

# Zip's Word, Tiara's Way

A STORY BY ARKEDELIC

## Note to Parents



**BUILDING BEAUTIFUL INSIDE**

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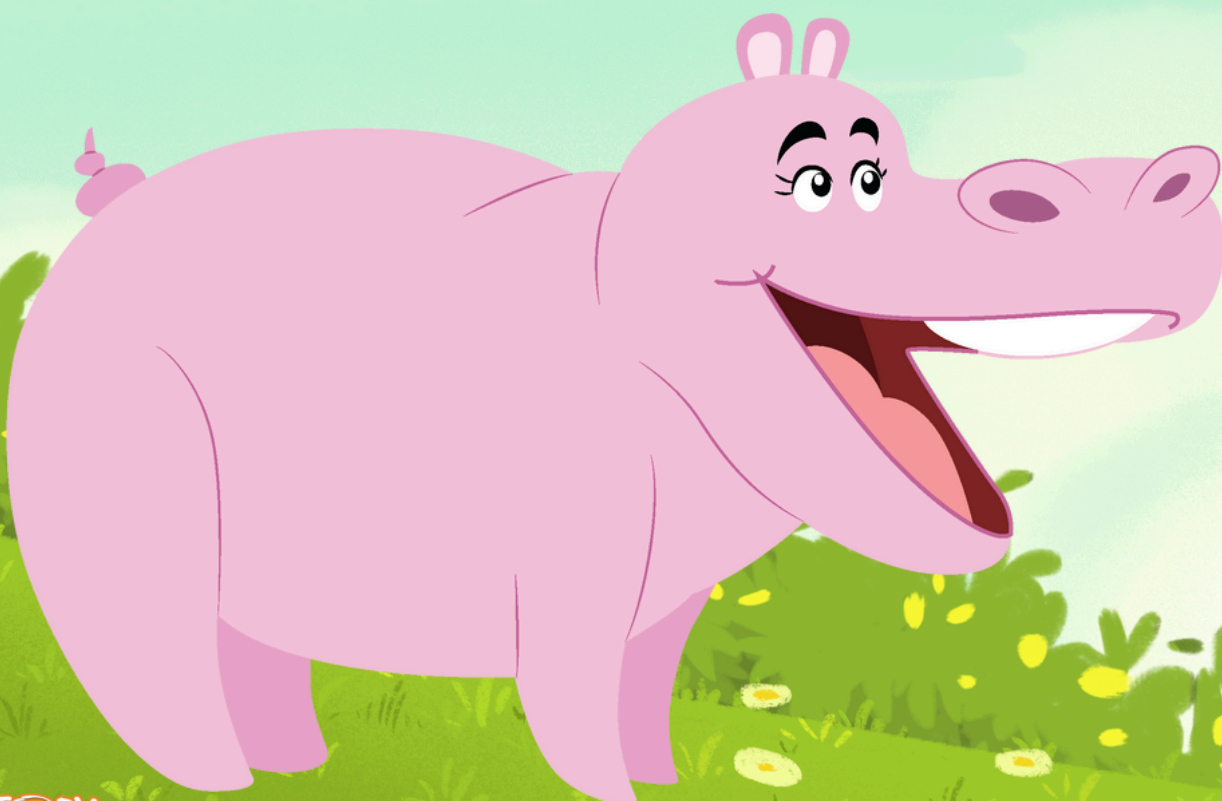


The jungle was alive with excitement.

Today was the big EchoWalk — a trust trail over Whispering Rock, led by Tiara herself.

“Eyes closed, ears open,”  
Mombino had said at breakfast.

“One leads.  
The rest must follow — listening, not looking.”





Tiara's heart thumped.

She'd spent the last two days pacing the trail,  
planning every curve and stone.

She'd even marked tiny criss-crosses on bark  
with juiceberry ink.

This wasn't just a walk. It was a promise —  
that the troop could follow her safely, and  
trust her all the way.

“Okay,” she said, trying to sound calm.

“We'll go in pairs. RJ and Alina, Stripes and  
Ringo, me and... Zip.”





Zip gave a half-hop, ears twitching.  
“Blindfolded hopping? My speciality.”

Stripes raised an eyebrow.  
“Unless you hop on someone.”

Tiara quickly stepped in.  
“No teasing today. Everyone — blindfolds on!”

Leaves were gently tied. Eyes covered. The group lined up, paw on shoulder, ready to follow Tiara’s voice.

“Right step. Careful. Curve ahead... Ringo, tail in.”  
And for a while, it went beautifully.





Tiara's voice danced between firm and friendly.

They tiptoed past whispering reeds and soft moss beds.

Every so often, Zip would hum a silly tune under his breath, making Alina smile quietly behind her blindfold.

But then — SPLASH!

Stripes screeched. Ringo yelped. There was a scrabble of paws, a tumble, and a crash.

Someone had slipped off the edge and landed — not far down, but right into the muddy pool below.

Everyone froze.





“I’ve been PUSHED!” Stripes roared from the puddle, fur dripping and puffed.

“No you weren’t,” Zip said, startled.

“I was three steps behind—”

“I felt a bunny elbow!” Stripes cried.

“You’ve always been bouncy and—”

RJ chimed in. “He does jump around a lot.  
Maybe it was by accident?”

“I didn’t,” Zip repeated, firmer now.

“I was careful. I stayed in line.”





Tiara's ears twitched.  
The group looked to her. She was leader today.

“Zip,” she said, “I know you mean well.  
But maybe you got excited.  
It's okay. We just need to be careful.”

“I didn't,” Zip whispered again, this time much softer.  
“But... okay.” His ears dropped.

No one could see it — their blindfolds were still on — but  
Tiara noticed. A tiny curl of sadness in his shoulders.

Alina hadn't spoken. She was crouched by the slippery bend,  
nose to the stones. Her paws gently moved a few leaves aside.

“These,” she said suddenly, “are fernpods. They fall from up  
there, but they only grow right here. If someone slipped, it  
wasn't from a push. It was from these.”





She held up two crushed pods, slick and shining.

Tiara looked. So did RJ. Stripes squinted.  
“Wait... you mean I just slipped? No one pushed me?”

“No one,” Alina said calmly. Silence.

Tiara turned slowly toward Zip.  
“I’m sorry,” she said, quietly.  
“I should’ve waited. Asked. Believed you.”

Zip didn’t say anything for a moment.

Then he looked up.  
“It wasn’t just about being blamed.  
It was about being... not believed.”





RJ scratched his mane. “I jumped in too fast.  
That wasn’t fair.”

Stripes muttered, “I was wet and dramatic.  
Maybe I panicked.”

Tiara stepped forward. “We’re not perfect.  
But we can be better. Maybe the real EchoWalk  
isn’t just about leading —  
it’s about listening.”

They nodded.





Later, when the trail was done and the blindfolds untied,  
they sat under the amber sky.

Jungle jam was passed around, and laughter bubbled again.

Tiara placed a sticky-sweet honeyfruit in Zip's paw.

“For standing still,” she said,  
“when everything around you slipped.”





Zip smiled. “And for standing back up,” he said,  
“when everything around you didn’t.”

They bumped paws, not in apology,  
but in quiet, wordless friendship.

And that evening, under the fading light of Booshkata,  
trust walked a little taller.

— *THE END* —





# Building Beautiful Inside

VALUE LESSONS FROM 'ZIP'S WORD, TIARA'S WAY'

## HOW DO I HANDLE IT WHEN MY CHILD TWISTS FACTS OR BLAMES OTHERS TO ESCAPE CONSEQUENCES?

**Context in the Story:** When Stripes slips and blames Zip, others join in without checking the facts. Tiara, the leader, sides with the louder voices to keep control. But it's Alina's quiet observation — and Zip's steady refusal to lie — that brings the truth to light. Tiara later apologises for not believing Zip sooner.

**Real-world Connection:** Children sometimes twist facts when they feel cornered, afraid, or desperate to avoid punishment. It's often less about lying and more about self-preservation or fear of disappointing others. Helping them face the truth safely builds long-term honesty.

**How parents can use the story:** This story creates an opening for parents to talk about honesty without harshness. Zip's experience shows that even when the truth is uncomfortable, standing by it matters. Parents can discuss with their child: "What do you think Zip was feeling? What helped him stick to the truth?" It also models how Tiara, as a leader, made a mistake but took responsibility and made amends. Use this story to encourage your child to speak the truth — not because they fear punishment, but because they trust you to listen. Build a home where it's safe to say, "I messed up," and still feel respected.



# Building Beautiful Inside

VALUE LESSONS FROM 'ZIP'S WORD, TIARA'S WAY'

## HOW DO I GET MY CHILD TO STOP TATTLING OR COMPLAINING CONSTANTLY ABOUT OTHERS?

**Context in the Story:** Stripes quickly accuses Zip without fully knowing what happened. RJ joins in, and the group begins to unravel with loud blame and complaints. Only Alina chooses observation over accusation. Later, Tiara teaches that true EchoWalk isn't about pointing paws — it's about listening and pausing before jumping to conclusions.

**Real-world Connection:** At this age, children struggle to know the difference between “telling to help” and “telling to get someone in trouble.” Tattling often comes from a place of confusion, competition, or need for attention.

**How parents can use the story:** Instead of shaming a child for tattling, this story allows parents to slow the moment down. Ask, “Was this like what Stripes did? Did we check what really happened?” It also gives a chance to praise kids who notice quietly, like Alina. Reinforce the idea that fairness doesn't always mean being the loudest — sometimes it means being the slowest to speak. Over time, children begin to internalise that being trustworthy means being thoughtful, not reactive. Use this story to build emotional patience and team thinking.



# Building Beautiful Inside

VALUE LESSONS FROM 'ZIP'S WORD, TIARA'S WAY'

## HOW CAN I TEACH MY CHILD TO SHOW LOYALTY, CARE, AND STAND BY LOVED ONES?

**Context in the Story:** Zip feels alone when his word is doubted by his closest friends. But he stands steady and doesn't lash out. Later, Tiara sees the cost of not standing by a friend when they needed her the most — and makes things right, publicly and personally. The story ends with quiet healing and restored trust.

**Real-world Connection:** Children begin to understand the meaning of friendship in difficult moments — not just play, but protection. Loyalty can mean asking, “Are you okay?” or saying, “I believe you,” when no one else does.

**How parents can use the story:** This story lets parents discuss real moments where a child can feel torn — when a friend is being unfairly blamed or left out. Ask: “Have you ever felt like Zip? Or like Tiara, later on?” Loyalty isn't just about never disagreeing — it's about not abandoning someone in their hardest moment. Parents can use this to help their child see that being a good friend also means being brave — speaking gently, listening fairly, and staying near. These are seeds of empathy, and this story waters them deeply.



# Assessment Questions for 'ZIP'S WORD, TIARA'S WAY'

**Five assessment questions to encourage children's understanding and emotional intelligence:**



## *1. Listening Before Deciding*

**Purpose:** To help children practise pausing and gathering clues before making a judgment.

**Question:** When Stripes fell, what could Tiara and the others have done before saying what happened?

**Follow-up:** If you hear a big splash or crash, what are three things you can do to check the truth kindly?

## *2. Being Believed Matters*

**Purpose:** To help children notice how it feels when someone trusts your word — and why that trust builds friendship.

**Question:** Zip said it wasn't just about being blamed — it was about not being believed. What feelings do you think he had inside?

**Follow-up:** When you want someone to believe you, what words or actions from them help you feel safe and heard?



### *3. Look for Clues*

**Purpose:** To encourage careful observation (like Alina's) instead of quick blaming.

**Question:** How did Alina's fernpods clue change what everyone thought about the slip?

**Follow-up:** If you were a "clue finder," what signs would you look for to understand what really happened?

### *4. Leading Means Listening*

**Purpose:** To guide children to see that good leaders slow down, ask, and include others before deciding.

**Question:** Tiara was the leader on the EchoWalk. What could a leader say or do to listen better when something goes wrong?

**Follow-up:** If you were leading a game and someone got upset, what questions would you ask to be fair?

### *5. Making It Right*

**Purpose:** To show how apologies and honest words can repair trust after a mistake.

**Question:** What did Tiara, RJ, and Stripes do or say that helped fix the hurt after the mix-up?

**Follow-up:** Think of a time you made a quick mistake with your words. What could you say or do now to make it feel better for everyone?



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