
Spooky Swirly Eyes
A Zag & Rafa Adventure
by Team Zag
ZOMBIEVILLE
Zag the Zonkey & Friends
Special Halloween Edition

Spooky Swirly Eyes

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

Special Halloween Edition



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It was Halloween afternoon. Pumpkins grinned from every hut in the village.

“Go outside and explore!” said Zomma. “Just be home before the moon comes out.”

So Zag and Rafa got their bikes ready.



Zag buckled his helmet. Click!

Rafa didn't have one, so Zag handed her his spare. Click! Now they were both ready.

Then they hopped on their bikes. Whoosh!



They rode past the baobab trees until they came to an old wooden sign.

It used to say WELCOME TO ZEBRAVILLE.

But someone had crossed it out. Now it said...

WELCOME TO ZOMBIEVILLE.

Rafa gulped. Zag's tail went twitch, twitch.



Zomma always said, “Stay away from Zombieville.”
At school, the little zebras whispered about it.
“The zebras there have swirly eyes!”
“They stare at their ZPhones all day!”
“They never, ever look up!”
Zag was a little bit scared. But he was a LOT curious.



They parked their bikes and tiptoed in.

It was quiet. Too quiet.

The swings creaked. Creeeak. The soccer field was covered in tall, tangly grass.

Not one little zebra was playing.



They crept past the huts. Blue light flickered in every window.

Flicker. Flicker.

Inside, zebras stared at their screens and scrolled through Zinstagram.

Nobody was talking. Nobody was laughing.

“Where are all the jack-o’-lanterns?” whispered Rafa.

There wasn’t a single one.



In the town square, zebras shuffled this way and that.

Shuffle, shuffle… BONK! They bumped right into each other.

Their eyes were swirly. Their mouths were drooly. And they all moaned the very same thing:

“Scrollllll… scrollllll… scrollllll…”



The little zombie zebras had earbuds stuck in their ears. They bopped and bonked and sang along with their ZPhones.

“Rhino poo! Rhino poo!”

They didn’t even know what they were saying.



Zag giggled. Then he remembered the last time he'd heard that song back home.

Zomma had clicked it off. "That's enough for today. Let's put on something happy!"

"What goes in your ears ends up in your head," she'd said. "Fill your head with good stuff, Zag."



The grown-up zombie zebras were even sillier. They marched in circles, shouting whatever their screens told them to shout.

“Follow this! Follow that!”

“Like this! Like that!”

“I am right! You are wrong!”



Nobody listened to anybody. Everybody just kept shouting.

Shout, shout, shuffle… BONK!

Zag and Rafa looked at each other.

“How do we wake them up?” whispered Rafa.



Zag had an idea.

He walked right up to the smallest zombie zebra. He didn't yell. He didn't grab her ZPhone.

He crouched down, looked her right in the eyes, and said, "Hi! I'm Zag. What are you going to be for Halloween?"



The little zebra blinked. Blink. Blink.
Her swirly eyes went… un-swirly!
“A… a pumpkin?” she said.
“Cool!” said Rafa. “Tell us all about it!”
And she did. Somebody was finally listening.



Zag kicked the old soccer ball across the grass. Boing!

One zombie zebra looked up. Then another. And another.

“Look up!” shouted Zag.

“Speak up!” shouted Rafa.

“Listen up!” shouted the little zebra.

One by one, the swirly eyes went un-swirly. ZPhones went down. Zombieville was waking up!



Then Rafa pointed at the sky. The moon was peeking over the hills!

“We have to get home!”

They raced to their bikes and pedaled as fast as they could. Whoosh!

Behind them, somebody was fixing the old sign.



Zomma was waiting at the door. “How was your bike ride?”

“Spooky,” said Zag. “You know how you always say to turn off the screen and look up?”

Zomma smiled. “Of course.”

“Well, now I know why.”

Zomma laughed. “That must have been some bike ride, Zag!”



Zanny rocked in her chair. Creak, creak.

“Zombieville used to be Zebraville, you know,” she said. “Then everyone stopped looking at each other. And when you stop looking, you stop listening.”



Zanny gave Zag a big squeeze.

“Spending time together and really LISTENING,” she said, “is the best zombie spell-breaker there is.”



That night, the whole family carved pumpkins. No screens allowed.

They talked. They laughed. They listened.

Then Zag looked over at Zomma. Her eyes were glued to her ZPhone.

Swirl… swirl…

“ZOMMA!” shouted Zag. “LOOK UP!”

Zomma laughed and put it away. “You got me!”

Zag's Zombie Spell-Breakers

For kids

Play Zombie Freeze! One player is the Zombie Caller. When the caller moans "Scrollllll... scrollllll...", everyone shuffles around like a zombie zebra with swirly eyes. When the caller shouts "LOOK UP!", everyone freezes, finds a partner, and tells them one thing about their Halloween costume. Switch callers and play again.

Talk about it:

1. What made the zebras in Zombieville turn into zombies?
2. How did Zag wake up the little zebra? Did he yell or grab her ZPhone?
3. What does it feel like when someone really listens to you?
4. What's something fun your family can do together with no screens?
5. Can you catch a grown-up with swirly eyes this week? What will you say?



Zag's Talking Points

For grown-ups

Be present. Kids notice where our eyes go. When we put the phone down and look at them, we teach them that people come first.

What goes in, stays in. TV, social media and music shape how all of us think and feel. Be choosy about what fills your home, especially for little ears.

Screens are new; childhood isn't. Today's kids are the first to grow up with devices everywhere, and researchers are still learning what that means. Set limits that fit your family, and talk about why.

Model listening. Zag didn't break the spell by lecturing. He crouched down, looked the little zebra in the eyes, and asked a question. Try it at dinner tonight.

Make screen-free traditions. Carving pumpkins, trick-or-treating, a family walk. Halloween is a great night to start one.

Talk with people who see things differently. Algorithms tend to show us more of what we already think. Spending time with all kinds of people keeps our minds open and our kids curious.



Meet Zag & Rafa



Zag

Empathy

Zag cares about how others feel. He listens, offers kindness, and helps everyone feel included.



Rafa

Curiosity

Rafa notices little details and asks big questions. She loves exploring and discovering something new.

Look up. Speak up. Listen up.



A Halloween adventure about curiosity, friendship, and the magic of really listening.

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