

JUDE MASON



JESSE'S  
HOMECOMING

Jesse's Homecoming  
*by Jude Mason*

**Phaze**

[www.phaze.com](http://www.phaze.com)

Copyright ©2007 by Jude Mason

NOTICE: This eBook is licensed to the original purchaser only. Duplication or distribution to any person via email, floppy disk, network, print out, or any other means is a violation of International copyright law and subjects the violator to severe fines and/or imprisonment. This notice overrides the Adobe Reader permissions which are erroneous. This eBook cannot be legally lent or given to others.

This eBook is displayed using 100% recycled electrons.



Distributed by Fictionwise.com

Jesse's Homecoming  
*by Jude Mason*

## Jesse's Homecoming

a novella of erotic romance by

Jude Mason

Phaze

6470A Glenway Avenue, #109

Cincinnati, OH 45211-5222

This is a work of fiction. Names, places, characters and incidents are either the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously, and any resemblance to any actual persons, living or dead, organizations, events or locales is entirely coincidental.

eBook ISBN 1-59426-928-9

Jesse's Homecoming © 2007 by Jude Mason

All rights reserved under the International and Pan-American Copyright Conventions. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

Edited by Alessia Brio

Cover art © 2007 by Debi Lewis

Phaze is an imprint of Mundania Press, LLC.

[www.Phaze.com](http://www.Phaze.com)

Also by Jude Mason

## An Acquired Taste

### Pink Ribbon

### Scorpio Tattoo

### Stage Fright

### Chapter One

Closing her eyes against the blinding glare of the August sun, Jesse rubbed a sweaty, dirt-grimed forearm across her brow. Her battered, dusty Stetson tipped back to reveal cropped, tightly curled, dirty blonde hair plastered to her head. She was sun-bronzed and lean. Some might say too lean, but she was satisfied with herself, and that was more than a lot of women in their mid-thirties could say. Snug jeans and a man's red plaid work shirt protected most of her skin from the sun. The low-heeled boots she wore rested easy in the stirrups, and were good for walking when her horse needed relief from her weight.

Looking at the sun, she watched the bottom arc of the fiery yellow ball approach the horizon. The ranch was still half a dozen miles ahead, and she knew she'd never reach it by dark. Taking up the reins, she urged Pepper, the agile roan gelding she favored, ahead with the slightest movement of her foot. The inside of her thighs felt as if she'd been

Jesse's Homecoming  
*by Jude Mason*

straddling a sandpaper saddle for the past two days, but she'd needed to get away from the ranch.

Jesse smiled. Meg had understood and almost pushed her out the door when she'd asked if she could manage the current batch of hired help on her own for a few days. Thoughts of Meg were what had turned her around and made her head home. She missed the older woman's arms around her and the way they fit together in their large, homemade bed.

Still smiling, she turned Pepper's head to the right, heading him toward a stream she remembered from past excursions and toed him into an easy trot. Going off the trail, she ducked repeatedly under low-hanging branches and cursed when she had to lay flat against his neck to dodge one. Her thighs burned. She could hardly wait to get out of the saddle, strip out of her two-day dust-covered clothes and get into the cool water she knew lay ahead.

Pepper's head rose. He must have smelled the water. He'd be as anxious as she was to get there. A cool drink for him—he might even join her in the stream.

"Come on, Pepper." She nudged him with her heels. "Almost there, fella, and I need a bath." The horse moved a little faster, his ears twitched. Jesse ducked again as they moved through the last few yards of brush before it opened onto the bank of the stream. The temperature dropped several degrees as soon as they neared the gravel bank.

Pulling the horse to a stop, she swung her leg over his haunch, and dropped to her feet. Quickly unbuckling the belly strap, she hauled the saddle and rough horse blanket off and

Jesse's Homecoming  
*by Jude Mason*

dropped it to the ground. Pepper whinnied, pawed the rocky ground, and then snorted, as if asking if he could go. Jesse pulled his head toward her and eased the bit out of his mouth. She scratched his soft nose and said, "Off you go. Get a drink."

As if he understood, the big chestnut horse turned and headed for the stream. The willows along the opposite bank shielded the water from the direct sunlight and the moss-covered ground a few yards away were like a velvet beacon calling to her. She flipped off her hat and smiled when it landed in the only patch of long grass on that side of the stream. Running her fingers through her sweat-damp hair, she felt goose bumps rise on her gritty neck. She had to wash it; the trail dust was driving her crazy. Reaching for the buttons of her shirt, she scanned the sun-dappled area to reassure herself that no one had found her secret swimming hole.

Free of the shirt, the light breeze cooled her over-heated flesh. Her nipples rose, sending a shiver down her spine. She cupped the small mounds and sighed when the rough callused tips of her thumbs inadvertently brushed her nipples.

"Oh, Meg," she breathed and pinched the hardened nubs. She tweaked them, and gently tugged on the puckered flesh, until with a shudder, she forced her hands away. "Damn, I miss you, girl."

Quickly, she dropped her hands to her belt buckle and worked the leather free. A moment later, she pushed her jeans down over her hips. A nearby boulder provided a seat for her, and with her jeans and panties halfway to her knees,

Jesse's Homecoming  
*by Jude Mason*

she toed first the heel of right boot then her left off. Sweaty socks came next with a groaned sigh of relief when her feet were at last naked. The grass was wonderfully cool on her feet and she wriggled her toes, sighing with pleasure as she went to her saddlebag and retrieved a bar of lye soap. The water was where she wanted to be, so after tossing her jeans toward her shirt and socks, that's where she headed. She was soon ankle deep in the icy current.

"Keerist, that's cold!" She sucked in her breath against the chill. The goose bumps that had softly brushed her neck, quickly raced down her chest and arms and across her belly. Crossing her arms under her breasts, she took another step into deeper water, wanting to get in before she lost her courage. Cold bit at her shins, then her knees as she slid off a smooth rock, barely catching herself before going completely under. Her breath caught. Her heart beat wildly, but she continued to wade deeper. By the time she was up to mid-thigh, her feet and lower legs were accustomed to the cold. She took a couple of deep breaths to build her courage and then lowered herself into the frigid water. Gritting her teeth, she managed to keep from screaming as the water took her into its cold embrace.

Closing her eyes, she concentrated on the current flowing around her and the silence. Even Pepper was quiet. Jesse's nipples ached from the cold. Her pussy felt puffy, slick, and even as she thought of it, she clenched. Suddenly, the cold was gone, and in its place was wonderfully soothing warmth. She pushed forward. Arms extended, she kicked and let the

Jesse's Homecoming  
*by Jude Mason*

current take her downstream. Rolling onto her back, the cold gripped her skull, and she shuddered.

Wanting to get the road dust off her, to get cleaned up for her return to Meg, she stood up and with the bar of soap still clutched in her hand, she ran it across her chest and down her arms. Her sun-bronzed flesh met the white of her soft mounds, and she smiled thinking of Meg—how she'd greet her, and how her hands would feel soft against her skin. Rubbing down her belly and into the soft curls below, she shuddered, wishing it was her lover's hands and not her own. The heat of her sex closed around her fingers, and she delved inside. Her clit was like a tiny hot pebble against her palm, and she pressed against it. Flashes of pleasure shot through her, but she forced her hands away, wanting them to be Meg's, wanting to share her orgasm with the woman she loved.

Tossing the soap to the shore, she pushed off and swam. The delight of feeling clean soon took over, and she splashed and kicked, enjoying the sweet sensation after long days in the saddle.

Pepper whinnied, but he wasn't close by. She turned, and for a moment, searched for him. He'd wandered upstream and stood knee deep in water while busily pulling at a tuft of sweet grass clinging to the bank. Smiling, Jesse swam toward him.

"Hey, Pepper, how would you like a bath, too?" She got to her feet when she was only a few feet away and approached the horse. He looked at her, content to nibble. Jesse scooped up a handful of water and sent it over his back. Rivulets

Jesse's Homecoming  
*by Jude Mason*

cascaded down his back and sides, and a shudder sent droplets flying. When he was thoroughly soaked, she said, "Come on, you," and grabbed a handful of his mane. Tugging at it, she urged him away from the grass and deeper into the stream. When he was belly deep, she said, "Whoa," halting him and went back to shore, where she pulled up a huge handful of dry sweet grass. Returning to his side, she rubbed him down using the grass and sluiced more water over him as she scrubbed his coat.

When she was satisfied, she was covered in sweat and breathing like a freight train. Leading him back to shore, she slipped his bridle back on, and after tying him to a low hanging branch, launched herself into the stream. She went under, the cold gripping again. She swam, twisted, and turned in the chilly flow until her arms grew tired. By the time the sun disappeared behind the tops of the trees, she'd clambered onto the grassy shore.

Untying the reins, she said, "Come on, Pepper, let's go." The gelding looked at her, like a child wanting to stay just a minute longer. Jesse reached for him and rubbed the side of his face then pulled on the leather lead. He came, but slowly, as if savoring the last bit of fun before being put to bed.

She quickly slid into her shirt while Pepper wandered a little ways off to a patch of grass where he grazed peacefully. Pulling up more dried grass, she went to his side and brushed him, both drying him and checking for any sores from the two-day ride.

"Phew, now I'm tired, fella." She ran her hands down his neck one more time and then slid the hobbles over his feet.

Jesse's Homecoming  
*by Jude Mason*

He'd be able to range a little, to feed overnight, but couldn't go far. She dragged her bedroll off the saddle, and found a soft spot on the moss. Once it was spread out, she went about building a fire and, after picking a few blackberries from a patch of bushes near the bank, she made a small dinner of bacon and the berries.

By the time she'd finished eating and cleaned the fry pan, it was dark. The campfire lit the area like a small cavern with its flickering brilliance. She filled her small tin coffee pot with water and climbed back into her bedroll beside the fire. She'd have coffee for the morning.

Watching the stars slowly move across the night sky, she sank down under the covers and thought of Meg—Meg of the luscious curves, the abundant breasts, and the gently swelling tummy. Her breathing quickened and her hands slipped under the cover to the moist heat between her thighs. She eased her knees apart, allowing her fingers room to maneuver through the light sprinkling of pubic hair shielding her sex. Skimming over the tight knot of her clit, she gasped. Hips thrust upward. Her breath caught, and she shuddered. The blanket fell away from her breasts, the rough fabric dragging across her nipples, elongating, tightening, aching, as they lay bare to the cool night air.

"Oh, Meg," she moaned, sliding two fingers into her wet core and groaned when the palm of her hand pressed against her clit in a most delicious manner. Stirring her fingers, like a tiny pot of honeyed-lust, her muscles tensed in preparation. Goose bumps raced over her chest and up her neck. Her toes

Jesse's Homecoming  
*by Jude Mason*

spread, stretched out and arched, as pleasure raged and grew.

Delving into the wet heat of her cunt, Jesse sobbed, straining for the release that was so close. She twisted onto her side and arched her spine, frustrated when her climax faded, threatening to vanish altogether. She kicked the blankets off, her shirt opened wide as sweat streamed down her ribs. Rolling back, she spread her pussy with the fingers of one hand, and used the other to tease and torment her stiffened clit. Gasping, choking on the tight flash of sensation shooting from her clit, she rubbed harder. Her eyes squeezed closed, but still the brilliant lights flashed. Lips numb, she growled as her heartbeat went wild. Hissing, she rammed her fingers in deep and slammed her palm against her clit, grinding it against the bone beneath.

Her heart stopped, she froze, straining, blissfully there, exploding, her orgasm an all-consuming beast that had her in its teeth. She soared. Her body shook like palsy had taken hold. Blind, she lay enthralled by the rainbow of lights.

Long minutes passed while she rolled and caressed herself, wishing it were Meg, missing the woman she loved more than anything in the world. When she caught her breath and could straighten her lust-cramped fingers, she reached for the blanket to cover herself. With her shirt once more in place, she snuggled down and watched the fire. The crackling flames lulled her and not long after, her eyes drifted closed.

Chapter Two

Jesse's Homecoming  
*by Jude Mason*

A loud snort and hot air smelling of horse brushing her face snapped Jesse out of a deep sleep. Eyes open, arm drawn back to swing if needed, she spotted Pepper's nose just in time.

"Holy shit, horse." She took a deep breath and relaxed her arm, stroking the gelding's nose. He snorted, sending a warm rush of air around her, then he whinnied and pushed against her hand. He'd always loved his morning rub, and she fell back, continuing to stroke his muzzle. "You just about got lambasted, you stupid nag. Bet that woulda shocked you." She chuckled and glanced around. The sun was high and the cool night air had already taken on a dry, baked smell. It was going to be a hot one.

"Okay, Pepper, let me up." She pushed the horse's muzzle away and sat up. Clutching the bedroll around her, she climbed to her feet and once more gazed around. The stream sparkled in the morning sunlight, not twenty feet away. She was tempted to take another dip, but thoughts of Meg changed her mind. She'd much rather be on her way as soon as she'd had coffee.

Pepper whinnied and moved a hobbled step or two away from her before bending to tear up a mouthful of sweet grass. He stood watching her and chewing, while she dropped the blanket and reached for her socks, panties and jeans. She pulled on the rest of her clothes, sat on the bedroll to pull on her low-heeled boots, and then clambered to her feet. She got the fire going again and put coffee grounds into the pot. While the coffee brewed, she went to the stream and washed.

Jesse's Homecoming  
*by Jude Mason*

Pepper hobbled along after her, as if begging for more attention. He nudged her when she knelt by the water, pushing at her and nibbling on the tail of her shirt. "Hey!" She pulled away from him. "Go on, git!" She raised her arms and shoed him away. He wandered off ten feet or so, only to turn and watch her again.

Minutes later, she leaned against a log and sipped a fresh cup of coffee, figuring she was nearly fit company for the horse. Mornings were not her favorite time of day. When she was done, it took her only a few minutes to clear up her campsite, put the fire out, and saddle Pepper. Less than an hour later, she was back on the trail and heading for home.

While crossing the last open field, Jesse automatically counted cattle and checked the rough fencing as she neared the circle of trees lining the valley. She was surprised to find that none of the hands they'd hired were out running the fence. She should have seen them.

By mid-afternoon, the ranch came into view and her heart picked up an extra beat. Pepper recognized the territory and increased his gait, eager to be home among the rest of the small herd of horses kept in the ramshackle barn behind the house.

It was quiet, too quiet, she thought as she rode on. Meg should have been out too, either in the large kitchen garden or helping the men with the fencing.

Apprehension stirred within her. Riding on, she noticed there were no spare horses in the corral. If the help weren't out riding the fence line, where were their horses? The silence

Jesse's Homecoming  
*by Jude Mason*

was oppressive. There should have been some noise. Even the cows nearby seemed to sense something wasn't right.

The closer she got, the more her fears grew. There was laundry on the makeshift line that was bone dry; several pieces had a peg missing, and hung limp to the dusty ground. The well bucket lay on its side, in the middle of the yard. Reining in, Jesse climbed down off Pepper and looped the reins over the rail in front of the porch. It looked even more deserted up close.

For a ranch house, it was small, only two rooms, but it had always been more than big enough for her and Meg. One room was for living and eating, the back room was where they loved each other in their homemade bed. They'd managed to put glass in the two front windows last year, but she saw the red-checked curtains were drawn closed.

Her stomach was in knots. The rifle she'd purposely rolled into the bedroll that morning seemed a million miles away. Without it, she felt naked. Quickly, she unlaced the bedroll and pulled it off, unceremoniously, dragging the old Sharpe's out. It took her only a moment to load the long gun. Then, with her eyes flicking from point to point, she approached the door.

From inside, she heard a soft scuffling. A muffled yelp, then something hit the floor, a chair maybe, she hoped.

Jesse reached the door. Curling her fingers around the wooden bar, before she had time to change her mind, she lifted it and flung the door open wide. The rough wooden door slammed into the wall, and she strode inside, rifle at her shoulder.

Jesse's Homecoming  
*by Jude Mason*

"Hold it," she yelled, pulling the rifle tight to her shoulder.

The man on the bed, spun around, nearly losing his seat. And that seat was between Meg's thighs. Her face was a mass of bruises, her arms and legs were bound to the corner posts of the bed, and tears streamed down her face. The long black hair that she normally kept drawn tightly back into a braided tail lay matted and filthy like a halo of agony around her head and shoulders. She was naked, of course, as was the man covering her. Splotches of blue and purple marred her lovely flesh, one of her round breasts even bore traces of blood from what looked like teeth marks around the nipple.

"Fuck!" cursed the scrawny, dark-haired man, scrambling off her. He reached for a gun-belt Jesse saw slung over the back of a nearby chair.

Meg must have guessed it was her, even though her eyes were swollen to mere slits. She twisted her hips, sending the man flying to the floor. He landed in a crumpled heap of arms and legs, still cursing and wildly scrambling for his gun.

"I said, hold it!" Jesse barked and took careful aim, pulling the hammer back until it clicked. The stink of man and sex turned her stomach. It took all her willpower not to vomit.

"Fer Christ sakes, I'm her husband. Ain't no call to go shootin' at me. I got rights, ya know." The man froze, arm outstretched toward his gun. He looked over his shoulder at her, a sickening leer on his face. What teeth he had were rotten, and his nose looked as if it had been broken at one time or another. His scraggly beard looked filthy, and she wouldn't have wagered as to whether he had fleas or not. He

was filthy. "She's my wife, you unnerstan? Mine. I got rights. I can screw her whenever I wants."

"Mister," Jesse snarled, taking aim at his forehead, "you got the right to get dressed and get out of here, that's the only rights I recognize. You try anything funny, and I'll put a hole right through that filthy carcass of yours. No sheriff would argue about a woman protecting herself." She gazed at Meg, and her heart ached to take her in her arms. She should never have left her alone. "People around here know us. Who the hell are you?"

The meaning of her words must have sunk in, because he pulled his hand away from his gun and instead, reached for the pile of clothes on the floor at the foot of the bed. While he dressed, Jesse's eyes darted to Meg time and again, wishing the man was gone, wanting desperately to take her lover in her arms and comfort her. With a pair of ragged jeans covering his lower body, he rose to his feet and made as if to slide his arm into a threadbare plaid shirt.

Jesse caught the lunge just as he made it—a dive for his gun. Her taut nerves jolted into action. Adjusting her aim automatically, her finger eased back on the trigger. The explosion seemed like it came from a great distance. The rich smell of gunpowder was suddenly strong. The man sank to his knees, blood oozing from a neat hole in his shoulder.

### Chapter Three

Meg's scream echoed in the tiny room. A moment later, his howl of agony joined the ruckus, and Jesse leaped into action. With the butt of her rifle, she hit the brute square in the jaw

and sent him sprawling to the floor. After making sure he was down, and was going to stay down, she raced for Meg's side.

"My God," she wept, kneeling at the side of the bed. Carefully, she drew the covers up over her lover's bruised body, knowing how she'd hate feeling so vulnerable. "I'm so sorry, Meg. I never should have left you here alone." Frantically, she worked at the knots in the old rope holding her wrists, but her fingers trembled so much it seemed impossible to loosen them.

"Jesse, I'm okay," the dark haired woman sobbed through dry, cracked lips. "Just get these damn ropes off me." Weakly, she pulled at the ropes.

Jesse stopped for a moment, and took a couple of deep breaths to steady her nerves. Fear and anger coursed through her. She knew that's why her hands shook. Meg was all right, all she had to do was calm herself down enough to get her loose. With that fixed in her mind, she opened her eyes and focused on the ropes, not the blood-ringed wrists they bound. Her knife. Damn, she thought and pulled the blade from its sheath on her belt. Carefully, she slipped the point of the knife under the rope and a moment later, the first wrist came free. A few seconds later, the other followed. Meg's arms immediately went around her and held her with a strength that surprised her.

Rather than fight her off and free her ankles right away, Jesse simply held her. At first, that's all it was, one woman comforting another. But then, the soft whimpers turned to gut-wrenching sobs that shook the entire bed and tore at her heart.

Jesse's Homecoming  
*by Jude Mason*

She'd always known Meg had been married and why she'd run away. Her husband had beaten her often and drank away most of the money the couple had. The poor woman had barely enough to eat and nearly starved the winter before she'd managed to get away.

Through her tears, and while Jesse held her and tried to unfasten the cruel ropes around her ankles, the story came out. The day she'd left, Meg and the hired hands had worked the fences until dark, then came in for dinner. As usual, Meg had come in an hour early to make dinner. She'd whipped up a stew and was in the process of making biscuits. Just before the four men had wandered in, hungry and dirty, Jacob Fitz appeared in the doorway. A tall wiry built man, his sallow complexion and deeply hooded eyes boded no good for her as he slouched, unbidden into the cabin. He'd slapped her to the floor before she could say a word. Threatening her with more abuse, he'd waved his handgun around, saying he'd shoot anyone who interfered with him. She'd caved in.

The hired hands, all young strong men from town, had eyed him suspiciously when they came in, until they found out she knew him. They'd been standoffish, but hadn't argued.

She'd been terrified; too afraid to argue when he told the boys he'd take over and they wouldn't be needed. They were to eat their meal and be on their way. Meg fed them, zombie-like, and waited on Jacob as if he'd always been there. At one point, she thought of running, simply opening the door and making a run for it, but she couldn't make her legs take her.

Jesse's Homecoming  
*by Jude Mason*

She'd simply obeyed and done as he ordered—just like she had all those times before she'd escaped.

How had he found her? A piece the local paper had run the summer before. She'd won a stupid bake off, and as in all small towns, it was news. There'd been a picture: her holding her pie, a big smile on her face and Jesse's arm around her. Jacob had only to make his way to town; the rest was easy.

When the men left, Jacob had taken his belt to her—again—just like in the old days. She fought, at first, but he was bigger, stronger, and mad as hell. When her strength failed, she collapsed. He continued beating her until she lost consciousness.

She woke up some hours later, tied naked to the bed, as Jesse had found her, with him on top, grunting as he rutted within her. She'd wept and begged, but it was no use. Jacob had his fill of her. Then, he'd left her alone, until the next urge struck. It had gone on for two days.

"I prayed for you," Meg sobbed, her arms vice-like around Jesse's neck, her bruised face buried against her shoulder. "He raped me—and he raped me, over and over." The trembling increased to the point where they both shook. "I don't even know how many times. He kept gloating about how easy I was, how much he liked hurting me." Looking up, gazing into Jesse's eyes, she added, "He knew I was with you, said he'd give you some of the same when you got home. Jesse, I was so scared. I thought he was going to kill me this time. I thought he was going to kill you, too."

Jesse's Homecoming  
*by Jude Mason*

Pulling the terrified woman against her again, she soothed her with the gentlest of caresses to her back. "He's not going to be hurting anyone now. He's going to jail."

Meg pushed away and cried, "But, he's my husband. He has every right to ... to ... to..." She broke down again, unable to continue.

Slipping the tips of her fingers under Meg's chin, she kissed her tenderly on the corner of her battered lips. Gazing into her eyes, she said, "My sweet woman, he may be your husband, but he tried to shoot me. That's called attempted murder. He's going to jail for that. And, I'm sure that once the other prisoners find out exactly why he's there, he'll have more than you or I to worry about."

Meg snuffled her nose against Jesse's shirt, and then looked up into her eyes again. In a tremulous whisper, she asked, "We have to tell Sheriff Manning about him, don't we?"

"Yes. It's either we tell the sheriff, or he walks free." Her heart thumped hard. It would be incredibly humiliating for her to have to tell a man what had happened, but she would. They both knew Johnson Manning—he was a good man, married with children, so he'd go easy on her.

All those thoughts and more must have been tumbling through her mind. She sighed and pulled herself a little closer. "All right, as long as you're with me. I can do it."

"Good girl." After planting another kiss tenderly on Meg's forehead, she eased off the bed. "I'll always be with you. You know that." She pulled the ropes from the headboard and, after another soft kiss to Meg's cheek; she went to the unconscious man.

Jesse's Homecoming  
*by Jude Mason*

He smelled even worse than he looked. Greasy hair clung to his skull, the ragged beard had bits of food caked around his mouth and grime covered all of the exposed skin she could see. He looked like he'd never taken a bath. She went for a rag, from the sink, to staunch the trickle of blood still seeping from the wound in his shoulder. Bending over him, she gagged. He stank of booze and sweat, and unwashed man. She wondered how Meg had managed to keep from vomiting while he raped her. Pressing the rag to his wound, she used a torn strip from his shirttail to hold it in place.

Rising, she pushed him over with her foot, so he was lying on his belly. Using the rope he'd used to bind Meg, she tied his hands behind him as tightly as she could. There was just enough rope left for her to drag his ankles up and secure them to his wrists. Hog-tied, he'd be much less dangerous, and that would definitely ease her mind.

Getting to her feet again, she turned to gaze at her dark-haired lover. Jesse wanted to shoot the man in the face for the hurt he'd caused.

Meg looked up at her, tears making her eyes sparkle. "I need a bath, Jesse. Please, can you heat some water for me? I can't stand my skin, where he touched me, his filth on me and inside of me." The tears came again—a river of them.

In a flash, she was holding her again, tenderly, as careful with her as if she were made of the most delicate china. "He can't hurt you, my love. I'll have to go out for the water. Can you sit here, right here, and wait while I get it?" She'd have to leave her alone with the bastard who'd raped and abused her, at least until he regained consciousness.

Jesse's Homecoming  
by Jude Mason

Blinking back tears, Meg took a deep, shuddering breath and looked at the bound man. Then, she closed her eyes and nodded. "Yes, I'll be all right. Just give me something to hit him with if he moves." When she opened her eyes again, she managed a timid smile. "Something heavy."

Jesse glanced around, looking for something she could use. Striding to the stove, she took hold of the iron poker and brought it back to the bed. "You think you can wield this thing?"

Taking it, she wriggled to the edge of the bed and held it on her lap. "You bet. If he moves, I'll bash his brains in." Her voice held a determination that made Jesse both proud and worried. Heaven help the man if he moved.

"Good girl." Grabbing the two wooden buckets from beside the sink, Jesse hurried to the door and stepped through into the sunlight. The front yard looked so calm, so normal, she thought as she raced for the well beside the cabin. The silence felt wrong. There should have been screaming and ranting at what had happened. The creaking of the winch as she lowered the bucket seemed far louder than it should. The splash and the return trip with her cranking the handle somehow felt surreal. She wanted to scream—had to bite her lip to keep from doing it. How could it happen to her sweet, sweet lady? What had she ever done to deserve...? She couldn't even *think* it.

She wound the crank, lifting the second bucket and tied off the handle. Trudging back to the house, she vowed that nothing like this would ever happen again. She'd see to it personally.

Jesse's Homecoming  
*by Jude Mason*

Pushing open the door, she first checked to make sure Jacob was still down and that Meg was all right. Then she tramped across the room to the stove. One bucket dropped to the floor, the water sloshing over the side, the other, she poured carefully into the big tin pot. The stove was already lit; she just stoked it to get the fire roaring.

When she passed by the hog-tied man, he groaned. Meg raised the poker, but just held it overhead. Trembling, she waited.

"Here," Jesse said, and took the iron rod from her. "He's not going to do anything. Not with that wound or tied like he is."

"I know, but I want to hurt him." She looked up into Jesse's eyes, her pain and humiliation clearly written on her face. "I want him to hurt like I did."

"You're better than him." Jesse stroked the soft expanse of flesh from shoulder to elbow as she sat with her. "Don't let him drag you down to his level. He's an animal. No, he's lower than an animal. Animals don't treat their mates like he did. He's scum."

Meg looked across the room at the prone man. "I don't want him in here when I take a bath." Her voice had stopped quivering. She tucked her legs up on the bed and wrapped the blankets more firmly around herself. Glaring down at her estranged husband, she spat, "Bastard."

"Do you feel up to helping me drag him outside then?"

Meg looked at her; a moment later, she nodded determinedly.

Jesse's Homecoming  
*by Jude Mason*

"You sit right there for a minute. Let me find your robe." Jesse searched around the bed, finally finding the rose patterned cotton robe pushed underneath. She stood so there was no way Jacob would be able to see her, and held the robe open. She stifled a gasp when she saw the bruising on Meg's ribcage and back. Her buttocks looked as if he'd whipped her bloody. Filth and bruising marred the once perfect flesh. Jesse's temper flared again.

Leaning forward and fighting to remain calm, she wrapped the robe around her lover and kissed her on the neck. Tying it snugly around her waist, she gave Meg an extra squeeze to reassure her. "All right, baby, let's get this useless sack of dung out of our home."

"You grab one arm, I'll take the other." With one of them on each arm, they managed to get him turned around and dragged through the door before he came to. But, when he did, he howled as if he'd been gutted with a dull spoon.

"Fuckin' cows," he bellowed, trying to twist free. With Jesse ruthlessly holding and twisting his wounded arm, his flailing movement must have been agony. He shrieked and every muscle in his body froze. "Fuckin' cunts!" he whined.

The words stung, and Jesse reared back and drove her booted foot into his ribs. The dull thud, followed by another howl of pain, went a long way to making her feel better. "You keep a civil tongue in your head, or you won't have to worry about the sheriff or going to jail."

A pained grunt and snort were his only replies.

Jesse's Homecoming  
*by Jude Mason*

"Meg, let's put him over by the washtub," she nodded at the small raised stand where she'd fixed the clothesline to a couple of months ago.

They pulled him, belly down, his hips and groin dragging through the dust, until they reached the clothes stand. Jesse took the tail end of the rope between his ankles and tied it to one of the rough, four-by-four posts.

"Come on, baby, let's get you back inside." Straightening up, she held her arms open. Her darling Meg entered them and pressed her body close.

"Fuckin' crazy women," Jacob cursed in a low voice. Even hog-tied and laying on his belly, he didn't seem to be able to keep his ugly thoughts to himself.

Before Jesse could stop her, or take any action herself, Meg spun around and kicked the man. Her naked foot connected with the side of his face, sending him rolling to his side. Without a moment's hesitation, she took a step forward and kicked him again, this time much lower and square in the balls.

He grunted, and his breath exploded. When he could move, he glared up at her, then at Jesse, but kept his mouth shut. That's probably all that saved him from being kicked into unconsciousness again.

"Meg, baby." Jesse stepped in behind the woman and placed her hands on her shoulders. Tension-taut muscles flexed under her hands and she gently massaged them. "Let him be. Come with me. Let's get you cleaned up; get his stench off you."

Jesse's Homecoming  
*by Jude Mason*

Meg shuddered and turned in Jesse's hands. The soft cotton robe slid partially open, revealing the bruises and scrapes on her upper breasts and neck. The look of horror and anger, and confusion on her face tore at Jesse's heart.

"Will he escape?" The voice was Meg's, but tiny, unsure.

"No, I tied him really well." She tucked the robe around her curves. Wrapping her arm around Meg's waist, she guided the distraught woman toward the house. Luckily, the man remained quiet. She wasn't sure if she could have stopped Meg, or herself, from killing him if he'd said another word.

Chapter Four

In the cabin, Jesse eased them both toward the stove to check the water. With one arm still snugly around Meg, she tested it and declared it hot enough. "It's warm, and I think warm is best for you right now. Just stand right here while I get the tub." She pressed her hands onto the woman's shoulders, encouraging her to remain where she was. Rushing to the far side of the room, she grabbed the big tin tub they used for bathing and turned it upright in front of the stove. With the curtains drawn, she'd have perfect privacy.

Meg had remained exactly as she'd left her. It was almost as if she had no more will of her own now that they'd taken care of Jacob.

"Do you want me to help?" She wasn't sure if Meg wanted her there. She hoped so, prayed the animal hadn't turned her away from the love they had.

Jesse's Homecoming  
*by Jude Mason*

The dark-haired woman shuddered, and then looked up into her eyes. "Don't leave me. I couldn't bear to be alone now."

"I'm here, and plan on staying here as long as you want me."

Meg tried on a smile. A real smile that time, even though it was weak and the corner of her mouth was swollen, and her eyes were red rimmed from tears, her hair a mess. But to Jesse, she was the most beautiful woman in the world.

Jesse got the water off the stove and poured the steaming fluid into the tub. The other pail followed. "Climb in; I'll get you the soap and a rag." She hurried to the cupboard where they kept the towels and rags, flung it open in search of a washrag. She turned back just in time to see Meg slip her robe off and carefully lower herself into the oval shaped tub. Meg cringed, inhaled a sharp, strangled gasp when her bottom touched the water, no doubt the scarlet-laced flesh extra-sensitive to the heat.

Near the sink, she grabbed the bowl of the special soft soap they'd scrimped for and used only on special occasions, then hurried to her side. "Easy love, let me wash you." She looked hopefully at Meg's face, wanting to find acceptance, permission to help her in any way she could.

A single nod from Meg, and she felt as if her heart would melt. She dropped the cloth into the water, swished it around to wet it and then used it to sluice water over Meg's shoulders and back. Dirt washed away, bruised flesh shone in the scant light filtering in through the heavy curtain. Meg cringed, and then sighed as the cloth brushed across the scraped and

Jesse's Homecoming  
*by Jude Mason*

broken skin. Her back was raw in places, the flesh discolored by large patches of bruising in others.

Jesse bent and kissed her shoulder. She rubbed soap on the cloth and worked up a lather. Then, taking Meg's hand, she lifted her arm and carefully washed its length, taking care not to rub where she might be sore. The other arm was next, and she noticed the elbow was scraped raw. Once she'd rinsed her back and arms, Jesse eased her back so she lay against the rim of the tub.

"I'm going to wash your hair now, so close your eyes."

"Careful, he pulled my hair." Softly spoken, the words didn't seem to hurt her so much.

Jesse knelt behind her and reached for a cup on the counter. She scooped water from the tub and poured it over the dark matted hair. She heard a gasp and knew that she wasn't being careful enough. The soaping was even harder. She knew it stung, and when she rubbed her scalp, she saw Meg's muscles tense with pain. Finally, her lovely raven-black hair was clean and Jesse moved on to her chest and belly.

She chewed her lips as she tried to simply rinse the worst of the grime away, but there were a few spots that needed a little scrubbing, one shoulder, a scrape on her lower arm, and around the bite mark on her breast was dark with dirt. Meg gasped quietly when the pain proved too much for her to bear, and tears streamed down her cheeks as Jesse carefully rubbed the upper slope of her breast. She dabbed at the swollen, darkly bruised and bloodied teeth marks, and felt her anger rise again. She was sure there'd be a scar. Leaning

forward, she tenderly kissed the soft swell just above the bite, and felt her lover's shuddering deep breath.

Backing away, she looked lovingly at the beauty before her and felt her heart swell with love. "Can you stand up and let me wash your legs and feet?"

"Jesse, you'll have to help me," Meg whimpered, trying to get to her knees.

She moved around to the front of the tub and knelt down. Reaching forward, she took hold of her under the arm. "What baby?"

"My butt is so sore I can't get up. It hurts too much." Her voice was stronger, anger showed through rather than any softness. Grunting, she said, "That bastard. I hope that gun shot wound gives him hell for the rest of his life."

"I'm sure it will, hon. I don't plan on doctoring him. Don't imagine the sheriff will either, once we get him to town." Holding out her hand, she helped Meg get to her feet, and held on to her until she steadied herself. Her eyes went immediately to her inner thighs, where bruises mottled the pale skin. Both knees were filthy and scraped, as if she'd tried to crawl away. With as soft a touch as she could manage, Jesse sluiced water over her leg from upper thigh down. Then, placing her foot on the side of the tub, she lathered her rag with the soap and carefully caressed the length of her leg.

Repeating the process with her other leg, took but a few minutes. The knee bled a little, but stopped almost as soon as it had begun. When she was done, in the softest, kindest voice, she asked, "Do you want me to wash the rest of you or not?"

Jesse's Homecoming  
*by Jude Mason*

Meg's eyes misted over, and she shook her head. "No, but stay close, please."

"You know I will." She stood up and went to the window over the sink. Pulling the curtain aside, just enough to peek through, she looked out and saw Jacob, lying in the dirt with his back against a wooden post. He faced the house, seemed to be glaring right at her. His hatred was palpable, his curled lip and squinting eyes, a mask that seemed etched permanently on his face.

Bastard, she thought and turned her back on him.

Meg had soap and was industriously working up a lather. Tentatively, she ran her hand down her belly and between her legs, again cringing as her hands encountered bruised flesh.

Jesse cringed with her, wondering if bruising was all she found. If the bastard had torn her, down there, she'd make sure he paid dearly. When her hands moved around to her ass, her expression went from discomfort to agony. "Damn, do I have any skin back there at all?"

Checking on how badly her skin was torn, Jesse replied, "Yeah, there's skin, but you're pretty torn up."

"I guess I slid across the floor boards a time or two trying to get away from him." She worked her hands over her round bottom, but not as vigorously as she might have a week ago.

Jesse stared at her breasts as they wobbled, and chastised herself for it. "Baby, you did all you could to get away from him. I just wish I'd been here." Anger at her absence tore at her. If she'd been there, none of this would have happened. She'd have taken care of Jacob, and Meg wouldn't be hurting, wouldn't be bathing torn flesh.

Jesse's Homecoming  
*by Jude Mason*

"Jesse, if you'd been here, he most likely would have killed me or you, or both of us. He did have a gun, you know."

"But I could have tried, damn it!" She exploded, anger and hate burned like a brand inside her. Damn the man, damn him to hell. Her mind raced with thoughts of what she could have done, would have done, how she would have taken care of her Meg instead of being blissfully riding in the hills while her love suffered at the hands of that animal.

"Hon, he'd have killed you."

The woman's voice cut through Jesse's silent admonition. She lifted her eyes and gazed at the bruises, and her heart melted all over again. Tears threatened and it took all her willpower not to let them spill.

"He would have killed us both." Holding out her hands, she gripped Jesse's and pulled her down to her knees beside the tub. Naked and battle-scarred, she pulled Jesse into her arms. "He never forgave me for leaving him. If he'd seen us together, he would have killed us both. You being away was the only thing that saved me—and you." Releasing her just to arms length, she slipped her finger under Jesse's chin and raised her face.

Forced to look into Meg's eyes, she tried to smile, but knew she failed dismally. "How can people be so cruel to those they're supposed to love?" Her question came from nowhere, but said so very much. How indeed?

"I don't know, hon, but you're the best thing that's ever happened to me." Meg leaned forward and gently kissed her nose, then said, "You and this ranch are my world."

Tears blurred Jesse's vision, and her throat was too tight for her to say the words she wanted to say. But, it didn't matter. Nothing did, when Meg's lips touched hers.

Suddenly, from the direction of town, she heard the drumming of horse hooves. Jesse pulled away and ran to the window. Peering out, her heart lurched. What if Jacob had friends after all?

## Chapter Five

"Meg, get me my rifle." Her voice was soft, dead, but all of her senses reached out trying to see who was approaching them. Finally, just as Meg slid the rifle stock into her hands, she saw the horse and rider.

"Jesse, who is it?" came her lover's terrified whisper.

Two trembling hands on her shoulders, the soft swell of her breasts pressing into her back, distracted her momentarily. When the horse and rider were half-way across the field, she breathed a sigh of relief. "It's all right," she hastily reassured her, "I recognize the horse. It's the sheriff's pinto."

"The sheriff?" Meg's voice was louder, not as afraid against her neck.

"Yes, we'd best get you dressed."

Rather than jeans, she went to the wardrobe they shared and pulled out a loose, blue cotton dress that would cover her from chin to ankle, but wouldn't be tight against her wounds. Pulling it over her head, she turned her back to Jesse and said, "Help me button it." Under it, she was bare, obviously

Jesse's Homecoming  
*by Jude Mason*

hoping the less clothing she had on, the less there would be to rub against the bruised and battered flesh.

Together, they walked out into the sunlight. Jacob still lay facing the cabin, his face a mask of hatred. He paid no attention to the approaching rider, but Jesse knew he must have heard the horse. When he spotted Meg, he yelled, "Bitch, yer mine. You got no rights 'cept what I tell you."

At the end of her patience, Jesse stomped over to the bound man. Glaring down at him, she reared a foot back and with all the strength she had, swung her booted foot into his belly. "Bastard! You'll never touch her again. You might be lucky to touch another woman ever, but I doubt it. Wife beaters are pretty low on the food chain where you're going."

Jacob retched. A vile pool of his stomach content formed in front of his face. Jesse managed to step back in time to avoid being spattered, and turned away.

Meg looked at her, and smiled.

Walking back to stand in front of Meg, she said, "Man has no brains." Kissing her softly on the lips, she brushed her nose back and forth. "Just hold on, sweetheart. The sheriff's almost here." Jesse put her arm around her, and together they waited for the tall, grey-haired sheriff to reach them. When he did, he looked over to where Jacob still lay, his face next to a pile of vomit, and said, "The men you hired, two of em, seemed to think you might need me out here. Sorry it took me so long to get out here, but the county judge was in town, and I had court duty." Nodding towards the hog-tied man, he asked, "This here the problem?"

Jesse's Homecoming  
*by Jude Mason*

"He was, Sheriff Manning," replied Meg in a surprisingly strong voice. "But, when Jesse came home, she solved it for me. His name is Jacob Fitz. He is—was my husband."

He eyed Meg, obviously taking in the bruising and swelling on her face, and nodded. His eyes darkened, his jaw muscles tightened. Climbing off his horse, he walked over to the wounded man. "Looks like he's been shot." He turned and looked at Jesse. "Your doin'?"

"Yes. When I got home, he was on top of Meg." Swallowing her disgust, she continued, "and he'd beaten her badly. He went for his gun when he saw me. I was faster."

The big man nodded again. "Well, you needn't worry now, ladies. I'll take him off your hands. He'll be charged with attempted murder, trespassing, and a few other things I'll dream up on my way back to town. You both come in to town when you're ready. He ain't going nowhere, so there's no rush."

It took him all of five minutes to load the wounded man onto his horse, still hog-tied, and bind him to the saddle. Jacob screamed and yelled a few times, but when the sheriff slapped him roughly across the face, he must have realized he was in deep trouble and shut up.

The sheriff went to his horse, but before mounting up, he walked over to where Meg and Jesse stood. "Meg, I know this man's your husband, and he figures he's got all the right in the world to do what he wants to you. He's going to be charged with attempted murder. I'm going to do my best to keep what he did to you out of it."

Meg shivered in Jesse's arms. "Thank you, sheriff"

Jesse's Homecoming  
*by Jude Mason*

"I can't promise it'll pan out, but there's no need for what he did to you to be made public. He broke in; he tried to shoot Jesse. That's all that the judge needs to hear. If he's got any brains at all, he'll keep his mouth shut about you. Men who beat their women get special treatment in prison. And, that's where he'll be going."

Meg's shoulders relaxed. It was as if the sheriff's words had lifted a huge burden off her, and even though he hadn't been able to promise, Jesse knew he would do his best, and that was enough to ease her mind as well. "The man should be hung for what he did."

Sheriff Manning mounted up and took the reins of the horse Jacob was tied to. When he was ready to go, he tipped his hat to the two of them and said, "Hanging's not unlikely. Although, a long stretch in the state prison might show him what it's like being weaker than those running the place. And I'm not talking about the guards."

Jesse cringed, but then thought of what he'd done to Meg. "Thanks, sheriff. We'll come into town in a couple of days, if that's all right." Looking at Meg, she wanted the bruises to fade before anyone saw her.

He nodded, reining his horse around and nudged it into action, but before he'd gone far, he turned and said, "I'll see you then. Take care of each other."

His wink made Jesse smile. "We will."

"Pepper, we need to get him into the barn." Meg nodded toward where she'd left the big roan tied. Hand in hand, they went to retrieve Pepper. She grabbed the loosely wound reins

from the post and gave them a faint tug, urging the tired gelding to follow them to the barn.

Once he was unsaddled and brushed, she fed him while Meg pumped water into the trough. Jesse watched her dark-haired lover work the pump. Her heart suddenly ached for the pain she knew Meg felt, and not just the obvious physical, but the deeper, ugly memories.

"Come here, you." She held out her arms, wanting to feel the soft curves pressing against hers.

Meg looked at her, then lowered her eyes. "Let's go into the house."

Jesse reached for her hand, but Meg pulled hers away and walked toward the house. She followed, confused, a little afraid. They'd always shared a fondness for being touched. She couldn't remember a time when Meg had pulled away before. Anxiously, she followed, her thoughts racing.

When the door was closed behind them, she put her hand on Meg's shoulder, meaning to simply turn her around. The woman's whimper shocked her. Dropping her hand, she went to the kitchen table and sat at her usual spot at one end.

"Talk to me. Please, Meg."

She stood in the middle of the room for a few moments, looking lost and afraid.

Jesse got up and went to her. Carefully, she slid her arm around Meg's shoulders and led her to her seat at the table. Placing a folded blanket on the chair, she said, "Sit down, sweetheart." She filled two glasses with the water kept in a large bucket beside the sink. Giving one to Meg, she took

hers and sat across from her. "I love you, Meg. Nothing that happened changes that. None of it was your fault."

Tears came then. She didn't sob or wail, but tears flowed like tiny rivers of pain down her face. Jesse reached for her hands. Taking them in hers, she tried to send strength down her arms and through her hands and fingers. Meg clutched at her. Her hands trembled and felt cold in her own, but she didn't pull away, and that's all that mattered for the moment.

When the words finally came, they were so soft that at first Jesse didn't catch them all. She kept silent though, simply letting Meg get it out. "...nothing mattered. He wouldn't listen to me. He just kept hitting me. Said I belonged to him, like a cow or horse, and he could do whatever he wanted to me. It was horrible. He called me such vile names, and when he turned me onto my stomach and forced himself into my ... He..." She gazed up into Jesse's eyes and her mouth opened and closed, but no words came out. She couldn't seem to get her breath.

"My love," Jesse crooned and stroked her hands, "close your eyes and listen to me for just a moment."

Meg blinked and closed her eyes, but blinked them open again instantly. Glancing around the room, as if to reassure herself that they were alone, she looked at her again, then closed her eyes. She managed a deep shuddering breath.

"I know you'll remember what he did forever," Jesse said, her voice filled with sadness. "If I could change that, I would. I'd give anything for it never to have happened. But, nothing that happened changes how I feel about you. I love you more than my life."

Meg's eyes opened and she whispered, "But, I feel so dirty. He ... What he did..."

"What he did was horrible." She got up from her chair, went around and knelt beside Meg, still holding her hands. "But it was him doing it, not you. He was horrible. He's worse than any animal."

"How can you even look at me now—after ... after what I did?"

## Chapter Six

And there it was—that fear of being blamed. "Baby, oh my God, it wasn't you doing it. It was that bastard who did it. He forced you. He made you do it. He raped you." Jesse stood and said, "Wait, just a minute. Don't move." She went to the bed, determined to show Meg how she felt. Jesse tore off the blankets and sheets, tossing them out the door, getting rid of the stink of him and the sex he'd forced on her. In moments, she'd grabbed a spare quilt from the top of the closet and spread it over the bed. Returning her attention to Meg, she took her gently by the hand and pulled her to her feet. With her arm around her once more, she whispered, "Stretch out." Her voice had grown husky. Her face felt warm.

"But..."

"No buts. Let me show you how much I love you and want you. Do this for me."

With a tentative smile pulling at the corners of her mouth, Meg eased herself onto their bed. She couldn't sit comfortably, so laid down on her back, knees pressed firmly

Jesse's Homecoming  
*by Jude Mason*

together. The dress clung to her, flattening her beautiful breasts, hiding her from Jesse's eyes, her hands, and mouth.

"Easy, baby." Jesse sat on the edge of the bed and pulled off first the simple shoes Meg had slid into, then her own boots. Her hands were trembling. She wasn't sure if it was in anticipation of her reunion with Meg, no matter how bittersweet, or because of her desire to kill the bastard who'd hurt her. Either way, it didn't matter. She rose and unfastened the buttons of her shirt, and noticed it was sopping wet. She smiled and slid the cotton shirt off and tossed it over the chair, then worked herself out of her jeans, pushing her panties along with them down her legs.

She felt Meg's eyes on her, watching her move, hopefully, hungering for her. She chanced a peek toward her raven-haired lover and smiled when she saw the flush in her partner's cheeks and the softness around her eyes as she gazed at her. "I know that look," she whispered huskily. And she did. The same look she had when she lusted, wanted to be touched, and to touch her love. It was there, just below the surface. All she'd need to do was reach for her, of that Jesse was sure.

"What look?" she asked innocently. But, the smile that grew from the words was magic.

"I love you, Meg." She turned then, showing her smooth, undamaged skin to her raven-haired lover. "I love everything about you." Her nipples grew taut as she stood there, almost afraid to reach out—almost. Her hand moved, as if it had a life of its own, reaching for that touch, that soft caress.

Jesse's Homecoming  
*by Jude Mason*

Meg gasped when her fingers connected. Gently, afraid of hurting her or frightening her, Jesse rolled her over and unbuttoned the dress, then pulled it away. Pushing her over, she was soon lying on her back. The light was dim in the corner of the cabin where the bed was, and helped to soften the ugliness of her bruises and scrapes, but they were still there. Sliding her fingers along the shinbone to her knee, the raw scrapes were rough under her fingertips. She bypassed the worst of the sores and let her fingers wander a little higher up her thigh. Inner thighs, soft and beautifully damp, greeted her.

She knelt on the bed, between Meg's legs. Bending forward, she inhaled the rich aroma of woman, and suddenly felt lightheaded by the scent and nearness of her lover. Her own pussy throbbed, as if calling for attention. Rubbing her thighs together helped ease the growing tension, but she knew it wouldn't last. She focused on the woman so lusciously prone beneath her.

She eased her fingers to the outside of Meg's thigh, caressing a soft, undamaged portion of skin. Her flesh was hot, and she trembled under Jesse's touch. She ached to rush ahead, to bend to her treat and devour the succulent flower before her, but refrained. The time away had fed her hunger, but her love and concern tempered it. Even so, she bent forward and pressed a kiss on the soft inner thigh, inhaling the heady scent wafting around her. Hands on the back of her head held her captive, refused to let her escape and she rejoiced.

Jesse's Homecoming  
*by Jude Mason*

"Yes, kiss me there," Meg moaned and thrust her hips upward.

With her heart in her throat, Jesse kissed the trembling flesh mere inches from her pussy. The sweet scent excited her and she fought the urge to leap ahead and devour the succulent honey pot she knew so well. Was Meg hurt? Had the brute torn her delicate flesh? Afraid to rush, she eased her lips and tongue a little higher, fully prepared to stop should Meg request it or show any sign of pain. She flicked out her tongue, tasting the faint tang of soap.

Still afraid to move too quickly, she shifted; straddling one of the long legs spread beneath her. Her position altered, she found herself directly over Meg's sex. Instead of directing her attention there, she crawled upward until her knee brushed the soft down between her legs and her lips found the puckered nub crowning her, uninjured left breast. A gentle nip with her pursed lips brought a moan. A more insistent suckling, and the hands on the back of her head, pulled her close. She twirled her tongue around the puckered areola, then again nipped at the tiny point. When she heard another moan, she slid across to the other side, where she knew a bite marred the lovely smooth flesh. Kissing and licking all the way, she carefully circled the swollen injury until the nipple brushed her lips. A shiver raced up her spine, followed by goose flesh.

She took the protruding nipple between her teeth and lips then flicked her tongue across the puckered tip. The taste of her drove her mad with wanting.

Jesse's Homecoming  
*by Jude Mason*

The only part touching her was her tongue and lips; that is until she lowered her hips and ground her pussy along Meg's shin. It was her turn to groan then. She didn't dare press too hard, couldn't allow herself the freedom to let go for fear of hurting her lover, but the sweet sensation of her clit rubbing against the bone, sent a deep, rolling shudder of pleasure coursing through her.

Fighting the desire to go wild, she pulled back enough to take a deep breath before going on—another kiss on Meg's breast, another nibble on the soft flesh around it, and she moved lower. Kissing, lightly running her tongue over the bruises and scrapes that dotted her rib cage, she finally brought a hand into play. Careful of the sore spots, she caressed only the undamaged breast, pinching its nipple delicately; all the while, she made a trail of wet kisses toward her navel.

The hands on her head clenched, the fingers digging into the scalp when she slipped the tip of her tongue into her belly button and ringed it. Meg raised her knee, grinding it into Jesse's crotch. Heat touched her cheeks, and she knew a blush of pleasure colored her face. Fingers wound into her short hair, gripping her head tight, guiding her down.

Willingly she went, kissing her way, tonguing the soft flesh of the gently rounded belly she loved so much. Something tickled her chin, and she knew she'd come in contact with Meg's pubic hair. Pressing down with her chin, she rubbed it back and forth.

She knew the path well and inched her way to the treasures offered below. Meg writhed as she slid down her

body, and pushed her legs open wide. Climbing between them, kneeling, she glanced up into her lover's face. The flushed face and gaping mouth told her how ready Meg was. The fingers twisted in her hair pulled her back down, but stopped before her mouth touched the wiry curls. Perhaps afraid, perhaps anxious of what the man had left behind, Jesse didn't know, but she had to show her that what had happened hadn't changed her love.

Pulling, she forced her way to the top of Meg's slit and flicked her tongue over that moist crease. It felt as if her scalp was going to be ripped from her skull, but she refused to back away.

"Jesse, he..." the words trailed off.

Lifting her face just enough to be heard, she replied, "I know what he did, not all of it, but enough." Gazing into Meg's eyes, she tried to show her how much she loved her with her eyes, hoping her own longing would be enough. "I love you, Meg. What he did hasn't changed that. I love you. I want you."

The hands fisted in her hair relaxed and allowed her face to drop to the succulent feast beneath her. The heady aroma threatened to make her swoon. She flicked out her tongue again, tasting the salty-sweetness of Meg. The delicate folds opened, swelled into plump ripeness as her tongue flicked again, finding the tiny pearl at the apex of her slit. The slick nub slid across her tongue, and she pushed deeper between the silken inner lips.

Meg jerked, but not to get away, Jesse was sure of that. She raised her knees and pressed them against Jesse's

shoulders, holding her in place. She trembled and when Jesse flicked her tongue around the opening to her cunt, her sudden growl was like music to her ears. The world around them vanished; there were just the two of them, lost in each other's pleasure. A flick of her tongue brought another growl, and when she slid her tongue in deeper, tasting the deep headiness of her, the bed rocked. Her hips rolled. Jesse slipped her arms under the woman's thighs and around her waist, holding on to keep from being bucked off.

With Meg's legs over her shoulders, she set to work. She rubbed her nose and mouth over the wetness. Inhaling the musky sweetness, her mouth watered. Her head swam with thoughts of how best to please the woman she loved as she ran her tongue from the back of her pussy, along the soft inner lips and over the taut nerve-filled nub. Again, she jerked when Jesse's tongue touched her clit.

"Yes," Meg hissed and raised her hips as if seeking her tongue again.

Jesse renewed her efforts, licking alongside the inner lips, pressing her tongue hard against the taut nubbin at the peak. Back and forth, she moved her face, then stopping to concentrate on her clit, sucking and running her tongue across it. When Meg's cries of pleasure reached a fevered pitch, she took the silky smooth inner lips and gently sucked them. Wagging her head from side-to-side, she reveled in the sensation of Meg's growing, uncontrollable thrashing. The woman's body bounced, her thigh muscles tensed, and a howl of pleasure echoed through the cabin. She knew that to keep the pressure up would be too much too soon for Meg, so she

Jesse's Homecoming  
*by Jude Mason*

eased off and tenderly lapped at the woman's swollen clit. A few licks, then she slid her tongue in deep, fucking her with it. She went back to lapping, which brought a new set of guttural groans from deep inside her lover's body.

She thrashed for a moment, then every muscle in her body froze. Her pussy clenched, grabbing at Jesse's tongue as the first wave of her climax hit. Meg was motionless, frozen in place for a long heartbeat and then her body shuddered and tensed again. Her choking sobs were music to Jesse's ears. Suddenly, it was as if her scalp was on fire as Meg's fingers tightened in her hair, this time pulling her face hard into the sweet depth of her cunt.

Jesse's muffled groans barely reached her own ears, so she was sure Meg was oblivious to them. Just as suddenly, her mouth was filled with sweet nectar. Lapping it up, she hummed against the swollen nub at her lips, and flicked out her tongue a few last times. Clinging to Meg's hips, she suckled and swallowed as much of the warm juices as she could, then kissed each of her inner thighs. Each shudder excited Jesse more. Each time Meg's fingers tightened in her hair, she wanted to shout her joy.

When finally, Meg's thigh muscles lost their rigid tightness and they fell to the bed, Jesse knew her climax was done. She didn't stop then, but continued to kiss and caress the limp thighs and belly while Meg lay gasping for breath.

"My lord, woman, I'm so glad you're back." Meg stroked her hair and gently pushed her face away. "I would never have thought you could get me going after..."

Jesse's Homecoming  
*by Jude Mason*

Jesse raised her face and gazed up along the soft slopes of womanly flesh. Dark eyes and soft lips greeted her gaze, and smiled. Thankfully, she smiled. "It's because I love you. I'm so glad you're okay. I don't know what I'd have done if you were lost to me." Even the thought of it made her heart lurch and tears burn her eyes.

Pulling herself up, Meg twisted onto her side and held her arms out. Crawling up and into them, she laid her head on Meg's arm, gazing into her eyes. "We're really going to be all right."

Meg kissed her on the forehead. "Yes, of course we are. It's not the first time he beat me, but it is the last."

Smiling, she purred with pleasure at the soft touch of her lover's lips. "Yes, it's the last. I have a feeling, Sheriff Manning will see to that."

The bed shifted, and then she heard a stifled groan, as Meg pulled herself up. "If I lay here, I'll never get up. It's best I move around some." She groaned louder when she eased her weight onto her sore bottom.

Jesse looked over her shoulder at the stubborn woman but didn't rebuke her as she watched her ease off the bed. She was right; to lie around would make things worse for her. She would however, keep an eye on her. A chore she'd never tire of, she was sure. She eagerly clambered out of bed and followed the swaying bottom of her lover. Yes, a chore she'd be more than diligent in carrying out.

About the Author

Jesse's Homecoming  
*by Jude Mason*

Born and raised on the West coast of Canada, Jude Mason continues to live there with her husband, their dog and their cat. She is the author of several erotic shorts and novels. Readers may visit her site at [www.my-haven2001.com](http://www.my-haven2001.com) for more information.

What's Your Pleasure?

GET YOURS AT

[www.Phaze.com](http://www.Phaze.com)!

The hottest romance, the most memorable heroines,  
and the most gorgeous heroes...

Welcome to the next PHAZE in erotic romance!

Join us online for author chats, writing workshops,  
and big prize contests with our FREE newsletter!

[www.phaze.com](http://www.phaze.com)

[groups.yahoo.com/group/PhazeChatters](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/PhazeChatters)

[phazebooks.ning.com](http://phazebooks.ning.com) (new forum!)

eBooks available at [Fictionwise.com](http://Fictionwise.com), [CyberRead.com](http://CyberRead.com),

Jesse's Homecoming  
*by Jude Mason*

and AllRomanceeBooks.com,

Print titles available at Amazon.com, BN.com,

and BooksAMillion.com!

---

If you are connected to the Internet, take a moment to rate this eBook by going back to your bookshelf at [www.fictionwise.com](http://www.fictionwise.com).