

## TONY THE FLORIST

By DOROTHY DOUGLAS

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Tony stood in his little florist shop and gazed longingly at the window across the avenue. His dark eyes, that held the tragedy and beauty of Italy in their brown depths, gazed during all idle moments in that same direction.

But the girl in the shop behind that window was not aware of Tony's gaze nor in any way conscious of the florist's existence.

Had both the tiny fragments of shop been rolled into one there would not even have been a space worth calling a shop—not a real Broadway shop. But within the heart of Ruby Vale was an ambition and sense of the artistic quite big enough to fill far greater space than her slim means could measure in actual possession. Ruby was not exactly one of the great herd of interior decorators that were filling all available basements with oddments of antiques and orange candlesticks, but she carried an assortment of accessories to the home.

As Tony gazed across the avenue each morning when he opened his own fragrant shop he knew that some new exquisite color scheme would greet him in Ruby's window. Try as he might to rise early, the girl opposite always managed to be down earlier and to have arranged her display for the day before he could get there.

He would then arrange his own beautiful flowers and was beginning to take his color effects, as far as was possible with seasonable blossoms, from the window opposite.

Only the day before there had been an exquisite twisted silver candlestick with an amethyst chignon shade, and lying carelessly beside it a cushion of amethyst taffeta with great silver tassels. Tony had sighed rapturously. Asters were in season and within ten minutes after seeing Ruby's window Tony had a display of lavender asters, with here and there a touch of silver birch.

Today the color was softest mazel, and Tony had gloried in the palest of chrysanthemums, with a few nasturtiums for character.

Had the two shops been side by side they would have lured the most indifferent passer-by and drawn many a customer, first to buy a dainty lamp shade and then into Tony's shop for a cluster of flowers to match it.

How Tony longed to go across the street with just a flower or two and thereby add the necessary finishing touch to Ruby's window display no one but himself knew. And perhaps had Ruby been other than an amber-eyed, golden-haired girl to make one dream of, Tony would have found courage to make his small contribution. But the heart of the florist beat thunderously at the very sight of Ruby and he feared to seem foolish in her eyes.

Had Tony been a scheming lover he could easily have gone boldly into the shop opposite and purchased any amount of lovely things for the little apartment that was perched high up on Riverside drive, with its windows turned toward the broad Hudson. He could have had endless trips to the shop, first for hangings for those windows, then for candle shades and finally for cushions, and in the end he might have carried Ruby herself out of the shop and into his heart. But Tony was not wise in the art of wooing. He was far wiser in the art of making and investing money, and braver at fighting, as a medal or two planned on his old uniform could vouch, than he was at winning a girl.

Modesty forbade Tony even supposing that Ruby had cast eyes in his direction. But modesty was greatly in error, for Ruby had not only cast many admiring glances at young, good-looking Tony, but she sent many a longing eye at the wonderful flowers that so often matched the color of her own window decoration.

Ruby had put all her small hoardings into a very lovely stock and could not afford to buy the few flowers she would love to have had daily to adorn her window. She, with Tony, realized that the few living blossoms would add a touch to her color scheme that would attract even the most elusive eyes. But flowers in the city were too expensive for struggling decorators to buy, so Ruby contented herself by planning for the day when she should not only have all she wanted but a full garden of her very own.

The morning that gave Tony a time advantage over Ruby was a record day. He arrived at his shop before the blinds opposite were even drawn or the color scheme there for him to copy. Tony wondered whether he should wait, but decided to develop a window effect of his own and was not without a faint hope that Ruby would see it and take his lead as he had so often taken hers.

Chrysanthemums were in from the market—great shaggy wonders of the flower kingdom, and Tony, unable to resist the warmth of pink, threw himself with characteristic swiftness into the arrangement of a window that sent its glow along the entire block. Certainly it cheered the early business humors as they dashed into the subway's yawning mouth.

Had Tony been anywhere but in the extreme back of his shop he would have seen Ruby emerging hurriedly from that same subway, stand for a

moment entirely absorbing the exquisite color of his flowers, then sit across and insert the key in her own door and pass within.

When he next looked across the street his heart jumped joyfully. In Ruby's window, with its soft background, was a luster ware lamp of exquisite pink with a chiffon shade that fairly took one's breath away by the chiffon softness of it. A pink wastebasket and billowy cushion completed the dainty picture.

Tony was no longer shy. With swift fingers he selected the most wonderful of chrysanthemums—pink and shaggy and exhaling that strange fascinating odor that was neither sweet nor bitter, but just fresh and pure.

He faced the little door opposite now with the same feeling of a conqueror that had been his when facing the enemy guns. Boldly he crossed the street with his huge pink blossom, a splash of color amid the Broadway traffic.

Ruby flushed brilliantly when she saw Tony in her doorway, but her smile went deep into the florist's heart.

"Oh-h!" she breathed softly, "what a wonderful, wonderful flower!"

"I wanted you to have it in your window," Tony told her simply.

"It will bring me in clients by the dozen," Ruby accepted the flower so graciously that Tony chided himself for not having come over weeks before. "Let's put it in this pink vase."

Together they stepped outside to get the full effect and both marveled at the artistic whole.

"I will bring you flowers each day," said Tony, "and as I am supplying many hotels and restaurants with flowers I know I can get you orders for candle shades for the same places—that is—if you want me to." Tony's habitual modesty rushed to his rescue. "Perhaps you don't."

A swift tremor of emotion seized Ruby. She had a desire to cry, but decided to laugh instead. The idea of her not wanting orders was amusing, but Tony was so innocent in his doubts. She knew that the coming of the florist into her life meant great big work and something even bigger than work. The quiet expression in Tony's eyes as they looked into hers told Ruby many things.

"Of course I want them," she told him, "and in return I shall send every client I get straight over to you to get flowers to match every color scheme."

Tony laughed. "I see people swarming to my shop now, so good-by for the time being." He was out before Ruby quite realized that he had been there. Only the pink chrysanthemum reminded her throughout the day of Tony. She carried it home to her small room at night rather than to leave it alone in the shop, and as the evenings wore on a different flower was added to the collection, having served its duty during the day. And each morning that Tony came over with his flowers and his orders found Ruby curiously ready to receive him.

A scant three weeks had passed, busy weeks, however, before he told her about the apartment with the windows looking far up the Hudson. "Whenever you design anything especially artistic," he said, "just smuggle it away for me. There are just five rooms, but I'll say there won't be five more wonderful rooms in the world when they are decorated with some of these chiffrony things."

"And many flowers," Ruby suggested.

"One wonderful flower," said Tony.

**Fishing Frog Hideous.**

There is a hideous reptile, known as the fishing frog, which angles for its game as expertly and with as great success as the most adroit fly fisher. He is a clumsy, awkward swimmer, but nature has compensated him for his unskillfulness by furnishing him with an equivalent for a rod and line, with bait always ready for use. Two elongated tentacles spring from his nose, which taper down like actual fishing rods. To the end of them is attached, by a slender filament, which serves the purpose of a line, a bait in the form of a shiny bit of membrane. The hooks are set in the mouth of the fisherman below, and in order to induce the fish to venture within reach of them, the angler struts up the mud at the bottom with his fins and tail. This attracts the fish and conceals him from their observation. He then plies his rod; the glittering bait glows in the water like a living insect. The dazed fish are taken in great numbers, perfectly circumscribed by the trick of the crafty angler, who can give pointers to the best trout fisherman.

**Had to Wait for Fame.**

Dryden and Scott were not known as authors until each was in his fortieth year. Thomas Carlyle was thirty-nine before he published "Sartor Resartus," and forty-three when he produced his "French Revolution." Richard Hooker was forty-one when his famous "Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity" was first published. Dr. Samuel Johnson was thirty-eight when he announced the plan of his Dictionary of the English Language, and was forty-six when, after a heroic struggle against penury, he succeeded in publishing the work.

**Little Guam's Expensive Pests.**

The rat and iguana campaign is still continuing. Rat catching has become almost a habit with the natives, as a line of them with their quarry is always in evidence in front of the jail on rat days. From the inception of the campaign in September, 1916, up to and including December 18, 1918, 1,571,643 rats and 40,053 iguanas were destroyed at a total cost to the island government of \$37,940.25.—Guam News Letter.

## TRUE BLUE

By ANNA M. GORDON.

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Somewhere in the prosaic little town of Ironton, there lived a likely lad by the name of David Glen, to be exact. David never had been a handsome boy, and two years of trench life had added no new beauty to his appearance. His deep gray eyes were still weak and watery from the blinding effects of gas; there had grown a slight stoop in his thin shoulders; and patches of iron gray hair had mingled with the black along his temples. Not one person in a hundred would throw more than a casual glance in his direction on passing him in the street. Blue-eyed Hazel did, though, and now David doesn't want anyone else to, that is, not in the same way.

Back in the days of the world war not a handful of people had ever given David Glen a thought. On his return from France he found that his reputation, running ahead of him, had paved a royal road for his feet to travel as he marched into Ironton. Buildings were decorated with banners; speeches were being made and crowds of people thronged the streets.

In the midst of it all, David was homesick and lonesome, until a slender girl, stopping by his side as he rested from the march, rewarded him with her praises and with the light of her eyes for all the hardships through which he had passed.

That is why David Glen sat every pleasant evening on blue-eyed Hazel's piazza—by Hazel's express command, and invitation. Under ordinary circumstances they might never have met, for Hazel was as rich as David was poor. This fact caused Aunt Caroline, Hazel's guardian, many sleepless nights, and as yet she had arrived at no definite conclusion regarding how to dispose of David.

For that matter, David's concerns were even then bothering him quite as much as they were bothering Aunt Caroline. Totally oblivious of anything or anybody save himself and Hazel he discussed them. Two hours they had sat on the wide front piazza of the red brick house talking over plans, and the topic was still fresh.

The afternoon sun had slipped away; dusk had fallen; a solitary woman coming into the house by the side entrance, and passing through the hall, had paused by the screened piazza door unnoticed. Still the young people continued to discuss plans for the future.

"I can understand, Hazel, just how you feel," said David. "You want to hire this new house beside Aunt Caroline's and furnish it well, because Aunt Caroline has a big house."

At the words "Aunt Caroline" the quiet woman inside the doorway gave a slight start. A puzzled smile wreathed her mouth as she listened. Then, deliberately standing farther back in the shadows, she cupped her hand over her left ear that she might hear a little plainer.

"Now, I say," continued David; "let's start honest. Let's live our own lives where I can afford to. You know I lost what few clients I had when I went to war."

The quiet woman in the doorway leaned breathlessly forward awaiting the reply. It came at last, slowly, but yielding.

"I know you're right, David, but Aunt Caroline has been like a mother to me, and the new house is a dream." Try as hard as she could, not another coherent sound could the listening woman hear. As for the incoherent ones—they were not meant for her.

"So they plan to leave me," she spluttered, all indecision about David frown. "They plan to leave me all alone in this big house—no honest man to advise me about my property—no little girl to help me fix my clothes decently—those two, out there—the only man I've ever heard talk honest—and the little girl I've brought up from a baby. Not much! Not if I know it!"

Back through the hall Aunt Caroline hastened. Opening the door with a bang she confronted the guilty miscreants.

"You come in here with me, both of you," choked she. "We'll soon make some headway about your affairs."

Blinking painfully at the bright light, David and Hazel meekly followed after the irate little woman along the hall to the living room. There, standing hand in hand by the round center table, they surveyed her with questioning eyes.

"Now children," she ejaculated, gestulating with both hands, "I'm an old woman, and one who must have her own way. Don't interrupt me until I finish. That new house on the right has come into my possession, and I intend, just as soon as I can, to make it over to you for your wedding present."

"We thank you but we can't afford to live—" began David.

"Wait until I finish," commanded Aunt Caroline. "I'll give you this house on one condition—that David takes me as his client. I want to be relieved of my business worries. I am going to take a rest."

With her hand on David's shoulder, Aunt Caroline anxiously watched the result of her maneuver.

Then David looked gleefully down at Hazel, and Hazel, patting his gray coat sleeve, looked almost jealously at Aunt Caroline. Not for one moment did she doubt but that Aunt Caroline saw David as she did—a hero, gigantic and brave, ready to tackle and conquer the whole earth.

## AN ATTRACTIVE BRICK BUNGALOW

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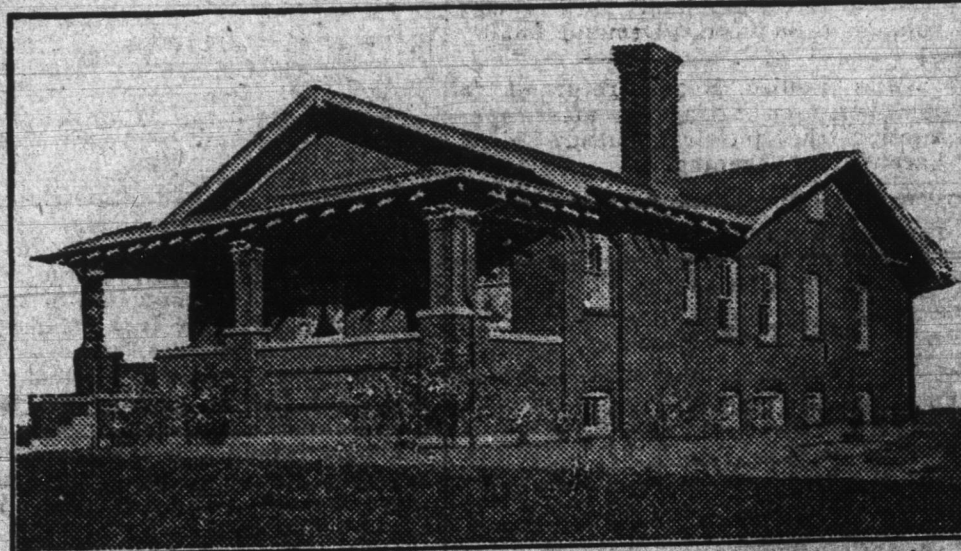
This is the season of the year when those who expect to build a home next spring are studying home building designs. Undoubtedly they have fixed in their minds about the sort of house they will build. But the decision will be influenced by the designs of houses they see and by the exteriors and interiors of the homes of the friends they visit. Nevertheless, building a home is an important step, and the house should not be selected without a careful study of plans and consideration of what the family needs.

One of the first decisions to be made is in regard to the materials to be used. In a great many minds, the thought of a house brings a picture of a frame building of wood. To others, brick will be the material, while some will consider hollow building tile, or cement blocks. Each material has its advantages and disadvantages. But, when arguments for and against the different materials are summed up, it finally becomes a matter of individual taste.

In practically every city the majority of houses erected at the present time are of brick, either of solid brick or of brick over frame, or hollow tile. Brick has a good, substantial appearance and has the advantages of providing a home that is warm in winter and cool in summer. And at present prices there is little difference in cost between any of the materials.

Herewith is shown a home building design that is most popular. It is a five-room brick bungalow that is attractive in exterior appearance and has a room arrangement that is convenient and will make a most comfortable home. While the rooms are small in number, they are of good size, and will provide accommodations for the average family.

The attractive feature of the exterior of this house is the porch. It is 26 by 10 feet in dimensions, which is a



size that makes it a place where the members of the family will congregate in summer. The pergola effect of the roof, the artistic columns, the panel effect in the front wall and the stone trim combine to make it pleasing in appearance.

The house is of standard brick construction with a veneer of face brick. It is 26 feet wide and 48 feet long, a size and shape suitable for a narrow city lot. However, its lines are such that it will fit almost any size lot, and when surrounded with shrubs and flowers on a large plot will be an exceptionally good looking building.

The five rooms, as shown by the floor plan, are living and dining rooms, two bedrooms and kitchen, and, of course, a bathroom. How conveniently these rooms are arranged can be readily seen by a glance at the floor plan.

The living room is 23 feet long and 15 feet wide, extending across the front of the house. The entrance door is at the end, and there are two broad windows in the front wall and two smaller windows in the end wall, which makes the room sunny and cheerful. Cheeriness in the winter is contributed by the open fireplace.

Back of the living room on one side are ranged the dining room and kitchen; on the other, connected by a short hall, are the two bedrooms, with the bathroom between.

The dining room is an exceptionally large room for this type of house, being 12 by 17 feet. It has a set of four windows in the outside wall, making it a light and cheerful room. The kitchen is 10 by 13 feet, and has additional space in the pantry and entry way, the latter opening onto a small rear porch.

The front bedroom is 11 feet 6 inches by 12 feet, and the rear bedroom is 10 feet 6 inches by 13 feet. The location of the bathroom, opposite the entrance to the hall from the dining room, is a

convenient arrangement. Plenty of closet space is provided.

A narrow stair, opening out of the dining room, leads to the attic over the rear half of the house. It will be noted that the roof is raised sufficiently to permit of a good-sized room in the attic, to be used either for storage or as a sleeping apartment.

The basement extends under the whole building and provides ample space for the heating plant, the fuel room, and rooms for the storage of fruits and vegetables and the various garden tools, etc.

This type of house is not only economical to build, but it is a good in-



Floor Plan.

vestment. It is of a size that is readily salable and has a room arrangement that will appeal to a majority of buyers.

The most satisfactory way to secure a home of one's own is to build it. When plans for the building have been selected, the owner knows exactly what he will get, and that it will be the sort of house that he and his family want.

**Keep Community Buildings.**

One result of neighborhood and community activity during the war has been the increasing desire in many regions to make this work permanent. To this end certain neighborhoods are preparing to acquire buildings originally erected for other purposes and transform them into community centers. Other towns which have temporarily maintained headquarters for soldiers camping in their vicinity propose to make these headquarters per-

## A HOUSEKEEPER

By GRACE E. RILEY.

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Hester Blynn started the trouble. Hester had lived with Melissa for 14 years. Now she was married and Melissa was left alone.

"I believe I'm lonesome," Melissa gurgled to herself. Gurgled describes it. Her conversation always seemed on the ragged edge of a laugh.

Fifteen years before, the heart of Ned Coffin, Melissa's sweetheart since her childhood days, had been captured by a summer boarder—a pretty girl and gay, who, when urged by Ned, had given up her school in Boston and married him in late September.

Their wedding day gave birth to Melissa's gurgling laugh, a disguise for her aching heart; and to all intents and purposes, Melissa had bought a farm in New York state, where, with her cousin Hester Blynn, she had lived and had gained a name for herself, both for her excellent cooking and for her fine friendliness to the world in general.

"Yes, I'm lonesome," she reiterated. "When a woman gets to pitying herself, she'd better look elsewhere for an outlet for her thoughts," and, lighting the lamp, she settled down to devour her farm paper. Everything from the president's illness to the want ads fell under her appraising eye. Then an ejaculation escaped from her lips. Someone in Nantucket wanted a housekeeper. She'd love to answer it! She was a good cook, and was alone in the world. What was to prevent? She read again:

"A widower on Nantucket Island has a place for a housekeeper with prospects. Address N-24, Farmers' Home."

"Seems like writing to a white post or some equally inhuman thing. Maybe he's that sort. Well, we'll see. Guess I'll send him a jar of my plums as a wedge to his approval," said Melissa, suiting action to word by making a raid on her choicest preserves. With great care she packed the jar, and, as with the letter, signed "Melissa Crosby," her mother's name, and addressed it, too, to N-24.

"Melissa, you're an old foot, but, as the saying goes, 'no fool like an old fool.'" So saying, she bolted the door, put out the lamp, hanked the kitchen fire and mounted the stairs to her cozy bedroom.

The next day, Ben, man of all work, carried her letter and package to town, and for a week Melissa was as near to nerves as a healthy woman can be. Then came a letter from N-24, expressing his desire that Melissa Crosby come on Oct. 1, to Boston, where he would meet her. He signed himself "Faithfully yours, N-24."

To say Melissa was in a state of excitement would little describe her perturbation. "Now, Melissa, what have you let yourself in for? Probably he's 70 years old and feeble. No, he can't be feeble, else he couldn't come to Boston," she argued as her laugh filled the room.

She wrote again to N-24, telling him to come to the Y. W. C. A., Boston, on Oct. 1, and ask for her. Then followed the busiest two weeks of Melissa's life. In the midst of packing preparatory to closing the house, Hester and her husband unexpectedly returned.

"Oh, Melissa, we're in awful trouble," said Hester.

"This is the place to come, then, Hester. What's wrong?"

"You know we were planning to buy the Hiram Brown place, had the papers already to sign, when Hiram got one of his tantrums on, and refused to sell. Now we ain't got any place to go."

"The Lord will provide," read Melissa from an old sampler hanging over the kitchen door. "You surely came to the right place, Hester; you can rent my farm."

"But I don't understand, Melissa." "Course you don't, so I'll tell you. I'm going to Nantucket for a spell, and will be only too glad to rent the farm if you and John will take it."

After a discussion of terms and conditions, the matter was satisfactorily settled, and in a week Melissa was on her way to Boston. October 1 found N-24 at the desk of the Y. W. C. A., inquiring for Miss Crosby. "She's sitting in that telephone room over there," the attendant told him. He crossed the hall, then stopped suddenly, but not before Melissa's glance had fallen on him.

"Ned Coffin, what are you doing here?"

Ned took in the situation at once. "So you, Melissa, are Miss Crosby? I am N-24, Melissa. So you're going to be my housekeeper?"

A hot flush stained her cheeks. "Now, Melissa," she scolded herself, "don't be silly."

"Guess I am, Ned."

He chuckled. The chuckle increased until it became a hearty laugh.

"What are you laughing at, Ned—why do you look so wise?"

"I was thinking 'bout my ad, Melissa."

"What about it?" The writing of the ad had quite gone from her memory.

"A housekeeper with prospects," he quoted.

She raised her eyes to meet his, her cheeks growing pinker and plumper as he said in lowered tone, "Meliss, how about the prospect materializing before we leave Boston?"

Melissa's gurgling laugh was cut short as Ned Coffin, reading acquiescence in her eyes, followed the lead of man since time immemorial.