remembered Ivan's gentle hands, his paintings, his joyful chest-beats. "Thank you for being my friend," Earl whispered to the sky. Though his heart ached with missing Ivan, Earl smiled through his tears, grateful for every wonderful memory they had shared together across all those special years.



Earl thought deeply about everything Ivan had taught him. Ivan had inspired him with wonder and curiosity. Ivan had shown him the value of every living creature. Earl had learned to advocate, speaking up when something wasn't fair. And Ivan, even behind glass, had nurtured their friendship with gentle kindness. "Inspire, Value, Advocate, Nurture," Earl repeated softly. These four simple words became the greatest gift Ivan ever gave him.



Now grown, Earl visited schools to share Ivan's story. "You don't need to be a gorilla to be like Ivan," he told the children. "Inspire someone, value others, advocate for what's right, and nurture your friendships." A little girl raised her hand. "Can I be Ivan too?" she asked. Earl smiled warmly. "Yes," he said. "Anyone, anywhere, can be Ivan." And with that simple truth, Ivan's gentle spirit lived on forever.


Be Ivan

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