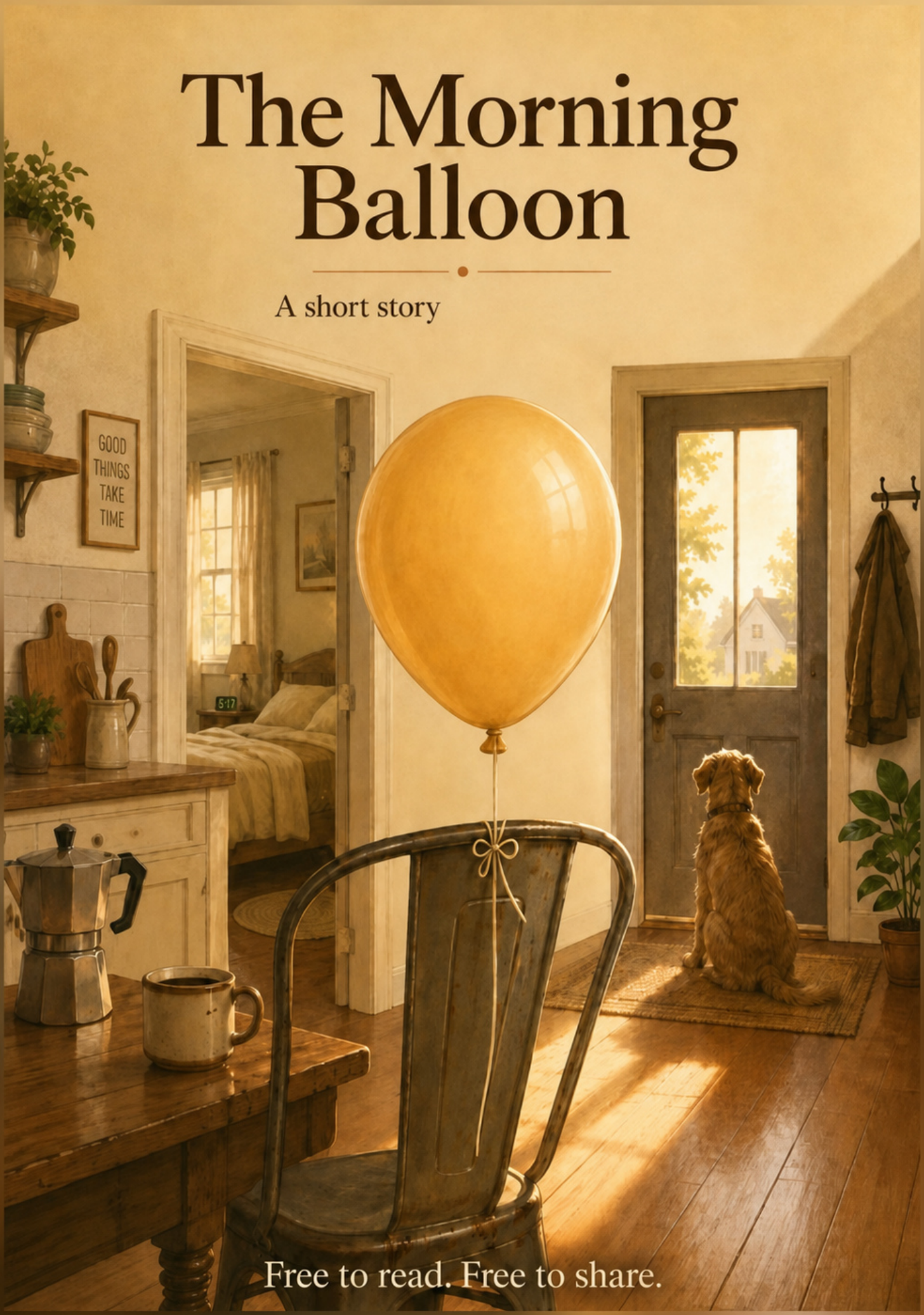
The Morning Balloon

A short story



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The Morning Balloon was tied to the back of a metal kitchen chair.

Not a comfortable chair.

One of those old kitchen chairs that looked like it had been in the family longer

than some people.

The kind nobody leaned back on for fun.

That was his spot.

Every morning, before the sun came up, he watched the same show.

The kitchen was dark.

The bedroom door was open.

The hallway light was off.

From where he floated, the Morning Balloon could see just enough.

The edge of the bed.

Part of the doorway.

The dog bed in the corner.

The front door if he turned slightly.

He never went anywhere.

The morning came to him.

The alarm went off.

Nothing happened.

The alarm kept going.

Still nothing.

Then the man made a sound from the bedroom.

Not words.

More like a person losing an argument with a blanket.

The dog lifted his head.

The Morning Balloon watched the dog.

The dog looked toward the bed.

Then toward the front door.

Then back toward the bed.

He knew the routine.

The man was awake.

Technically.

But outside was not happening yet.

Coffee came first.

Always coffee first.

The dog stood up first.

Front legs down.

Back end up.

Big stretch.

Then he shook like he had been working all night.

He had not.

He had been asleep.

The man finally appeared in the bedroom doorway.

Hair wrong.

Eyes half open.

One sock on.

The dog looked at him.

The Morning Balloon looked at the dog.

The dog looked at the front door.

The man walked past the front door.

Straight to the coffee machine.

The dog did not move.

He knew.

The machine clicked.

Then hissed.

Then made the sound coffee machines make when they are doing more than

everyone else in the house.
The man leaned on the counter.
The dog sat by the door.
Waiting.
The Morning Balloon floated above the old metal chair.
Same spot.
Same show.
Every morning.
The coffee finished.
The man picked up the cup.
The dog stood up.
Too early.
The man picked up his phone.
The dog sat back down.
Correct.
The Morning Balloon had seen this part before.
The man took one sip.
Looked at his phone.
Scrolled.
Squinted.
Scrolled again.
Then said, "All right."
The dog stood up.
The man did not move.
The dog stared at him.
The Morning Balloon watched the dog stare.
The dog looked at the front door.
Then back at the man.
Then at the front door again.

It was not a suggestion anymore.
It was a business meeting.
Finally, the man put the phone down.
"All right, boy. You ready to go outside?"
The dog jumped up.
Immediately.
Too immediately.
Like he had been waiting his whole life for that exact sentence.
He walked to the spot by the door.
Sat down.
Lifted his head.
Ready for the collar.
The man moved slowly.
Very slowly.
The dog made a small sound.
Not a bark.
More like a tired employee reminding the boss what time it was.
The collar clicked.
The leash came off the hook.
The dog's tail started moving.
The man opened the front door.
Cold morning air slipped into the kitchen.
For a second, the Morning Balloon could see the sky.
Still dark.
Barely blue.
Too early for anyone to be making decisions.
The dog stepped outside like he owned the block.
The man followed him with coffee in one hand.
Then the door closed.

The kitchen went quiet.
The Morning Balloon floated above the old metal chair.
Waiting.
Same spot.
Same show.
Every morning.
A few minutes later, the door opened.
The dog came in first.
Successful.
Proud.
Business handled.
The man came in behind him.
"Good boy."
The dog drank water.
Then walked to his spot.
Turned in a circle.
Turned in one more circle, just to make sure the first circle was correct.
Then he lay down.
The man sat at the kitchen table.
Just for a second.
The Morning Balloon knew better.
It was never just for a second.
The man picked up his phone.
The coffee sat on the table.
The kitchen clock kept moving.
The man did not.
Five minutes passed.
Then six.
Then the man looked at the time.

"Oh no."
There it was.
The part where the morning became everyone else's fault.
Shoes.
Keys.
Wallet.
Phone.
Coffee.
Phone again.
Where were the keys?
The keys were in his hand.
The dog watched from his bed.
Not worried.
Not surprised.
This was also part of the routine.
Finally, the man grabbed his things.
He opened the door.
Then stopped.
Turned back.
"All right, Doggio. Have a good day."
The dog wagged his tail once.
The man smiled.
Then looked toward the little speaker on the counter.
"Hey, Alexa, play classical music for the dog."
Soft music filled the kitchen.
The man stepped outside.
The door closed.
The Morning Balloon floated above the old metal chair.
The dog laid his head down.

For a moment, the whole house was quiet.
Then the dog looked toward the door.
And wondered if every human was like his.

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THANK YOU FOR READING.

Some balloons chase danger. Some watch the coffee get cold.

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