

# *The Rambling Rose and the Fir Tree*

*Reg Down*

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Once, not so very long ago, there lived a rose. It was a rambling rose and grew on a trellis on the sunny side of a house. This rose had leaves like a rose, and thorns like a rose, and it rambled like a rambling rose, but it didn't have any roses like a rose. No matter how hard it grew no roses ever appeared.

The gardener who planted it waited for seven years for the rambling rose to flower – but it never did.

“That plant is no good,” he said one day as he stood looking at it growing up its trellis. “I shall wait till winter. If it doesn't flower by then I'll dig it up and throw it away.”

Winter came and snow lay upon the ground. It was almost Christmas and the rambling rose still did not flower. So the gardener fetched his spade, dug up its roots, pulled it roughly off its trellis and threw it into the back of the garden out of sight.

Now it happened that the rambling rose landed next to a fir tree. The gardener had never paid much attention to this tree, but now he looked at it carefully.

“That tree is getting too big. Soon it will be a lot of work to haul it away. I shall come back in the morning and cut it down.” Then he walked away.

The fir tree was sad. He had not lived very long and now he was to be cut down. The fir tree wept bitter tears as the rambling rose lay dying next to it.

That night a child walked through the garden. He heard the fir tree crying and saw the rose dying next to it.

“What is wrong, dear plants?” he asked.

“I am to be cut down tomorrow,” wept the little fir tree, “and I shall die.”

“And I cannot bear flowers,” said the rambling rose, “so the gardener dug me up and threw me away.”

The little child made a hole underneath the fir tree and planted the rambling rose into it. Then he wound the rose's long brambles in and out amongst the branches of the fir tree.

"Don't give up," said the child, "there is always hope," and he walked away.

In the morning the gardener took an axe and went to cut down the fir tree. But when he came to the corner of the garden he stopped in surprise. There in the snow he saw the rambling rose twining up the fir tree, and covered with red and white roses.

He ran to tell the master of the house and the whole family came and admired the little fir tree and the rose. From far and wide people came to see the sight, and from that year on the rambling rose put forth red and white roses at Christmas time for as long as the fir tree grew.