The Taco Tuesday Balloon



At 9:03 in the morning, the office already smelled like printer paper, old coffee, and people pretending to work.

The balloon was tied to the corner of a gray cubicle.

It was yellow, with a little green ribbon curling underneath it.

Someone had brought it for Taco Tuesday.

The balloon did not know it was Tuesday.

It also did not know about tacos.

But the man at the desk knew.

He knew very much.

The cafeteria started serving them at noon.

Noon was not close.

Noon was three hours away.

Which, for a man thinking about tacos, was basically next week.

Coworkers typed, clicked, and muttered.

He stared at a spreadsheet.

Then the clock.

Then the spreadsheet.

Then his phone.

On his phone was a tiny story called Taco Tuesday from Balloon World.

He read the title three times.

That did not help.

At 10:14, he wrote follow up with supplier in the wrong box.

At 10:37, he almost answered the phone by saying, "Tacos?"

At 11:02, he opened the cafeteria menu like it might have changed in the last

four minutes.

The balloon floated above him and gently bumped the cubicle wall.

Tap.

He looked up.

"No," he whispered. "Do not start."

The balloon tapped again.

Tap.

A coworker peeked over the wall.

"You talking to the balloon?"

"No."

The balloon bobbed.

"Maybe."

At 11:59, the whole office changed.

Chairs squeaked.

Laptops closed.

People who had not moved all morning suddenly remembered they had legs.

The man stood up before the minute finished.

Then his manager stepped out.

"Can you take that balloon to the cafeteria?"

The man looked at the balloon.

Then the clock.

Then the hallway.

"Right now?"

"It's for the table."

That was a very calm thing to say to a hungry person.

The man grabbed the string.

The balloon floated behind him like it had been waiting all morning.

He walked fast.

Not running.

Office running was frowned upon.

But it was the kind of walking that had thoughts behind it.

The elevator stopped on every floor.

Every floor.

A man got on carrying soup.

Soup.

On Taco Tuesday.

The balloon drifted into the soup man's shoulder.

"Sorry," the man said.

The balloon was not.

By the time they reached the cafeteria, the line stretched past the condiment

table.

Two people near the front were deciding like this was a house purchase.

The man delivered the balloon to a woman setting decorations.

"Thank you," she said.

The balloon bobbed above the taco table.

It looked important.

The man did not care about important.

He cared about the line moving.

The line moved.

Slowly.

Then faster.

Then finally.

He got two tacos.

He sat down.

He lifted the first one.

The shell cracked a little before he even bit it.

His mouth watered.

The balloon floated above the room, proud, useless, and somehow part of the day.

He took the first bite.

Crunch.

THANK YOU FOR READING.

Some mornings are longer than they should be. Some lunches are worth the wait.

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