



Gonna Lay Down My Burdens

Mary Monroe

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Bestselling author Mary Monroe won rave reviews from critics and readers alike with her first two novels, *God Don't Like Ugly* and *The Upper Room*, both Main Selections of the *Black Expressions* Book Club. Now she returns with the masterful *Gonna Lay Down My Burdens*--that rare novel that inspires laughter, tears, and repeat readings.

In the sweltering little town of Belle Helene, Alabama, Carmen Taylor keeps her weaknesses, her frustrations, and her tears to herself. She's too busy shouldering the burdens of her troubled friends, like Desiree Lucienne, the petite, pampered daughter of a doctor who tries to beat the wildness out of her. But it doesn't stop Desiree from trawling for men whenever she can, and trying to drag Carmen along with her.

It's not that Carmen hasn't had her share of boozy pick-ups. She has, but they just can't compare to the one steamy night she spent with the man she's loved since they were both kids. Now a local cop, Chester Sheffield, with his Barry White voice and his all-too-fine body, keeps showing up in Carmen's life, wanting to do something about the feelings they obviously have for each other. But that would mean abandoning her "boyfriend" Burl Tupper and that's something Carmen just can't do.

Ever since Burl ended up in a wheelchair because of a foolish teenage prank she played on him, Carmen's promised herself that she'd spend the rest of her life making it up to him. When Carmen doesn't take her chance with Chester, Desiree does, and when she learns that she's pregnant with Chester's child, it's almost more than Carmen can bear. Still, her loyalty to Desiree goes back a long way, and she's not about to let a man get in the way of their friendship--even when Desiree starts stepping out on Chester.

Then, on a sultry, reckless moonlit night, Carmen commits a desperate crime of passion, and, with Desiree, hits the road running. But she can't run from the truth she's avoided for years--and in a seedy hotel in the middle of nowhere, she confronts her demons head-on. Now Carmen has two choices--a life on the lam, or a full circle return to Belle Helene, the place where it all began. . .and the only place in the world she can lay down her burdens and seize her one true chance at love and redemption.

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