

CHRISTMAS ROSES

by Carol L. Duff

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STORY OF THE PLAY

Chuck Overton is finally home for Christmas, but his welcome is far from reminiscent of the prodigal son. Because of Chuck's involvement in a robbery years earlier, his father, Aubrey, has shut him out and refuses even to talk to him. Seemingly nothing can pierce Aubrey's hardened heart – until his granddaughter, delivering letters from the past, intervenes. Aubrey discovers the importance of forgiveness and its relationship to Christmas – that God gave His Son to forgive us, so that we might have a second chance at life. *Christmas Roses* is the conclusion of Chuck's journey which began in the drama, *Heading Home*.

Approximate running time:

50 minutes

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(7 men, 6 women, 2 girls)

AUBREY OVERTON: Father of Vanessa and Chuck; proud and unreachable; 60s.

ELLIOTT HUBBARD: Aubrey's attorney; 60s.

BEA TOMPKINS: Aubrey's nurse; a bubbly, Southern woman; late 50s to 60s.

VANESSA BURGESS: Aubrey's daughter; about 30.

BLAKE BURGESS: Vanessa's lawyer husband; early 30s.

CHUCK OVERTON: Aubrey's son who has come back for forgiveness; early 30s.

PATTY OVERTON: Chuck's supportive wife; quiet and understanding; early 30s.

ERIN OVERTON: Chuck and Patty's older child; talkative and friendly; about 8.

CARLEY OVERTON: Their younger child; about 5.

3 COUPLES – Blake's law partners and spouses; any age.

STANLEY and CHRISTINE

EDWARD and CLAIRE

HELEN and DAVID

COSTUMES

Aubrey Overton – pajamas, robe and slippers; neat slacks and simple shirt.

Elliott Hubbard – business suit and tie.

Bea Tompkins – nurse's uniform.

Vanessa Burgess – high fashion; even when casual she has a flair about her.

Blake Burgess – expensive "designer" clothes; always sharply dressed.

Chuck Overton – casual clothes.

Patty Overton – casual, but neat clothing.

Erin Overton – play clothes.

Carley Overton – play clothes.

Couples – evening wear.

PROPS

Small bed with linens and several pillows
Night stand with book
Two small chairs
Legal-size papers (representing a will)
Briefcase and pen
Recorded secular Christmas music
Christmas tree and various decorations
Wrapped gifts
Eight glasses with liquid
Small tables (with optional lamps)
Sofa and three chairs
Two suitcases
Stuffed animal
Winter coats, mittens, scarves, etc.
Large box with smaller box containing Nativity scene figures,
stack of letters tied with ribbon and a photo album
Bible
File folder with papers inside
Overcoat
Briefcase with cell phone
Glass of water
Child's drawing
Bathrobe
Tape recording of Chuck reading letter
Envelope containing deed

SETTING

All scenes take place either in Aubrey Overton's bedroom or the living room of Blake and Vanessa Burgess' home. Set up Aubrey's bedroom on a side stage (stage right) if at all possible, or divide the regular stage into two rooms. Control the scene changes and action with lighting. The action begins on the evening of December 22.

Scene 1

(AT RISE: Aubrey Overton's bedroom, night of December 22. A small bed with several pillows, night stand with book, and two small chairs make up the décor. AUBREY is sitting in bed, propped up by pillows. ELLIOTT HUBBARD, attorney, sits in a chair beside his bed and BEA TOMPKINS, nurse, stands nearby.)

ELLIOTT: *(Opens briefcase and removes papers.)* I have the papers ready for you to sign, Aubrey. *(Opens document and reads.)* It reads: "I, Aubrey Overton, being of sound and disposing memory, do hereby make and declare this instrument as my Last Will and Testament, hereby revoking any and all wills ..."

AUBREY: There's no need to read it, Elliott.

ELLIOTT: Now, Aubrey, you know you should never sign anything without reading it first.

AUBREY: Did you do it like I told you?

ELLIOTT: Just like you told me. Everything goes to your only daughter, Vanessa Burgess.

AUBREY: No loopholes? No way anybody can fight it?

ELLIOTT: None. Once you sign it.

AUBREY: *(Reaches for the paper.)* Then hand it here and let me get on with it.

ELLIOTT: *(Holding onto papers.)* First I need to be certain you've thought this through. Don't you want to include Chuck? At least in some respect?

AUBREY: No.

ELLIOTT: I know you've had your differences, but he is your only son.

AUBREY: Far as I'm concerned, I don't have a son.

ELLIOTT: You don't mean that. What would Rose think if she were alive and heard you?

AUBREY: The day I see Rose standing in this room, telling me to forgive him, that's the day I'll do it. Not until.

ELLIOTT: You'll remember I represented Chuck in the robbery. And I spent a lot of time with him. He was just a kid, Aubrey.

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ELLIOTT: *(Continued.)* He was hurt and confused and grieving terribly for his mother. You can't hold one mistake against him forever.

AUBREY: I can do as I please.

ELLIOTT: He still keeps in touch with me, you know. He's become a fine man, your son.

AUBREY: *(Angrily.)* Then where's he been for the last ten years? Visiting his father? Not once.

ELLIOTT: I happen to know that he wrote you ... many times. Did you ever invite him to come back?

AUBREY: I never answered his letters.

ELLIOTT: I didn't think so.

AUBREY: I sent them all back, unopened.

BEA: Mr. Aubrey!

AUBREY: *(Ignores HER.)* If I'd have wanted to hear a sermon, I'd have sent for a preacher.

ELLIOTT: And if you didn't want to hear what I had to say, you could have gotten your son-in-law to draw up your will. He's a good attorney. You're under the same roof. You didn't need me.

AUBREY: Bad enough that I have to live in his house and have him pay for somebody to take care of me. I'll not have him knowing all my personal business, too. Now give me the paper.

(ELLIOTT lays document on his briefcase, places it on AUBREY'S lap and hands him a pen. He points to the bottom of the page.)

ELLIOTT: Sign right there.

(AUBREY signs, hands the pen back to ELLIOTT and leans back against the pillows.)

ELLIOTT: Now, Ms. Tompkins, if you would sign here as witness.

(HE holds the briefcase out for HER. Bea steps forward, signs the paper and hands the pen back to him.)

End of Freeview

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