

TEMPTATION

Looking into the garden I caught my first glimpse of her. Dark hair, pale skin and the finest dress of the most unusual green, like a deep pond with reeds around. She was certainly the lily in the body of water.

She seemed different to those around her. I couldn't stop watching, a shy smile, her head tilted to one side. But not giggly and silly like some, an elegance and grace exuded from her. I leant forward trying to hear her voice. But all I could hear was my wife Katherine, I found her voice extremely annoying. She was also in the garden, giving her orders, an independent woman, very accomplished and strong willed. We'd married young, desperately in love at the time, but that love, and of course, our passion had faded, much like her beauty. We'd had one daughter, then unfortunately my wife had several miscarriages and sadness followed. I knew I didn't want to stay in a loveless marriage. My eyes and thoughts had started to wander elsewhere

I searched for the beautiful young woman in the green dress again, but I could no longer see her. She'd unsettled me. I couldn't rest, I started to pen some words capturing my thoughts, the vision in green acting as my muse. The tune came into my head as the words flowed, a folk ballad, a song about unrequited love. If only that had been the end of it and I had forgotten about her.

I started to see her around more frequently, her name was Anne. I began talking to her and she amused me. At first Anne was shy, but gradually her eyes lit up when we were in the same room. I told her that I had written a song after I first caught a glimpse of her and would very much like to sing it to her. We arranged to meet in the garden at midnight.

I was used to singing to others, I'd had a few drinks at dinner and was happy to launch into my song. Anne told me to sing quietly, she didn't want to disturb anyone or for us to be seen together. I lowered my voice and slipped my arm around her waist, she smelt very sweet this close. I quietly sang in her ear.

*'Greensleeves was my delight
Greensleeves my heart of gold
Greensleeves was my heart of joy
And who but my Lady Greensleeves'*

Our kiss that night had many repercussions; my divorce, the break with the Catholic Church, and me becoming head of the Church in England. It was a long and tortuous path, I married Anne several years later, only to be rewarded with another daughter. As the opening line of the song goes,

'Alas my love you do me wrong'

There was no other option than to send her to The Tower. When asked in later years if I had composed 'Greensleeves', I denied it. I wanted no memory of Anne Boleyn!