

Chapter 3

Melanie sat with Amy on the picnic tables outside during lunch. She opened her container of home-made rhubarb pie she'd gotten up extra early to bake this morning. She'd used freshly cut rhubarbs from her garden, making the pie from scratch. It was so rewarding to cook and bake using things grown from her own two hands. Melanie felt that food was something personal and everything she grew, she grew with love. Her mother had always told her that one should always be mindful of good and bad energies. Food full of good energy was always healing for the soul. It was another reason Melanie hated it when her father bought groceries that weren't from farmers markets but rather from suppliers where things were mass produced with a single objective: to make a profit. Foods full of harmful pesticides and altogether grown with a selfish intent could never be good for one's soul or body.

Melanie turned to Amy, ready to offer her friend a slice of fresh pie but was cut off by a new voice.

"You!" growled a low voice in surprise.

Melanie looked up from her seat next to Amy. Amy stiffened next to her and suddenly, Josiah, who was part of the infamous group of troublemakers and one of Brad's closest friends, bounded across the school grounds. Reaching Amy, he scooped her up in his arms. Amy wrapped her legs around his torso as they began kissing furiously.

As people around them began noticing what was going on, the two kept going at it, making Melanie feel a bit uncomfortable since everyone was looking their way. It was clear that they were both mates. Both had probably turned 16 over the summer and were seeing each other for the first time now. And while Melanie was happy for her friend, she seriously did not appreciate the low moans coming from both individuals that were practically humping each other on the picnic table she intended to have lunch on.

"All right, that's enough!" boomed the voice of their history teacher Mr. Blackworth.

But Josiah kept his tongue shoved down Amy's throat while Amy kept her hands buried in his hair, their movements more anxious than before.

"I said it's time to stop!" their teacher repeated as Josiah sneaked a hand under Amy's shirt making it ride up a bit. "Josiah, you aren't even in this lunch block! You shouldn't be here." Mr. Blackworth spoke firmly.

The male population littered outside for lunch began to hoot.

Josiah jerked back as if suddenly realizing where they were. He looked around wildly for a moment, an almost feral expression in his gaze as he glowered at the boys who had been egging him on to take Amy's shirt off. Then, in one swift movement, he picked Amy up off the table and left.

Melanie couldn't help but be happy to see that her friend had found her mate. Josiah was a bit of a bad boy but he wasn't as bad as Brad. Josiah didn't smoke and so what if he had a few tattoos on his arms? The worst thing he did was probably cut a few classes with Brad. But he wasn't the type to get into fights or bully people like Brad did.

Melanie couldn't help but feel sorry for whoever Brad's mate was going to be. She was going to have her hands full with that douchebag.

He wasn't a particularly nice person.

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"What's got you pissed off?" Dylan inquired as Brad stalked into his home, throwing his bookbag onto the floor like a toddler having a tantrum. "And shouldn't you be in school?"

After running around aimlessly in his wolf form, Brad had decided to seek refuge at his brother's home. Brad was allowed to roam freely between Crimson Phoenix Pack and Silver Creek Pack lands so getting here hadn't been a problem.

"F**k!" Brad exclaimed, thumping his fist on the coffee table in Dylan's T.V. lounge, his fist landing next to a plate of what looked like fresh pie.

The plate of pie clattered in agreement. Dylan leaned forward, trying to save his pie from falling onto the floor.

"Hey watch it!" Dylan exclaimed as he grabbed the plate.

Looking at Brad's sour expression, Dylan silently handed over the uneaten pie in hopes of settling his youngest brother down. Food always helped put Brad in a good mood.

"Either you were just rejected by your mate, or you're not happy with who your mate is," Dylan finally stated.

Brad's eyes glowed yellow momentarily, his wolf glaring him over the reminder of his mate.

Brad viciously stabbed the pie with his fork. The aroma of freshly baked pie filled his nostrils and eased his cranky mood somewhat.

"Trust me, I've been where you are," Dylan stated.

Brad looked at his 19 year-old-brother in surprise.

"I wasn't too happy when I found out who my mate was. I ended up rejecting her," Dylan conceded. "But your situation can't be as bad as mine. Now tell me what's going on?"

"She's a loser!" Brad stated in a huff.

Dylan tilted his head to the side, looking at Brad incredulously.

"That's the only reason? Because she's not popular?"

Brad shook his head vehemently.

"You don't get it..." Brad trailed off and took a bite of pie.

His eyes widened. This pie was actually really good.

Dylan grinned.

"It's rhubarb pie. Selene brought over a few slices this morning. I'm sharing with you this once since you had such a shitty morning."

The mention of Selene made Brad think of Melanie which made him angry again. But not angry enough to stop eating this too-good-to-be-true pie. Brad shoved another mouthful of pie into his mouth, chomping down viciously and wondering on the next course of action to take regarding his unwanted mate. This was a disaster all right.