The Perfect Gift

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It was a rather lovely and elegant afternoon. The sun played against the grass in bursts of blissful colors and tickled the faces and noses of the park’s inhabitants. Harold the porcupine and Petunia the hedgehog strolled by the lake, across the bridge, and had just begun the paved path, when Petunia was struck by a marvelous idea.

“Harold, darling,” she started, “I was struck by a marvelous idea! We should go down to the gazebo and acquire a balloon. Doesn’t that sound perfect for such a lovely and elegant afternoon?”

After consenting, Harold and Petunia strolled the way to the gazebo and happily found a rather sprightly badger graciously distributing balloons. Harold paid the fare with flair and George, the gracious badger, picked a ruby-red balloon from his bouquet and handed it to Petunia.

“Oh, thank you so much!” she exclaimed with glee.

But as George extended an azure-blue balloon to Harold, Harold’s excitement caused his quills to explode suddenly, and with a loud ‘pop!’ the balloon was reduced to rubbish.

“Not to worry sir,” George encouraged, and after the quills had settled, offered Harold another balloon.

But once again, the excitement was too much, and his quills rose and the balloon popped. Three more times the gracious badger George tried, but to no avail. By this time Harold was so upset that his quills refused to go down at all.

“Oh, dear me,” Harold lamented, “I guess I just wasn’t made for holding balloons…”

Just then Petunia was graced with another marvelous idea.

“Wait here,” she told the hopeless Harold, and dashed from the scene.
Not but half an hour had passed when she returned holding a brown box with a bright orange bow on top.

“I was saving this for your birthday, but I thought it would make you the happiest today,” Petunia explained, handing Harold the gift.

Still slightly sad, but overcome by Petunia’s display of thoughtfulness, he opened the brown box and pulled free its contents. Inside was a hand-knit sweater of dazzling patterns and wondrous colors! His happiness quieted his quills and gleefully he put on the sweater.

“I’ve been working on it secretly for days,” Petunia told the beaming Harold, “I’m so glad it fits!”

“It’s the loveliest thing you have ever made,” Harold declared with joy.

He felt safe and warm in his new sweater; it was like the feeling you get when you wake to the sound of birdsong and the stretch of the morning sun beckoning a new day.

“My dear badger,” Harold stated boldly, “I do believe I will have a balloon now.”

And without further ado, Harold and Petunia were happily settled by the lake, hand in hand; holding the loveliest of afternoon balloons.

The End.

Christopher Kent is a junior in Performance and Philosophy. He transferred from University of Northern Iowa and this is his second semester here. He enjoys reading books that previous owners have written in, as well as telling stories both on stage and in ink. His hope is to own a cat one day.