

THE BALLOON MAN

By

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EXT. BUSY PLAZA. DAY

BALLOON MAN is slumped on a bench, head in his hands. Lots of people are shopping and walking past, but it is visibly empty around him. Beside him on the floor is a worn leather case with assortments of balloons, pumps, balls and other playful gadgets. The Balloon Man sighs, stares at the box visibly upset, then looks at the crowd.

MAGICIAN is standing opposite in the plaza, he is surrounded by children who gasp and are amazed at his simple card tricks and magic. He is overly flashy and showing off, but his tricks are obviously very easy or low skilled.

MAGICIAN

What card children, what card? Oh you mean, THIS card? Tada! Yes, I'm brilliant, I know. How about a ball, watch the ball...

He captivates the crowd of children, who soon disperse as he finishes. Balloon Man watches the act with little interest.

A GIRL runs up to Balloon Man, pulling MOTHER along by the hand, talking quickly and pointing for a balloon. The Balloon Man visibly brightens and makes a show of making a balloon, extravagantly pumping it up, quickly making a range of animal shapes. The balloon pops in his hands, the Girl begins to cry, Mother looks horrified and hurries the Girl away with a disgusted look at Balloon Man.

The Magician is watching this display with amusement, he laughs when the balloon pops, making mocking motions in the air imitating the balloon man sarcastically. The Balloon Man notices, Magician winks at him to show off, then strides over to SIGN HOLDING GIRL.

Sign Holding Girl is standing a fair distance away, Balloon Man has been staring wistfully at her for some time in love. She is in the crowd holding a large advertising sign in her hands.

SIGN HOLDING GIRL

Sir can you please? Oh Madam, if you would take this...? Special 2 for 1 on Valentine's Night at our restaurant! Sir, Sir, SIR!

The busy crowd walks past with their shopping, ignoring her and the leaflets she tries to give out. Magician walks up to her slyly, taps her on the shoulder, then

appears from the other side and surprises Sign Holding Girl. Magician brandishes a plastic bunch of flowers from his coat, She ignores his repetitive sleazy tricks. He runs a hand up her arm, stroking her and making kisses, pulling her closer. Balloon Man watches shocked.

SIGN HOLDING GIRL
GET OFF ME!

Sign Holding Girl hits Magician hard with her advertising sign, fending off his sleazy advances. Magician yelps in pain and limps away. Sign Holding Girl begins to cry and runs off through the crowd.

Balloon Man watches this glumly, then chuckles as the Magician stumbles back to his spot, sputtering with rage. Balloon Man winks at him, reaches down to lock the clasps on his leather case, picks it up and strides off. Magician watches, a YOUNG CHILD runs up to him, making motions for him to make magic. Magician shouts angrily and scares Young Child off, cards scattering in the air.

EXT. QUIET BENCH. DAY

Sign Holding Girl is slumped on a bench, head in hands, visibly distressed and crying. Her sign is discarded by the end of the bench crumpled.

Balloon Man gently walks up to the bench and sits, far away from Sign Holding Girl. He puts case down in the empty gap, opens it and pulls out a pink balloon. He begins stretching the balloon and blowing it up.

Sign Holding Girl slowly stops crying and looks up, to be presented with a heart shaped balloon from a grinning Balloon Man. She explodes in a huge smile and wipes away her tears laughing.

She takes the balloon, then lightly kisses him on the head, stands up and holds out her hand to Balloon Man. He looks questioningly at her, then takes it and stands. She begins to walk off, tugging him along.

BALLOON MAN
But, where are we going?

SIGN HOLDING GIRL
Well it is Valentine's Night after all.

Sign Holding Girl walks off, gently pulling a bemused Balloon Man by the hand, her pink heart shaped balloon bobbing alongside.