

ISABELLE

By Debra Baker

Characters

MARIELLE - 65, Caucasian, Dutch, lives in Rotterdam. A retired university lecturer.

PAM - 42, Any ethnicity, lives in Sevenoaks, Kent.

BELLA – Mid 50's Non-Caucasian, large, bubbly, loud, smiley. The host of a daytime chat/magazine show recorded in front of a live audience. Wears a bright pink power suit jacket – a cross between Rusty Lee and Lorraine Kelly

Scene 1

Marielle and Pam stand in the space, either side of the stage, lit in the darkness

MARIELLE It was around 7

PAM It was around 7

MARIELLE In the morning

PAM In the evening

MARIELLE When I saw it

PAM When I saw it

MARIELLE In the field

PAM On facebook

MARIELLE And I hadn't been there for so long

PAM And I hadn't been on it for a while

MARIELLE So I was surprised

PAM So I was shocked

MARIELLE And felt quite excited

PAM And felt quite sick

MARIELLE Because there it was

PAM Because there it was

Beat

BOTH A BALLOON

Beat

MARIELLE And I knew it was meant for me

PAM And I knew it was meant for me

BOTH **Because I'd been thinking about it**

MARIELLE And I felt really joyous

PAM And I felt really furious

Beat

MARIELLE I didn't tell my husband straight away

PAM I didn't tell my husband straight away

MARIELLE I knew what he'd say

PAM I didn't know what he'd say

MARIELLE He's so easy to read

PAM He's a very private man

MARIELLE And supportive

PAM And doesn't show his feelings

MARIELLE Full of kindness

PAM Full of anger

MARIELLE A good listener

PAM He wouldn't want to hear it

MARIELLE But he didn't know I'd been there

PAM But he didn't know I'd done it

BOTH **We'd agreed**

MARIELLE So I kept it to myself

PAM So I tried to ignore it

BOTH **And just got on with life**

MARIELLE But the need 'to do something' grew stronger

PAM But IT wouldn't leave ME alone

MARIELLE Until I couldn't sleep at night
PAM Until I couldn't avoid it any longer
BOTH So I knew I had to do something about it

Blackout. Pam and Marielle exit

Scene 2

Burst of music/lights – A Daytime TV show - BELLA

Bella and Pam both seated, waiting to go 'on air'.

Bella touches the earpiece in her ear.

BELLA *(to audience)* Welcome back!! Now I do hope some of you are going to try Brian's tasty meatballs at home. I had a little nibble during the break and I can tell you they made my mouth water!

Beat. Change of pace/story

Now, how much do you use social media?? Facebook, twitter, instagram (whatever that is!!) –there's no escaping it. And how many times have you seen people searching for others?? Maybe you've 'clicked and shared' such a post, hoping it would help?? Well, my next guest, Pam, is a lady who was on the receiving end of such a search, and she is here to share her story with us. Please welcome to today's show – Pam Ford!!

Applause

BELLA Pam!! Welcome to Bella.

PAM Thanks Bella.

BELLA Now this is a very interesting story which I know has gained huge media interest. And it all started on Facebook. Tell us about it....

PAM Yes. Erm well it all started one Friday evening. I hadn't been on Facebook for quite a while, and I mean, I was never a big user, but when I went on there were er 327 notifications, 189 private messages and 78 friend requests, which was quite, scary and, abnormal I guess. / And I....

BELLA / Wow! That is a lot. Now there were also quite a lot of posts on

your wall as well, isn't that right?? And what were they of Pam?

PAM *(wasn't expecting that question)* Oh, er. Well they were pictures, well, er photographs

BELLA Of????

Beat

PAM A balloon...

BELLA Yes a pink balloon, that's right isn't it

PAM Yes that's right

BELLA And it was a balloon that YOU had released, a week so earlier, isn't that correct?? So tell us about that

PAM Yeah, well, I... Sorry. *(she takes a deep breath)* So... I lost a baby a year ago, and, I'd released the balloon as a sort of, I don't know, as something to mark the occasion. Something to recognise the moment, and it was a very private thing, I mean I didn't even / tell my hus....

BELLA *(a message in her earpiece)* / Oh here we are, here's one of the pictures for you . *(Nothing happens)* Oh we have a technical hitch, well I can tell you it's a picture of the balloon where it was found, and funnily its the same colour pink as my jacket! Now this picture was liked and shared all round the world by over 60,000 people. And the woman that found the balloon lives in Holland!! I mean this just shows you the power of the internet. Now that is just incredible! Eh Pam??

PAM *Beat.* I don't know if I'd say 'incredible'. I wouldn't describe it like that. The thing is, / I didn't want....

BELLA *(message in her earpiece)* / Right ok, and there was a note on the balloon that actually led to it being traced to you, isn't it Pam??

PAM *(shocked)* Nobody mentioned / that you would be...

BELLA / Because the lady who found the balloon managed to find where the little card was from.

PAM Yes she put a photof of it on Facebook and people shared it. And then it got tweeted, and before I knew it, it was on the local news. And so that's why I agreed to come on the show. I don't know this woman and / she decided..

BELLA / Which is amazing. And it was tweeted by Amanda Holden, who

herself sadly lost a baby, to nearly 2 MILLION followers.

PAM Yeah, it's been crazy. I mean this was a private thing and suddenly its everywhere. It's been completely overwhelming.

BELLA I can imagine it has Pam. Well hopefully you won't be TOO overwhelmed by our next guest. But Pam, we've invited her over, all the way from the Netherlands, to finally meet with you. Ladies and gentlemen please welcome to the show - Marielle!!

Applause

Bella stands to welcome Marielle who looks happy, Pam is stunned but as Marielle comes on she stands

MARIELLE Hi Pam its lovely to meet you at last.

PAM You're not Marielle. I've seen your photo on facebook, you're not Marielle.

MARIELLE My photo? *(thinks)* Oh no that's a photo of my niece who just got married. *(she laughs)* No, you're right. But this is me and its wonderful to meet you at last. I can't quite believe it.

BELLA Oh goodness, for a moment there I thought we'd invited the wrong person on!! Marielle, welcome to the show. /

PAM / No I can't believe it either. Do you know what you've done?

MARIELLE Pardon?

BELLA Ok lets take a seat ladies. So Marielle we've been hearing about this incredible story.../ *(Bella and Marielle sit)*

PAM No, no she doesn't realise what she's done

BELLA Ok Pam...*(Bella struggles – there is shouting in her earpiece)* / Pam take a seat and lets discuss it

PAM *(Pam sits, angry, forgetting the audience)* She... That balloon was a private moment for nobody else but me.. even my husband didn't know I did that. Do you know that thousands of strangers, people I don't know have shared my most personal moment all over the internet, all over the world and you did that, I didn't ask you to do that, why did you do that?

MARIELLE Oh, oh Pam ... well, it was such a beautiful morning and when I saw the balloon there, it felt, it felt like a sign.

PAM A sign of what? That you should poke your nose into someone

else's tragedy?

MARIELLE Oh no Pam, I wanted you to. ... When I read the note and understood what it was, I wanted you to know that it had found its way to somewhere beautiful and peaceful and that I was sure that Isabelle would know.

PAM *(A reaction to hearing the name)*

BELLA *(trying to recover the situation)* Ok so lets just pause there. So Pam obviously this is... its... I can see that you're upset as obviously this is a difficult thing to..., and Isabelle was your daughter, is that.. / right?

PAM Yes, my daughter....

BELLA *(trying to save the interview)* I see and Marielle you er said it was a beautiful place so that's why you wanted the mother to know that it had found its way somewhere beautiful??

MARIELLE Yes it is the most wonderful place, a nature reserve /

PAM But I didn't want to know where it had ended up, that's not the point! As far as I was concerned it had gone, it had gone wherever she is, heaven, wherever, and she knew I was thinking of her. I didn't think beyond that. You've killed that, you've made it real. That balloon didn't go to Isabelle, that balloon ended up in a field in Holland

MARIELLE Oh Pam I'm, I...its such a beautiful place. A heavenly place, a place of peace. A very special place.

PAM To you maybe! To me its nothing, just some field in Holland!

MARIELLE But if you could see it...

PAM I did see it! You posted pictures of it! I have had people sending me messages, texts, people stopping me in the street, its been in the local paper, its been everywhere. I did not ask for this intrusion. **I had no choice, I had no say in this....**

MARIELLE I

PAM Have you lost a child? Do you know what it feels like?

MARIELLE

PAM Well have you?

MARIELLE Yes.

PAM *(stopped in her tracks)* What?? You've lost a child???

MARIELLE Well, sort of

PAM Sort of? Either you have or you haven't

BELLA *(grabs onto this opportunity)* SO Marielle you're saying you've also lost a child??

MARIELLE Well not in the same way that Pam has but in a different way, yes

BELLA Okay. Go on.

MARIELLE Pam I , I also had a child taken from me...

BELLA I know this is difficult Marielle

MARIELLE I um, I was a very young girl and I had a baby and they took him away from me. I had no choice, I had no say. And it was.. it was his birthday last week. I don't know where he is or what happened to him, he's never made contact. So when I saw the balloon in the field it felt like a sign

PAM A sign of what? What could it possibly mean?

MARIELLE I thought that it was too much of a coincidence to...

PAM No that's all it was, a coincidence, you just happened to be there

MARIELLE *(lost in her own thoughts)* I was hoping for a sign. I never knew where he was.

PAM And what if he died, what if HE's dead

MARIELLE What??

PAM But what if he is? What if someone came along and showed you absolute PROOF that he was dead, and put an end to all your dreams and fantasies and all your hopes that he was alive somewhere? Because that's what you did to me when you posted that picture. *(She cries, stands up, rips the mic off and storms off)*

MARIELLE *Pam.... (she doesn't know what to do. She breaks down)*

BELLA *(panicking, listening to earpiece)* Wow, well this certainly has been an interesting story. And not the one we were expecting. Marielle thank you for sharing with us today. *(to audience)* We will keep of course you updated on this story. But now lets go over to Brett with this months competition to win a family holiday for four to Florida!!!

Burst of noise, bright competition advert projected on back wall.

Blackout

Scene 3

Marielle and Pam stand in the space, either side of the stage, only them lit in the darkness

PAM It got worse after that

MARIELLE It got worse after that

PAM The press were everywhere

MARIELLE The press were everywhere

PAM Wanting interviews

MARIELLE Wanting details

PAM Knocking

MARIELLE Calling

PAM Emailing

MARIELLE Messaging

PAM Prying

MARIELLE Probing

PAM I couldn't leave the house

MARIELLE I couldn't leave the hotel

BOTH I was trapped

PAM But eventually it blew over

MARIELLE But eventually it died down

BOTH But you can never escape it completely

PAM Because its everywhere now

MARIELLE Because its all around now

PAM It invades your life
MARIELLE It invades your privacy
PAM And it will always be out there on the web
MARIELLE And it will always be out there in the cloud
BOTH Forever

Lights fade out.