

Christmas Love
a short story
by Austin Mitchell

Rog was feeling pleased with himself. The Christmas season was coming up and he was hoping to enjoy it. There would be non-stop entertainment. He and his friends usually attended lots of parties. His girlfriend, Megan, was never around during these holidays. She was around during most of the other holidays. But at Christmas she had to be with her relatives. He didn't mind, since it afforded him the opportunity to get a new girl. This had happened for the past three seasons. Megan was making plans on how she was going to spend her holidays in Howell's Content. She had always insisted that one of the reasons for her going to spend the holidays with her parents was that they had a big family dinner. She also got the opportunity to attend church. He would usually take her down there and return for her.

Rog worked with a large insurance brokerage house. They normally had their party two weeks before Christmas. It was a big event with all the staff turning out. Megan would come too and he would go to her company's party the next night.

So the Christmas season was upon them. He owned his own flat, a one bedroom spread in a new development in Vineyard Town. She lived with her aunt. She would spend time with him as her aunt was a liberal woman and knew that when she was her nieces age, she wasn't allowed a lot of freedom by her parents. However, she recognized that times had changed.

That Friday evening Rog drove Megan down to Howell's Content and returned to Kingston. He went on the plazas and saw his good friend, Trend Roofe.

"What's going on, Trend? I just took Megan down to the country," he greeted his friend.

"Yeah, well my girl, Latoya, just got news that her sister met in an accident in Fort Lauderdale and she has to go up so I'm rushing to drop her at the airport."

"I hope everything's all right with Latoya's sister. I suppose we can start tomorrow night."

They shook hands and the latter departed for his car.

Meanwhile, in another part of the city Chanella Pearson and Debra Deacon were in deep conversation.

“Have you ever seen that guy, what was his name again?” Chanella asked Debra.

Three years ago Debra had met this fabulous guy, who was two years older than her. He had his own car, his own flat in Vineyard Town. He was also in a good job. They had partied the Christmas away and then just when she was ready to announce him to her friends as the new man in her life he had disappeared after New Year’s eve. Despite numerous attempts on her part, she never saw him again. A different guy answered his cell phone and when she asked for Rog, he told her that this was his cell phone number and he didn’t know anybody by that name. When she turned up at his apartment complex the security guard refused to let her in.

“I remember that his name was Rog. I still feel so silly for letting him fill up my head with all those stories. I still feel like a fool.”

“I feel like a fool too, my guy’s name was Trend and just about the same thing happened to me like what you described.”

Chanella worked as a secretary for a New Kingston based insurance agency. She was of medium height and would be twenty five years old in January. Debra was a customer service representative at a large building society branch office also in New Kingston. She was tall and was twenty five years of age. They were talking as they waited for transportation to take them home to Portmore and Spanish Town respectively.

Chanella’s boyfriend of one year had migrated to Trinidad with his company three months ago, so she was in for a lonely Christmas. Debra had been through two boyfriends since her experience with Rog. She and her last boyfriend had broken up in mid-September but she nevertheless was hoping to really party this Christmas.

Both girls said their goodbyes as their buses came.

On Monday Chanella was shopping after work on the Constant Spring Mall when she bumped into this guy and her bags fell out of her hand.

“Oh, I’m sorry, Miss,” the guy said as he bent down and picked them up.

“Thanks.”

“Say, you shouldn’t be out shopping all alone.”

“My sister was supposed to have joined me, but at the last minute she phoned to tell me that her boyfriend has this party he wants her to go with him.”

“I’m out shopping, myself, just for some pieces of clothes to maybe go to a few clubs and parties.”

She loved his easy smile and he was so handsome plus he was wearing an expensive perfume.

They were in front of Woolworths now.

“I’m going inside to get some gift wrap paper,” she told him.

“Say, maybe I could hold some of your things for you. You don’t have a car you could put away some of these things?”

“No, I don’t have a car,” she said, handing him some of her parcels.

They went into Woolworths where she chose some gift wrap paper.

They soon found themselves upstairs the Food Court having a drink.

“Say, you haven’t told me your name,” he remarked.

She put up a face, then took some more of her fruit punch through a straw.

“I don’t give out my name to strangers.”

“I’m Rog and that’s short for Roger Lecky.”

At the name Rog, her heart skipped a beat. She looked him up and down. Was this the same guy Debra was talking about? In her heart she wished that it wasn’t so.

“I’m Shanique.”

“That took ages. You seem to have been lost for a moment there, but I like your name. Are you finished shopping?”

“Sure I am, but I’ll have to take these parcels over to the bus park. Can you help me?”

He helped and solicited a date with her for the following night.

Chanella called Debra and they decided to have lunch together. The two girls were lunching upstairs the New Kingston Shopping Centre.

She had given Debra a description of Rog. Debra agreed that this was the person she knew.

“So you told him that you were Shanique. So what did he say?”

“I’m going out with him tonight.”

“Wow girl, I can’t wait. I want to hear all about it.”

“We’ll be going to this party his friend is having up in Jacks Hill. I’m so excited.”

“I hope I’ll be as lucky as you. I really want to party this season, but I suppose I can always go out with my friends.”

“I can ask Rog, maybe he could introduce you to one of his friends.”

“Not another Trend Roofe. Do I sound so desperate, Chanella?” Debra asked and it was Chanella’s turn to be embarrassed at the mention of Trend’s name.

“I don’t know about you, but I’m just going to enjoy myself without making any commitments.”

“I hope you enjoy yourself, Chanella,” Debra remarked and Chanella burst out laughing.

They had finished eating now. They both got up from the table and returned to their respective workplace.

Trend looked at the girl in the receptionist booth. She looked hot, he thought. Her face was so pretty and she had an easy smile. She was definitely his type of girl.

Debra saw the young man looking at her and moved to help him.

“What can I do for you, sir?”

“I got a notice that I was overdue on my premiums.”

She directed him to speak to Janice Stephenson, another customer service agent.

When he was passing her he gave her his card. He asked for her cell phone number, but she refused. He decided to call her when he reached his office.

The receptionist put him through to her.

“I’m the guy you just met, the one who gave you his card and asked for your cell phone number.”

“I don’t remember you. Nearly every guy who comes in here wants my cell phone number and gives me their card.”

He described himself to her.

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