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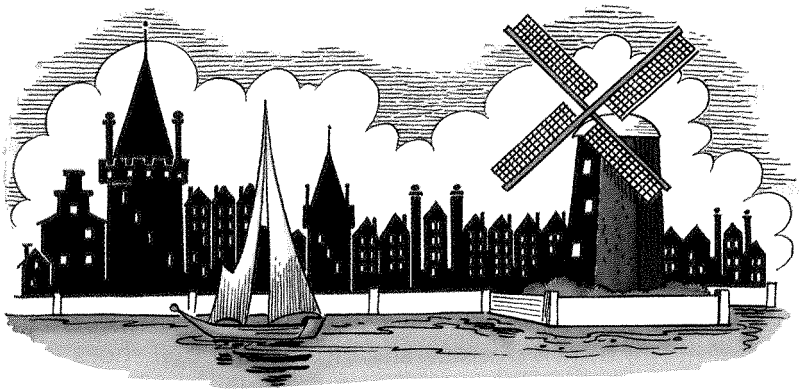
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# Chapter 1

## The Pink Tulip



Peering over the edge of the boat rail, Love strained her weary blue eyes for a glimpse of land. The sun was like a ball of soft gold light, peering dimly through the haze. Suddenly, like a heavenly place, the city appeared. There were tall, shining towers, gold church spires, pointed roofs with wide red chimneys where the storks stood in one-legged fashion, and great windmills with their long arms stretched out to catch the four winds. The boat was soon to reach the city of Amsterdam, in the country of Holland. The boat was full of people who were looking for a place to live where they could worship God freely. These people were known as the Pilgrims.

Love Bradford, ten years old, flaxen haired, and as pretty as an English rose in June, wrapped her long, gray coat more closely around her and turned to one of the women on board.

“Do you think that my father may have taken another boat that sailed faster than this and is waiting for me on the shore, Mistress Brewster? The last words he said to me when he left me on the ship were ‘Wait patiently until I come, Love; I will not be long.’ That was many days ago.”

Mistress Brewster turned away so the little girl might not see the tears that filled her eyes. Love’s father, just before the ship that carried the Pilgrims from England had sailed, had been cast into prison by the king, because of his faith in Jesus Christ. Love was all alone, but Mistress Brewster did not want her to know that her father, Goodman Bradford, was imprisoned.

“Maybe your father will meet you some day soon in Holland. Surely, if he said that he would not be long, he will keep his word. See, Love, see the little boy down there in the fishing boat.”

Love looked in the direction in which the woman pointed. A plump, rosy little boy with eyes as blue as Love’s own and dressed in full brown trousers and clumsy wooden shoes sat on a big net in one end of the boat. He looked up as the sails of the little fishing craft glided closely alongside the boat that carried the wanderers from England. At first, he dropped his eyes in shyness at the sight of the little girl. Then he lifted them again and as his eyes met hers, the two children smiled at each other. It was like a flash of sunshine piercing the gray haze that hung over the sea.

There were friends waiting on the shore for every passenger except Love. These were older brothers, fathers, and other relatives who had made the pilgrimage from England a few months before and had homes ready for their family members. They climbed a long hill, very flat on the top, and reached by a flight

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of steps. Then they were as high as the trees that lined the beach and could look over the narrow streets, the tidy cottages with their red roofs, and the pretty gardens. There were many little canals, like blue ribbons, cutting through the green fields. Love walked into town with Mistress Brewster.

A Dutch housewife, dressed in a white cap and apron, met them and said, "Welcome to Amsterdam!" She put her hand on Love's yellow hair. "And in which house are you going to live, little English blossom?" she asked kindly.

Love looked up wonderingly into her face and there was a whispered consultation between Mistress Brewster and the Amsterdam woman. "Poor little blossom! She shall come home with me. There is always room for one more in the stork's nest," the Dutch woman said kindly. She took Love's hand and led her away from the others, and along the canal.

The house where they stopped was really very odd. It was made of red and yellow bricks and it stood on long posts sunk deep into the ground. The white kitchen door was so clean that it was hard to tell that they were walking into the kitchen. What a kitchen it was, so cozy and so quaint! The floor was made of white tiles and there was a charming little fireplace. It looked like a big brass pan filled with coals, and there was a shining copper kettle hung over it by a chain from the ceiling. The kettle bubbled and sang a cheerful welcome to Love. There were stiff white curtains at the windows, and on the sill of one window was a row of blossoming plants. Blue and white dishes and a pair of tall candlesticks stood on a shelf. Love could see a bright sitting room beyond and another room where there was a strange bed, built on the wall and stretching almost from the floor to the ceiling.

"Jan, Jan," the woman called. "Come in from the garden and offer your new little English sister a seed cake. You may have one

yourself, too. You have often wished for a playmate and here one has come to live in the house with you."

The door opened slowly and in came Jan. He did not look up at first. Then his eyes caught Love's. It was the little boy from the fishing boat. It was his dear mother who had offered to take care of lonely little Love.



"You may help me drive the dogs that draw the milk wagon," Jan said to Love the next morning, after they had become well acquainted over their breakfast of milk and oatmeal cakes.

"And so I can help to earn money for your kind mother," Love said with shining eyes.

Jan had two dogs and a little two-wheeled cart to which he harnessed them every morning. Into the cart his mother put two shining pails of milk and a long-handled dipper for measuring. Today she also put in some round, white cheeses and golden balls of butter. Off started the cart along the narrow street with Love running along one side and Jan clattering along in his

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wooden shoes on the other side. The dogs knew where to stop almost as well as Jan did, for they had made the trip quite often. The cheese and butter were soon gone, and everyone had a pleasant smile for the little English girl. At one cottage, a Dutch housewife brought out a strange, earth-colored bulb that she put in Love's hands. Then, smiling down into the little girl's wondering face, she said:

"It is truly a rare one. I give it to you that you may plant it and tend it all winter. When the spring comes, you will have a finer one than any child in all Amsterdam."

Love thanked the woman, but she puzzled over the hard, dry bulb as she and Jan walked home beside the empty milk cart. "It looks like nothing but an onion. What good is it, Jan?"

Jan's eyes twinkled. "I know, but I won't tell," he said. "I want you to be surprised next spring. Come, Love, we will plant it in the corner of the garden that the sun shines on first in the spring. Then we will wait to see what grows."

As Jan dug a hole and Love planted the bulb, his words repeated themselves in the little girl's lonely heart. She remembered, too, what her dear father had said last to her, "Wait patiently until I come, Love." Would her patience bring her missing father back, Love wondered sorrowfully.

The days passed, with blue skies and the bright sun shining down upon the canal, and then grew shorter. The storks flew south, and Love was very happy. Her days with Jan were busy, merry ones. She, too, had wooden shoes now; and Jan's mother had made her a warm red skirt and velvet girdle and a green quilted coat. Love looked like a real little Dutch girl as she skated to school, with her knitting in her school bag to busy her fingers with when it was recess time.

There was never any place in England, Love thought, so merry as the frozen canal in front of her new home in Holland.

Everybody was on skates; the market women with wooden yokes over their shoulders, from which hung baskets of vegetables; and even a mother skating and holding her baby in a snug nest made of a shawl on her back. The old doctor skated, with his pill bag on one arm, to see a sick patient at the other end of the town; and long rows of happy children glided by, holding each other's coats and twisting and twining about like a funny ribbon.

"Are you not glad, Love, that you came here to Holland to be my sister?" Jan asked as, holding her hand in his, he skated with Love to school.

"I am glad, Jan," Love warmly replied. "I feel as though it were a story book that I am living in, and you and your dear mother and our house and the canal were the pictures in it. But, oh, Jan, I wish very much that I could see my father—so tall and brave and strong!" Then she stopped. "We must be moving on, Jan," she said, "or we shall be late for school." But to herself, Love was saying, "Be patient."

Spring came early that year in Amsterdam. The ice melted and the canals were again blue ribbons of water. The sails of the windmills whirred, and the housewives scrubbed their sidewalks until the stones were clean enough to eat from. The storks built their nests in the red chimneys again, and everywhere the tulips burst into bloom. Love had never seen such beautiful flowers in all her life. There was no garden in Amsterdam so small or so poor as not to have a bed of bright red and yellow tulips.

With the first sunshine, Love went out to the garden where she and Jan had planted the ugly, hard bulb. How wonderful; her patience had been rewarded! There were two tall, straight green leaves and between them—like a wonderful cup upon its green stem—a great, beautiful tulip. It was larger than any of the others. It was not red or yellow like the others, but pink, like a rose, or a sunrise cloud, or a baby's cheek.



“Jan! Mother! Come and see my tulip,” cried Love, and then the three stood around the pink tulip in admiration.

“It is the most beautiful tulip in Amsterdam,” said Jan.

“It is worth money,” said his mother. “Someone would pay a good price for the bulb.”

Love remembered what Jan’s mother said. As the days passed and the pink tulip opened wider and showed a deeper tint each day, a plan began to form in the little girl’s mind. She knew there was not very much money in Jan’s home into which she had been so kindly welcomed. She knew, too, that nothing was so dear to the people of Holland as their tulips. Strange tales were told of how they sold houses, cattle, land—everything—to buy tulip bulbs.

One Saturday when Jan was away doing an errand for his mother, Love dug up her precious pink tulip and planted it carefully in a large flowerpot. With the pot hugged close to her heart, she went swiftly away from the house, down the long steps to the road that led along the coast of the sea below the dike. Here, where great merchant ships from all over the world anchored



almost every day, Love felt sure that someone would see her tulip and want to buy it.

There was such a crowd—people of many nations busy unloading cargoes—that at first no one saw the little girl with the flower in her arms. Up and down the shore she walked, a little frightened but brave. She held the flower high, and called in her sweet voice, “A rare pink tulip. Who will buy my pink tulip?”

Intent on holding the flower carefully, she came suddenly in front of a man who had been walking in lonely fashion up and down the shore. She heard him call her name eagerly.

“Love! Love! Oh, my little Love!”

Looking up, Love almost dropped the tulip in her joy. Then she set it down and rushed into his arms.

“Father, dear Father! Oh, where have you been so long?” she cried.

It was a story told between laughter and tears. Goodman Bradford, only a short time since released from prison, had come straight to Amsterdam, but he had been able to find no trace of Love. Mistress Brewster had gone on with the Pilgrims to America, and there was no one to tell Goodman Bradford where his little daughter was. Now he could make a home for her and reward Jan’s mother.

“I was patient,” Love said, “as you told me to be, and see,” she cried as, hand in hand, they reached the quaint little cottage where Jan and his mother stood at the door to greet them, “in good time they both came to me—the pink tulip and my father.”