

My Step-Dad Is My Mate

Chapter 26

I proudly admired myself in my glowing white gown and white cap in a mirror they had backstage.

"Jessica Kingsley." The principal called out from the microphone to the one of the graduates to get her certificate.

They are doing in alphabetical order by last name, which means I'm soon.

My nerves were all over the place by I was happy. All my hard work over the years is paying off and nothing could possibly ruin this day for me.

"Danica."

I turned around to face one of my teachers, her name was Mrs.Ward and I hated that bitch like the plague.

"They're about to call your name. Get out there." She said in her dead monotone voice that made me want to kill something.

Giving her a brief nod, I glanced over at myself once last timde then reluctantly left the mirror.

"Oh and Danica.....Good job." Mrs.Ward said softly as I passed her by to head to the stage with a grin on my face.

This is it.

"Danica Monroe."

Holding my head high, I proudly walked up onto the stage near my principal.

He handed me the medium sized document that had a red ribbon around it.

"Congratulations." He said and I nodded then said a brief thank you. I looked out to the crowd and spotted my mom and Aiden sitting in the back.

"Good job." Aiden mouthed to me, and I beamed in happiness. Walking off of the stage, I still couldn't believe I was officially done with high school. No more 5am mornings, annoying classmates or lame teachers- well for now anyways. I have plans to go to college but not right away.

I stripped from my gown and stayed in my regular jeans and Bullet For My Valentine T-shirt.

I made my way through the scattered groups of people that were with those who already got their certificates to my mom and Aiden.

"Dani!" My mom semi yelled and engulfed me in a hug, knocking my gown out of my hand bit luckily Aiden caught it.

"I'm glad you guys could make it." I said and Aiden rolled his eyes. "How could we ever miss it?" He said with a grin and gave me a hug as soon as my mom got off of me.

My eyes wandered down to see a bunch of roses on the chair my mom was sitting on.

"Who sent you roses mom?"

"Oh!" She exclaimed and picked up the bundle of white roses and handed it to me, "These are for you actually. Some girl who said she was from your class brought them to me. She said someone left them back stage for you but she didn't want them to get lost so she gave them to me to hold. They're quite pretty."

I ran my gently over the white petals. There was a small card hidden between one of the petals and I took it to read it.

You looked beautiful in your gown -K

K? Is this from Kaden? I hope it is.

Glancing over at Aiden, he wiggled his brow and I shook my head while I sniffed the beautiful flowers.

"Mom these are from...-what are you staring at?"

I looked up at my mother to see her staring in the opposite direction, and Aiden was now doing the same. I turned my head and my eyes widened in shock.

"Richard.." I mumbled and he was leaning against a tree with his hands deep in his black coat pockets.

"What the hell is he doing here?" Aiden growled lowly and I patted his shoulder arm.

"Its okay." I said then began to walk towards him but mom held me back.

"Are you sure that's a good idea Danica?"

"No but it's bound to happen one day. I guess it's just sooner than expected."

I placed my roses and my gown in her arms and gave her a smile.

"I'll be okay."

"Well, I surely didn't expect to see you again." I said to Richard as I approached him.

"I wanted to see you graduate..at least before I leave." He said as he looked me over with a sad look on his face.

My brows furrowed," Leave? Where are you going?"

He shrugged. "I left the pack. Not like I was that welcome anyways since...you know...so I'm just going to leave once your mom gives me the divorce papers. Besides Aiden hasn't told me where I'm going yet." "Wait. Aiden? Why does Aiden have to tell you where to do?"

And from there, Richard began to explain. How when he was in the torture chamber how Aiden came to him and told him he had to reject me if he really cared about me. How Aiden told him that he would send him away after the rejection.

Believe me, I'm glad for the rejection but I thought it was on Richard's own terms, not Aiden's.

I turned around and scowled at Aiden who was staring intently at Richard.

Aiden has some explaining to do.

Chapter 27

The Next Day After Graduation

"Mom can you pass me those plates?"

"Here you go Dani."

"Thank you", I said as I placed two more plates around the dinner table and straightened the table cloth.

"This dinner was a nice idea sweetie. Is it just Aiden coming?" Mom asked and I shrugged just as the doorbell rang.

"Something like that." I replied and went to open it.

As soon as I opened it, I was greeted by my first invited guest.

"Come on in."

"Are you sure about this Danica?"

I waved Richard off and pushed him towards the kitchen.

"You're needed here for what I want to do. So don't piss me off and we're good."

"Danica, who's at the-Hell No!" My mom screamed as she caught sight of Richard standing by the door.

"Mom can you no-"

"Why the hell is he here? For you?" Mom asked with a furious expression.

"No." I said, "He's-"

"For me? We're done Richard!" She exclaimed and Richard rolled his eyes.

"Don't nobody want you.." He muttered and I sighed.

"Mom, he's here for a reason. Please, you'll see why soon, just don't cause a problem tonight. I know how you feel about his presence right now and he'll be gone soon. I swear." I softly said as I rubbed my temples.

"Fine..." Mom muttered and she grumbled her way back to the kitchen. "As for you", I said, turning to face my ex-mate, "Just go sit at the table and be quiet. I wouldn't want mom to stab you with a butcher knife." Richard slowly nodded and headed to go sit at the table while I shut the door-well almost shut the door. A foot blocked the door from closing and I reopened it, revealing Aiden and his....parents?

"Hey Dani." Aiden said cheerfully and gave me a small wave.

"Hey." I replied and gave him a flash of a smile.

"Oh! Dani! It's been so long!" Aiden's mom literally screamed as she shoved Aiden to the side, almost making him fall and embraced me in a bone crushing.

"Racheal...don't kill the girl", His father said and yanked Aiden's mom off of me, "Its good to see you again Danica."

"Likewise. Please, come in." I opened the door wider for them to come in, glaring at Aiden for bringing his parents.

"Mom literally jumped in the car, she really wanted to see you. Dad basically followed. I didn't think it would be a big deal." Aiden said to me via mind link and I held back on rolling my eyes.

"Well dinner should be ready and I should set up two more plates for you two," I said, gesturing to Aiden's parents, "So come on to the kitchen."

I walked to the kitchen then slowly opened the door, seeing Richard sitting at the far end and my mom placing the food bowls on the table while glaring at him.

"What the Fuck is he-" Aiden started to yell but stopped as soon as he collected a slap to the back of the head from his mother.

"Language boy. We aren't at home and I didn't raise you like no animal." Racheal (Aiden's mom) said with a shake of her head but her eyes widened when she spotted Richard.

"Aiden, is that who I think it is?" She asked and he nodded while rubbing the back of his head.

Racheal let out a squeal like noise then clapped her hands. I watched as she grabbed a dining chair and moved it by the kitchen entrance. "Mom...what are you doing?" Aiden asked and his mother slowly sat down and crossed her legs.

"Well, I think its better I sit here. For a better view and a quick exit if anything goes down. Just pretend I'm not here." She said and waved her hand in front of her face.

"I'll be in the living room." His dad said then left the kitchen.

"Okay then..." I said awkwardly, Aiden, take a seat. Mom, please sit." "What's this about Danica? Why is he here?" Aiden asked while sending Richard a death glare he just seemed to be ignoring. Deja vu much? "Why don't you take a bite of your food first Aiden then we'll talk?" I said with a smirk

"0000 she's smirking...you're dead." Racheal said then added a light cough and took a sip of a glass of water.

Richard took a bite of one of his dumplings, "What did you put in this?" "My spit." Mom replied and Aiden spit out the gravy he drank back into his soup bowl.

I dropped my spoon by my bowl and sighed internally as I struggled to hold in my laughter.

Richard's eyes widened as he ceased from chewing and he also spat back into his bowl.

"You people are disturbing." Aiden murmured as he pinched the bridge of his nose.

"Well", I giggled and pushed aside my bowl, grabbing my own glass of water and took a little gulp, "It's about to get more disturbing. Why did you make Richard accept my rejection?"

"Aaron! Get in here! It's getting good! And stop blocking me from the link you ass!" Racheal whisper yelled to her husband.

"Leave me out of this." We all heard him yell back.

"Ugh...asshole...", Racheal muttered and when she noticed us looking at her she grinned,

"Proceed."

"Aiden..." I called his name to draw back his attention and to let him know I wanted my answer.

He began to chuckle dryly and scratch his head before he pointed to my mom.

"Roseanna made me do it!"

"Snitch." Richard snickered as he looked at the little display intently. "Mom?" I looked over to her and she was fixing her hair behind her back.

"Okay I told Aiden to talk to Richard about accepting the rejection. I just got so tired of seeing you be hurt and upset because of him. I just wanted him out of your life so you could be happy with someone else", Mom stared at me sincerely as she continued to speak, "You've done a lot for me Danica and I spent three years hurting you in a way a girl should never experience. I can't change the past but I can work to make it right. I'm sorry for interfering but I just wanted to help."

Well, I can see she meant well...despite the fact it was wrong.

The light sound of sniffing drew my attention for a moment as I diverted my gaze to Racheal who was pulling out a tissue from her purse and wiping her eyes.

"What?" She asked all of us who were staring at her, "Mind your business."

The sound of the doorbells shocked me for a minute. I'm not expecting anyone else.

"I'll get it!" Aaron yelled. Damn, they might as well move in.

"Danica, I hope you aren't angry with me." Aiden said and I shook my head.

"I understand and it's okay. You both were just looking out for me, thank you but please don't play God with my life." I stated and my mom and Aiden nodded.

"Hug?" Aiden said with a little pout, making me giggle and stand from my seat and reach over the table to give him a little hug.

"Well that was easy..." Richard murmured and played around with his cutlery.

"WHY ARE YOU TOUCHING MY FUCKING MATE?" A voice boomed from behind of Racheal, who bolted out of her seat by the kitchen entrance and was now near my seat at the table.

I quickly released Aiden and stared in shock at the seething Kaden whose eyes were a killer black.

And they were pointed directly at Aiden.

Goddess, can't I catch a break?

Chapter 28

"Kaden! Calm down." Aaron, who finally decided to bless us with his appearance again said to Kaden who was still sending wagers at Aiden. "You're telling him to calm down," Racheal suddenly said while she rubbed her temples, "But I just wanna know how the hell this is even possible."

"Second chance mates are rare but not unheard of." Aiden said as he ducked a punch that

Kaden threw.

"Kaden! You are an Alpha, not a teenage boy. Calm the fuck down." Aaron said sternly to his son who was growling lowly at being told what to do and stopped struggling against his father to get at Aiden. Richard on the other hand, exited out of the back door a few minutes ago. It's bad enough Kaden wanted to kill Aiden, I don't need him to kill Richard right now either...not that I'd mind that much anyways...

"It was just a hug Kade! Relax!" Aiden said.

"It would have been a finger shake for all I fucking care. Don't touch her!" Kaden shouted back.

"Kaden! Language boy." Racheal snarled and Kaden's eyes opened wide and he instantly went quiet. Racheal chuckled and flipped her hair as she strutted out the kitchen, "Mama still got it."

"Racheal, get back in here and deal with your sons!" Aaron exclaimed with a roll of his eyes.

"They're yours tonight!" She replied.

Aaron let out a quiet cough then slowly backed out of the kitchen, "You guys aren't mine for tonight either."

"Kaden" my mom said as she finally decided to speak up, "Didn't you walk out on her the other night? Yet your here trying to play possessive. It doesn't work like that hun. You either want her or you don't.

"Thank you." I linked to my mother. I couldn't of said it better myself.

"I think I better uh...go check on Adrianna." Aiden added as he tried to inch out of the room as far from Kaden as possible.

"Who's that?" I asked and he gave me a snort.

"My mate. I'll tell you about her tomorrow. Bye." He gave me a quick wave then bolted out of the kitchen using his enhanced speed. "Danica.." Kaden called to me and I looked at him, to see he had a hand stretched out to

me, "Would you come on a run with me...please?"

I nodded fervently, immediately scolding myself for being so fast and desperate -like. Grabbing a hold of his, I gladly welcomed the peaceful feeling that came along with it.

"I'll have your daughter home soon Roseanna." Kaden said as he nodded to my mother who waved her hand in dismissal while staring at the amount of food on the table.

"What am I gonna do with all this?" She said with a sigh.

"I'm here aren't I?" We heard Racheal shout from the living room and Kaden gave a brief chuckle while slowly pulling me out of the back door.

"Come on, shift." Kaden began to take off his shirt and I looked away before I ended up dying from embarrassment from staring him.

He didn't bother to take off his pants- not that I'd mind anyways...- as he shifted into his rather large white and grey wolf, causing them to rip to pieces.

Rubbing my arm shyly, I was sorta uneasy about stripping in front of him. As if Kaden realized my discomfort, he bowed his head towards his back.

"What? You want me to ride you?" I asked then blushed when I realized how that sounded.

Kaden nodded his big Wolfy head and laid down on his stomach so I could climb on.

Wow, he's serious. I never rode a wolf before -no pun intended! climbed onto Kaden's back and tightly gripped his fur before I fell off. He rose slowly, making sure I was steady before he let out a loud howl then ran us into the forest.

Chapter 29

"Why did you bring me here Kaden?"

"To talk...to make you understand." He replied as he leaned against a large willow tree that stood tall in the middle of a clearing.

I sat down with my legs crossed and I looked up intently at him, "I'm listening."

Kaden sighed and sat close to me and looked up into the sky.

"I used to have a mate ya know...before you.. Her name was Lillian but I used to call her Lilly... like the flower..."

Kaden blinked a few times before continuing, "I met her a day after my 16th birthday. I loved her so so much."

I kinda cringed when he said he loved her. I understand she was his mate first but he is mine too so it's kinda uncomfortable but I didn't want to make it known and have Kaden feel some type of way so I stayed silent and let him finish.

"...We did everything together and spent every minute together for about a year until I had to become Alpha." Kaden looked down and I saw his hands ball into fists, "I had no choice since it was my birthright so I accepted the position and Lilly became my Luna. She hated the rank because she felt like everyone thought she was more important than they were and that always made her mad but we worked together ya know..made the pack strong and every single one of them were like family to her."

"One day she told me she wanted to go on a little field trip with the pack children. I wasn't going to let her but she kept begging and pouting," Kaden rolled his eyes and smiled to himself as he recalled the memory of his past mate, "So I let her go and I had to stay back to finish up work...I don't know what happened...One of those kids, her name was Aurora. She's maybe 14 now, came running into the grounds saying "They caught her! They caught her". I came out and I asked who... She said Rogues caught the Luna. I told Lilly don't go off pack ground but she was never one to actually listen to me. I tried calling to her through our link but she wasn't answering so I ran as fast as I could. I tried to trail her scent but I was just so worried I couldn't focus...and then I felt it." Kaden absentmindedly put his hand over his chest and sighed deeply.

"Felt what?" I asked softly and he turned to look at me with teary eyes "My heart break," he replied.

"Kaden-"

"I knew she was gone. I just...I felt it...I felt her slip away and I hated myself because I was so close yet so far. She needed me and I couldn't even do my job and protect her. I froze, I couldn't move. Aiden was coming and he saw me. He asked me what was wrong and nothing...nothing came out. After that...I don't know what happened. I woke up in the hospital wing and Aiden told me she was killed. She gave her life..to save them and I wasn't even there to save her." "Kaden." I said his name but he refused to look at me. Rolling my eyes at him, I shifted from my sitting position and sat on my knees right in front of him.

"Kaden" I called and held his head so he'd look right at me. I could see the pain and frustration behind his eyes and I only wished I could make it all go away.

"It wasn't your fault-"

"Yes it was!" He shouted, "If I was there, she wouldn't have had to give her life."

"And what would happen to your pack if you did? Your family? Lilly left loved ones behind too, yes but she died for a reason..to protect ones she loved. She didn't die vain. You have people who look up to you for you to lead them. Do you ever ask yourself maybe why she didn't link you the moment she saw trouble? Maybe she was trying to protect you too Kaden. Everything happens to a reason and even if you don't know what type reason is now...you will find out soon enough."

Kaden stared at me in silence as I spoke. I knew he was listening, I just wished he'd speak up and say something... Anything.

"I'm scared..." He muttered and I finally let go of his cheeks but he didn't break our gaze.

"Why are you afraid?" I asked and he began to fiddle with my fingers. "I'm scared history will repeat itself and I'll lose you too. That's why I left that night. I was scared.

I know they say Alpha's are suppose to be fearless but...Danica this scares me and I won't survive if I have to lose you too."

"Kaden...you're not going to lose me."

"How do you know?" He asked.

I smiled at him and intertwined our fingers together, "Because I'm your second chance," I leaned forward and gave him a peck on the cheek, "And you're mine."

Chapter 30

"Is he treating you good?"

"Of course. It's been a few days since we've had our little heart to heart and he's coming around slowly", I confided somewhat sadly to Richard. We were sitting about half a mile away from pack borders, in my Haven. My Alpha said I could no longer bring him into pack territory so we meet up here to talk.

A part of me will always care about him, no matter how badly he fucked up. He was my mate after all, the bond between us might be broken but hey, I'm not completely heartless. It's nice to know that he's at least okay. Being a rogue is not easy, believe me.

"That's good..." He replied.

"Maybe we shouldn't talk about this..." I rubbed my arm oddly and he sucked his teeth.

"No no. It's fine and I'm fine. Trust me. You deserve this." Richard gave me a flash of a smile before he got up and cracked his neck, "I'd better be going."

"Yeah...I better go too. Finally meeting Aiden's mate today." I said excitedly. He's been going on and on about Adrianna for a longest and begged me to come meet her today. Kaden would be there too, since he hasn't actually officially met her either.

"You'll let me know how that goes."

"Danica, right? It's nice to meet you." Adrianna said to me as she extended her hand for me to shake. Adrianna, Aiden and I were sitting in a small bistro. I nearly turned around and left when I entered because they two were showing enough PDA to blow up the USA.

"Likewise," I replied and gladly shook her hand," Aiden talks about you alot"

She laughed and nudged Aiden with her shoulder," Blowing her mind huh hunny?"

Aiden chuckled shyly and looked down as a light blush came on his cheeks. Well, she seems nice.

"Is Kaden still coming?" I asked Aiden as I sipped my mocha latte.

He shrugged his shoulders and played with Adrianna's fingers, "He told me he had a few things to take care of before he came. Why don't we order some food to go and go back to the pack?"

"Aww but we just got here." Adrianna whined and a sudden stab or irritation hit me.

"No. It's okay. I'll go," I said as I picked up my drink cup and stood up, "You two stay here and enjoy yourselves."

"You sure Dani? It's no problem really." Aiden replied but before I could reply, Adrianna spoke.

"She said it's okay baby. Let her go. Danica, it was nice meeting you. We should do this again."

I narrowed my eyes slightly at the curly haired brunette and just waved as a I turned to leave.

Okay...maybe she isn't that nice.

I knocked on Kaden's office door somewhat eagerly. I hope I'm not disturbing him from his work.

Linking him didn't work since he has himself blocked off so I had to get Aiden to link his guards to let me through. I was currently standing behind his door in a towel that a female pack member gave to me. Common sense didn't hit me fast enough to tell me I should of taken my clothes off then shifted before I ran here

"Danica?" I heard a shrill voice behind me and I silently cursed myself for not taking her scent earlier. Slowly I turned around and fake grinned.

"Hey Ilene.."

"What the h-e-l-l are you doing here girl? And why are you in a towel?" She asked as she eyed me up and down.

"Came to see Kaden and my clothes ripped. Forget to take them off before shifting." I replied while glancing at Kaden's office door. I don't think he's in there honestly but I'm not about to get lost in this pack house looking for him.

"Oh!" She exclaimed and laughed loudly before pulling a short silk dress out of her side bag, "I always keep it in case of emergencies. Here. You have it."

Slowly I took the dress and cringed. Today was the not the day I felt like wearing a dress.

"Thank you."

"No problem. What are besties for right?" She nudged my arm, "Oh! I have the wedding invite for you by the way. I was hoping I'd see you soon."

Ilene dug around in her purse while my eyes widened in shock.

Is she still...No, it can't be.

"Oh? Wedding? To who?" I asked, praying she didn't say his name.

"Oh uhh" She bit her upper lip while she searched then smiled as she pulled out a small light brown paper with a gold ribbon on top of it, "Kaden of course."

And it was in that moment... I snapped.