

The Night Lovers
a novel by
Austin G. Mitchell

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Chapter One

Commercial farmer, Greg Dixon, could still remember what Sue Harper shouted at him at Keswick High school that day, nearly five years ago.

"Greg Dixon, you're a fool and I'll never talk to you again."

It all began because one of his friends had told him that he had seen her and another boy coming from the Hill View hotel last evening. Without asking any questions, he had confronted the boy, who had denied it. Not believing him, he had confronted her, and they had a parting of the ways. Both of them had said some strong words to each other. She had been crying. They had been friends since grade nine and went everywhere together. In grade eleven, they became intimate when they managed to save up enough money to rent a room at that same hotel one Saturday evening. He had to put it down that he had been tricked, but up to now he couldn't understand why. The boy who had done it never benefited because he never became her boyfriend. He had tried to reconcile with her, but it had failed. She left soon after that to join her father in the United States.

After leaving high school, he went to study at the College of Agriculture in Portland. When he returned home, he decided to become a commercial farmer. He rented lands in both St. Catherine and St. Mary. He was supplying the canteens at both the primary and high school in Keswick. He supplied several supermarkets and hotels with produce from his farm.

Linda Brown was the supervisor of the canteen at the primary school. The first time he saw her, he thought she looked fashionable. She was dressed in a long-sleeve white blouse and a black skirt. She was a petite woman and looked to be in her middle twenties.

"Mr. Dixon, how nice to see you. It's the first time I'm meeting you. All the other times you've sent one of your workers with the stuff. Now you've come yourself. I always wondered when I was going to meet you."

"Now that I've met you, the guys told me that I have to meet you and I'm glad I did. You're so beautiful."

She laughed and said.

"And you look so handsome and well groomed."

It was his turn to laugh. He turned to her and said.

"Could I have your number?"

But she shook her head.

"I have a very jealous boyfriend. He doesn't like when I take calls from anybody, especially other men."

"We'd be just casual friends."

"I'd have to think about it."

About two weeks later, she said to him.

"I heard about you and Dahlia Chance, Georgia Kirlew and Sue Harper."

"I was seeing both Sue and Dahlia. Georgia and I were nothing more than good friends."

"I knew why you and Sue broke up. Why did you and Dahlia break up?"

"Her old boyfriend was now driving a car and she was living in Kingston. I guess that's the reason."

"I heard that you have a baby mother, named Deanne."

"Yes, she has a son for me, but we're not seeing each other again."

At fetes, parties and socials, he would go, and he and she would dance together. They soon started a relationship. She had ditched her old boyfriend, Sammy. Two months into the relationship, he started coming around again.

"Why is Sammy here?"

"I don't know, I never invited him."

She went to dance with him, further infuriating Greg.

"What's really going on here?"

"He's my old boyfriend. I'm not willing to give him up."

He couldn't believe what he was hearing. He stormed off, jumped into his pickup and drove home. The next day she called him.

"Greg, I'm sorry, I hope you'll understand."

"Did you ever leave him?"

He tried calling her, but only got her voice mail. A week later she called him.

"Greg, I'm sorry, but he and I have been seeing each other for too long for me to give him up like that."

"I understand Linda, I guess I was wrong to want you to get rid of him like that."

"I'm glad that you understand, and you can always call me, and we'll talk," she told him and ended the call.

A month later it was the end of the summer term. She didn't return for the new school year. He understood that she was at a new school in Portmore.

Merryll Dacres was the local nurse at the health center in Keswick. She was in her early thirties and the mother of three children, two girls and one boy, all pre-teens. They didn't live at the two-bedroom house adjoining the health center as the roof was in some amount of disrepair. He had met her once or twice. She was a tall, copper colored woman. She had big, but firm breasts, a narrow waist, but wide hips. She and her children were standing outside the health center one evening apparently waiting for a taxi when he saw them. He offered her a ride home to Norris, two miles away, which she accepted.

"Winston promised to pick us up two hours ago. I think he might have gone to one of his women's houses and forgotten about us."

"I didn't know he was like that."

"These young girls in Keswick, Norris, Leeds and Lobbans are so wild. They're willing to sleep with any man for money. The amount of them, I have to beat, to leave him alone. I heard that the Keswick back road is worse than the Portmore one. Even girls from Kingston and Spanish Town come over. Sometimes they even fight over the men."

He had heard those stories but didn't know if they were true.

"Greg, what happened to you? I heard that you and Linda broke up."

"After we started seeing each other, she said she wasn't willing to give up her boyfriend, Sammy. I had always suspected that she was still along with him and so we broke up."

They had reached her gate now and he stopped the pickup. She gave the children the keys to go and open up for her.

"I heard that you have a baby mother, Deanne and another girl, Harlene, fighting over you now. Is any of that true?"

"Deanne and I broke up a while back and Harlene and I have just started talking. It was while I was on my third semester break that she got pregnant for me."

"I like you, Greg, but put ten years on my age and I could almost be your mother. I started having my children late. Winston is trying to get a job in Cayman as an education officer. If he gets through, it will mean uprooting my children and settling in a different country for I don't know how long. I'll see you around," she said and went into her house.

The next Friday evening they were talking outside her gate after he had again dropped her and her children home.

"Winston is going away for two weeks. He's trying to nail down a job down there. I'll be here all by myself. Don't you want to come and stay with me?"

"But you'll have your children as company."

"That's not that kind of company I mean. Anyway, I don't want you to leave your girlfriends for me."

She came out of the pickup and went into her house.

By Monday he understood that Winston had left for the Cayman Islands. She called him that evening.

"Winston has gone away as I was telling you. Would you like to have dinner with me up at the River Road hotel this Wednesday evening?"

"What time shall I come?"

"Say about seven o'clock."

Chapter Two

On Wednesday, Greg and Merryll met for dinner. She chose rice and peas and chicken while he chose curried goat and white rice.

"I choose here because I know how fast people are. I don't want them to run to Winston with a story that I'm sleeping with you."

"Here was the right place to come."

"I like you, Greg, but I want to know how you feel about me."

"You're a very beautiful and sexy woman. Any man who gets a chance to go to bed with you can consider himself lucky."

She laughed but continued to eat her food.

"I've heard so much about you and Sue. If and when she returns home, will you be going back to her?"

"I'll agree that our break-up was all my fault. But my understanding is that she's engaged to a Jamaican man over there."

"So, are you jealous or anything like that?"

"No, I'm not, I went to college, got my degree and am making the best use of it. I want to start something with you, Merryll."

"On my side, you understand that I have my husband, so I have to be very careful. That's why I was asking about Sue. What about your baby mother, Deanne?"

"We're hardly on speaking terms. I just give her an agreed sum of money every two weeks."

They made a date for Friday night at the same hotel. That Friday night he took her twice. She climaxed both times, thrashing around on the bed and calling out his name as she rode out the waves of ecstasy engulfing her body.

"You're such a virile young man. I think you could last the whole night. From I saw you, I knew that I wanted to do it with you. You haven't disappointed me one bit."

"You think I didn't see you wiggling your hips at me each time you came out of the pickup." She laughed and said.

"These are the kind of things women do to entice men."

It was his turn to laugh. They returned to the hotel on Saturday night and did it again. Again, he took her twice. He wanted them to spend the night making love, but she said she had to go home to her children. They did it again Tuesday and Thursday, but she told him that they had to tone it down as Winston was due home shortly.

"We can't do it when he's on the island. I'll find out what his plans are. We can schedule our lovemaking around them."

On Monday of the next week, he saw Harlene.

"You're along with the nurse from the clinic," she told him.

"Yes, we're friends, but that doesn't mean I can't be friends with you."

"If you want me, you will have to leave her."

But he refused to leave Merryll to be along with Harlene. Merryll was home the next day when her cell phone rang. Harlene was on the line.

"How can I help you, Harlene?"

"Why are you along with my boyfriend, Mrs. Dacres? Why don't you stick to your husband and leave him alone?"

"I don't understand you. Which boyfriend are you talking about? If you mean Greg, yes, I'm seeing him."

"You're much older than him Why don't you look somebody in your age group?"

"Please get off my phone and stop talking foolishness," Merryll told her and ended the call.

Greg was in his small office in Keswick when Merryll called him.

"Are you sleeping with Harlene? She called and told me to leave you alone."

"I'm not seeing her. I don't know why she would call you and tell you any such thing."

"Just warn her for me or else I'll just stop sleeping with you."

Half an hour later, Harlene called him.

"Greg, I told you already that I won't talk to you until you leave Merryll."

"Why did you call her?"

"To tell her to leave you alone."

"You think I can't talk for myself?"

"I didn't say that. Ok, so why don't you tell her?"

"Do you fancy a fight with her over me? She has beaten a lot of girls over her husband."

"I'm not afraid of her," she said and ended the call.

A week later, Winston left for the Cayman Islands again. That Friday night Greg and Merryll were basking in the afterglow

of their lovemaking. He had taken her two times already. She had climaxed both times, digging her nails into his back as she rode out the climax. Outside they could hear the rain which had just started falling.

"I have another month on the island. I'm really going to enjoy it. I want to know about you and Harlene. She called me again to tell me to leave you alone."

"She's just a young girl who doesn't know what she wants."

"I hope you aren't fooling around her."

"I just talk to her. I'm not going to bed with her."

"From now on we can spend the whole night up here. We can spend half the night making love."

That month they spent at least three days at the hotel making love. They were Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays.

"Oh God, Greg, you're so virile. I wish I could just spend the whole night with you, but I have to get in before my children wake up."

"You're a sexy woman, Merryll. These young girls can't match you in bed."

"That's because I know what to do and I love sex so much. I know that while I'm in Cayman, you'll be playing around. I can't stop you but remember to use protection."

"I'll wait on you."

"No, I don't want you to blame me. I think you and Sue are destined to be together."

"Who and me did you say? If you mean Sue, you're crazy. I haven't spoken to that girl in years."

He took her and her children to the airport that Sunday afternoon.

That night Harlene called him.

"Your woman has gone away and you're all alone and in need of female company."

"Do you want to come over to stay with me?"

"You think I want her to fight me?"

"She can't do you anything."

"I'm still not coming over. Because you need a woman, you're inviting me over and when she returns, you'll just tell me to go. I'll come over to your house, but it's just to talk, nothing more."

Harlene was over at his house and they were talking. Outside it was slightly drizzling.

"Everybody knows that you were sleeping with Merryll. The two of you were at the River Road hotel every other day, even when her husband was around. The poor man, he didn't know what was going on."

"Don't you like me, Harlene?"

"Yes, but like I told you. I don't want to be sleeping with you and as soon as she returns to the island, you cast me aside."

"How about us going partying this weekend?"

"Ok, I'll go with you."

Friday night, they went to a party in Keswick. She wore jeans, a tank top and slippers. He wore a polo shirt, jeans and sneakers. He bought food and drinks for both of them and they sat and had it. They started dancing again. He dropped her home at around two o'clock that morning. They made plans to go out Saturday night.

Chapter Three

That Saturday night, Greg and Harlene were out partying again. They were at a party in Norris.

"Yeah, baby, you're enjoying yourself?"

"You know I always do, especially if I'm with you."

He was glad that she didn't mention Merryll. The only woman he would leave her for was Sue.

Sunday night, they went clubbing in Linstead at the Bamboo night club. They were sitting in a corner and having refreshments and watching the happenings around them. When they were finished eating and drinking, they returned to dancing.

The next week Friday night, they were at a party in Norris.

"You want to go to the Hill View with me, baby?"

But she shook her head.

"I don't want to start sleeping with you and when Merryll comes out here, you just abandon me for her."

He laughed and said.

"I have no idea when she's returning home."

"I think you do. She and you must speak regularly."

"Remember that she's a nurse. She just can't come home any time she wishes."

"You're still along with her. If she comes out here tomorrow, you're going to run to her."

That Saturday night, they were again at the Bamboo night club. They danced together to several genres of music.

On Sunday night there was a social in Keswick and he took her there. The next week Saturday night, she agreed to go to the Hill View hotel with him.

"I don't like going to bed with a man who's not mine," she told him as they were in his pickup going home.

"You have a great body, Harlene. You're a very sexy girl."

She was of brown complexion, about five feet six inches tall. She had a thin waist, but wide hips and ample breasts. He on the other hand was copper colored and almost six feet tall and athletic looking.

"It's just you and me now, baby. As I said, I don't know when she will be back home."

"I want you to tell her about us."

They had reached her gate now.

"She has always known about us. What more can I tell her?"

"Okay, but if she ever comes back out here and you abandon me like you did that first time, I'll never talk to you again," she told him and went into her house.

The next two weeks were a blur of activity. He and she went partying in Kingston most times ending up at either the Hill View

or the River Road hotel.

A month later, Merryll returned home. He went to pick her up at the airport. It was a Sunday afternoon. He took her to his house before she went over to her sister's house in Norris, two miles from Keswick. They were in his living room talking. Outside it was slightly drizzling.

"I have just returned to tidy up some business and then you might not see me until a year's time when I go on leave."

"So long, I can't wait that long."

"I can't come home for any unscheduled leave. I don't want Winston to get suspicious that I have a lover who I'm coming to look for."

"So how long are you staying?"

"Just a week darling, but you'll have me every night. So, who has been keeping you company while I was away?"

"Nobody that you know."

"I know who it was. It was that little girl, Harlene. Just tell her that I'm back and you'll be busy, so you don't have any time for her."

"She knows that already."

That Sunday night he took her clubbing to the Bamboo night club. They slept at the Hill View hotel.

He was on his farm the next day when his cell phone rang. Harlene was on the line.

"Just because Merryll is here, you've abandoned me for her. When she's gone, please don't come calling me to go out with you."

"You know it's nothing permanent between me and her. By the end of the week, she's going back home. After that we can take up where we left off."

"I'm not prepared to play second fiddle to her. If you want me, get rid of her," she told him and ended the call.

Merryll was at her sister's house lying in her bed in the spare bedroom when her cell phone rang, Harlene was on the line. She wondered what she wanted.

"How can I help you, Harlene?"

"You can help me by leaving Greg, alone. Your husband can't satisfy you, so you stole away to come and sleep with him. Ask him who he has been sleeping with while you were away."

"But now I'm back, he doesn't need you again. It's obvious that I'm giving him what you didn't give him."

"You don't have anything that I don't have. I have big breasts, a narrow waist and wide hips. You can't give it to him better than me."

"So why did he run to me as soon as I returned to the island?" Merryll asked and cut off the call.

Greg was delivering some produce at the Keswick High school that Monday when he saw the teacher who was in charge of the canteen, Reta Cameron. She was a tall, copper colored woman with moderate breasts, a narrow waist and wide hips. He had been trying to date her, but she was resisting his overtures. She was a very beautiful girl, he thought. He guessed that she was about twenty-five years of age.

"Greg, how are you? I have the list of what you can supply us with. I will get the cook to check off the goods that you just brought for us."

They went into her office.

"I know that you want us to be friends, but what about Harlene and Merryll. You and Harlene were all over the place up to a week ago and as soon as Merryll came out, you dropped her."

"Merryll is only spending a week out here and Harlene has left me."

"What you're telling me is that as from next week you're free. Suppose I want you from tonight?"

"I told you how it is. She's my woman for the time being. I don't want her to get jealous and leave me. Harlene has her boyfriend, Max, in Kingston and she has returned to him."

"I too have my boyfriend, Bryan, down there too and I'm not about to give him up for you.

Merryll is a terrible woman. She was sleeping with you even before her husband left the island."

"I'll see you around and we'll talk."

"If you want me, you've got to tell her about us."

"I'll think about it," he said and left the office.

That Monday afternoon, he was in his small office when Harlene called him. He wondered why she was calling him.

"Greg, I can't wait to be along with you again. What we had was real love. Why are you throwing it away just because of Merryll?"

"What did I tell you, Harlene?"

"You're putting her before me. Does she look better than me? The only thing she has over me is experience. Please leave me alone. When she goes away again, don't call me. You have a baby mother

by the name of Deanne?"

"I have a baby mother, but we're no longer together. I just give her money for the child she has for me."

"What about Reta? Are you and her friends?"

"She's just a social friend of mine."

Chapter Four

That same afternoon, Deanne was at her office where she works as a pharmacy assistant in Linstead when Merryll called her.

"Deanne, I heard that you're calling my name. You're saying that I ran left my husband to come and sleep with Greg. I'm just on business out here and he's a good lover, so naturally I have to look him up. Since he and you are no longer together, I don't see why you have to be criticizing me."

"I heard that you told people that the child I have for him wasn't his. Why don't you stay in Cayman instead of coming out here to fast with people? I know when he gave me my son. You should mind your own business and go back to your husband and leave him alone."

"By the end of this week I'll be gone. So, you, Harlene and Reta can have him."

"All I want from him is maintenance for Roger. Harlene and Reta can fight over him all they want."

"None of you girls can stop me from enjoying myself with him," Merryll said and ended the call.

Merryll had just finished talking to Deanne when Reta called her. She was now sitting in one of the veranda chairs. Reta was in her small office as canteen administrator.

"Merryll, I want to know about you and Greg."

"What do you want to know?"

"It seems to me that the least opportunity you get, you run leave your husband to be along with him. Give the man a break and go back home. He can't satisfy you again?"

"Obviously you want Greg. I didn't look him, it was he who looked me. Anytime I come out here, I don't have to send for him, he runs to me. It means that I have something that he wants."

"Have you left your husband permanently to be along with him?"

"Why are you fasting in my business, Reta?"

"Because I want Greg. You had better say goodbye to him when you leave this time. I'm going to give it to him so good that he won't remember who you are."
Merryll burst out laughing.

"You don't know what you're talking about. I'm giving it to him so good that he's already begging me to stay the entire month. Harlene tried to hold on to him and couldn't. They had several sexy weekends between the River Road and the Hill View hotel."

"She's just a little inexperienced girl. I have lots more experience than her."

"We'll see about that," Merryll said and ended the call.

Tuesday night, Greg and Merryll were at Witty's pub and she was telling him about the calls she had received from Harlene, Deanne and Reta. They were sitting on stools outside the bar and sipping champagne. She was dressed in a-cut-off-jeans-shorts, a blue blouse and slippers. He had on a-short-jeans-pants, a sports shirt and sneakers.

"Harlene told me about what you were having nearly every night I was away. Reta said she's waiting for me to leave the island so she can start giving it to you."

"Harlene got angry and left me. Reta and I are just social friends."

"As soon as I leave, they'll be fighting over you. What I fear is that you might not want me again. Both of them are very sexy looking. They've promised to give it to you so good that you won't remember me."

"You're a sex bombshell, Merryll. Neither Harlene nor Reta can match you in bed."

"I thought you had never slept with Reta."

"I have never been to bed with her, so I don't know how good she is. I'm just speculating, that's all."

They went to Walters' night club before returning to sleep at the Links hotel that morning. It was a whirlwind of activities for

Merryll. At nights she went partying with him. They slept at various hotels, but by Saturday she was gone.

Two weeks before Merryll returned home, Sue returned to the island. Greg heard that she was an accountant and was working in Kingston. He also understood that she was engaged to a Jamaican man. She was living in Keswick with her mother, Valery and her sister, Alia. He had seen her driving around in the village and to work. He heard that her fiancé, Phil Distant, had also returned home. He lived in Kingston and was also an accountant. He heard that they worked for the same company.

"I heard that they'll soon get married," Easton told him. He was the man who had told the lies on her. He was now a taxi driver.

"She'll never look in your direction again, Greg."

"I'm not concerned about her."

He even saw her shopping in the village, but she paid him no mind. He didn't think she was making more money than him.

The next week, Wednesday night, he received a call from her. He was in his vehicle going home. She was also in her car going home.

"Greg, how are you? Do you have a woman by the name of Harlene?"

"I'm seeing her."

"Tell her not to call me again. I'm engaged, I'll soon be married. I know that you're along with Reta too. Before I returned, you were all over the place with Merryll. You have a child with Deanne. You're really running it hot."

"The women just like me, that's all. As for Merryll, she can't get enough of me. Since she returned to Cayman, she calls me every day."

"When is she returning?"

"Maybe next year. But I can wait."

"Are you sure about that? Anyway, you just told me that you were sleeping with Harlene and Reta too."

"It's nothing like what I had going on with her," he told her and ended the call.

Sue was still in her car ten minutes later when Deanne called her.

"I understand that you're back in the island. Is it true that you're planning to return to Greg?"

"I'm so in love with my fiancé that I wouldn't bother to look at any other man. Why are so many of you fighting over him?"

"All I'm protecting is my son's money."

"Well, Deanne, I have no intention of being along with him again," she said and ended the call.

Later that night, Reta called her.

"Sue, I understand that you have left your fiancé and are on the way to being along with Greg again."

"Nothing like that has happened, Reta. I'm still in love with my fiance, Phil and we'll soon be married."

"That's not what I heard. I'm told that he and you have broken up and you were calling Greg, begging him for another chance."

"I want you girls to leave me alone. I have my fiance and I have no interest in Greg," she said and ended the call.

Just as Sue was leaving work the next evening, Merryll called her.

"Sue, I understand that you're back home and that you're looking Greg again, is that true?"

"Of course not, none of it is true. But if it was even true, what could you do about it?"

"You're wasting your time. When I'm back home, he's mine. Sue, don't try it, because even if you get married to him once I'm back I would take him away."

"I wonder what you have giving him that no other woman can give him?"

"Ask Harlene and Reta why he abandoned them for me the last time I was out there," she said and ended the call.

Chapter Five

Greg was at home that evening when Sue called him.

"I didn't know that Merryll owns you."

He burst out laughing.

"Who told you anything like that? She can't tell me what to do."

"She said that even if you were married and she wanted you, you'd have to leave your wife and come to her."

"She was just running up her mouth. You shouldn't have listened to her. When next she's out here, I'm going to put her in her place."

"It doesn't sound as if you can do anything like that. She sounds like she has all the talk. She just has to snap her fingers and you'll run to her. I asked her what she had giving you that no other woman can give you. She said she has it all. So, what is it that she has that each of Harlene or Reta couldn't give you?"

"I don't know what she's talking about."

"I'm glad that I left you. Imagine having to be fighting, Deanne, Harlene, Reta and Merryll for you. And especially Merryll who you can't resist. She told me about the sexy weekends she and you spent between the Hillview and the River Road hotels."

"How are you sure that your fiancé won't find other women out here? Will you be attending any parties on the weekend? Lots of them are kept up here."

"I won't attend any of them without Phil."

"I'll warn those girls to leave you alone," he said and ended the call.

That Friday night, a party was being kept in Keswick. Greg attended with Deanne. They had made up.

The next night, he was at a party in Norris with Reta. Later that night, Harlene called him.

"Yes, Greg, so you're sleeping with me, Reta and Deanne now?"

"They begged me to take them partying. I was calling and all I was getting was your voice mail."

"You could have come down to my house to check me. You're just trying to play smart. You told me that you and Deanne were not speaking and yet you're going out with her. I think you went to

sleep with her last night. Is Reta at your house now?"

"I took her home after the party and I did the same thing with Deanne. It's just you I'm along with as far as I know."

"I'm going to leave you if I find out that you're sleeping with either of them. You think I don't remember what you did to me with Merryll. As for her, you'd better warn her about me and you," she said and ended the call.

Sunday afternoon, Greg called Sue.

"There's a party being kept in Norris tonight, will you be attending?"

"As I told you before, I only attend parties with my fiancé. If he's not going, I don't go. I know if I go to any of these functions, I'll attract unwanted attention and I don't want that."

"You hardly find any single guys at these events."

"Is that so? I don't know about that. So now that Merryll isn't here who's your girlfriend?"

When he hesitated, she said.

"I'll understand if you can't make up your mind which one of them it is."

"Reta is my woman. She's okay and not temperamental like Harlene or Deanne."

"Since I've been back and even when I was abroad, I've heard so many things about you and various women. These stories are too numerous to talk about. You were having sexy weekends with all sorts of women."

"A lot of those stories are nothing more than rumors. I'm not saying I never behaved very bad, but it's nothing like what's being alleged."

"I'll see you around," she said and ended the call.

Monday afternoon, Deanne was at work when Merryll called her.

"Deanne, I heard that you went partying with Greg. I even heard that you went to sleep with him afterwards. I thought you said that you had your man and you were only looking money for your child."

"I'm free to go out with him. Even if you were out here you couldn't stop that. Merryll, you aren't easy. Imagine, you're in Cayman and

Monday afternoon, Deanne was at work when Merryll called her.

"Deanne, I heard that you went partying with Greg. I even heard that you went to sleep with him afterwards. I thought you said that you had your man and you were only looking money for your child."

"I'm free to go out with him. Even if you were out here you couldn't stop that. Merryll, you aren't easy. Imagine, you're in Cayman and want to stay there and plan his life for him. Why don't you stick to your husband?"

"Leave my husband out of this. I'm not the first married woman to have a lover. You behave as if it's something strange I'm doing. I heard that Reta went partying with him too, but I will deal with her."

Deanne burst out laughing.

"The man has needs, how are you going to stay where you are and help him?"

"I gave him enough sex to last him until I can arrange for us to meet again."

"You aren't easy that's all I can say," Deanne said and ended the call.

After she finished talking to Merryll, Deanne called Reta.

"Reta, why did you go partying with Greg the other night? I'm warning you to leave him alone. We had broken up, but now we are back together again."

"Ask him who's his woman these days and he'll tell you that I fit that bill."

"We'll see about that. I know that he wants me. He has already given me a child. As far as I'm concerned, he's just using you."

"That's what you believe. Just you wait and see, Deanne. He tells me and everybody that I'm the one he loves."

"He's only fooling you up Reta," Deanne said and ended the call.

Friday night, there was a party being kept in Norris. Deanne came there alone and saw Harlene in his arms, dancing. When the song finished playing, she confronted her.

"Harlene, why don't you leave him alone, girl? You boasted about the number of romantic weekends you spent with him. Yet when Merryll came out here, you couldn't do anything. He simply abandoned you for her."

"If he wanted to sleep with her, I can't stop him. Any woman he wants to sleep with, I'm not going to stop him. All I do is make sure that I don't have unprotected sex with him."

"I'm now sleeping with him again. I think he's paying you to sleep with him. You say that you're a nursing assistant and look what you're doing to supplement your income."

"I give my body freely to him. He's not paying me to sleep with him.

I know that you accept money from him for your son and yourself."

Greg returned and stopped the quarrel.

Harlene was at her house the next morning. She had just eaten her breakfast and began tidying up her room when Reta called her. Outside, light rain was falling.

"Harlene, what a way you get brave. Now that Merryll is away, you can do anything you want. Girl, Greg is mine. He's just using you, that's why he's paying you to sleep with him."

"Reta, I'm not selling my body to him. I have never slept with him and he has to pay me," she said and cut off the call.

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