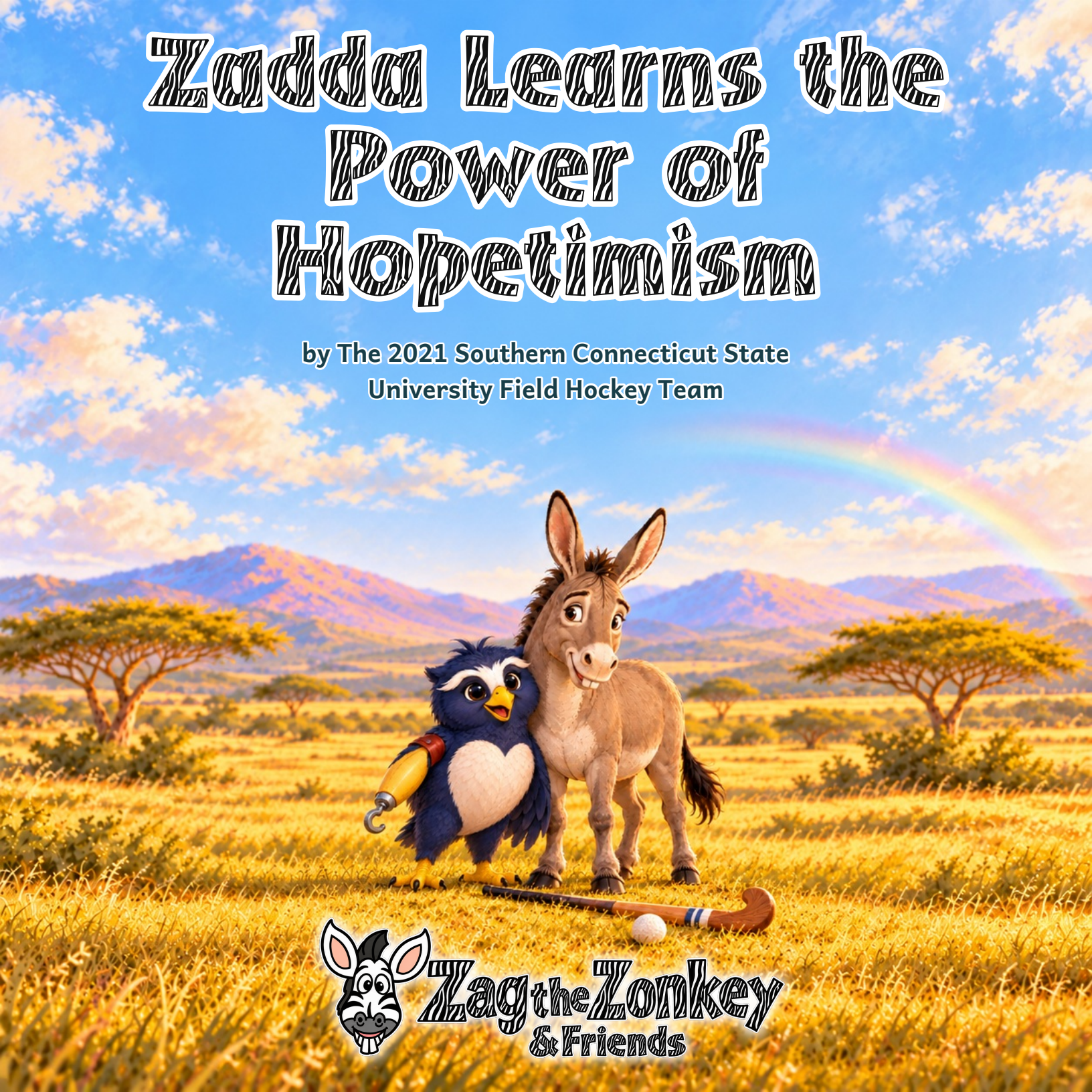
Zadda Learns the Power of Hopetimism

by The 2021 Southern Connecticut State University Field Hockey Team



Zadda Learns the Power of Hopetimism

by The 2021 Southern Connecticut State University Field Hockey Team

A community story about hope, teamwork, and looking for the good.

About this book

This book was written and created by the 2021 Southern Connecticut State University Field Hockey Team as a team-building project and fundraiser for their program. Together, the team invented Hope, an owl inspired by their mascot, and wrote a story about the things they learn on the field every day: keep working, lift each other up, and look for the good, even on the hard days.

Hope the owl is fast asleep in her favorite tree, dreaming about scoring the winning goal. Today is her very first field hockey game!

Hope's eyes pop open. She hops down from her branch and races to the watering hole. SPLISH! SPLASH! In she jumps, feathers first.

Hope bobs up, dripping wet, right next to her pal Zadda. They both play for Serengeti State University, and today they face Kenya College!

"Are you okay?" Zadda asks. Hope flaps her wing and her shiny helper wing. "Better than okay! It's GAME DAY, GAME DAY, GAME DAY!"

"Game day, game day, game day," Zadda grumbles. He doesn't sound excited at all. "It's too hot and sticky to play." "Rain is coming," says Hope. "It will cool us off, and the ball will zoom even faster!"

Rain? Zadda's ears droop. What if he slips? What if he falls in front of everyone? "The other team has to play in the rain too," Hope says. "Just keep working."

Before the game, Coach Rodo, Coach Rafa, and Coach Lito gather the herd. "Work together, use your training, and have fun!" Hooves, paws, and wings pile in. "SSU UNITED!"

The game begins! Both teams run hard. Then the clouds open up. Drip, drop, DOWNPOUR!

Zadda is so busy worrying about the rain that the ball bonks off his hoof. Down he goes, SPLAT! Hope runs over and holds out her helper wing. "You're alright. Just keep working."

Kenya College scores. Then they score again. But Zadda remembers: just keep working. He reaches out his stick and STEALS the ball from a zebra!

Tick tock, tick tock. The clock is running down.
"Time out!" call the coaches.

"Don't worry about the clock," says Coach Rodo. "Stay positive and leave it all on the field."

The team hustles back out for the final two minutes. Zadda gets the ball. He has a chance to score. He swings and...

WHOOPS! He slips and misses. The clock hits zero. SSU loses the game.

The next day, the team meets at the watering hole for practice. "I'm not playing," Zadda mumbles. "I stink at field hockey." Hope shakes her head. "Stink? Let's count. You got back up. You stole the ball. You zig-zagged and SCORED!" She counts each one on her feathers.

"When I lost my wing, I thought I'd never play," Hope says, lifting her helper wing. "But I kept looking for the good, and I kept working." "I call it HOPETIMISM. You hope, AND you look for the good." Zadda smiles a little. "Hope-tim-ism. I like that."

That night, Zadda lies under the stars and thinks about the game. He tries Hope's trick. One good thing, two good things, three good things, counted on his hooves. He falls asleep smiling.

A few days later, it's time for the next game. Zadda gallops to the watering hole. "GAME DAY, GAME DAY, GAME DAY!" Then he looks up. Big gray clouds are rolling in...

Drip. Drop. The rain begins to fall. Zadda grins. "Rain? That just makes the ball go FASTER!" "Now THAT'S hopetimism!" Hope cheers. Every day may not be good, but there is something good in every day.

Meet Hope

A teammate who looks for the good.

When Hope was little, she fell out of a tree and lost one of her wings. Now she uses a helper wing to play field hockey. She has her own way of doing some things, and she loves being part of the team.

Hope has hard days, too. She practices, asks for support when she needs it, and encourages her teammates. Her word for hoping and looking for the good is hopetimism!

Talk Together

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

1. Zadda worried about the rain. How did Hope help him feel less alone?

2. SSU lost the game. What did Zadda do that was worth celebrating?

3. Hope calls it hopetimism: hoping and looking for the good. Can you find a small good thing in the story?

4. Hope uses a helper wing to play. What helps you do something you enjoy?

5. What could you say to a teammate who missed a shot or wanted to give up?

Try hopetimism

Three good things

Think of three good things from today. Count them on your fingers, point to them, or share them with someone. One good thing is a good place to start, too.

A teammate's words

Try saying: 'I'm here.' 'Would you like help?' 'Let's try again together.' Ask what kind of help someone wants.

Move in your own way

Try a little zig and zag like Zadda, or imagine the ball rolling across the field. You can move, make a sound, watch, or join in your own way.

You can feel disappointed and still notice something good. You don't have to feel happy or be ready to try again right away.

A note for grown-ups

Read, look, pause, and enjoy this story together. These pages are an invitation to connect, not a test. Follow your child's pace; there is no need to share a personal story.

Start with the feeling: 'Losing felt disappointing.' Then, if your child is ready, notice a specific effort, a helpful teammate, or one small thing that went well. Hopeful thinking does not guarantee a win, erase hurt, or replace support.

Hope's helper wing is one way she takes part. Notice her ideas, humor, teamwork, and skill as well as her equipment. Different bodies and different ways of playing belong. Ask before helping, and let the person tell you what works for them.

Keep the three-good-things habit gentle and optional. A child may name one thing, draw, listen, or pass. If something is bothering them, make room to talk with a trusted grown-up before looking for a bright side.

Draw together

What helped Zadda try again? Draw a teammate helping, a brave try, or one good thing from your day.

Drawing, writing, talking, imagining, or passing are all welcome.

Created together

Written and created by The 2021 Southern Connecticut State University Field Hockey Team.

Originally created as a team-building project and sold as a fundraiser for the team's program.

This refreshed community edition pairs the team's story with new illustrations created using AI and the approved Zag character references.

Story text is set in Andika by SIL Global. Cover lettering uses the Zag series Zebraskin typeface.

There is good to find.

A rainy game. A missed shot. A teammate who sees the good. With Hope by his side, Zadda discovers a little habit that changes how he meets the next hard day.