

Title: Lady Like?
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"How old are you today?" the man selling balloons in the park asked the young girl sitting on a bench in the park.

"Just turned 5 yesterday." "Why?" she looked at the man holding the balloons. He looked familiar. The man wore a T-shirt that said '*Balloons 5 cents*'. "Five," she smiled.

"My how grown up you are young lady," he said. The balloon man sat down on the opposite end of the bench and stared straight ahead off into the park.

"Not really," she responded. She pulled a large brush out of an oversize bag and began to brush her short ponytail at the back of the head. The ponytail slide all the way down until only a short pony tail was hanging toward the back of her neck to the shoulder. She stopped brushing and laid the brush beside her on the bench.

"Why?" he asked her still looking off into the park holding the balloons.

"Not lady like," she commented looking down at her feet scuffling them in dry dirt.

"Not lady like... that doesn't seem like a problem for you." "Are you not a lady?" the balloon man asked this as if he was amused.

"My mom says manners are to be instilled." "I asked her what moonshine she was making, "the little girl replied now looking at the profile of the man sitting on the bench that was staring straight out in the park smiling.

"What happen?" the balloon man chuckled a little and bounced a balloon up and down by tugging on one of the strings. It thumped several times as she watched him.

"I'm not supposed to know what moon shine is?" she said staring straight out in the park.

"Well what is it?" the man chuckled and laughed a little bit to himself glancing at the young girl briefly then continued to stare straight out into the park.

"Not the moon that is a full circle in the sky now and then at night..." "My grandpa's kitchen pantry has it in it." "He says it's for cooking and slow evenings," she replied. She stood up and walked over in front of the balloon man who was now looking at her when she said, "My mom told me if I talk about moon shine to people it wasn't lady like," she continued to stare at the man in the face as he looked up and tugged on a balloon that thumped.

"So you're not being lady like right now then?" "Is that what you're telling me?" he said as he glanced at her face before he tugged on another balloon and watched it thump again several times bounce in the air.

"Not sure," she said now watching with him the balloon that he was bouncing with the tug.

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"OH, "he said then chose a different color of a balloon to bounce with a tug.

"What's oh? "she asked watching him bounce the different color balloon up and down with a tug.

"When are you lady like?" he smiled glanced away from the tugged balloon going up and down and chuckled to himself.

"I say thank you when somebody gives me something." "I stand straight up and don't slouch." "I do the cores that mom gave me." "And oh!" "Let me think," she said and rolled her eyes and looked straight up into the clear sky.

"It's ok," the balloon man said. "You're being very polite." "I think that's grown-up and lady like." He held out the balloon that he was tugging and watched as she absently received the balloon with her hand. She giggled and a smile appeared upon her face. "Oh!" "I cross my legs when I sit and don't blow buggars in my shirt sleeve or blouse," she said then smiled really big. She held her balloon but tugged it just a little to see it bounce.

"You got any candy?" he asked her and laughed a little.

"Candy? "she said confused.

"Candy?" he asked her.

"I like gum balls and caramels." "You got any?" the balloon man asked.

"No, not right now," she responded with a sad face.

"Oh, I guess I'm not being lady like because I'm not supposed to asked people for candy," the balloon man said and chuckled to himself. He tugged on all the balloons in his hand and made a big thunk.

"Oh," the young girl started to laugh. She held tight to her balloon as the balloon man stood to his feet smiling he reached out tapped the girl lightly on the shoulder and said, "Got' a go!"

"Oh," the girl said sadly as she watched the balloon man reach into his pocket and hand her a handful of candy. Before she could reply with a comment he took his index finger pressed it to his lips, smiled, turned to the left and walked straight into the park toward a crowd.

Open hand she held the candy at a glance. She surmised that she held two gumballs- one red and one purple and four caramels with a mini chocolate bar. Smiling she stuck the pile of sugar in her pocket in hopes the summer's day did not melt it away.

Sugar helps keep the smile to last a little bit long – especially on that day.