

Herdwork & Hoofs

Created by Team Zag



Zag the Zonkey
& Friends



Zag's dad was a donkey.
His mom was a zebra.
And Zag? Zag was a zonkey!
He loved racing across the meadow, ears flapping,
tail swishing.
But every single time, the young zebras reached
the tree first.



“Too slow, Floppy Ears!” shouted a zebra.
The other one laughed and laughed.
Zag's ears drooped. He wished he could hide them.
His little sister, Zig, stomped her hoof.
“That's not kind!”
Then she nudged Zag. “Come on. Let's find Dad.”

Zadda listened to every word.
Then he turned to the zebras.
“No teasing,” he said. “In this meadow, there's
room for everyone.”
He nuzzled Zag. “And that means you.”
Then he showed them the forked tree.
“Stay on this side, near the herd. If you need us,
call.”





Later, Zag went to the market with his mom,
Zomma.
Four gold hoof shoes gleamed in the window.
Maybe they'll make me faster, Zag thought.
Maybe then the zebras will want me on their team!
Zag counted out his birthday coins.
Clip-clop!
Sparkle, sparkle!



Back in the meadow, Zag showed off his shoes.
“WOW!” said the zebras.
Zag lifted one shiny hoof, then another.
He felt bright. He felt bouncy. He felt FAST.
Then one zebra pointed past the forked tree.
“Bet you can't race to that tall grass and back.”

Zag looked at the tree.
He looked at his shoes.
Stay on this side, Dad had said.
But what if they laughed again?
One step past the tree.
Two steps.
Three.
Zag's tummy felt tight and twisty.





Far across the grass, something golden stood up.
A lion.
Zag froze.
Thump-thump! Thump-thump! went his heart.
Forget the dare.
Zag spun around. "ZADDA! ZOMMA! HELP!"



“I'm here!” called Zadda. “Run to my voice!”
Zag ran.
Squish! One gold shoe stuck deep in the mud.
Zag didn't stop. He left it behind.
Zadda met him at the forked tree,
and together they hurried back to the herd.

Safe beside the herd, Zag leaned against Zomma.
“I just wanted them to like me,” he whispered.
Zomma held him close.
“You called for us. That was the bravest thing you
could do.”
Zadda nuzzled his ears.
“And next time, come find us before you cross that
tree.”



Later, the two zebras walked over, heads low.
“We're sorry we teased you,” said one.
“And sorry we dared you,” said the other.
Zag stood tall, long ears and all.
“No more laughing at my ears. And no more dares
past the tree.”
“Deal,” said the zebras.





Close to the grown-ups, they played Follow the Hoofprints.

Zag kicked off his three gold shoes.

Zig wiggled. One zebra tiptoed. The other hopped.

Then Zag zigged and zagged, ears flapping in the wind.

“Do it again!” giggled the zebras.

And whenever someone fell behind, everyone waited.



Long ears. Slender legs. Two peeking teeth.
Zag was still Zag.
He liked shiny shoes. He liked muddy hoofprints.
But he didn't need either one to belong.
That's herdwork: looking out for one another.
Zig's little legs lagged behind. Zag stopped and
waited.
“Come on, Zig! There's room for you, too!”

Talk & explore with Zag



Pick one question. You can point, talk, draw, act it out, or just listen.

- 1 Zig stomped her hoof when Zag was teased. What did she say?
- 2 Zag shouted for help when he saw the lion. Who came?
- 3 Zag told the zebras, “No more dares past the tree.” What could YOU say if a game didn't feel safe?
- 4 In Follow the Hoofprints, what did everyone do when someone fell behind?
- 5 Zag has long ears, slender legs and two peeking teeth. What makes YOU you?

Can you zig and zag like Zag? Try a tiptoe, a hop and a wiggle, too!

Brave words to try: “No, thank you.” “Please stop.” “I need help!” “There's room for you, too!”

Everyone deserves kindness, even after a mistake. If someone keeps being unkind, tell a grown-up you trust. If they don't help, keep telling until someone does.

A note for grown-ups

Read, look, pause, and enjoy this story together. It is written for shared reading with children ages 4–8, not as a reading test.

There is brief teasing and a distant lion scare, without an attack or injury. Preview the story and follow your child's pace. The animals live in a make-believe world; this is not wildlife-safety guidance.

Zag deserves kindness before the shoes and after the mistake. As you read, notice who listens, who helps, and how Zag passes on his dad's words: "There's room for you, too." Children can say no, ask for help, or simply listen. There's no need to share a personal story.

**Read. Pause. Listen. Enjoy
it together.**



Made with herdwork



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Floppy ears. Gold shoes. One big dare.

Zag the zonkey just wants the zebras to like him, so he buys the shiniest shoes in the market and races right past the forked tree. When trouble appears across the grass, Zag learns that the bravest move is calling for help, and that there's room for everyone in the herd.

A warm, funny story about fitting in, speaking up, and herdwork: looking out for one another.



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