

Bonded

EPISODE 1

by

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Adapted from the novel Bonded
by DG Ireland

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TEASER

1 EXT: EDGE OF FOREST - DAY

1

ROMAN DAVENPORT, stands naked in the grass outside his secluded home. He's over six foot with a body that sports powerful strength.

A TATTOO of a BLACK PANTHER ACROSS HIS BACK; PANTHER HEADS ON HIS BICEPS. He's 40, with black shoulder-length hair and green eyes,

He gazes into the forest, forlorn. He rakes his fingers through his hair, head hangs down. He has everything. A company that made him a millionaire. But no true friendships or love.

He LISTENS to the BIRDS and the scurrying of SQUIRRELS.

ROMAN (V.O.)
I can't continue alone.

He sucks in a deep breath savoring the earthy aromas.

ROMAN (V.O.)
I can't go another twenty years like this... My heart is empty... Where are my people? My kind?

His face is etched with pain.

ROMAN (V.O.)
Am I immortal?

He's embarrassed for even thinking it.

ROMAN (V.O.)
I'd find a way to end my life. No one should have to suffer from this loneliness decade after decade.

He shakes it off. Looks around.

ROMAN (V.O.)
It is what it is, but I'm sick of this shit.

He stretches out, LEAPS FORWARD. He SHIFTS into his PANTHER and shakes himself.

Roman's panther is much larger than an actual panther. He takes off running into the forest at full speed.

2 INT. FOREST - DAY

2

The panther stops at a stream. He wades into the water, lapping water as he walks. He raises his head and takes in a deep breath, scenting.

He leaves the water and approaches an oak tree.

A NOISE breaks the peace. Like something large falling through the trees BREAKING BRANCHES on the downward spiral.

ROMAN (V.O.)

Maybe a meteor?

He looks to the sky. No planes, gliders. Nothing.

He runs through the forest toward the sound.

A THUD and an anguished SCREECH.

The panther approaches a small clearing. He stops in his tracks.

On the ground is a NAKED MAN, not quite human. HALF-SHIFTED from a LARGE BIRD, with an ARROW through his partially shifted wing.

ROMAN (V.O.)

*Shifter! Oh my God! Please don't
be dead!*

3 EXT. CLEARING - DAY

3

Roman leaps into the clearing and approaches the bird-man. He SHIFTS to his HUMAN form.

He studies the bird-man. He's covered in LACERATIONS from falling through trees.

Roman kneels.

ROMAN

Can you hear me? I'm going to help
you.

The Bird-man's head, part of his torso, arms and legs are covered with WHITE, GOLDEN AND BROWN FEATHERS.

The man slowly opens his eyes. They are tawny, and filled with pain.

Roman senses the pain. He sends a PULSE of healing energy to the bird-man.

The bird-man stares at Roman.

BIRD-MAN

Shifter?

Roman nods.

The man smiles through his pain. He holds out his good hand.

BIRD-MAN

Brother.

Roman swallows a lump in his throat. He grasps the hand.

ROMAN

Brother.

(pause, emotional)

You won't be able to shift and heal until I remove the arrow. I'll try to compensate by sending you relief.

BIRD-MAN

(Hoarse with pain)

Do what you have to do.

Roman grabs the shaft of the arrow with one hand and steadies the feathered arm on the ground with a foot and the other hand.

He yanks.

The shifter SCREECHES - half human, half bird.

The arrow comes out clean. The bird-man passes out.

Roman slings the bird-man over his shoulder, grabs the arrow and runs through the forest to his house.

4 EXT. HOUSE IN THE FOREST - DAY 4

Roman races to the house.

5 INT. HOUSE IN THE FOREST - DAY 5

Roman runs up the stairs and places the bird-man gently on a bed.

He assesses the wound, gets supplies from the bathroom, and cleans the wound.

Roman gets dressed and grabs the arrow.

6 EXT. HOUSE IN THE FOREST - DAY 6

Roman lifts his face and inhales. He detects a scent. He takes off at a RUN - INHUMANLY FAST.

7

EXT. FOREST - DAY

7

Two HUNTERS at the edge of a clearing.

The hunter in a DARK GREEN SHIRT carries a KROHNS RECURVE BOW and a QUIVER OF ARROWS.

The LONG-HAIRED HUNTER carries a RIFLE.

GREEN SHIRT GUY
I know I hit that bird.

LONG-HAIRED HUNTER
Where the heck did it fall? Did we
go past it?

Roman observes the hunters.

ROMAN (V.O.)
Goddamn trespassers!

Roman WHISTLES to announce his approach.

ROMAN
You're on posted private property.

Roman steps into the clearing holding the arrow by his side.

GREEN SHIRT GUY
(cocky, with attitude)
We didn't see any signs.

ROMAN
Where did you enter the forest?

LONG-HAIRED HUNTER
Gunter Hill Road.

ROMAN
Two miles down from the highway on
Gunter Hill Road are very large signs
on both sides of the road. They say
Private Property. You're telling me
you didn't see them?

GREEN SHIRT GUY
Look, buddy, I didn't see any signs.
Right now, I'm only interested in
finding the bird I shot.

Green Shirt Guy spots the arrow in Roman's hand.

GREEN SHIRT GUY
You found my bird?

ROMAN

Yeah. You damaged his wing. I'll take care of him. In the meantime, get your eyes checked and get off my property... now. If I see you on my property again, I'll take action.

GREEN SHIRT GUY

Oh, I'm scared. What are you going to do?

ROMAN (V.O.)

Fucking piece of shit.

ROMAN

You have a choice. You can either leave peacefully or end up under the ground. Your choice.

LONG-HAIRED HUNTER

Come on, let's get out of here.

GREEN SHIRT GUY

I'm not going anywhere until I get my bird.

Roman steps forward.

ROMAN

You take one more step onto my property and I've got a problem.

GREEN SHIRT GUY

Think you're faster than a bullet?

Green Shirt Guy pulls a HANDGUN out of his vest and points at Roman.

ROMAN

I don't want to hurt you.

Green Shirt Guy laughs. His finger tightens on the trigger.

Long Haired Guy watches as the unbelievable happens. He hears a DEEP GROWL that only a wild animal makes.

Roman LEAPS THROUGH THE AIR with the grace of a black belt martial artist. He kicks the gun out of the hunter's hand.

The GUN SPINS IN THE AIR. ROMAN SNATCHES IT OUT OF THE SPIN and bashes the Green Shirt Guy alongside his head, then tosses the gun to the ground.

Roman kicks and pounds the guy, then allows his PANTHER CLAWS to come forth. He rips them down the guy's chest.

Green Shirt Guy SCREAMS and falls to the ground as blood soaks what's left of his shirt.

ROMAN

Get off my property. If I ever see
you again, you won't leave.
Understand?

Long Haired Guy helps Green Shirt Guy up. He reaches for the gun.

Roman stomps his foot on the gun.

The two hunters run back where they came from.

Roman picks up the gun and heads back to the house.

8 INT. BEDROOM - DAY

8

GAGE STRYKER (Bird-Man), 40, sits against pillows at the headboard in severe pain. His chest is covered with tattoos. His biceps sport the HEAD OF AN EAGLE.

He rolls off the bed and staggers to the bathroom. Across his entire back is an EAGLE IN FLIGHT.

He returns to the bed and collapses against the pillows.

Roman enters the room. He places the arrow on the bedside table.

ROMAN

Little souvenir for you.

They stare at each other, assessing one another. Neither has ever seen another shifter before.

Brown, white and golden feathers meet sandy blond hair on his head, arms, legs. He's sexy and muscular. And just as lonely.

ROMAN

Where are you from?

GAGE

Boston. I just moved to Reading.
Relocated my electronics business.
Had to get away from New England.
Needed this.

Gage spreads his good arm out.

GAGE

Forest. Skies. A place to shift.
Thought it would be safe. You?

ROMAN

I grew up in Reading and Wyomissing. Looks like we have more in common besides our unique abilities. I inherited my father's electronics business. We specialize in security systems and do a lot of work for the government.

GAGE

Huh. We design circuits and components for IBM, DEC and other companies. Plus, we create electronic components for radios and receivers.

ROMAN

Did you come across any other shifters in Boston?

Gage shakes his head.

ROMAN

What about your parents? Were they shifters?

Gage shakes his head.

GAGE

I figured I was a freak of nature. I'm so happy... relieved... I'm not alone anymore. I never saw my parents shift, or heard them talk about shifters. I'm an only child, so it's not like I could watch nieces or nephews for telltale signs.

ROMAN

Same here. I don't know where this shifting came from unless there was someone in my family that no one talked about. There's got to be others out there.

END TEASER

SUPER: 50 YEARS LATER

9 INT. LIMO - DAY

9

Roman and Gage, still look 40, work their cellphones. Business never stops.

Suddenly, Roman sits up straight and inhales.

ROMAN
Did you smell that?

GAGE
Stop the car!

The limo eases to the curb.

10 EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

10

Roman and Gage clamber out onto the sidewalk. They draw in deep breaths.

GAGE
Did you get a whiff of that?

Roman's face is bathed in euphoria.

ROMAN
Where is she?

Gage twirls his fingers in a silent "roll down the window" to the Limo DRIVER.

GAGE
We're going on foot for a while.

The limo pulls away from the curb.

Roman and Gage draw in scents of the area. They stand in front of an APARTMENT COMPLEX.

ROMAN
Let's look around.

11 EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX PARKING LOT - DAY

11

They enter the apartment complex parking lot.

Gage's keen EAGLE EYESIGHT SCANS everything in the vicinity, searching.

Roman sucks in a deep breath. He taps Gage's arm.

ROMAN
This way.

They walk, then stop before an empty parking space.

Roman stares up to a second floor door directly in front of them.

ROMAN

That's where she lives. We just missed her.

Gage turns and faces the road.

GAGE

Can you tell where she took off to?
Is she close by?

12 EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

12

Roman leads them two streets away to a restaurant. He stops by a late model Honda Civic.

ROMAN

This is her car. Do you recognize the scent?

Gage sucks in a deep breath and stumbles as if drunk.

ROMAN

Christ, don't act like a fool!

Roman elbows Gage in the ribs.

GAGE

How come we both detect her?
Shouldn't she be yours or mine?

ROMAN

How the hell should I know? It's not like we have an instruction manual.

13 EXT. RESTAURANT - DAY

13

Roman walks to the front door of the restaurant.

ROMAN

We'll figure it out. Just so you know, I'm not going to fight over her. She's human and you're the only other shifter. Understand?

Gage grunts.

GAGE

Come on, open the fucking door already!

14 INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

14

ARI, 70 but looks 50, with waist-length white wavy hair, sits at the bar. She checks her phone repeatedly. The only makeup is pink lipgloss. She's slender and curvy at 5'4".

Roman and Gage enter the restaurant. They look around, Gage's keen eagle eyes searching and Roman's superior scenting detecting. They find her.

They head to the bar.

ROMAN (V.O.)
That's her!

GAGE (V.O.)
I know, you idiot!

Roman elbows Gage.

ROMAN (V.O.)
God! She's beautiful!

GAGE (V.O.)
I've got a hard-on just looking at her.

ROMAN (V.O.)
Keep it under control for Christ's sake!

Roman and Gage approach her.

Gage leans on the bar, looks at Ari and smiles.

GAGE
Hi.

ROMAN (V.O.)
Don't grin like a hyena. She'll think you're a weird stalker.

Gage attempts to elbow Roman.

Roman tries to get around Gage.

ROMAN (V.O.)
Stop blocking me!

Ari stares at the two, hot sexy men grinning at her.

ARI (V.O.)
What's up with these two? Do they miss their grandmother?

Roman coughs into his hand to stop from laughing as he reads her thoughts.

ARI

Hi.

ROMAN

Can we buy you a drink?

ARI (V.O.)

What the hell do these jokers want?

She stares them down.

ARI

Why?

GAGE

Because you're a beautiful woman waiting in a bar for friends.

ROMAN

We're here, and they aren't.

ARI

How do you know I'm waiting for anyone? Perhaps I'm here by myself. Or, maybe I'm looking for a sugar daddy or sugar mommy. Why is it that people assume older women in a bar are not there on their own?

GAGE

Touché!

ROMAN (V.O.)

Touché? Did you just say that? What decade were you...

GAGE (V.O.)

Okay! Just shut up, will you? It's not like I can stuff it back in my mouth!

Roman reaches out and tucks a strand of hair behind her ear. He breathes in deeply. He smells her sex. He scents she's dripping wet. His EYES TEMPORARILY GO OUT OF FOCUS.

ROMAN

You have gorgeous hair. I'm not sure if I can keep my hands out of your hair.

Ari pulls back and studies Roman.

ARI

How long have you had this hair
fetish?

ROMAN

Since right now. There's something
about it. Perhaps it's the color or
texture. It's not gray. It's a
stunning white. Your hair feels
like silk.

GAGE

Your eyes are like the night sky. I
don't think I've ever seen that shade
of blue before.

ARI

Where are your girlfriends?

GAGE

No girlfriends. Not for a long time.

ARI

Oh, come on. Two good looking hunks
like you? If you snapped your
fingers, women would be all over
you.

ROMAN

So, you think we're hunks? That
sounds promising.

Gage elbows Roman.

GAGE (V.O.)

*Christ, Roman! You'll scare her
off!*

(verbally)

We don't want them. Most are gold
diggers and only want their names in
the society column.

ARI

Oh, so you two are wealthy hunks
then?

GAGE

That would be us. Where's your
husband, boyfriend, or man?

Ari holds up her left hand.

ARI

Do you see a ring?

ROMAN

Maybe we can solve that problem.

Ari becomes indignant.

ARI

Who said it was a problem?

JASON and KEVIN, Ari's sons, enter the restaurant. They approach their mom. Eye Roman and Gage.

JASON

Hi Mom. Are these guys bothering you?

ARI

No, honey, they were just keeping me company while I waited for you two slackers.

Ari looks at Kevin, her quiet son.

ARI

You okay, Kev?

KEVIN

Yeah. Just having a day.

Gage sticks his hand out to Jason.

GAGE

I'm Gage and this is Roman. This is one of our favorite restaurants.

The men all shake hands.

Gage stares at Ari, his hand outstretched to her.

After a long moment, she takes his hand.

ARI

Ari.

ROMAN (V.O.)

Ariana's her real name.

An ELECTRICAL CURRENT SHOOTS THROUGH GAGE AND ARI'S HANDS. Ari jerks her hand out of his.

ARI (V.O.)

What the heck was that?

Roman picks up Ari's hand and kisses her fingertips. His LIPS RECEIVE A SHOCK.

ARI (V.O.)
Just static electricity...

ROMAN
Would you want additional company
for lunch?

JASON
Sure, why not. That okay, Mom?

Ari stares at Roman and Gage.

ARI (V.O.)
*Oh no! How do I get out of this
without freaking out my kids?*

GAGE (V.O.)
She's going to bail!

ROMAN (V.O.)
*Shut up! She's not going to drag
her sons out the door!*

Gage sent a PULSE OF CALM to Ari.

ROMAN (V.O.)
*What the fuck are you doing? You
can't influence her decision!*

GAGE (V.O.)
*I just wanted her to know we're not
a threat.*

After a long moment, with all four men staring at her...

ARI
Sure.

They approach the hostess stand.

GAGE
Can we have Lucy's section?

The hostess escorts them to a table.

Roman pulls out a chair for Ari. He takes the chair next to
her and Gage claims the chair on her other side.

Jason and Kevin sit opposite them.

LUCY approaches.

LUCY
Hi Mr. Davenport! Hi Mr. Stryker!

GAGE

Hi Lucy. This is on me.

Gage looks across to Jason and Kevin.

JASON

Sure, I can always use a free lunch.

Jason elbows his brother.

Kevin grunts acknowledgment and smiles.

ARI

That's generous of you. Thank you.
My boys can use all the help they
can get.

KEVIN

Mom... Jeez, let me have a little
dignity.

ARI

Just stating the facts of the matter,
and it's nothing to be ashamed of.
People sometimes struggle until they
find their true place in life.

ROMAN

I was raised to take over my father's
electronics business. If I had
been left to my own decision-making
about my future, I would not have
had a clue.

GAGE

It took me ten years to figure out
what I was really good at. Yours
will come.

KEVIN

Electronics?

ROMAN

Everything you can think of, but we
specialize in security systems and
details.

JASON

That sounds interesting.

They order food and drinks.

Roman and Gage each have a leg against Ari's. Roman moves in
his chair and his leg separates from hers.

A flash of separation crosses Ari's face.

ROMAN (V.O.)
She wants the contact.

GAGE (V.O.)
I got that.

ROMAN (V.O.)
She's so beautiful! Her sons like us.

Ari sips wine as crazy thoughts flow through her head.

ARI (V.O.)
Am I having some type of mental breakdown? Have I been single so long I'm fantasizing these two men are into me? Lord have mercy, how embarrassing!

Roman grins.

ROMAN (V.O.)
She's thinking about possibilities.

GAGE (V.O.)
Yeah, but she thinks she's having a breakdown.

ROMAN (V.O.)
I want to kiss her. I can't stop fantasizing about kissing her.

GAGE (V.O.)
I want to touch her.

ARI (V.O.)
Oh my God! I can't believe how these guys are affecting me!

15 EXT. RESTAURANT - DAY

15

Kevin and Jason rush back to work.

Ari stands on the sidewalk with Roman and Gage.

Roman sends a text message.

GAGE
(softly)
Come with us?

Ari is very nervous.

ROMAN

Please...

He runs a finger down her cheek.

ARI

You do understand those were my sons?
I'm over seventy years old.

Roman put his arm around her waist.

ROMAN

Age is not relevant, Ari.

The limo pulls up beside them.

Gage opens the door.

Roman enters the limo.

16 INT. LIMO - DAY

16

Roman reaches out a hand to Ari.

ROMAN (V.O.)

Please... please!

17 EXT. RESTAURANT - DAY

17

Ari stares at Roman in the limo. Her eyes sweep over Gage on the sidewalk. She takes two steps back.

ARI

I can't!

Ari turns and hurries away to her car. She drops her keys. Finally gets inside.

18 INT. CAR - DAY

18

Ari locks the doors and grips the wheel.

ARI (V.O.)

*Oh my God! What was that all about?
I haven't had a relationship in over
TWO DECADES. I've got to get home.
Oh, God! Get me home!*

She gets out of the parking lot. She glances in the rearview mirror and sees Roman getting out of the limo to join Gage on the sidewalk.

ARI

Oh my God! Let me get home without wrecking the car!

19 EXT. RESTAURANT - DAY

19

Roman rests a hand on Gage's arm.

ROMAN

Let her go. We scared her, and she
scared herself with her reaction to
us.

Gage is frantic.

GAGE

We can't just let her walk away!
I've never suffered like this for
any other woman... or any other human
being... ever!

Roman watches the car disappear from sight.

ROMAN

Me neither. It hurts like she's
pulling on me. I need her so badly.

Gage turns to the limo.

GAGE

Come on, let's go home. I'm going
to get drunk.

20 INT. ARI'S APARTMENT - DAY

20

BODIE, a black house cat, and ISABEL, a Maine Coon cat, watch
Ari pace from the kitchen to the living room and back again.

Ari sits on the sofa, jumps up and paces again.

ARI

What the hell just happened? What
was that?

She flings herself on the sofa and naps.

21 INT. ARI'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

21

The apartment is dark. Ari wakes and fumbles with a light.

Ari goes to the kitchen, opens a cabinet. Her hand veers
from a bottle of wine to a bottle of bourbon then to lime
vodka. She grabs the vodka, a rocks glass and ice.

She gulps down a mouthful of vodka.

ARI

What the hell is wrong with me?
(MORE)

ARI (CONT'D)

Who are these guys? WHY... why do I
want them so badly? I WANT THEM!
BOTH OF THEM! What is that all about?

She drains her glass and slams it on the counter.

22 EXT. ARI'S APARTMENT - NIGHT 22

Gage's eagle talons grip the iron railing on Ari's balcony.
He's seen and heard enough. He flies back to the penthouse
balcony.

23 EXT. PENTHOUSE BALCONY - NIGHT 23

Gage's eagle lands. He SHIFTS back to human and slides open
the glass door and walks into the living room, naked.

24 INT. PENTHOUSE - NIGHT 24

ROMAN

Well?

Roman's eyes look pained.

GAGE

She wants us.

ROMAN

She's confused. We need to let her
work through this. We don't want to
strong-arm her and make her run away.

GAGE

(yells)

But we need her! How long are we
going to wait?

ROMAN

As long as it takes!

They each head down separate hallways. Doors SLAM.

25 EXT. PENTHOUSE BALCONY - DAY 25

Gage lands on the balcony, shifts and enters the living room
naked.

26 INT. PENTHOUSE - DAY 26

Gage is in a foul mood.

GAGE

She's not there.

(MORE)

GAGE (CONT'D)

This is four days in a row. I tried communicating with her cats, but they're useless.

ROMAN

She must have gone out of town. We need to find her sons.

Roman grabs his cellphone and places a call.

ROMAN

Sherm, I need to you to find someone for me. Actually, two guys. Kevin and Jason Davis. Their mother is Ari Davis. They all live here in the city.

Roman waits, scribbles information on a pad of paper.

ROMAN

Thanks, Sherm. It's personal. Maybe later.

Roman waves the piece of paper at Gage. He texts Jason and Kevin inviting them for drinks after work.

27 INT. DIFFERENT RESTAURANT - NIGHT

27

Piano music greets Kevin and Jason when they enter the restaurant. They find Roman and Gage at the bar.

ROMAN

Let's grab a booth.

He calls out to the bartender.

ROMAN

Put their orders on my tab.

They get their drinks and grab a booth.

GAGE

How's your week going?

JASON

You know... nowhere. Bottom of the pit jobs, not enough money. Mom feeds us a couple of times a week, but I feel guilty that I'm forty and can barely support myself.

ROMAN

At least your mom feeds you. How's she doing.

KEVIN

Probably great right about now.
She's laying on a beach in Cozumel
while we babysit the cats.

JASON

Yeah, she seemed stressed out about
something, but wouldn't tell us what
was going on.

GAGE (V.O.)

At least she didn't tell them.

ROMAN (V.O.)

*That was kind of obvious since they
didn't cuss us out in the text.*

Gage SENDS A VISUAL of him pecking Roman on the head.

Roman retaliates and SENDS A VISUAL of his claws raking the eagle.

They order food.

GAGE

Make sure you check her mail so no
one knows she's not home.

JASON

I've been bringing in her mail and
newspaper every day. I've got to
pick her up at the airport tomorrow.

ROMAN

Do you get docked from work? We can
pick her up.

28 INT. AIRPORT BAGGAGE CLAIM - DAY

28

Ari looks around for Jason while she stands at the baggage carousel conveyor.

She see's Roman and Gage heading her way.

ARI

What are you doing here? Where's
Jason?

ROMAN

The four of us met for dinner and
drinks last night. He didn't want
to miss work, so we volunteered to
fetch you. Is that okay?

ARI

You're here.

(V.O.)

OMG! Should I get back on the plane?

The BUZZER SOUNDS the arrival of luggage.

Ari turns to the conveyor system to watch for her bag.

ARI (V.O.)

*Five minutes with these guys and my
panties are soaked!*

Gage grins like a fool. He covers his mouth with his hand.

ARI (V.O.)

*What possessed me to wear a sundress?
I'm going to drip all over the floor!
I should have worn slacks!*

Roman drops a glance to the floor.

Gage and Roman inhale her scent.

GAGE (V.O.)

*Water, water everywhere and not a
drop to drink. Water, water
everywhere and all the boards did
shrink...*

ROMAN (V.O.)

What are you babbling on about?

GAGE (V.O.)

*The Rime of the Ancient Mariner.
I'm trying to lose my hard-on.*

ARI

Here's my bag.

She points to her luggage.

Roman pulls it off the conveyor and sets it on the floor, extends the handle. They walk out of baggage claim and the limo pulls up.

29 EXT. ARI'S APARTMENT - DAY

29

Roman carries the bag to the second floor apartment, his eyes on Ari's tanned legs and the sway of her dress across her ass.

Ari unlocks the door. They all go inside.

30 INT. ARI'S APARTMENT - DAY

30

Isabel HISSES and her tail bushes as she stares at the men.

Bodi rubs against Roman.

ARI

I don't know why Isabel reacted the way she did. She's usually the friendlier of the two.

GAGE (V.O.)

Probably because I called her stupid since she couldn't give me information.

Gage sits on the floor, pats his thighs, then reaches out to Isabel.

GAGE (V.O.)

Isabel, I'm sorry. You're not stupid. You're beautiful, a warrior kitty.

Isabel saunters to the living room and jumps on the sofa. She glares at him.

Gage stands.

GAGE

She'll come around.

ROMAN (V.O.)

Yeah, if she ever forgives you.

(verbally)

Do you need anything?

ARI

Not really. A nap, perhaps. Travel exhausts me.

ROMAN

Why don't you let us take you to dinner after your nap? You're not going to want to cook.

ARI

Dinner would be nice. I typically don't see the boys until I unpack. We go to lunch the day after.

GAGE

Get some rest. We'll be back at seven.

31 INT. LIMO - NIGHT

31

The three sit casually in the limo.

GAGE

I hope you like the restaurant we picked. It's one of our favorites.

(V.O.)

Why can't we sit closer so we can touch with our legs at least?

ROMAN (V.O.)

Do you want her to jump out of the goddamn limo?

Gage's eagle SCREECHED inside Roman's head.

32 INT. TANGO'S SEAFOOD - NIGHT

32

The maitre d greets them.

MAITRE D

Ah, Mr. Davenport, Mr. Stryker.
We have your special table ready.

Roman slips the maitre d a twenty.

They are seated at a table for six. Roman and Gage on one side, Ari on the other.

GAGE

So, tell us about your trip. You're nice and tanned.

ROMAN

Did you do anything special while you were in Cozumel?

ARI

I visited some old churches - they have some beautiful old churches, but that's about all. I drank a lot. Danced. Walked the beach.

Roman rearranges his face at her *dance* comment.

ROMAN (V.O.)

Did she sleep with men when she got drunk? Did we push her there?

Gage kicks him under the table.

GAGE (V.O.)

It's her fucking life. She can do as she pleases.

(MORE)

GAGE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
(verbally)
It sounds like you had a good time.

ARI
So, what have you been up to while
I've been tanning and dancing?

ROMAN
Don't forget the drinking.

ARI
Yeah... I did a lot of that.

GAGE
Unfortunately, we only bored ourselves
with work. Our highlight was meeting
up with your sons.

ARI
That was nice of you.

Their food arrives.

33 EXT. TANGO'S SEAFOOD - NIGHT

33

The limo pulls up. They get in.

ROMAN
Would you like to see where we live?

Ari bites her bottom lip. She nods ever so slightly.

GAGE
(to the driver)
Home.

Roman kisses her tenderly.

Gage turns her to face him. He's not as reserved. His lips
crush down on hers as he practically consumes her mouth.

Ari gasps.

Roman cups her breasts. He pinches a nipple. He lowers his
mouth and pulls the nipple with his teeth, along with the
material of her dress.

Ari grabs Roman's thigh. Her fingers dig into his leg as she
gasps through her passion.

ARI (V.O.)
Oh, God! More! I need more!

Gage groans. He presses his palm into her mound.

She pants.

The limo stops.

Roman tucks Ari's hair into place. He looks her over.

ROMAN
I'm sorry. I've rumpled you.

He and Gage straighten their clothes.

34 EXT. HIGH RISE - NIGHT

34

ALEX, the doorman, opens the door.

Roman slips him a twenty.

ALEX
Thank you, Mr. Roman.

Alex tips his hat at Ari.

35 INT. HIGH RISE - NIGHT

35

They take the elevator to the Penthouse.

ARI
You live in a penthouse?

ROMAN
We own the building.

ARI
You own a high-rise?
(V.O.)
*What was I thinking? I need to stop
right now and go home. Maybe move!*

Roman lifts his eyebrows.

Gage shakes his head slightly.

GAGE (V.O.)
It will be okay, you'll see.

The door opens to an enormous apartment.

36 INT. PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

36

Ari is drawn to the windows. The city is lit up. Mountains and forest in the distance.

ARI
Breathtaking!
(MORE)

ARI (CONT'D)

I've never seen the city from anything
other than the ground or a plane.
You're so fortunate to experience
this every day.

Gage slides her purse off her shoulder and puts it on the
coffee table.

Roman puts his arm around her back.

ROMAN

We love the view.

Gage points to the sofas.

GAGE

Coffee or a drink, right here. Every
day. Every night. I love staring
at the forest and mountains.
Sometimes I wish I were a bird.

Roman rolls his eyes.

ROMAN (V.O.)

How original.

Gage and Roman turn her from the windows. Their hands and
lips are all over her. They undress her; discard their own
clothes.

The three of them stand naked, sandwiched together. Touching
and kissing.

Roman scoops her up and carries her to a bedroom.

37 INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

37

Roman places her on an enormous bed. He and Gage join her on
the bed.

Hot steamy sex. ROMAN AND GAGE ARE NOT BISEXUAL.

Ari SCREAMS THROUGH ORGASMS.

Later, they doze.

Ari awakes two hours later, alone. A robe sits at the edge
of the bed. She gets up, slips into the robe, sits on the
edge of the bed. Her head is churning.

ARI (V.O.)

What just happened?

(MORE)

ARI (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*I can't believe I had sex with two
gorgeous men practically the same
ages as my sons! I must be having a
senior crisis! A breakdown! Or
something.*

Roman and Gage appear in the bedroom doorway.

GAGE (V.O.)
(panicky)
She's having second thoughts!

ROMAN (V.O.)
Knock it off!
(verbally)
Did you sleep well?

ARI
Yes, it was the most solid sleep
I've had in years.

She stands and faces them.

Gage goes into the bathroom and returns with a hairbrush. He
steps behind her and brushes her long hair.

38 INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

38

They sip tea and munch on apples, cheese and crackers.

ROMAN
Ari, just so you know, neither of us
has ever had a three-some before.
We don't want you to assume this is
something we do every day.

ARI
I've never had an experience like
this before, and I'm not sure how I
should react. It's like I skipped
college sex 101 forty years ago.
It's confusing. You two are
different, and I'm drawn to you...
I'm not sure that even describes the
feeling. It's almost like I'm bound
to the two of you. Not more to one
than the other, but equally.

GAGE
It's the same for us, Ari. Believe
it or not, we were miles away when
we sensed you that day we met at the
restaurant.

She balks.

ROMAN (V.O.)
Oh, great, just dive right in.

GAGE (V.O.)
No point in beating around the bush.

ARI
What do you mean you sensed me?

ROMAN (V.O.)
*Sure hope you know what the hell
you're doing! I swear if you
jeopardize this I'll beat the shit
out of you!*

GAGE
I realize this will sound a little
crazy, but we're not completely human.

Ari picks up a piece of apple.

ARI (V.O.)
*Oh, no! Do they think they're aliens?
Please don't have one of them say
they're Captain Kirk!*

ROMAN (V.O.)
*Great. Just great. We totally fucked
our only chance.*

GAGE (V.O.)
*Calm the fuck down. We don't know
that.*
(verbally)
We're shape shifters.

Ari belts out a laugh. When she sees they are serious, the
apple drops to the table.

ARI
Shifters? Like in the romance novels?
Bears, wolves?

ROMAN
Yeah, but those are just romance
stories writers made up. We haven't
found any other shifters in the past
fifty years since we discovered each
other.

GAGE

Roman and I are older than you by over twenty years. We're frozen at this age for some reason. Since we haven't found any other shifters to talk to, there's no one to answer our questions.

Ari stares at the table while processing what she heard.

ARI

You're serious? Shifters. You change from men to animals?

GAGE

Yes. Please trust us. We're serious.

ROMAN

You're the first woman we've been drawn to. The first woman we've ever shared. Your scent is like heroin to us. We can't get enough of you.

ARI (V.O.)

Oh, great. That sounds sort of like Edward and Bella in Twilight! Are these two crazy?

Gage and Roman frown.

ROMAN (V.O.)

Wonderful. Just fucking wonderful. Now she thinks we're fucking lunatics!

GAGE (V.O.)

We've got to show her!

ARI

Why are we drawn to each other?

Roman shrugged.

ROMAN

Have no idea. Has to be a shifter trait.

ARI

That's why I ran away to Cozumel and drank myself into oblivion. I didn't understand what was happening. I ached for you so bad my entire body was practically screaming.

(MORE)

ARI (CONT'D)

I imagined that perhaps I was having some type of strange possession or obsession or a psychotic episode. It made no difference that I was in another country. My mind wouldn't let go of you.

GAGE

Whatever it is, it's the strongest I have ever been pulled to anyone ever. We had a very difficult time being separated from you. It's not going to work for any of us to be apart like that.

Ari shakes her head in puzzlement.

ARI

When I woke up, and you were gone, I had an awful sense of separation.

GAGE

That's what we experienced. It's a terrible feeling.

ARI

You may be older than me but you look like forty.

ROMAN

You're a beautiful, desirable woman who doesn't look a day over fifty. You've got good genetics going on there. How old are your sons?

ARI

They're thirty-eight and forty.

GAGE

Great genetics. They look at least a decade younger, possibly more. You've taken care of yourself.

ARI

What are your animals?

(V.O.)

If I'm going to get on board this crazy train, this is an appropriate question.

ROMAN

Gage is an eagle and I'm a panther.

(MORE)

ROMAN (CONT'D)

And not your normal size of either animal you'd find in any zoo. We're enormous.

ARI

Can I see you shift?

ARI (V.O.)

This I've got to see. Wonder what excuse they'll make when it doesn't work?

GAGE (V.O.)

She can handle us shifting.

ROMAN (V.O.)

God, I hope so!

(verbally)

Just so you know, Gage and I can communicate between our minds, but I'm not sure we can communicate with you. We'll have to test that.

Ari keeps her face neutral; she doesn't know what to expect.

Roman MORPHS into a very large black panther.

Ari screams and jumps back.

ARI

Oh My God! Oh My God... You weren't lying!

Roman's panther rubs against her. His size almost knocks her down... his shoulders come up to just below her chin. His tongue swipes across the top of her hand.

ARI

You're so beautiful, Roman. You're so big!

A LOUD SQUAWK sounds.

Ari gasps at the gigantic eagle. Its body is twice the size of a normal eagle. She walks over to him and runs her hands over his beautiful feathers.

ARI

Oh, Gage! I can't keep my hands off your feathers. Can I touch your head?

Gage SQUAWKS.

Roman and Gage shift back to human.

GAGE
We're not bull-shitters, Ari.

ROMAN
Are you still in the workforce?

ARI
I retired a few years ago, but I've
been searching for something that
seemed to be missing my entire life.

Gage stares hard at her.

GAGE
Have you found it?

Ari swallows. Her eyes drift from one to the other.

ARI
I may have, but it's all confusing
right now.

ROMAN
(with a hint of panic)
You're not going to run away again,
are you?

Gage grips the edge of the table waiting for her answer.

She chews on her lower lip.

ARI
I don't know. To be honest, I'm not
sure what to do with this. It's
crazy.

They sit in an awkward silence while finishing their tea.

Ari gathers her clothes and returns to the bedroom. She
returns to the kitchen, dressed.

Roman and Gage have a silent, tense conversation. They stop
when Ari enters the room. They both turn to face her.

She grips the back of a chair not knowing what's to come.

GAGE
Would you consider living here?

She flinches.

ROMAN

We need you. It's not just for the sex, which is absolutely mind-blowing. It's this bonding thing that's making us a little crazy with thoughts of not having you close.

Ari stares right through them.

ARI

That's impossible. My sons... friends... how would I ever explain such a relationship?

Roman and Gage smile like schoolboys who just found fifty bucks.

ROMAN

So, you'd consider living here with us?

Ari flinches again.

ARI

I had no idea of even considering, but I have this strange need to be near you two.

ROMAN

You could tell them you're our personal assistant, or housekeeper or something. That we're CEOs of several companies, which is true, and we need someone we could trust to take care of us.

39 INT. ARI'S APARTMENT - DAY

39

They enter Ari's apartment to assess her living space. She has a wall of bookcases in the living room.

ROMAN

We'll hire a carpenter to build bookcases in your suite. The sitting room is about the size of your whole apartment.

Roman runs his hand across the back of the sofa and Isabel arches her back and hisses.

ROMAN

Come on, beautiful. Give us a chance.

Isabel whacks at his hand and leaps to the top of a bookcase and glares down at him.

ROMAN (V.O.)

Damn, she holds a grudge forever!

Gage walks into the bedroom and looks around.

Ari and Roman follow.

All three of them eye the queen bed at the same time.

Then they're naked and in it.

40 INT. PENTHOUSE - DAY

40

SUPER: THREE WEEKS LATER

Ari unpacks her things in her suite: clothing, accessories, bath items. Cases of books stood before the bookcases.

41 INT. PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

41

Ari drops into her bed, exhausted.

Roman joins her in bed later.

Gage arrives later still.

They sleep in a tangle of limbs.

42 INT. PENTHOUSE - DAY

42

Gage wakes first. His hand roams across Ari's hips and ass, then across her breasts. He presses his lips to hers.

Ari wakes to his kiss. Roman is against her back.

Gage nudges her onto her back while Roman disengages his limbs.

Roman leaves the bed to the bathroom.

Gage's mouth is all over her.

Roman climbs back into bed.

HOT STEAMY SEX.

Suddenly Ari bursts out laughing.

Both men stop their lovemaking and stare at her.

ROMAN (V.O.)

Oh, no! She's flipped out!

ARI

I had the sudden thought what if I had a heart attack or stroke from all this? It's not like I've been having sex for the past two *decades*, and suddenly I'm your *sex goddess*.

43 INT. KITCHEN - DAY

43

Ari cooks breakfast.

Roman drapes his suit jacket on the back of his chair. He pours coffee for the three of them.

Gage makes toast.

They eat breakfast then lounge in the living room.

44 INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

44

Roman's phone rings.

ROMAN

What's going on Celeste?

Gage rolls his eyes.

Ari gives a questioning glance his way.

ROMAN

Okay, bring them by and I'll sign them.

He ends the call, presses a button on his phone and turns to Gage.

ROMAN

I need to sign the Baker papers. She'll notarize and file them by nine this morning.

Within minutes the elevator dings Celeste's arrival.

A tall, leggy brunette, in a skin tight, tiny, black skirt, four-inch red fuck-me heels and a red scooped tank, steps into the foyer. She holds a file folder and her notary stamp.

She struts into the living room as if she belongs there.

Ari watches Celeste's approach.

ARI (V.O.)

Will you get a load of this little temptress?

ROMAN (V.O.)

Uh-oh. This may not be such a good idea. Celeste will say or do something inappropriate.

GAGE (V.O.)

Get her out of here as quick as you can.

CELESTE

Hey, Gage.

Celeste walks past him on her way to Roman. She stops abruptly as her eyes discover Ari on the sofa. Her eyes move from Ari to Roman to Gage.

CELESTE

(with a hint of disbelief)

Oh, is this your mom?

Ari tenses.

ARI (V.O.)

Their mom? Oh, jeez! This little bitch feels threatened by my presence.

Gage smirks.

GAGE

Hardly.

Roman gives Gage a stink-eye, then directs his gaze to Celeste.

ROMAN

This is Ari.

Celeste studies Ari. She sees a classic, ageless beauty in a long white shirt, black leggings and ballet flats.

CELESTE (V.O.)

What the hell is this woman doing here at this time of the morning?

Celeste practically blows smoke out of her ears with Ari's presence.

She fake-smiles and holds out her hand.

CELESTE

Hi, I'm Celeste.

Ari rises and shakes Celeste's hand.

ARI (V.O.)

If I had an animal, it would be a lioness, and you'd be lunch.

(verbally)

Hi Celeste. It's nice to meet you.

ROMAN (V.O.)

This is so not good.

GAGE (V.O.)

Why the hell didn't you think this through?

Ari's hair swings forward and Celeste gasps.

CELESTE

Oh, what beautiful hair!

ARI

Thanks. I'm going to braid it this morning.

Ari sits back on the sofa and Gage joins her. He nudges her forward and braids her long hair.

Celeste pulls her gaze away from them and turns to Roman.

CELESTE

I've placed arrow stickies where you are required to initial and sign.

Celeste sits on the sofa opposite Gage and Ari and opens the folder. She extracts the pen clipped to the front.

Roman sits on the sofa keeping a distance from Celeste and picks up the pages.

Celeste hands him the pen. She can't stop watching Gage braid Ari's beautiful, long white hair.

CELESTE (V.O.)

What the hell is going on here?

Roman peruses the contract line by line. He circles something.

ROMAN

This isn't right. Get with Rick and verify this number.

Celeste read the paragraph.

CELESTE

I'm sorry. This is supposed to be the final document.

ROMAN

I know this isn't the right figure.

He circles another figure.

ROMAN

I'll be down a little later.

Celeste gathers the pages, folder and pen. Her eyes slid to Ari then back to Roman.

CELESTE

I'm so sorry to have bothered you.
I'll make Rick go through each line
to be sure it's correct for your
signature.

Celeste hurries to the foyer and leaves.

ARI

Well that was interesting. Your
mom, huh?

ROMAN

She's been chasing after Roman for
two years.

ARI

You don't like her?

ROMAN

She's the type of woman we try to
avoid. She can get pushy.

(V.O.)

Never let these two cross paths again.

GAGE (V.O.)

*Celeste went a little too far. Going
to evaluate this situation. Will
not let that bitch ever treat Ari
that way again.*

ARI

Is our arrangement going to be awkward
for your employees? Or your board
of directors, or anything?

ROMAN

Nope. Don't even go there, Ari.
There's no reason for you to be
concerned about our private
relationship. We are on solid ground.
Our employees are just that, except
for Sherm, Lonnie and the private
security division they take care of.

GAGE

Regular staff don't get into our private affairs. If they did, they would be terminated.

ARI

But Celeste...

ROMAN

If she becomes a problem, she's replaceable. I won't tolerate anyone who crosses that line. Gage and I have a lot to lose. We may outlive our employees, but we'll move the company if it comes down to that.

Ari chews her bottom lip.

Gage rubs her shoulder.

GAGE

Listen to Roman. Don't fret. There will never be anything to come between the three of us. And neither of us will be jealous of your time with the other. All I can tell you is that we three are one now. I, for one, am finally very happy.

Roman nodded in agreement.

ARI

Do people from your companies come up here all the time? It's sort of uncomfortable because there's no front door... they get off the elevator and are just *here*.

GAGE

Yeah, but they call or text ahead of time to announce they're coming otherwise the doors won't open. We have to buzz them in.

45 INT. PANTHER INDUSTRIES - 30TH FLOOR - DAY

45

Gage escorts Ari to SANDY TURNER's office. He makes introductions.

SANDY

Hi, Ari. It's nice to meet you. I have your paperwork all set.

(to Gage)

You can come back in about an hour, Gage. We should be finished by then.

Gage leaves.

Sandy and Ari move to a small conference table where a ream of documents in folders sits waiting.

Ari sees framed photos on a shelf.

ARI
Are these your kids?

SANDY
Yeah, my little squirts. They're a handful!

ARI
They're precious. Wait until they grow up.

Sandy gets a wistful expression on her face.

SANDY
I'm not looking forward to that. I don't think I'll do empty nest syndrome very well.

ARI
They're never really gone. Think bungee cords throughout college and beyond.

She pats Sandy's hand.

Sandy laughs.

SANDY
I can do bungee cords.

Sandy opens a thick folder. She pulls out a small manila envelope.

SANDY
Let's start with this.

She opened the envelope and pulled out the cardkey to the penthouse and a gym badge.

By the time all paperwork is signed, Ari discovers her enormous salary, computer and phone upgrades and benefits.

46 INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

46

Ari inserts her new cardkey into the slot.

Gage presses the P for the penthouse.

ARI

I can't believe everything I sat through! How could you pay me so much money? And what are these car keys for? I own a vehicle.

ROMAN

Ari, we're worth billions. We passed the million status years ago. Your salary is as small as the top of a pin head compared to our fortune.

ARI

That may be so, but...

GAGE

Your car is twelve years old! Now you'll be able to use any of our vehicles.

ARI

But it's been a great vehicle.

ROMAN

We can donate it to a women's shelter.

The doors open, and they step into the foyer.

ROMAN

Go put your paperwork in your room and let's go get lunch. I'm starving.

ARI

You ate a huge breakfast.

GAGE

Our animals expend a lot of energy and those calories burn off pretty quick.

ROMAN

After lunch, we'll introduce you to Sherm.

Ari hurries to her sitting room and drops the packet in the desk drawer.

47 INT. PANTHER INDUSTRIES SECURITY DIVISION - DAY

47

Roman, Gage and Ari walk to a glassed-in office lined with several wall monitors. A desk and credenza hold laptops and other pieces of equipment. Thru the glass wall is a large area of cubicles.

ROMAN

Sherm, I want you to meet Ari Davis.

An Asian man in his thirties stands and shakes her hand.

SHERM

(with a deep southern
drawl)

Nice to meet you, Ari. Sherman Foo,
but please, everyone calls me Sherm.
Roman mentioned that you had a degree
in forensic accounting. You ever
get a chance to use what you learned?

ARI

(smirks)

Boy, did I. I helped pull the plug
on those doctors who were bilking
Medicare. They had accounts buried
so deep I figured I'd need a bulldozer
to uncover them.

Sherm's jaw drops. He takes two steps back and points at Ari
and hoots in disbelief.

SHERM

You're 'the sifter'?

Roman and Gage exchange shrugs.

ARI

How could you possibly know that
nickname?

SHERM

In this industry, we keep tabs on
everything and everyone. You're
practically a legend.

ARI

I don't think I'd go that far.

Sherm wagged a finger at her.

SHERM

If the pants fit, put 'em on and zip
'em up. Everything I've heard or
read about that case, those pants
fit. The government retrieved a
good portion of the money when they
confiscated mansions, yachts, jets
and everything in between from that
ring of thieves.

Ari glances over at one of his monitors where columns of numbers fly up the screen.

ARI
What are you running?

Sherm nods at the screen.

SHERM
Looking for a key.

ROMAN
Well I hate to break up this budding friendship, but we should get going. See you later, Sherm.

ARI
Call me if you need anything.

She looks longingly at the setup.

Gage wraps his arm around her waist and guides her to the door. Roman hugs her shoulder to his.

Sherm's brows crinkle as he watches them leave.

SHERM (V.O.)
What are these guys up to now?

48 INT. PENTHOUSE - ARI'S SUITE - DAY

48

Roman, Gage and Ari unpack her books and shelve them in the bookcases.

Ari hunts for a particular box and finds it.

ARI
Roman, can you open this box? You and Gage should take a look at these books.

Roman pulls the box toward him and slits through the tape with a box cutter. He opens the box, lifts out crumpled packing paper and stares at the old volume on top. He carefully picks up the old book.

ROMAN
Where did you get these?

Gage looks over Roman's shoulder. He digs out another book.

GAGE
Holy shit! Will you get a load of this?

ARI

I went to an estate sale with one of my friends ten or fifteen years ago. This Asian family was clearing out their grandfather's things. I wish I had had the foresight to grab up more of the other books. I would have bought everything they were selling if I had the credit cards you gave me. I'll bet anything grandpa had secrets stashed in the furniture.

Roman studies the binding and the paper.

ROMAN

This is a hand-tooled cover, and I'm not sure about the paper and ink. How many more are there?

ARI

There were eight in all. I bought the whole set.

Gage kisses her with passion.

GAGE

We may find answers about our kind in these pages.

ROMAN

Why don't we go to the cabin? I could use a run.

GAGE

Yeah, that sounds good.

ARI

Where's your cabin?

Roman turns to the window and points.

ROMAN

Way over there, close to the mountains. It takes a couple of hours to get there.

49 INT. PENTHOUSE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

49

Their faces are buried in the books. All they can do is study the drawings and sketches. The writing is in neat columns of Chinese.

ROMAN

How can we get these translated?

ARI

Maybe we should scan in the pages and get them translated online. We don't know what these books contain. For all I know, these could be the only copies. I don't think we should let the books out of our sight. Besides their age, which seems to be ancient, they could be priceless.

Gage nods.

GAGE

Yeah, Ari's right. We don't know what we have here.

ROMAN

Gage! Look at this!

Gage and Ari join Roman and look at his book.

GAGE

Shifters! Look at the different types. We've got to find out if these are authentic findings, or if grandpa was writing stories for his grandkids.

Gage presses a sloppy kiss on Ari's mouth.

ROMAN

This is the most excited I've ever been about a book. We should try to scan just this page to see if we can get it translated.

GAGE

I'll get the hand scanner.

Gage jumps up and goes down the hall. He returns with a hand scanner.

He runs the scanner over the page, removes the USB device and they follow Gage to his suite.

50 INT. PENTHOUSE - GAGE'S SUITE - CONTINUOUS

50

Gage goes to his sitting room which is his home office. He sticks the USB device into his computer.

ARI

Pull up Google Translator.

Google translates the document.

ARI

(reads the translation)

*Man and beast share skin and souls.
Jump from skin of man to skin of
animal. Skin of animal to skin of
man. Little mouse unfolds to
Sparkling Princess. Cave of bear
people. Men who become bears. Yu
the Great Xia Dynasty. Three
Sovereigns and Five Emperors.*

Roman thumps her thigh.

ROMAN

Why don't we get packed so we can
leave early?

They go to their rooms to pack.

51 INT. PENTHOUSE - ARI'S SUITE - CONTINUOUS

51

Roman enters the room, pulls her into his arms and devours
her with a kiss.

ROMAN

I don't know what I love more. Your
hair, your ass or your clit.

ARI

No discrimination. I want you to
love all of me.

Gage wanders into the room.

GAGE

You started without me.

He sandwiches Ari between them.

Ari squeezes out of their embrace.

ARI

Listen, you bad boys, let me finish
getting my gear ready for tomorrow.
You can hold off for an hour, can't
you? You guys run along while I
pack.

Ari finishes packing.

52 INT. BATHROOM - NIIGHT

52

She goes into her bathroom and turns on the shower faucet. She undresses and steps into the glass stall.

Roman and Gage join her. She reaches out and grabs ahold of their cocks and strokes.

GAGE

Me first. You always hog her.

ROMAN

Do not.

Gage lifts Ari above his cock and lowers her onto his shaft.

Roman runs his palm over the cheeks of her ass, then reaches around and rubs her sensitive nub as Gage thrusts.

Ari screams out an orgasm. She grabs Roman's hand.

ARI

Stop, Roman!

Gage blows his load into her.

GAGE

Oh, Ari...

53 INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

53

Ari pushes a cart piled with meat, veggies, fruit and snack items.

ARI

What about drinks?

ROMAN

The wine cellar is stocked, as well as the bar.

ARI

Okay. I guess I'll see when we get there.

Roman kisses her on the nose.

ROMAN

You're so cute when you're curious.

She swats him.

Gage dumps fish, shrimp, lobster tails, scallops and crab claws into the cart.

GAGE

If I remember correctly, the freezer
is low.

ARI

Do you have ice cream?

The men head to the freezer section. Ari follows with the
cart.

ARI

Do they have pistachio? If not, get
butter pecan.

Several gallons are added to the cart, along with ice cream
bars.

As they leave the freezer section, Roman grabs a couple of
cans of whipped cream.

Gage smirks.

ARI

Honestly!

They check out and leave the store.

54 EXT. DRIVING - DAY

54

SUPER: 2-1/2 HOURS LATER

Gage pulls the SUV off the highway onto a two-lane paved road.
After several miles he turns onto a road with SIGNS posting
PRIVATE ROAD.

ARI

I'll never find this place on my
own.

Gage pulls the SUV up to a house that takes Ari's breath away.

ARI

Cabin? Who called this a cabin?

ROMAN

Okay, house in the woods. Come on,
let's get the food inside.

55 INT. HOUSE IN THE FOREST - DAY

55

Ari is mesmerized as she looks out the floor-to-ceiling
windows.

Roman slides his arm around her waist.

Gage joins them.

GAGE

Beautiful, isn't it? I fell in love with it fifty years ago. It always has the same effect on me when I arrive after a long time.

ARI

I may not want to leave.

ROMAN

Ari, would you mind if we shifted? We might be gone for a couple of hours.

ARI

Let your animals loose.

The guys shed their clothes. They all walk to the sliding glass doors and step outside.

ROMAN

For now, stay indoors and get comfortable with the house. Lock the doors. We have a hidden key and we'll let ourselves in. Tomorrow we'll go for a walk.

Roman and Gage walk a few feet away, then SHIFT.

ARI

Have a good time. I'm going to take a nap.

She retreats to the house.

Roman's panther turns and looks at her.

Ari stops at the sliding glass doors. One hand goes to her head. She turns and looks at the panther and eagle.

ARI

Did you say something to me?

Roman's panther stares at Ari intently.

ROMAN (V.O.)

I love you, Ari.

ARI

I love you too. Be safe.

Gage opens his wings and leaps into the air. His twenty-five foot wingspan lifts him off the ground.

Ari watches him.

ARI

Oh, Gage! I wish I had your wings!

The eagle SQUAWKS loudly.

Roman's panther runs into the forest.

56 INT. HOUSE IN THE FOREST - DAY

56

Ari spies the sofa and stretches out for a nap.

LATER

A CLINK-CLINK noise jars her back to consciousness. She stays still trying to determine what it is.

Ari gets up and saunters into the kitchen to find Roman, still naked, tending to the steaks marinating.

ROMAN

Hi gorgeous. Did you have a good nap.

ARI

I did. Has Gage returned?

ROMAN

Not yet. I detected human scents in the woods. Gage is searching from the air. No one should be within miles of the house.

ARI

Should we be worried?

ROMAN

Don't know. Probably just someone hiking. I detected two different traces about a mile back. I walked around the house and my cat didn't pick up any strange scents here.

A loud SCREECH outside announces Gage's return.

They walk to the glass sliders and step outside.

57 EXT. HOUSE IN THE FOREST - DAY

57

Gage's eagle is on the lawn. He turns his head this way and that.

Gage and Roman have a private conversation.

Roman walks Ari back inside the house.

ROMAN

Lock the door. Stay inside, out of sight. There's two men headed this way, with guns. There's a loaded gun between the mattress and headboard. Do you know how to turn off the safety?

ARI

I'm sure I can figure it out.

ROMAN

Get the gun. Always be ready for the worst.

He kisses her and SHIFTS back to his panther. He leaves the house and runs into the forest.

Ari locks the door, takes to the stairs and runs into the bedroom. She feels between the mattress and headboard and finds the gun. It's heavy.

She finds the safety button and flicks it off. She creeps to the window, approaching it from the side. Her eyes search through the trees.

Ari spots a GLINT through the trees.

A loud SCREECH sounds overhead.

She focuses her mind.

ARI (V.O.)

Do you see anyone? I saw something shiny. Maybe someone's watching the house with binoculars.

GAGE (V.O.)

Two men. They're trying to keep under cover, so we can assume they want in the house. Shoot first, Ari. Never hesitate.

ARI (V.O.)

Be careful! You could get killed.

Ari shakes with fear. She sees movement at the edge of the trees.

STRANGERS approach holding HANDGUNS.

Roman lets out a vicious GROWL that reverberates through the forest. He leaps on the man closest to the trees.

A GUN FIRES.

Gage SCREECHES from the sky. He descends, talons outstretched. He grabs the second man's outstretched hand.

The gun falls to the ground. The men are quickly subdued.

ROMAN (V.O.)
*Ari, come outside with the gun. Get
their weapons.*

Ari runs down the stairs, unlocks the door and launches herself outside.

58 EXT. HOUSE IN THE FOREST - DAY

58

Ari approaches the men, gun in her hand.

ARI
Don't move, if you want to live.

She grabs their guns and tosses them toward the house.

The STRANGERS' eyes are filled with fear.

ARI
What are you doing here? This is
private property that's posted very
clearly.

BLUE SHIRT MAN
We were just hiking in the woods.

ARI
Yeah, I bet. You always approach a
house with your weapon drawn? I'll
bet you're lying, so let's try again,
or my animals will have you for a
nice snack.

Both men cringe.

Roman GROWLS low in his throat.

Gage pecks at his guy's foot, his large, strong beak pierces through the work boot.

The man SCREAMS in terror.

BLUE SHIRT MAN
We just saw your house the other day
and didn't know anyone lived here.

ARI

You honestly think a house like this just sits here empty? If you assumed it was empty, explain why you returned with guns.

The man in the plaid shirt squirms an inch away from Gage.

Gage snatches the guy's ankle in his beak.

ARI

If you want that ankle, you'd better not move and you'd better explain.

ROMAN (V.O.)

Ari, go inside and call Sherm. Tell him what's going on. Grab our clothes and leave them at the back door.

ARI

You two stay put.

She picks up their guns, runs to the house, and lets herself inside.

59 INT. HOUSE IN THE FOREST - DAY

59

Ari dumps the guns on the coffee table and launches herself upstairs. She grabs her purse and her new cellphone.

SHERM (O.S.)

Well, hello, Ari. Bored already?

Ari blurts out the situation.

SHERM (O.S.)

Stay calm. We'll be there shortly.

Ari pulls together a set of clothes for her men, runs down the stairs and opens the back door quietly. She places the clothes on a table near a huge grill.

ARI (V.O.)

Sherm will be here shortly. Your clothes are at the back door.

Ari runs through the house, grabs the gun, goes outside.

60 EXT. HOUSE IN THE FOREST - DAY

60

Ari returns to the men.

Roman rubs against her.

ARI

Go hunt.

The panther GROWLS into the man's face then launches himself into the forest.

A few minutes later, Roman runs around the house, dressed. He retrieves the gun from Ari.

He waves the gun at the other man.

ROMAN

You, over here with your buddy.

Gage launches into the sky.

A HELICOPTER approaches.

Gage, fully dressed, jogs across the lawn.

GAGE

They'll land in the clearing.

He cradles his arm around Ari.

They hear the ROTORS shut down, and several pairs of feet THUNDER in their direction.

Sherm leads a team of COMMANDOS in full gear as if ready to head into war.

The trespassers are wide-eyed.

SHERM

Miller, secure these two. Garcia, take the team and find their vehicle.

Sherm looks to Roman.

SHERM

Which direction did they come from?

Roman points.

ROMAN

That way, Sherm.

SHERM

Miller, you stay behind and keep your eyes on these two.

ARI

I've got their weapons inside.

Roman slides his arm across her shoulder and kisses the side of her head as they walk to the house.

ROMAN

You okay?

ARI

Yeah. A little shook up, but I'm fine.

They go inside.

61 INT. HOUSE IN THE FOREST - DAY

61

GAGE

Want a beer?

SHERM

Yeah, a beer sounds good.

He sticks his head outside.

SHERM

Miller, want a brew?

MILLER

I'll never turn down a cold beer.

Sherm looks over the handguns.

SHERM

A Hudson H9 and a SAR 9. These guys aren't your run-of-the-mill rednecks hiking through the woods buddies. These weapons mean *purpose*.

Gage hands Sherm a beer.

62 EXT. HOUSE IN THE FOREST

62

Gage brings a beer to Miller.

GAGE

Send their pictures to Lonnie.

Miller takes out his phone and snaps a picture.

Gage heads back into the house.

63 INT. HOUSE IN THE FOREST - DAY

63

Are stares at Sherm.

ARI

I hardly recognize you, Sherm.

Sherm winks at Ari.

The commandos return to the house. Garcia slides the glass door open and steps inside.

GARCIA

Found a pickup truck. Derek's driving it back to the shop so we can go over it.

Sherm's phone DINGS. Two PHOTOS and details appear.

SHERM

Matt Pendleton, blue shirt, works at a lumber store. He was a Boy Scout. Divorced. Two kids. Drowning in child support. Joe LaThompse, plaid shirt guy, is an engineer with the power company. Married. Three kids under the age of twelve.

Sherm reads more data.

SHERM

These yahoos both have subscriptions to gun magazines and a couple of adventurous story magazines about mercenaries and spies. They're lucky they didn't accidentally kill each other.

ROMAN

What are you going to do with them?

SHERM

We'll take them back to the shop, shoot them up with some truth serum and see what the hell they were thinking. Not sure if they had a plan. Who knows what they intended if they broke into the house.

GAGE

Are you going to bring the police in?

SHERM

I'll see where the interrogation leads, and if interesting intel crops up. Derek will tear the truck apart. If it comes up clean, we'll let them go with a warning.

Sherm and Garcia head out the sliding glass doors, followed by Gage, Roman and Ari.

Sherm signals to his team to grab the men and head to the chopper.

Ari places her hand on Sherm's arm.

ARI
Thank's so much.

SHERM
That's what they pay me for.

ARI
You could have fooled me. I thought
you were a computer geek.

GAGE
Sherm's multi-faceted.

ROMAN
Yeah... and deadly.

Sherm grins.

Ari, Roman and Gage return to the house.

64 INT. HOUSE IN THE FOREST - DAY

64

Gage locks the glass doors.

ROMAN
I'm going to hit the shower.

GAGE
Yeah, good idea.

ARI
I'm heading for the bar.

She uncorks a bottle of wine. Pulls the marinating steaks out of the fridge. Grabs salad fixings and potatoes.

Roman pads down the stairs barefoot, in jeans. He wraps his arms around her and licks her lips. They kiss. He rests his forehead against hers.

ROMAN
I don't know what I'd do if anything
happened to you.

ARI
Everything's okay. Don't go getting
all maudlin on me.

Gage comes into the kitchen and sandwiches into Ari's back. His wet hair drips on her.

ARI

Gage! Get a towel and dry your hair.

She giggles.

GAGE

It'll dry outside.

He shakes his hair and sprays Ari and Roman.

Ari runs her hands over his muscular chest and six-pack abs. She catches herself before she licks him.

Gage and Roman are ready to engage.

ARI

Sorry. Food first. Ignore me.

She pushes away from them. They are still focused on sex.

ARI

Focus on food!

The guys each grab a beer. Ari pours herself a glass of wine and they head out the kitchen door.

65 EXT. HOUSE PATIO - DAY

65

They sink into chairs.

GAGE

(to Ari)

You should work with Sherm on some self-defense tactics.

ROMAN

Good idea. Let's throw in some weapons training. After today, there's no telling what situation may come up, and I want you to be prepared.

Ari's phone DINGS a message.

ARI

Oh, no. Kevin was downsized.

ROMAN

We should be able to find a place for him. He installs cable, right?

ARI

Yes. He wires offices and things. He's the quiet one so I don't know details about what he does.

ROMAN

Send him my phone number and tell
him to call me next week.

Ari texted her son.

GAGE

Fire up the grill, Roman. I could
eat a horse.

66 INT. HOUSE IN THE FOREST - BEDROOM - NIGHT

66

They enter the bedroom.

ARI

This day has worn me out. Maybe I
need special energy?

Ari waggles her eyebrows.

Roman kisses Ari. He devours her mouth.

ARI

Hurry!

Gage slips his pants off and kneels on the bed. He hooks his
thumbs in Ari's panties and slides them down her legs and
tosses them.

GAGE

Me first.

Roman undresses.

Hot Sex.

67 INT. DOJO - DAY

67

Sherm instructs Ari in the dojo. They run through several
exercises. Most of the time, Ari ends up on the floor and
Sherm looks a little too happy.

Ari gets to her feet.

ARI

Just wait, Sherm. One of these days
payback will be hell.

Sherm smiles wickedly.

SHERM

Looking forward to it.

END



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January 11, 2021

Bonded series treatment

Bonded by DG Ireland is an adult novel about shape-shifters. The series consists of four novels: *Bonded*, *Tothars*, *Tilted*, and *Family*. This focuses on book 1, *Bonded*.

Logline:

Roman Davenport thought he was the only shape-shifter in existence—a freak—until he meets Gage Stryker. Then Ari Davis crossed their path and nothing would ever be the same for any of them again. They formed a bond that could never be broken.

The synopsis of *Bonded* is as follows:

Roman Davenport thought he was the only shape-shifter in existence—a freak. He first shifted to a panther when he was twenty. Now, in his forties, he and his panther are so lonely.

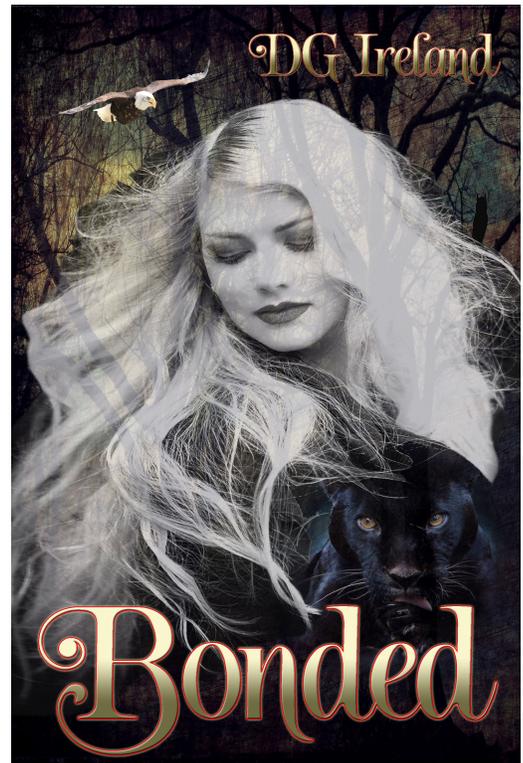
Then he rescues Gage Stryker, an eagle shifter shot from the sky with an arrow through his wing. Like Roman, Gage thought he was the only shifter.

Roman and Gage were so happy to have found each other. They spent the next fifty years searching for their kind—and searching for mates. Relationships with women were short—most only wanted the limelight of the city's two most eligible bachelors.

Then Ari Davis crossed their path.

The woman was seventy but looked fifty, with thick white hair to her waist. The attraction was a powerful pull for all three of them.

Ari was so confused by the strong attraction to the men—that were barely older than her two sons—that she fled to Mexico for a week to try to get her head straight. When she returned home, they were there—waiting for her.



Nothing would ever be the same for any of them again. They formed a bond that could never be broken.

The main characters of Bonded are as follows:

Roman Davenport (panther), 40s, black shoulder length hair, green eyes, 6', muscular, panther tattoos on shoulders & full panther on back.

Gage Stryker (bald eagle), 40s, sandy blond hair, brown/golden eyes, 6', muscular, eagle tattoos on shoulders and eagle in flight on his back.

Ari Davis, 70 but looks 50 or younger, thick white wavy hair down to her waist, 5'4", slim

Sherman (Sherm) Foo, Panther Industries Security Division head. 30s, Asian human.

My books typically have large casts. Bonded will contain a large shifter community. There are other characters (receptionists, restaurant people, etc.).

The main supporting characters that are named consist of the following:

Jason Davis, 40, human

Kevin Davis, late 30s, human

Lonnie, mid 30s, human

Celeste, late 20s, human

Sandy Turner, 35, human

Alex the doorman, 50s, human

Detective Valk, 50s, human

Eddy Brindlethorpe, 50, kidnapper/serial killer, human

Dom McMahon, 20, Eddy's associate, human

Dr. Tanner, 40s, human

Helen Brindlethorpe, old lady, Eddy's mother, human

Jake, 40, human

Jefferson Lloyd, 40s, human

Gloria (wolf), 50, nurse

Dr. Lorraine Talbotson, 50, psychiatrist, human

Grandfather Silver Wolf (Ben Hatahle), 102, Gloria's grandfather

Beverly, 50, nurse, human

Leander (king cobra), 50

Rat people

Atsa (eagle), Navajo, late 50s

Yiska (wolf), Navajo, 50

Navajo elders

Young Navajos (18-24)

Mr. Tran, translator/historian, Asian, 60, human

Travis Shelton (white dog), 20s

Lisa Hamilton (cougar/mountain lion), 30s

Trisha Anderson (mountain lion), 40s

Please note that the Bonded series contains explicit sex and violence (not violent sex). In the four TV Script episodes I have written for Bonded, I have not spelled out the sex scenes. They're in the book, but I assume a producer and/or director would have their own ideas as to how to film those scenes (like the sex scenes in Sense8).

I have broken down my 304-page Bonded novel which consists of 23 chapters. Some chapters are dense.

Chapter 1 opens with Roman, naked, on the edge of the forest. He's despondent that he's alone, never having found any other shifters. He shifts into his panther, runs into the forest. He hears something large falling through the trees and heads in that direction. He discovers a naked man (Gage Stryker), not quite fully shifted from his eagle, an arrow through his arm/wing. Roman carries him to the house, removes the arrow then goes in search of the hunters and deals with them. Fifty years pass. They scent a woman that tilts their world.

Chapter 2: Ari Davis waits for her sons in a restaurant. Roman and Gage track her to the restaurant. They find her in the bar area. They practically fall over each other trying to get to her, but not wanting to scare her off. As shifters, Roman and Gage have a constant silent bantering dialog back and forth. Her sons arrive. Roman invites them to lunch. Reluctantly, Ari accepts. After lunch, Roman and Gage try to convince Ari to come with them to their penthouse. She freaks out and leaves. They give her some space, not wanting to scare her off. Gage flies to her apartment every night looking for her, but she's not there. They have Sherm track down her sons; invite them for dinner. They find out Ari went to Mexico for a week. She returns, Roman and Gage pick her up at the airport.

Chapter 3: Roman and Gage take Ari to dinner. She tells them about her trip. They're a little riled up when she mentions all the drinking and dancing she did. They wonder if they drove her to have sex with multiple men, but that wasn't the case. She had to get away from them. They scared her because they brought feelings back she thought were long dead. After dinner, she goes home with them. They have incredible sex (Roman and Gage are not bisexual). After sex and a nap, Roman and Gage take the plunge and shift, show Ari their animals. They all discuss their backgrounds. Roman and Gage's businesses. Ari is a retired forensics accountant. There is a long discussion about not being able to be apart from each other. They ask her to move in with them.

Chapter 4: Ari takes them to her apartment so they can determine what moving her to the penthouse will entail. They meet her two cats. Isabel doesn't want anything to do with them. Gage figures she's pissed because he called her useless and an idiot when he was searching for Ari. She moves into the penthouse. The three of them sleep in Roman's room in his gigantic custom bed. Roman and Gage's electronics business, along with their security business is also in the building. Celeste, one of their employees, comes to the penthouse with contracts for Roman to sign. Celeste has the hots for Roman. There is tension between Celeste and Ari. The guys are on edge that

Celeste will do or say something inappropriate. After that business concludes, Roman and Gage bring Ari to meet with Sandy Turner, their HR person. They get Ari on the payroll, then they introduce her to Sherm. He recognizes her name. She has a reputation in the industry as someone who can dig deep and discover cooked books. She is known as *the sifter*.

Chapter 5: They go to the Apple store and Ari gets all new equipment. Her new cellphone has the elevator app that controls the elevator to the penthouse. Roman and Gage help Ari unpack all her books in her new suite in the penthouse. She has Roman open this one box that holds eight ancient Chinese books. There are pictures that depict shifters, but the text is in Chinese. They discuss getting them translated. They decide to go to the cabin in the woods for the weekend the next day. More sex 😊

Chapter 6: They go to the grocery store and fill two carts with enough to feed an army. Shifters burn a lot of calories, so there's meat and seafood galore. Roman grabs a couple of cans of whipped cream. Yes, they always have sex on the brain. 2-1/2 hrs later they arrive at the cabin, which is a 4K sq ft house set on the edge of the forest. Roman and Gage strip and shift. Roman runs into the woods, Gage takes to the air. Ari takes a nap. She wakes when she hears Roman in the kitchen. Gage is still flying. He spotted two men. Hunters or hikers. The men approach the house with guns drawn. Roman and Gage tell Ari to stay inside. To get the gun that's behind the mattress. Roman apprehends the two men. He has Ari come outside, get their guns, and call Sherm. The helicopter arrives with Sherm and a team of commandos. Sherm looked over the handguns. A Hudson H9 and a SAR 9. These guys aren't your run-of-the-mill rednecks hiking through the woods buddies. He says that these weapons mean *purpose*.

Chapter 7: They find the pickup the men used, take the vehicle and men back to headquarters. After things settle down, R, G & A open the box with the ancient books. They try to understand what the pictures mean. After a while, they give up the books for sex. Back in the headquarters building, Ari spars with Sherm in the dojo. She's not very good at fighting yet, but warns him that's temporary.

Chapter 8: Five blissful years passed. They are at dinner with Ari's sons when Jason voices a startling revelation. Ari appears younger. When they get back to the penthouse, they look through photo albums and sure enough, she looks the same, or younger than when they first met. The next day, Ari kisses the guys as she heads out the door to the bookstore across the street. As she waits for the light to change, a white van screeches to the curb, the side door opens and she is hauled inside, screaming and fighting. Alex, the doorman of the building, pulls a gun and shoots. He calls upstairs in a panic that Ari has been kidnapped. Ari silently screams for Roman and Gage. They silently call out to try to find her, but there's nothing. Only silence. Eddy has knocked her out with ether.

Chapter 9: Detective Valk is on the scene. He interviews Roman and Gage, Jason and Kevin. Sherm and his team are checking cameras throughout the city, plus the satellites

for the van. Eddy (kidnapper) and Dom (accomplice/driver) go to an old, ramshackle former machine shop. The inside room tells a grim story: dried blood on the floor. Grimy ropes looped over large hooks on the wall. Knives, hammers, pliers. A padlocked door. Eddy dumps Ari on the floor. He strips her, calling her a whore. He takes a dusty metal tube of around a half-inch in circumference and three inches long sat. It has tiny, biting spikes on the outside. He shoves it into her vagina. He & Dom go next door to get lunch. Ari comes to, she's in horrific pain. She can't move without the spikes tearing into her vagina. She's bleeding profusely. She silently screams for Roman and Gage. Gage shifts in the penthouse and flies off the balcony, trying to find her. Eddy & Dom return to the shop. Dom doesn't go into the room of torture. He sits with his video games and headphones. Eddy punches Ari in the face, arms and ribs. He grabs her hair and pulls her around the floor, blood trailing her. Gage determines she's on the northeast side of town. Lonnie finds a low-end motel to use as a base. They all go there and wait for Gage to find Ari.

Chapter 10: Lonnie secures rooms at the Moonlight Hotel. Roman and Gage shift in front of Jason and Kevin. They now understand about the bond they have with their mother, and the silent communication. While they will find Ari before the police. Gage takes to the air. He hears Ari; finds her. Leads the team to the building. Eddy, Dom and the white van aren't there. Sherm has his forensics team go over the entire place. When they open up the room, it first appears that Ari is dead. Sherm discovers 14 bodies (skeletons to different forms of decay) in the cellar. Roman and Gage freak out when they see Ari. Sherm wants Roman to scent the place to pick up on the kidnapers. Sherm contacts Valk. Tells him to send not just an EMT team, they'll need a doctor as well. Sherm sends a picture to Valk. Dr. Tanner examines Ari on the floor. He discovers the tube inside her and carefully extracts it. Kevin and Jason are horrified when they see their mother. The ambulance takes Ari to the hospital.

Chapter 11: Detective Valk and cops go to Helen Brindlethorpe's house. Sherm and Roman tag along. Roman scents the exterior. Eddy hasn't been keeping his mother company. Ari's in surgery. Gage goes to the roof of the hospital, strips and takes flight, searching for the white van. The next day, Jefferson Lloyd gets ready to go to work. Notices his license plates were switched. Calls the cops. When he reads off the new plates, the cops identify them from the white van. Valk and a team shows up. At least now they know the direction Eddy is heading.

Chapter 12: Something's wrong with Ari. The doctors determine she is in a coma. Roman and Gage, Kevin & Jason are devastated. They're sick of the stupid hospital rules that want them to leave. They have the spare room in the penthouse equipped with everything her condition requires and have her ambulated to the house. Gloria, the shift nurse, curtsies to Roman and Gage. They have a silent dialog about why she would do that. Roman discovers that Ari hadn't been wearing her rings when she was taken to the hospital. He goes to Sherm and asks about them. Sherm makes calls. Their forensics team doesn't have them. Then he calls Valk. Their forensics team did not recover them. They plan to meet Valk at the shop. When Roman and Sherm arrive, Roman scents someone there. They enter the shop quietly. Sherm with his gun ready.

It's Dom; cowered in a corner. Roman wants to kill him, but only beats him. Valk arrives. They discover Eddy kicked Dom out of the van around Segerville for asking too many questions. Roman sends Gage the location. Gage flies. Roman, Sherm and Valk search for the rings while Dom is hauled off to jail. They find one of Ari's rings against the wall. Valk pulls up a board and they discover jewelry from the women, including Ari's other ring. Gage has found the white van. Sherm & Roman drive to the location. Roman and Gage are in their animal forms. They kill Eddy – tear him apart. Sherm uses a burner phone and the voice of a boy and calls in the location. Ari temporarily comes out of the coma. She calls out for her men and sons.

Chapter 13: News reports the manhunt for Eddy Brindlethorpe has ended. He was attacked and killed by animals. Ari is in a coma for three months. Dr. Tanner feels that Ari is on the brink of coming out of the coma. Roman and Gage hire psychiatrist Dr. Lorraine Talbotson. Dr. Tanner said Lorraine may help pull her out of the coma. Dr. Talbotson sits with Roman and Gage getting background info. Gloria tells Roman and Gage she thinks her grandfather can help them. They don't understand what she's talking about. She tells them there's a whole shifter community around them but they are afraid of Roman and Gage. Grandfather Silver Wolf is 102 and in an assisted living home where Gloria works part time to keep an eye on him. They go see him. Grandfather Silver Wolf is blown away when he sees them. Tells them they're not regular shifters. They're Tothars. He hasn't seen a Tothar in over 80 years. He tells them to go see Atsa in Shiprock, NM, in the Four Corners. Atsa has an ancient book that will provide information. While in her coma, Ari's thought process churns. She doesn't want to stay in a coma. She wants to return to the living. There is a scene where Roman and Gage clean Ari up by taking her into the shower, all her tubes and wires are long enough.

Chapter 14: Ari comes out of the coma. Roman and Gage sleep lightly, afraid Ari will slip back in the coma. She has nightmares and wakes screaming. The nightmares continue for weeks. Ari tells Roman and Gage she wants to move back to her bedroom. They are devastated.

Chapter 15: It's been two months since Ari moved out of Roman's bedroom. Everyone is tense. Roman and Gage are freaked out that the dynamics have changed in their relationship with Ari. Ari couldn't recall the last time they made love. She thinks it's been six months. She doesn't want to be estranged from them, but can't seem to move forward. Gloria visits. They decide to take Ari to meet Silver Wolf. Ari doesn't trust Silver Wolf. She doesn't understand why or how he knows her personal details. He reminds her that shifters can read minds. He tells her she isn't completely human, but she's not a Tothar. Silver Wolf helps her with her grief. She feels better when they go back home. Roman and Gage can sense a change in her but they determine she will have to come to them. Roman tells them he's taking a shower—he plants the seed in her head. After contemplating, Ari takes Gage's hand and leads him to Roman's bathroom. They shower and touch. She's still scared there may be something inside her that will hurt her.

Chapter 16: After their shower they sit on the sofa drinking wine and cuddling. Gage senses something is still off. Ari's not getting wet. They all go to Roman's room and go to bed. The next morning, Gage is a little depressed. She isn't responding to them. After Ari and Roman wake, they all start kissing and touching. She's getting wet, but when Gage attempts to slip two fingers inside her she freaks out. She's afraid of being penetrated in any form. Afraid of what she'll feel. She lets Gage try. When she understands there's nothing left over from the torture she experienced, she relaxed and the three of them have a heavy-duty sex session. They are all very happy. They go to the house in the woods and have a four-day sex romp, along with the guys shifting and running/flying in the forest. On the drive back to the city, Sherm calls. Valk contacted him with a court date. Ari freaks out. She doesn't want to be under a microscope. She never saw Dom and doesn't want to be in front of a media circus.

Chapter 17: Ari wakes in the middle of the night, climbs out of bed, goes to the living room and drinks bourbon. She's upset about court. After breakfast Roman and Gage go downstairs to Sherm's office. They discuss what Gloria had said about there being a whole shifter community around them. They decide to set up a meeting place to meet with the shifters. Roman silently calls out to them and requests that they meet at a warehouse location. People show up. Roman and Gage discuss the problem with Dom, the court, Ari's fragile mental state. They ask if there's any way anyone can get into the jail and take care of their problem. A wiry man steps forward. He and his pack of wharf rats can help. The next day at breakfast, Sherm calls & tells them to turn on the news. They watch the news that relates two men were killed at the jail—bitten hundreds of times by rats. Protestors are in the background protesting to clean up the jail.

Chapter 18: Roman and Gage go down to see Sherm and Lonnie. They are relieved the problem has been taken care of and Ari won't have to go to court. They decide they need to not have any secrets—they need to tell her what happened. When they approach her, she asks what they did because they look guilty. They tell her they found the shifter community. They decide they need to go see this Atsa person and find out about their kind. Ari tells them to bring the ancient books. They fly to Shiprock, NM with Sherm, Lonnie & a team, for Ari's protection. They find the location where a couple of hogans and modular buildings are. A Native American man approaches them cautiously. Asks if they're lost. They tell him they're looking for Atsa. When they mention Grandfather Silver Wolf, the man relaxes. He's Yiska. He takes them to Atsa. He explains that Tothars are royalty of their kind, but were thought to be extinct. He brings out his book. He explains about shape-shifters and uses the Greek terminology. Atsa tells Ari she is a Tothar as well, but her bloodline is so weak she doesn't have an animal. R, G & A are shocked at this info. They bring out their Chinese books. The elders come into the room and look at the books as well. They're all blown away, discuss getting them translated. Sherm interrupts. There's a problem outside. They discover some young men harassing Sherm's team. One young man shifts into a wolf. Atsa tells Roman and Gage to shift along with him. They deal with the young wolf.

Chapter 19: They go back inside the building and resume looking through the Chinese books. Atsa, Roman and Gage discuss Tothars and the Reading shifter community.

Atsa tells them how to deal with them, while Ari sits with the elders looking through the books and discussing them. They return to Reading and discuss where to meet with the shifter community. They look at the first-floor outdated meeting space. Ari takes on the project of updating the spaces with a secure, modern space. In the meantime, they have Sandy search for a translator and historian. They look over resumes. Roman and Gage interview some candidates. Get rid of one woman who acted like she was on a dating game show before Ari saw her. The last candidate is Mr. Tran, an older gentleman who came prepared with work he translated (originals and translations). He is thrilled when he sees the books. Tells them he's waited his entire career for this opportunity. They offer him the job; he accepts.

Chapter 20: The shifter meeting is set up. The first person to show up is Leander Stills. He showed up first at the warehouse as well. They get the meeting underway. R, G & A acknowledge the rats. Alarms go off. Sherm, Lonnie and a team of commandos swarm the room. They discover a young man near the door that's doing something with his phone – trying to access the security system. Leander leaps onto the stage and shifts into a King Cobra. He tells the royals he will protect them. Sherm & Lonnie take Travis Shelton into custody and get him out of the room. The meeting continues. 85 shifters attended. After, R, G & A invite Leander upstairs to the penthouse. After a lot of discussion, they make Leander their liaison between them and the shifters. After Leander leaves, Roman and Gage go down to the basement where a cell is in a room. Travis is belligerent. Roman puts him in his place. It's discovered he has a master's in math and PhD in computer languages from MIT. Quite the little prodigy. His father has a gaming company but Travis wants nothing to do with it. He wants serious work. They end up hiring him to try to break their systems. Back upstairs R, G & A have an incredible lovemaking session. After, Gage and Ari get all maudlin about woulda, coulda, shoulda things. Roman goes off and tells them they just had the best sex of their lives and no one's going to leave. He's pissed.

Chapter 21: Ari compiles a list of the shifters in the city. There's 187 that they know of. She breaks them down into animal species. They have another shifter meeting where they discuss shifters helping shifters by professions, hobbies, etc. The core team along with Kevin and Jason have a BBQ at the house in the woods. Sherm and the gang, along with Leander and Kevin show up. Jason will be late. Roman and Gage are in the woods in their animal forms prior to the cooking. Ari is attacked by a mountain lion/cougar. All hell breaks loose. Guns are drawn, Leander shifts into his cobra. Roman in his panther form crashes through the forest and attacks the cougar, drags it off Ari. He demands the cat to shift. It's Lisa Hamilton. She thought he wanted her and wanted to eliminate the competition. Jason shows up during the chaos. Wants someone to shoot the woman. They contact her alpha, Trisha Anderson. Lisa is let go, to report in to Trisha immediately.

Chapter 22: Back in the city, Gage & Sherm walk back from the manufacturing facility to the high-rise when Sherm gets a call. A wall street client has an emergency – they're being hacked. He gathers Travis and they go and take care of the problem. Travis shows his genius by eliminating the problem, and tracking the hackers to their location

in Bangkok. All but one of the hackers are intercepted by one of their teams in the area and turned over to authorities. R, G, A and Gloria get Grandfather Silver Wolf and bring him to the house in the forest. The old man shifts to his old wolf and Roman takes him into the woods while Gage flies overhead.

Chapter 23: After a good romp in the woods, Roman carries Grandfather Silver Wolf back to the house where he can rest up before dinner. Roman shifts back to his panther and goes back to the woods. Later, Gage returns to the house and takes a nap with Ari. Roman still hasn't returned when they wake and start preparations for dinner. They call out to Roman, verbally and silently, but there is no response. Sherm and the team arrives. A large number of shifters arrive to search the woods, along with Leander. Their sight is better than the humans, and it's getting dark. Ari is freaking out. A wolf sends out a message. He's found blood on the ground, what looks like a battle. Human footprints. Sherm arrives at the location. Discovers a tranquilizer dart. Ari is a crying mess as everyone comes out of the forest and Gage lands in the yard. Sherm tells her Roman was loaded on a helicopter. Whoever kidnapped him wanted him alive. Ari screeches Roman's name, trying to call out to him. Gage tells her he's unconscious. His phone rings. It's Atsa. He heard the call for Roman. Gage tells Atsa Someone's got Roman.

To be Continued in *Tothars*, book 2, and *Tilted*, book 3, and *Unforeseen*, book 4,