

# The Zebra Who Painted with Her Stripes

Inspired by Bill Nye  
Written by Sundeep Parmar



LITTLE KEYS  
*to the Universe*



LITTLE KEYS TO THE UNIVERSE

# **The Zebra Who Painted with Her Stripes**



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DEDICATED TO

**Ria & Mia**



Big Lessons. Little Stories.



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Zee the Zebra lived in the bright savannah, where the trees swayed in the breeze and the flowers wore every colour of the rainbow. She loved watching the flamingos dance in pink, the parrots chirp in blue, and the leopards stretch in golden spots. But every time she looked at herself, all she saw were black and white stripes. Why don't I have real colours? she whispered one day. She tried rolling in flower dust to turn pink.



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She stood in the sun to turn golden. She even rubbed her back against blue butterfly bushes. But nothing worked. Maybe if I look like them, she thought, I'll feel like I belong. The next morning, Zee noticed something strange. The parrots had covered their feathers in leaves. The flamingos stood in muddy puddles. The leopards laid in the shade, hiding their spots. No one was showing their colours anymore.



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And the savannah began to feel... dull. The flowers didn't seem as bright. The air didn't feel as light. Everyone looked the same. And no one was smiling. Zee's heart felt heavy. What happened to the colour? she whispered. That's when she saw it. A streak of yellow zipped across the sky, then green, then purple. Zee looked up and saw a bird with a paintbrush for a tail, leaving trails of colour wherever he flew.



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Whoa! she gasped. Who are you? The bird looped in the air and landed nearby. I'm Huw, the paintbrush bird, he said with a flutter. I help the world remember its colour. Zee tilted her head. But everyone's hiding their colour now. Even me. Huw nodded softly. They're hiding because they think being different is wrong. But really, it's what makes this world beautiful.



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He looked kindly at her. Your stripes are part of the painting too. Zee's eyes widened. But I don't have colour, just black and white. Huw smiled. Ah, but your stripes are contrast. They show off the colour around you. They make things pop. They help the painting shine. He dipped his tail in a puddle of rainbow light. Want to try something? Zee nodded slowly.



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Huw flew beside her as she walked. With each step, her hooves left behind zigzagging trails of black and white in the dirt. Not smudges. Stripes. Her stripes. Other animals peeked out from behind trees. The parrots ruffled their feathers. The flamingo shook off the mud. The leopard stretched toward the sun. And one by one, they joined in. Walking, dancing, adding their real colours to the world.



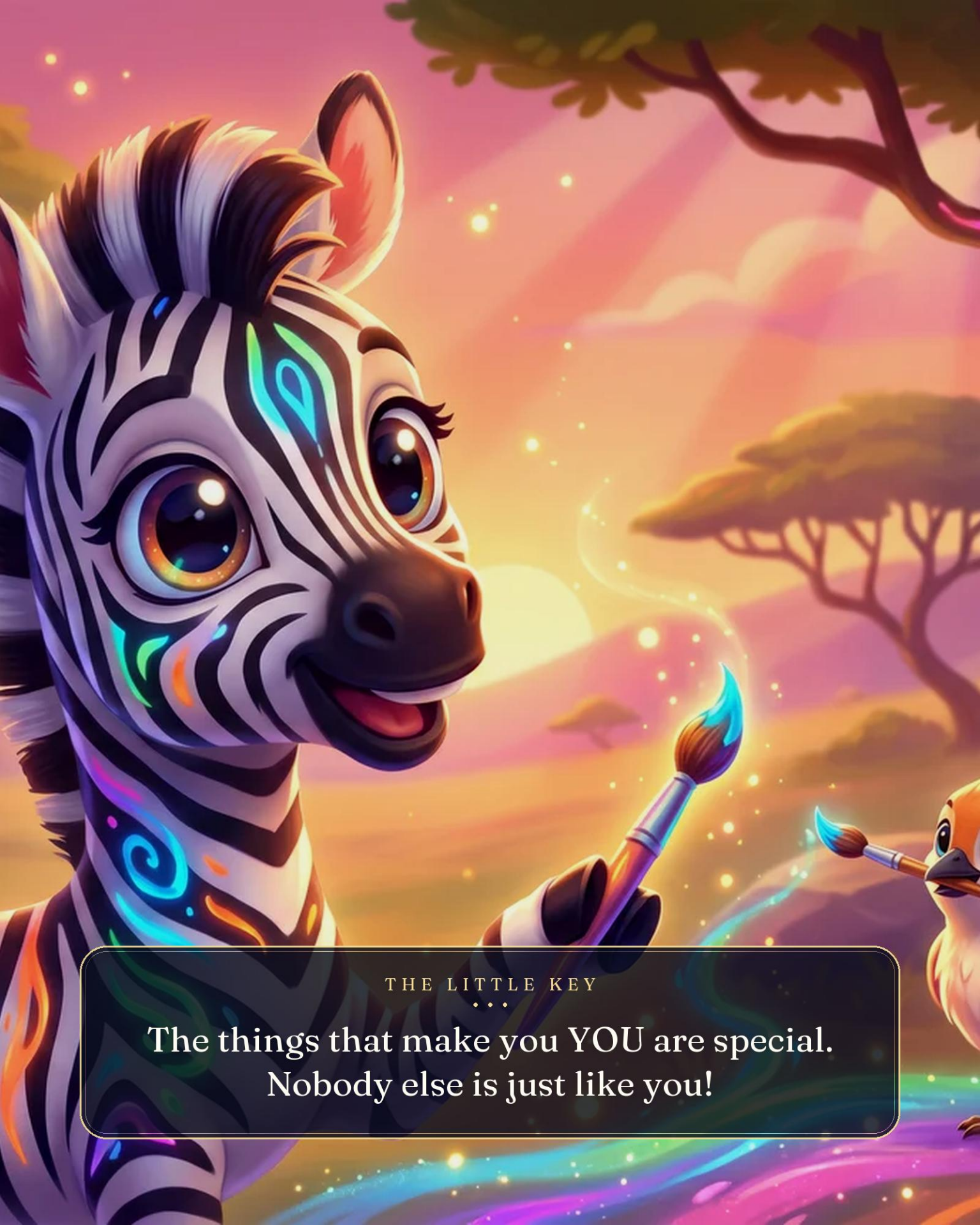
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Dots, spots, spirals, swirls. The savannah lit up with life again. Zee laughed. I thought I had to look like everyone else. But the painting needed my stripes. Huw nodded. When we all show up as ourselves, the world becomes a masterpiece. Bill Nye teaches that we're all part of one big family. Different colours, different faces, different voices. But the same amazing stuff inside. Science shows us that our differences aren't mistakes. They're what make us stronger, brighter and more beautiful together.



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So the next time you feel different, paint with your own colour.  
Dance with your own pattern. And remember, you help the  
world shine.



THE LITTLE KEY  
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The things that make you YOU are special.  
Nobody else is just like you!



### YOUR STRIPES MATTER

A zebra who wishes she were colorful discovers that her own stripes paint the world in a way only she can. A joyful bedtime story about self-expression.

For kids embarrassed by what makes them different — a reminder it's their signature.

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