

Birthday Balloon Bundle

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The sharp hissing of a helium tank and creaking of an inflating balloon broke the silence in Ceejay's apartment as the cat lazily prepared for his own birthday party. The cake was safely waiting in the fridge, a bounty of snacks were already on the table, and his friends would start arriving in only a couple hours. All that was left was filling up a few balloons. Though Ceejay couldn't deny that was mainly an excuse to inflate something.

Only a couple balloons in, the tank abruptly sputtered and quieted, empty. Ceejay frowned until he remembered he'd seen a second tank buried in the closet. He hurried over and opened the door, leaning into the closet and retrieving a tank a few moments later. It was a bit smaller than what he usually bought, but at least felt full. He didn't recognize the brand and wondered if it was something he'd gotten as a gift and long forgotten. The tank's origins weren't important, though, just that it saved him a trip to the store.

As Ceejay carried the odd tank over to the balloons he found his thoughts wandering. *He* wanted to be the one inflating, hide stretching and belly swelling. The cat frequently used an air pump to indulge in such fantasies when he had the free time, occasionally spending whole afternoons waddling around with a beach ball belly. Unfortunately he didn't really have the time to indulge to such a degree right then. Still, a modest puff from the tank wouldn't hurt, and he could purge the helium easily before guests arrived.

Ceejay grabbed a short rubber hose before plopping down on the couch, resting the tank beside him. A few seconds later the hose was firmly attached, and the cat happily placed the other end into his mouth. He stifled a grin as he heard the wonderful hissing and felt his cheeks puff up. His belly wobbled gently as it began to round out. Soon his middle was peeking out from under his shirt, resembling a balloon more and more every second. Once it was about a foot and a half or so wide he'd stop.

While the cat admired his somewhat bloated belly, though, he suddenly realized it'd stopped growing despite the fact helium was still rushing down his throat. When Ceejay tried to poke his middle out of curiosity he ended up struggling unexpectedly, his arm feeling oddly stiff. A squeaky meow of distress escaped his lips as he saw his arms had begun inflating, his paws round and puffy. His legs were the same.

The helium should've been safely confined to his gut, but for unknown reasons he was instead inflating all over. A wave of dizziness came over Ceejay as even his head began to expand. To make matters worse he felt his whole body growing numb, the cat unable to reach the tank to turn it off. Helpless, Ceejay let out high-pitched whimpers, not entirely sure what was happening.

Ceejay's fur matted and gained a noticeable shine. His clothes became skin-tight and gleamed as well, until fur and fabric blended together. He was creaking loudly, both from the steady expansion and what little wobbling he could manage. The cat's gaze was locked into place, forced into a wide nervous grin that was in considerable contrast to his actual state of mind. He was aware enough to know he was transforming, too, not that the information was of any practical use.

If anyone had entered the apartment then they likely would've mistaken Ceejay for a bizarre, life-sized inflatable animal. His arms and legs looked like series of three interconnected balloons apiece, all leading from the oversized balloon that was his torso. Without warning the helium tank shut off, the hose popping out of Ceejay's sealed mouth and onto the floor.

All at once the many balloons that made up Ceejay's body broke away. They drifted upwards towards the ceiling, strings attached to their tied knots that'd previously been hidden. The ends of the dozen plus strings were tied together, creating a neat bundle of birthday balloons. They were an eclectic mix, multiple sizes and colors not normally used for such things. One even had a smile and wide eyes printed on, though it was easy to overlook bouncing beside the giant balloon in the bundle's center.

With the balloons ready the preparations for Ceejay's birthday party were officially complete. It was a shame the birthday boy himself had mysteriously vanished...