

*Bound by Honor* by S.E. Jakes published by Samhain Publishing, Ltd

Damon remained brooding there at his desk for the next hour. Pulled out and stared at the picture of Jesse he kept in his desk drawer. Tried to figure out what the hell Jesse had been thinking.

And while he couldn't ever really know that, thanks to LC, he had the most important thing—Tanner's address.

He headed to his truck and drove around aimlessly for a while, radio blasting, wondering why the hell he would do this when he'd successfully gotten the boy out of his life.

Because you owe Jesse. Or Jesse owed you. Whichever way it was, Damon knew he'd get no rest until he made Tanner an offer...and an apology. And so he pulled in front of the address he'd programmed into the GPS, the soothing female voice telling him he'd arrived at his destination.

It was the right place—a townhouse near the base, nicely groomed. No car in the driveway but Damon hoped it was in the garage, wanted the boy—Tanner—to be home.

He stared at the house, his nerves still jangled. They'd been that way after his first meeting with Jesse as well.

Jesse. It had been so complicated. And at first that had Damon jumping right in and helping. Fixing.

Losing himself in the process until he didn't know who he was or what he wanted anymore.

Had he ever?

Jesse. Big brown eyes. Biting wit. And a need for submission as big as the state of Texas, where he'd been born.

Jesse had come to the club to survey the scene, check things out and, most of all, to find Damon, who, at his peak, was one of the best and most coveted Doms around.

He'd initially refused to play with the beautiful boy with the aching need in his eyes, knew how much work it could be to train a new sub.

"I'll do whatever you say," Jesse had told him earnestly, but the boy had the devil in his eyes.

Damon remembered frowning, saying, "They all tell me that."

But he hadn't refused.

It was supposed to be one night. One time with Jesse strapped to the spanking bench, writhing under the weight of Damon's hand, the steady slaps bringing him into subspace far more quickly than Damon could ever have anticipated.

*Bound by Honor* by S.E. Jakes published by Samhain Publishing, Ltd

Under the weight of the memories, Damon felt sluggish, like he could easily drown. The man in the house could be his lifeline...or could sink him even further.

Without knowing which, Damon got out of the truck and headed up the walk, rang the bell and waited. A long four minutes later, just when he was about to walk away, Tanner answered the door, dressed only in a pair of low-slung sweatpants. His eyes were red-rimmed and that tore at Damon's gut.

Tanner's chin jutted stubbornly when he saw Damon, his eyes blazed and yeah, Damon deserved it and the anger of Tanner's first words.

"How do you know where I live?" Tanner demanded.

"Your wallet."

Tanner went to close the door but Damon's hand shot out, stopping it. "That wasn't a proper scene," he started.

"Felt pretty real to me." Tanner's voice was hoarse, and he still held the door half closed.

"If it had been proper, you wouldn't have been alone. I would've been there to help you through it. I would've been there afterward, when you fell apart."

"Yeah, one night and you would've been able to put me back together, right?" Tanner's voice held the bitterness Damon had expected, but the boy didn't deny that he'd fallen apart. Instead, he let the door go and Damon pushed it open fully and took a step closer.

"I can do better. Give you what Jesse wanted you to have," Damon offered, his voice quiet.

Tanner flicked a surprise gaze at him. "You want another chance?"

"Not at the club. At my place. Just the two of us."

"I don't think...I don't think I'm cut out for this," Tanner admitted.

"There's more I want to know...about Jesse."

Tanner was still guarded, but he was a man of his word—Damon was counting on that...needed to make all of this right somehow.

"I can do that. The rest...I don't know," Tanner said.

"Why?"

"Look, it's not my scene, all right? I'm not a sub. I'm not a bottom."

*Bound by Honor* by S.E. Jakes published by Samhain Publishing, Ltd

Damon stared at the boy as the picture of him bound and spread and coming flashed before his eyes. He'd been out of the game for longer than he'd realized. That—and the fact that Jesse had clouded his judgment—because he should've realized from the second he'd met the boy that Tanner thought he was a top. Damon knew, from the second he met the unarguably alpha male, that he wasn't. How to convince him was another issue in itself. “You sure about that?”

Tanner shrugged like it was no big deal, but the casualness of the gesture didn't match the confusion in his eyes. “Yeah, I am. Nothing wrong with it, though. I just prefer being in control.”

Damon leaned in and put a hand around the back of Tanner's neck, waiting for the man to resist.

He didn't, and Damon rubbed the heated skin, still damp from a recent shower. He pulled Tanner a little closer although the boy tugged back a little.

Damon tugged harder, told him, “No, baby—you'd prefer someone to take all that control from you until you're moaning like a sweet little bitch.”

Tanner's jaw dropped and his eyes glazed slightly, like Damon had just revealed his deepest, darkest fantasy.

He let his hand slip away from the boy's neck reluctantly. “It's nothing to be ashamed of.”

“No,” Tanner agreed, not believing it, rubbing a hand along the back of his neck where Damon's hand had been. And he was still hard. “It's just something I'm not.”

Tanner would insist that until Damon proved it otherwise, so for now, he didn't press it. “That's why it was hard for you to walk into the club and submit.”

“Well, that and bringing up Jesse.” Tanner shook his head as though saying the name was as hard for him as it was for Damon.

“You were close.”

“We were on the same team. Leave no man behind.”

“You didn't leave him behind, Tanner.”

Tanner didn't answer and Damon knew that, no matter what he told the boy, he'd believe he somehow let Jesse down.

Damon knew that better than anyone. “Tomorrow night—after midnight. My loft's above the club—you can use the private entrance in the back. Be prepared to stay the weekend.”

*Bound by Honor* by S.E. Jakes published by Samhain Publishing, Ltd

He turned and headed back to his truck before Tanner could say anything, before he could turn Damon down, because suddenly Damon wanted nothing more than Tanner.