

CHARLEMAGNE THE SHAPER OF BALLOONS  
By Ben Gillman

*(A YOUNG MOM gathers up a bunch of KIDS.)*

MOM: C'mon, kids! I've got a special birthday treat for you!

ALL THE KIDS: Yay! Treats! Birthday! What is it?!

*(All the kids sit on the floor waiting.)*

MOM: I've hired a man to come and make balloon animals for you!

ALL THE KIDS: Yay! Balloon Animals! Hooray!

*(CHARLEMAGNE enters with a flourish.)*

CHARLEMAGNE: Hello, small children! It is I, Charlemagne the Shaper of Balloons. I am the greatest balloon artiste in the entire world. Nay, the entire universe! No animal is beyond my ability. Just try to stump me!

KID #1: I want a dog!

CHARLEMAGNE: Ha! A common house pet is no challenge for Charlemagne. I will happily create this simple friend of all man with a few quick twists of the balloon. Viola! I present you: A Dog!

*All the kids "Ooooooh!" and "Aaaahhhh!"*

CHARLEMAGNE: Now, who is next? Any beast throughout the entire Animal Kingdom is available to you, tiny humans.

KID #2: I want a tiger!

CHARLEMAGNE: Ah, yes! La Tigre! The powerful King of the Jungle with his mighty roar and devastating claws. I will happily shape this common balloon into the most uncommon of predators. Aha! Here you are. A tiger!

*The Tiger looks exactly the same as Dog.*

KID #2: Ummm... This looks just like the dog...

MOM: Pat! Sorry about that Charlemagne.

CHARLEMAGNE: Hahaha, silly little person! You make Charlemagne the Shaper laugh with your child-like naiveté.

MOM: Um... Charlemagne why don't you try something a little more distinct. What about a giraffe?!

ALL THE KIDS: Yeah! Hooray! A giraffe! Giraffe's are funny!

CHARLEMAGNE: A wondrously, fantastic suggestion, Mother-of-the-small-birtherd- child! For who could mistake the powerful features of the mighty Giraffe! With it's enormously long neck and equally long and spindly legs. It truly is a creature unlike any other! Boom! A giraffe!

*(The giraffe looks just like all the other animals.)*

KID #3: It looks like all the other balloons!

ALL THE KIDS: Boooo! He's no good! He doesn't know anything! Blaaaahhhh!!

CHARLEMAGNE: Silence, miniscule sapiens! Do not question the great powers of Charlemagne the Shaper of Balloons!

MOM: *(to Charlemagne)* We're losing control of them. You got to make something new! How about just making a snake!

ALL THE KIDS: Yeah! Oooooohhh! A snake! Cool! Ssssss!

MOM: Perfect! They're excited about that one! Go ahead make a snake!

CHARLEMAGNE: The snake! The biblical beast of the devil! That is the one animal I have never been able to master!

MOM: Are you kidding? You don't even have to do anything. Just blow one up.

CHARLEMAGNE: I've never been able to successfully harness the delicate majesty of the wild snake, but I will endeavor to try for this audience! I will twist this balloon to create the deadly venomous fangs! Now the hooded face of the beast. Now it's long, twirling coils that have been the demise of so many other living things! And finally the terrifying rattle! Yes! Success! My life's work is complete! I've created the snake!

*(Charlemagne holds it out proudly. It looks exactly like the other balloons!)*

*(Longish pause)*

*(The kids start boo-ing)*

ALL THE KIDS: Booo! You stink! You're no artiste!

MOM: Hurry! Do something! Your sword looks pretty cool! Why don't you make those for all the kids!

CHARLEMAGNE: Ehhh... I had to have a circus clown make this sword for me. I wouldn't even know where to start.

MOM: What? You can't do anything! Get out of here! And don't expect me to pay you!

*(The Kids and Mom chase away Charlemagne.)*

CHARLEMAGNE: Fine! But I'm taking my snake with me!

*(Mom thrusts the balloon at Charlemagne)*

KID #1: No! I wanted the snake!

KID #2: No fair! I wanted the snake!

KID #3: I want one too!

ALL THE KIDS: We want snakes! We want snakes!

MOM: Charlemagne, can you make more of these... snakes!?

CHARLEMAGNE: *(suddenly grand once more)* Charlemagne the Shaper of Balloons is on the job!

ALL THE KIDS: Yaaaayy!!!

THE END