



A cartoon illustration of a zebra standing in a field of tall, dry grass. The zebra is facing right, looking towards the horizon. In the background, there is a single acacia tree with a flat top. The sky is a light blue gradient.

THE GREAT SAFARI BALLOON



It was a perfect sunny morning. Leo and Maya were ready for an adventure. They climbed into their bright red hot air balloon, the Great Safari Balloon, and waved goodbye to their house.



Up, up they went, over the rooftops and across the sparkling ocean. "Look, Maya! The water goes on forever!" said Leo.



Soon they saw a golden land with tall grass and flat-topped trees. "We made it! The Serengeti!" cheered Maya.



Below them, elephants swayed, giraffes stretched their long necks, and lions dozed in the sun. Everywhere they looked, an animal was doing something amazing.



But in a quiet spot near some bushes, a little zebra stood all alone. She looked lost. "Poor thing," whispered Maya. "She must have wandered off."



Maya took her favorite red scarf and tied it to the basket rope. They lowered it down. The little zebra perked up and followed the bright scarf like a ribbon.



Soon they spotted a herd of zebras. A mother zebra came running! The little zebra—Zuri, as Maya named her—galloped to her side. Leo and Maya smiled.



As the sun turned the sky orange and pink, Leo and Maya raised their juice boxes. "To the Great Safari Balloon!" they cheered. "We'll be back tomorrow!"