Ana the Ostrich Saves Thanksgiving

Created by Team Zag



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Story by Team Zag.
Illustrations created with AI and reviewed by Team Zag.

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A story about gratitude

This book belongs to

For everyone in our thankful flock.





Ana was the smallest ostrich in her flock.
She had short legs (for an ostrich) and round glasses perched on her beak.
When the big flock thundered across the golden grass,
Ana couldn't keep up.
Thump-thump-thump... and then, just quiet.



Ana wandered until the sky turned pumpkin orange.
Then she heard it. “Gobble-gobble-gobble!”
“You look a little like us,” said Grandma Gobble. “Long neck. Fluffy feathers. Stay for supper?”
Ana’s heart gave a happy flutter.



Ana was taller than every turkey. Taller than the fence post. Taller than the termite mound!
Through her round glasses, she could see far, far away.
“Ana is our lookout!” the turkeys cheered.



But when danger came, the turkeys went
Flap-flap-FLUTTER! up into the acacia tree.
Ana could only look up and wish.
“If only I could fly.”



At school, Ana's best friend was Zag the Zonkey.
Zag was the only zonkey in a herd of zebras.
Ana was the only ostrich in a flock of turkeys.



They bumped wing to hoof.
Different, and loved just the same.



A few mornings before Thanksgiving, Ana stretched her long neck high... and froze.
Golden manes. Swishing tails.
A pride of lions, creeping closer!



“Turkey for Thanksgiving,” one lion purred.
“Yum.”



Ana raced for the Gobble Bell.
Zoom, zoom, ZOOM!
Whoosh! Her glasses flew off.
Everything went blurry.



Was that the bell? A rock? A rhino?
Ana fumbled and flapped until...
CLANG! CLANG! CLANG!
Flap-flap-FLUTTER! Every turkey zipped into the tree.
Every turkey except Ana.



The lion stepped into her path. His mane was enormous, and his breath smelled like lunch.
“Please, Mr. Lion,” Ana begged. “I’m not even a turkey! My flock is my family. Please let me go home.”



The lion looked at the turkeys huddled in the tree. His grin softened.
“Run along,” he rumbled. “Your flock is waiting.”
He stepped aside.
And Ana RAN.



Back home, the turkeys wrapped Ana in a big, feathery hug.
They found her glasses in the grass.



Grandma Gobble tied them on with a cranberry-red strap.
“There,” she said. “Snug as a bug.”
“Thank you, Grandma,” said Ana. “Now they’ll stay with me!”



The next evening, Zag and Ana were playing after supper when a sad roar drifted over the hill.
They tiptoed closer and peeked through a bush.



It was the lion, locked in a cage!
Nearby, people in safari hats sat around a crackling campfire that smelled of smoke and toasty marshmallows.



“We have to help him,” Zag whispered.
Ana fluffed her feathers.
“I know that lion. He was kind to me. Now I want to help him.”



“How about you and your herd create a distraction?” Ana suggested.
“That’s a great idea!” Zag replied.
They huddled up, heads together, like a team before the big game.
“Herdwork!” they whisper-cheered.



On the far side of camp, Zag's herd went wild!
They hee-hawed and whinnied. They hopped and stomped.
The people turned to look.



It was Ana's turn. Zoom, zoom, ZOOM!
Her glasses stayed snug.
With her beak, she lifted the latch. Click!
Creeeak! went the door.
The lion and Ana looked into each other's eyes. No words needed.
Then they each ran home.



On Thanksgiving, the flock gathered for a feast.
A turkey-free feast, of course!
Sweet corn. Tangy cranberries. Warm pumpkin pie that smelled like cinnamon.



One by one, each turkey shared what they were thankful for.
“I’m thankful for Ana,” said Grandma Gobble. “She helped keep our flock safe. But she was part of our flock before she ever rang that bell.”



Then it was Ana's turn. She was so full of thanks she almost popped.
"I'm thankful I'm tall, and fast, and for my glasses. I'm thankful for a lion who was kind, and that I got to be kind back."



“But most of all, I’m thankful for my flock, who love me just the way I’m made.”
Ana leaned close to Grandma Gobble.
“And thank you for helping me see all the good around me.”



“Happy Thanksgiving!” gobbled the turkeys.
And far across the golden grass, a lion roared, just once,
as if he were saying it, too.

Zag's Gratitude Activities

For kids

Gratitude means noticing the good in your life and feeling thankful for it.

Play Pass the Thanks!
Sit together in a circle. Take turns thanking someone for something specific:
"Thank you for _____. It helped me _____."
Your thanks can be for something big or small!

Talk about it:
1. Who showed Ana kindness? What did they do?
2. How did Ana show the lion she remembered his kindness?
3. Why was Ana thankful for her glasses and Grandma Gobble's strap?
4. What is something about yourself that you're thankful for?
5. Who would you like to thank today, and why?

Make a Thankful Feather
Draw a big feather. Inside it, draw or write something you're thankful for. Put everyone's feathers together to make your own thankful flock!



Zag's Talking Points

For grown-ups

Notice everyday gifts. Ana's gratitude includes her flock, her glasses, her abilities, and an unexpected kindness. Help children notice everyday things they appreciate: a meal, a shared laugh, a helpful friend, or a comforting hug.

Make thanks specific. Go beyond "Thank you." Try "Thank you for helping me find my glasses. Now I can see clearly." Invite children to explain what someone's kindness meant to them.

Show gratitude through actions. Ana remembers the lion's kindness and chooses to help him. Explore ways to express appreciation through a drawing, a helpful act, or time spent together.

Give freely. Gratitude grows from appreciation. The lion's kindness is a gift, and Ana's help is her own caring choice. We can appreciate kindness without treating it as something we must repay.

Appreciate strengths and support. Ana learns to be thankful for what she can do and for the help she receives. Ask: "What are you glad you can do? Who or what helps you do it?"

Make gratitude an everyday habit. At dinner or bedtime, share one good thing you noticed and one person you appreciate. Gratitude belongs in ordinary days, too - not only on Thanksgiving.



Meet Ana & Zag

Gratitude in action



Ana

Gratitude

Ana remembers the kindness others show her. She learns to appreciate her own strengths, the help she receives, and the flock that loves her. She shows her thanks through both words and actions.

Zag

Empathy

Zag's caring heart helps him notice what others do for their friends. In this adventure, he helps Ana put her gratitude into action.

Who belongs in your thankful flock?

Think of someone who makes your life better. What would you like to thank them for?

Stories to remember. Songs to sing.

For thousands of years, people have shared their stories through song. Long before books and screens, music helped us pass down important lessons, share experiences, and connect with one another.

At Zag the Zonkey, every story has an accompanying song. We believe some of the most important lessons in life deserve to be remembered—and music helps children carry those lessons beyond the page.

By combining meaningful stories, lovable characters, and catchy songs, we help children not only understand important life lessons, but remember them, sing about them, and carry them into their everyday lives.

Because a great story can teach a lesson, but a great song can make that lesson stick.

Sing along with Ana

www.zagthezonkey.com/stories/ana-the-ostrich

Explore all our songs

www.zagthezonkey.com/songs

Or listen on your favorite streaming app

Amazon Music

Spotify

A Zag the Zonkey adventure about gratitude

When an unexpected act of kindness changes Ana's day, she discovers just how much she has to be thankful for.

With Zag and her feathery flock beside her, Ana learns to appreciate everyday gifts, remember the kindness of others, and put her thanks into action.

A warm Thanksgiving story that helps children notice, feel, express, and share gratitude - all year long.



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