

A BERRY IN THE HAND

“Ninety eight, ninety nine, one hundred!” Mabel pines cheered, dropping her one hundredth blueberry into a plastic pail. She turned and looked over at Pacifica Northwest, snickering a little. “I’m totally beating you. How many have you picked?”

“Like... two dozen?” The blonde valley girl shrugged. She wasn’t exactly thrilled that this was how she was spending her weekend. “Is this all there is to do here? No like, hay-rides or haunted mazes?”

“There’s food?” Mabel said, brushing some brown hair out of her face and adjusting her sweater.

“Uh, a jar of blueberry jam is *not* a meal, not for me anyway.”

Mabel just smiled and walked over to her ‘friend’, trying to lighten the mood. “C’mon, just try and enjoy it! We’re not in any rush.”

“That’s for sure...” Pacifica huffed. The cold autumn air made her feel sluggish. She wanted some hot food, a warm blanket, and rain boots to deal with the damp ground of the blueberry farm. As far as she was concerned, this was a bust. There wasn’t even anyone around to talk too!

Mabel was just happy to be hanging out again. It had been quite some time, but neither of them seemed to have changed much, for better or for worse. “Let’s just fill our buckets and then see how we feel! Maybe it’ll grow on you?”

“Sure, I guess...” Pacifica rolled her eyes and wandered away, looking for an area that was more aesthetically pleasing to pick in.

There was a small path on the edge of the field, cutting through some dense foliage and winding through the woods. Pacifica could just make out some bands of light in the distance, illuminating a clearing. It looked quite magical. A short hike would be a nice break from bending over to pick berries all day. Though, truthfully, she would feel bad just abandoning Mabel and wandering off.

She called over her shoulder. “Hey Mabel! I’m gonna go on a walk, wanna come?”

“Hm? Oh, sure!” Mabel hurried over, clutching her pail of produce. The two meandered through the forest, looking around and admiring the massive pine trees and natural landscape. Despite Mabel visiting often, and Pacifica residing in the state, the sights of Oregon could still impress.

They continued walking down the path and soon came to the edge of the clearing. The two had to awkwardly step over some large briar brambles to enter, but once inside, they had the whole space to themselves, a good twenty foot wide circle of soft grass, and a lone berry bush in the center.

“Daww, look at this one! It must have wandered away, hah.” Mabel joked, traipsing over to inspect the singular shrub.

Pacifica just shrugged. “Well, pick some I guess. Did you want to bake a pie, or?”

“Ooh, that’d be nice. I was thinkin’ smoothies... Huh, these ones are *huge!*”

“Huh?” Pacifica sauntered over. Her eyes went wide at the sight of the fruits; they were as big as tennis balls, and incredibly ripe. “Holy cow, they’re gigantic!”

“Oh man, I gotta try one of these right now.” Mabel grinned.

“Wait! Are you sure? I mean... these are so big; they may not even *be* blueberries. What if they’re toxic?”

Mabel considered this, before pinching one of the berries, and getting some juice between her thumb. She gave it a lick and smiled.

“Na, that’s blueberry. C’mon!” She tossed Pacifica one of the fruits.

“Well... If they’re good, maybe we should pick all of them.”

“That’s the spirit!” Mabel beamed, as both girls bit into the berries.

The taste was incredible. It was as sweet as sugar, and as juicy as watermelon. The blueberry flavor seemed almost condensed, like candy. Mabel’s mind immediately went to those ‘cotton candy grapes’ as a comparison. This was some sort of super-berry!

“Wooah, that’s good!”

“Jeeze, and I don’t really even *like* blueberries.” Pacifica snickered.

The two kept eating, finishing their apple-sized snacks and going in for seconds, while picking as many as they could for their buckets. It was as if they were pulling softballs out of the bush, and filling their pails with water balloons.

“Alright, if you make a pie or a smoothie out of *these* berries, I’ll call this day a win.” Pacifica teased, looking over to Mabel.

“Hah, told you this would be fun. Oh... Hah! You got some blueberry juice on your nose.” She pointed to the stain.

“Oh big deal, your whole *face* is covered in it!” Pacifica laughed, before looking Mabel over and noticing just how blue her face was; there was even blue on her eyelids and forehead, and... was it spreading to her ears?

“Uh, yours too, actually... how are you doing that?”

“What are you talking about!? Is this... are we allergic?” Pacifica bolted up, wiping her hands off on her lilac top and black leggings, but her hands already seemed stained, front *and* back.

Mabel wasn't any better off. She looked down to see her thighs and knees shifting blue, with the color soon reaching past her ankles.

“What's happening!? Oough, I must have eaten too many. I feel really bloated...”

Pacifica hated that Mabel brought that up, because she was suddenly feeling full too. A strange heaviness seemed to be spreading out from her stomach, causing her middle to swell and grow. She and Mabel almost looked pregnant, or at least fifty pounds heavier.

“It's like I ate a whole thanksgiving dinner.” Pacifica groaned, unsure if she should be watching her own swelling stomach, or Mabel's. The plump brunette was looking positively fat now, with a round flabby belly peeking out from her autumn-themed sweater. A big band of blue flesh exposed to the chilled air. Pacifica wasn't any better off though, with the belt tied around her waist snapping off and lodging itself in the jagged brush at the edge of the clearing.

Mabel gave out a nervous giggle, taking a step away from the bush, if swearing off the fruit for life. “H-hah! This must be one of those weird things in Dipper's journal. Figures...”

“So what are we supposed to do!? I’m like, as fat as a cow, and you’re a cow plus thirty pounds.”

Mabel tried her best to think of the journal’s contents, but nothing about berries came to mind. If only Dipper was here. “Wait!” She cried out, “Get your phone, we gotta call Dipper!”

Pacifica gasped and shot for her phone, but her swelling frame made it impossible to reach. She stretched her now flabby arms to her waistband, but couldn’t get within even a foot of her phone. “Ugh! Here, you try!” She turned and pushed her hip out towards Mabel, but accidentally knocked the girl over, sending her rolling onto her back, with her fat legs kicking and straining against her now useless skirt.

“Gah! Pacifica!” Mabel yelled, flustered and annoyed.

“Crap, sorry!” Pacifica bent down to try and help, but lost her footing and flopped over herself, rolling next to Mabel, coming to rest on her own belly, and a bed of autumn leaves.

The two helpless blue spheres began to panic as they grew and grew, straining their clothing and their skin. They resembled two gigantic blueberries, each about seven feet wide.

“My hands! My feet!” Mabel cried, as her limbs were smothered by her body, leaving only four divots with her limbs sunken inside.

“Nnngg! My neck!” Pacifica groaned, as her neck and chin were swallowed up in the same way. Their only respite was that the swelling was slowing; creeping to a halt after a long and uncomfortable spell of expansion, leaving them as big as two garden sheds, and just as immobile, their clothes barely hanging on, with their new indigo-colored love-handles, bellies, and thighs spilling out of what remained.

“Ugh... Are you okay?” Pacifica asked.

“H-hah... No? But I’m not bad either...” Mabel joked.

Pacifica could only huff at that, and wriggle about, as if to confirm how helpless they were. Their bodies sloshed about like two water jugs. “Well next time, let me pick the ‘bonding activity’, okay?”

Mabel let out a somewhat apologetic mumble. Pacifica relaxed a bit, and let out an aggrieved sigh. “Well... Dipper dropped us off. How long until he comes to pick us up?”

The brunette berry was silent, before making a pained noise. “Ah... Yeah, I probably should have told him about that before he left...”

The blonde blimp only groaned in response, and gave a sudden jolt of movement, as if trying to hop to her feet. Pacifica only managed to wobble a bit, and feel something scrape against her underside.

“Gah! What’s that?” She looked around, noticing they had swelled to reach the brambles on the edge of the clearing. The thorns were brushing up against their bodies, an inch away from them at most.

“What’s what?” Mabel asked, a little anxious.

“Uh, nothing. Just don’t move okay? And whatever you do, don’t eat any more berries”

“Hah! As if... Well.. I mean, they *were* super delicious... but...”

Pacifica groaned. They just had to hold on for as long as they could. Someone would wander back here and find them, eventually, and they’d know how to fix this mess.

...Right?

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