

## **Red Roses**

by Christine Lindop

### **Chapter I. White Roses**

It's August. Anna is playing her guitar on the balcony of her new apartment. 'I like it here,' she thinks.

Then her phone rings. It's her friend Vicki. 'I'm coming now, Anna. It's Grandview Apartments, Charlton, isn't it?' 'That's right. See you soon.'

Anna takes her guitar and goes out of her apartment. She goes down in the elevator and goes outside.

Anna is waiting outside the apartment building. A young man is walking along the street. He is carrying a bunch of white roses. Anna looks at them. 'What beautiful roses!' she thinks. Then she looks at the young man. 'He's nice too!' she thinks. The young man looks at her and smiles, and suddenly Anna's face is pink.

Will is walking along the street, when he sees a young woman with a guitar. 'Hmm - a guitar!' he thinks. 'I must play my guitar more often.' Then he looks at the young woman. 'She's nice!' he thinks, and he smiles at her.

Anna's face is pink, and she looks away. Will goes into Grandview Apartments. Just then, Vicki arrives in her car. 'Hello, Anna,' she says. 'Are you OK? Your face is a bit pink. What's the matter?'

'Oh — er — nothing,' says Anna. They drive away. Vicki talks to Anna, but Anna is thinking about the young man.

'Who is he?' she thinks. 'Does he live in the building? Who are the roses for? His wife? His girlfriend? His mother?'

'Anna? Are you listening?' says Vicki. 'Oh! Sorry, Vicki,' says Anna. Her face is red now.

'What are you thinking about?' says Vicki. 'Tell me!' 'Well, I'm thinking about a bunch of roses,' says Anna. 'And a man.' 'Aha! Who is he?' says Vicki. 'I don't know,' says Anna. 'But I want to know,' she thinks.

Will arrives at his gran's apartment.

'Hello, dear,' she says. 'Oh, you are a good boy. You always bring me roses.' 'Of course,' says Will.

Gran makes Will some coffee. She asks him a question, but Will does not answer. 'Will, are you listening? You're thinking about something, aren't you? What is it?' 'Oh - sorry, Gran. It's - it's not important.'

Later, Will says goodbye to his gran. Then he gets into his car and drives away. In the car he thinks about the young woman with the guitar. 'Where does she live?' he thinks. 'Does she live in one of the apartments? Or has she got a friend there? How can I meet her? Who is she?'

Five minutes later, Anna and Vicki arrive outside the apartment building. 'Goodnight, Vicki,' says Anna.

'Quick - go inside,' says Vicki. 'Just think - you walk out of the elevator, and there is a young man with a bunch of roses. And he says—'

'Oh be quiet,' laughs Anna. 'See you tomorrow.'

### **Chapter II. Pink Roses**

It's September. Will is visiting his gran again. 'It's a lovely day, Will,' she says. 'Let's have our coffee on the balcony.' Will and his gran are sitting on the balcony in the sun, when suddenly Will hears a guitar. 'Listen!' he says. 'That's a guitar. Where's it coming from?' He stands up and looks around, but he cannot see the guitar. 'Excuse me, Gran,' he says. 'I - er - back soon!' And he runs out of the apartment.

Will runs along the corridor. Where is the guitar? And who is playing it? He stops outside an apartment and listens. Nothing. 'Perhaps it's outside,' he thinks. 'Perhaps she's on her balcony.'

So he goes down in the elevator and goes outside. Upstairs, Anna takes her guitar and goes inside. She closes the door to the balcony. 'That's it for today,' she thinks.

Will looks at all the balconies, but he cannot see or hear a guitar. He goes back to his gran's apartment. 'Are you all right, dear?' she says. 'Yes thanks, Gran,' says Will. 'It's just - oh, it's not important. Well, it is important, but . . .' And Will tells Gran about the girl with the guitar.

A week later, Anna is coming home. She can see a young man near the apartment building, and he is carrying a bunch of roses - pink roses today. But he is not looking, and he does not see her.

Anna walks more quickly. But when she gets to the building, there is nobody there. She gets into the elevator. There is nobody in the elevator, but she can smell roses - beautiful pink roses.

One day Anna comes home and finds Gran at the door of the building with a lot of bags. 'Oh, can I help you?' she says. 'Can I carry something?' 'Thank you very much,' says Gran.

At the apartment, Gran says, 'Come in, dear. Would you like some coffee?'

'Oh — that 's very nice of you,' says Anna. 'I'm new here, and I don't know anybody in the building.' 'What do you do?' asks Gran. 'I'm a music student,' says Anna.

Gran brings some coffee into the room. 'These are lovely apartments, aren't they?' says Anna.

'Oh yes,' says Gran. 'I like it here very much.' She tells Anna about her apartment, and about Charlton. Later Anna gets up. 'I must go now,' she says. 'Thank you for the coffee.' 'Goodbye, dear,' says Gran, and Anna goes out. 'What a nice girl,' Gran thinks. 'But - just a minute. A music student - perhaps she's the girl with the guitar! I can ask her over one day when Will comes. No I can't - I don't know the number of her apartment!'

Later that week Vicki talks to Anna. 'I'm having a party on Saturday,' she says. 'Can you come?' 'Yes, of course!' says Anna. 'Your parties are always wonderful.' Vicki calls her brother. 'Come to my party on Saturday, James,' she says, 'and bring some friends.'

On Saturday, James and his friends arrive at Vicki's house. 'Hi, Vicki,' says James. 'Meet my friends. This is Tom, and Daniel - and Will.'

Just then, Vicki's phone rings. 'I'm sorry, Vicki,' says Anna. 'I can't come to your party, because I'm not feeling well.'

'Oh Anna! I'm sorry, too,' says Vicki. 'Well, stay in bed, and get better soon.'

Vicki's party is wonderful. Will meets Natalie, and Jane, and Katie. But he does not meet Anna.

### **Chapter III. Red Roses**

Now it's October. Will visits his gran, but he does not see Anna. He walks along the corridor, but he does not hear a guitar. 'Where is she?' he thinks.

Anna visits her family for a week, then she comes back to her apartment. She looks for Will, but she does not see him. 'There are lots of men!' says Vicki, but Anna cannot forget Will.

Then Gran goes to hospital for two weeks. One day Will visits her there. 'How are you today, Gran?' he asks. 'Very well thank you, dear. I'm going home on Friday.' 'That's good,' says Will. 'Perhaps I can get some things for you on Thursday and take them to the apartment.' 'That 's very nice of you, Will,' says Gran.

After work on Thursday Will goes to the shops and gets some things for Gran. He gets some roses, too, and he puts everything in his car.

Suddenly it begins to rain. Will is getting into his car when he sees his friend Tom. 'Where are you going, Tom?' says Will. 'Home — to Eastfield.'

'I'm going to my gran's apartment in Charlton, so I can take you to Eastfield first.'

'Can you take my friend Anna, too? She's going to Charlton.' 'Yes of course,' says Will.

Tom and Anna get into Will's car.

'Thanks, Will,' says Tom. 'It's not a very nice night!'

'That's all right, Tom,' says Will. He drives Tom home, and then he says to Anna, 'Where are you going, Anna?'

'I'm going to Grandview Apartments. It's on Park Road.' 'That's funny,' says Will. 'I'm going to Grandview Apartments.' 'Is it her?' he thinks. 'The girl with the guitar?' He looks in the mirror, but he can't see her face very well.

'Can I smell roses?' thinks Anna. 'Is it him - the man with the roses?'

Then they are outside the apartment building. They get out of the car, and then they begin to talk at the same time. 'Oh! It's you!' 'You play the guitar!' 'And you come here with roses!'

'Yes — I always bring roses to my gran.' 'His gran!' thinks Anna. 'Not his wife, not his girlfriend.' 'She's coming home from hospital tomorrow, so I'm taking some things to her apartment,' says Will. 'Can I . . . would you like some help?' says Anna. 'Yes please!' says Will.

They go up to Gran's apartment. Will puts things away, and Anna puts the roses in a vase.

'There — aren't they lovely!' she says. 'I like roses. They smell wonderful.' 'Thank you for your help, Anna,' says Will. 'That 's all right,' Anna says. 'Look - would you like to come up to my apartment for coffee?' 'I'd like to very much,' says Will.

He smiles, and she smiles. They go upstairs.

On Friday Gran comes home. Will goes to see her. He is carrying a bunch of red roses. 'That 's a big smile, Will!' says Gran. 'Red roses - don't they say "Red roses for love" ?' 'Well, Gran ...' says Will.

Ten minutes later, Will comes out of Gran's apartment and goes upstairs. He 's carrying a bunch of red roses.

Gran goes out onto the balcony and sits down in the sun. She can hear a guitar. Then it stops.

Gran hears Will's voice, and Anna's voice. Then Anna laughs. Gran smiles. She can smell roses - beautiful red roses, in the sun, outside on a balcony.