

The Permanent Balloon

By: IndigoRho

Chaotic stretched and yawned on the couch, the gray-and-white raccoon doing his best to shake off the sudden bout of drowsiness that'd hit him. The sun was still out, bright light shining through the windows, and Chaotic wasn't ready for the fun to end yet. He'd been hanging out at his friend Rho's apartment all afternoon, a welcome reprieve after a long busy week of work. They'd just finished another round of video games, and Chaotic was patiently waiting for Rho to return from a quick trip to the kitchen.

Sure enough the orange-striped zebra entered the room once again, holding two glasses of a clear soda. "Sorry about the delay, took longer than I thought to find the glasses!"

"No problem, the little rest was nice," Chaotic said as he accepted the soda. "Ooh, what flavor is this?"

"It's a surprise! Though I guarantee you'll think it's swell," Rho grinned.

Chaotic took a cautious sip of his drink, surprised by how bubbly it was; he could feel the bubbles from the carbonation linger in his mouth a good while. Even after a second gulp he couldn't settle on the flavor, though there were definitely strong hints of citrus. Regardless the soda was delicious, and the raccoon couldn't help but guzzle it all down rapidly.

Rho kept a particularly keen eye on his friend, the grin on his face growing as he watched Chaotic's glass drain completely. "See, I knew you'd love it! Honestly it's a drink practically tailor-made for ya."

"R-really?" Chaotic blushed a little. "You'll have to tell me what all's in it, then, cause that's the best drink I've had in a long, long time!"

The raccoon's attention shifted to Rho at just the right moment to avoid noticing his normally flat middle had swelled a bit, and was getting rounder and rounder still. A muffled fizzing was echoing within his stomach, the bubbles from the carbonation not bursting but floating upward and multiplying along with the soda itself. Of course Rho saw the changes—he was behind them after all—though he did well to hide his gaze from Chaotic.

"Well it's nothing *too* fancy," Rho said. "Just the usual soda ingredients, along with a hearty amount of rather volatile helium berry juice."

The smile on Chaotic's face faded for a moment before he burst into laughter. "Oh man, you almost had me for a second there!" Laughing only aggravated the soda inside him, causing the raccoon to bloat further. The liquid was deceptively light, and even a couple gallons barely felt heavier than a normal glass of water.

"For once I'm being *very* serious, my friend. The soda you so greedily guzzled had enough helium berry juice to turn a person into a taut, squeaking ball permanently." Rho bent over and gave Chaotic's round middle a prod, alerting the raccoon to his predicament.

When he felt the poke far further than it should have been Chaotic's eyes widened, and his smile went away for good once he looked down and finally saw how much he'd swelled without realizing. He jumped in surprise, his new belly suddenly inflating more from the jostling to his dismay. Chaotic looked like he'd swallowed a beach ball, and the longer he stared the larger that ball became. Helium berries were a rather strange fruit that always looked about to float right off the bush thanks to its juice being lighter than air. In small quantities they weren't dangerous, but the right additives could prompt the juice to multiply out of control once consumed, filling the victim until they were spherical.

"Why would—" Chaotic winced and went silent for a second as he heard the higher pitch in his voice, another obvious sign of excessive helium berry juice consumption. "N-not funny Rho, I didn't want to get big tonight! Go grab me an antidote before I'm too round to move!" His hopes of sounding assertive were dashed by his odd voice.

"But Chaotic, I *want* to see you too round to move you squeaky goof!" Rho chuckled,

drumming slightly on the raccoon's belly and making him blush. "You always look your best when you're spherical, and taut, and barely recognizable as a raccoon anymore. It really is your natural state!"

Chaotic still wasn't amused by his friend's prank, and knew he had to act fast if he wanted to snag something that would settle the bubbles and juice within him. Unfortunately his initial attempt to get off the couch failed, the raccoon wobbling comically and blimping up more as his expanding middle got in the way. Additional attempts ended just as poorly, until Chaotic was forced to give up, too big to escape on his own.

By then Chaotic's chest was swelling as well, merging with his growing ball belly. He could feel his arms and legs starting to puff up slightly, getting less and less flexible by the second. The juice building up inside him was so light he felt like he was inflating with air, and the miniature helium bubbles rolling around above it didn't help. Faint creaks emanated from his stretching hide, unnerving the raccoon even though he knew he could get far bigger.

"Now you're starting to look like the real you!" Rho declared with glee. "Nice and round, just like a proper balloon."

Rho embraced Chaotic's belly and squeezed, his friend blushing and whimpering before burping up a couple bubbles. The zebra gave one a solid poke, his finger pressing in deep but not bursting it. He prodded both a few more times, even clapped his hooves together over one, but no matter how roughly he treated them they didn't pop. The demonstration delighted Rho—and left Chaotic feeling rightfully concerned.

"Sorry, I neglected to mention a few little ingredients here and there. Once you've blimped up completely you'll be just as unpopable as those bubbles, a trait any balloon would want!" Rho laughed.

"Please Rho, deflate me, I don't wanna be a balloon tonight!" Chaotic squeaked, wobbling on the couch as his body grew even lighter.

His plea was answered by a series of pokes and belly rubs, Rho seemingly eager to test his swelling friend's durability. "Oh Chaotic, why can't you accept that being a balloon is your destiny, what you were meant for? I'm sure you'll have a change of heart once the pressure overwhelms you." Rho pressed down a little harder on the raccoon's bloated middle, whines turning to moans as the pressure temporarily increased. "And if not, then at least you'll have plenty of time to once you're a permanent helium berry."

"P-permanent?" While Chaotic had originally assumed Rho was joking around, his certainty was wavering rapidly. There was just something...different about his friend's tone, the way he was treating and teasing him. Annoyance turned into fear, and Rho's once-friendly words now felt ominous. Before he could even think of a proper response, though, Chaotic realized he was rising off the couch.

The inflating raccoon flailed about as he floated helplessly upward, his body creaking and sloshing and swelling the whole while. Chaotic couldn't effectively move his limbs anymore, just wobble them, and they were well on their way to getting enveloped by his increasingly-spherical form. Little-by-little the pressure was creeping into his thoughts, a distraction that made him firmly blush against his will. Getting lost in the sensation would be easy, but he'd never escape it on his own if he did.

"A good balloon is always in the air, Chaotic," Rho stated before gently nudging the bloated raccoon a bit higher with a hoof. "Tell me, how does it feel knowing you'll never touch solid ground again?"

Chaotic's face flushed red and he let out a high pitched whimper as his round middle bumped against the ceiling. The pressure within was at a point where the raccoon had to actively concentrate to think of anything else, a challenge as the sensation grew more and more pleasurable over time. He yelped when he felt a tug on his puffy tail, unable to see Rho tying a long, thick string to it; Chaotic only looked more balloon-like then.

"Rho you can't just keep me inflated in your apartment like this, I'm not an actual balloon!"

Chaotic begged, struggling to ignore the pressure.

“Trust me, the temptation to have my own personal balloon was very, *very* strong. You'd have been a hit at parties, and made a great seat to relax in from time to time.” Rho tugged on the string, causing Chaotic to bob and bounce around. “But keeping you locked away just seems wrong. Balloons are meant to be free, floating above the clouds for all eternity without a care in the world.”

With the raccoon balloon in tow Rho trotted over to the sliding glass door that led onto his balcony and opened it as wide as possible. Chaotic twitched as he felt the fresh air rush over his body, naturally afraid of the great outdoors in his floaty state. He was barely able to keep the pressure at bay, worry interfering with his attempts to concentrate on *anything* aside from how big and taut he was. Every slight bump against the ceiling only worsened the feeling, though.

“W-what...what are you...doing!” Chaotic mumbled in his squeaky voice.

“Sending you home, of course! The sky's where you belong, Chaotic, just an unpopable balloon out of anyone's reach,” Rho said before pulling his blimp of a friend through the door, prompting creaks and moans from Chaotic.

Chaotic immediately drifted upward upon getting outside, held back only by Rho's grip on his string. “N...no. I don't...I don't wanna be...”

The immense internal pressure Chaotic had been enduring finally overwhelmed his mind, intruding on his every thought. He couldn't think a coherent sentence let alone speak one, and twisted grin frozen on his face as he blushed perpetually. He'd sporadically whimper or outright moan, even moreso if prodded or rubbed, which Rho did with glee. Rho's teasing felt so distant, so...unimportant. All that mattered was the unbelievable pressure pushing against his unpopable hide.

“See, told ya you'd embrace your fate~” Rho teased as he noticed his friend was in a daze, one he'd likely never break free from. “Well it was nice knowing ya Chaotic, but you were always bound to become a balloon eventually. Enjoy your journey!”

Without hesitation Rho let go of the string, the only thing that'd been keeping Chaotic from floating off into oblivion. The balloon rose steadily and lazily, aglow in the light of the setting sun. Rho pulled out his phone and recorded the lift off, keeping his sights on Chaotic for as long as possible, till he was a barely visible speck in the sky. Only then did the zebra wander back inside his apartment, delighted by how fun and productive the day had been.

Meanwhile up above, Chaotic was oblivious to his predicament. He didn't see the city getting smaller and smaller below, didn't feel himself pass through some of the lower, lighter clouds. His life was all about pressure now, wonderful, sensual, oppressive pressure. With such volatile helium berry juice bubbling inside him Chaotic was guaranteed to never deflate, not that he wanted to. After all, as far as he was concerned there was nothing better in life than being a big round balloon...