

I suppose they call it “philandering,”...I suppose, also, that most philanderers don't see it that way. I certainly did not. There was no agreement that I remembered between Desiree and me about calling, how often we should get together, and that no one else should be a party to that. She wasn't my steady. I hadn't had a steady girl since Dana in high school and I hadn't forgotten how disastrous that was. But I was “philandering” then, too.

What did Desiree want from me, after all? Could she demand it without any agreement on my part? Besides, how would she know? I was excellent in rationalization. She was seeing someone else when I first met her, but she went out with me. Isn't that “philandering?” If so, didn't she start it?

Whatever it was and whatever she knew, there came no call and no meeting after the trip to Carbondale. Perhaps it was wise on her part. I was pathetic at defending her from those two bullies who burst into our private room off Jeff's room at the dorm and proceeded to grope and pull at her. Maybe at my size, bachelorhood was the safest choice for everybody. It's an ugly human world at times. - *page 132*

I missed her big, bright eyes and her shining, smiling face, and her unmistakable giggle when I said or did something funny. I tried not to think about it like that. It was a new experience. I had never really missed anyone or anything to that point in my life. At least not anything that just wouldn't go away. - *page 133*

“That's it,” Don vowed, watching the whole thing. “This is how you do it.”

A moment later Don took a gulp of beer, stood up from his chair and slowly walked over to Desiree's table. As he spewed his lines, he gradually leaned on their table toward them. Occasionally, Desiree or the other girl would look over to me and smile or laugh and look back at Don as he laughed. After a couple minutes, Don nodded his head and both girls smiled as he slowly walked back to our table.

“The great Don has struck out,” I observed as he sat down.

“Au contraire, my friend,” Don replied smugly. “They will come over here in a few minutes. Your friend, Desiree, said she wanted to talk to you and was glad you were here.”

Fifteen minutes later the two girls were still sitting at their table chatting away when the waitress strolled over to them. They both shook their heads and nodded to our table and the waitress strolled over to us.

“The ladies over there,” the waitress said, nodding to Desiree's table, “say you gentlemen are buying their next round.”

Don smiled widely as he informed the waitress, “I'm not. He is.” He laughed heartily. - *page 135*

Amazing as it may seem, Desiree actually pulled up in her mother's car less than thirty minutes later. She drove onto the dirt drive to the back of the house and parked the car there like she had been to the Hess street house before. Greeting her on the back porch, I commented about that and she advised that she had some good friends who had lived down the street so she was familiar with all the houses in the neighborhood. That's how she knew the color of this one. - *page 140*

Still squatting, I scooped her garments from the floor before her, and as I set them to her right, Desiree suddenly skipped naked to the bed, pulled back the cover and sheet, sat down and swung her legs onto the bed, pushing them toward the foot as she pulled the sheet over her naked body, holding it tight at her neck. She giggled. “Get those clothes off and get in bed with me,” she commanded. - *page 143*