

## Somehow You Know

She came out of a pew on the bride's side. Alan watched her graceful walk up the aisle – the loveliest girl he had ever seen; honey-coloured hair, warm brown eyes, and a delicate nose above a mouth that pouted a little. Somehow she knew that he was watching her; instinctively, she gave him a shy smile. He had problems finding somewhere to park, and when he arrived the hall was already crowded. He was offered a drink and a canapé, and started chatting with his team-mates and their wives. Then came the speeches, admirably brief and sometimes funny. Finally, the Best Man announced that the baritone Colin Wragg, a friend of the bride, would grace the occasion with a sentimental song, and brought him forward to quiet applause. His deep rich voice and quiet sincerity stilled the crowd:

*Some enchanted evening, you may see a stranger ...*

Alan thought of the girl: he looked round the hall.

*... across a crowded room.*

He saw her nearer the stage, standing quite still, listening. He stood watching her for a minute or two.

*...when you find your true love ...*

Yes, I have.

*...then fly to her side, and make her your own...*

He should just go and talk to her, but - you can't, you'll just look a fool and embarrass everyone.

*Once you have found her, never let her go ...*

The song ended. Still watching her, he finished his glass; then he took a deep breath and made his way towards her. As he approached, she was talking to two men in morning suits, which made him even more apprehensive, so he stood back waiting.

The conversation went on, but she saw him and hesitated, looking rather flustered. The conversation faded away.

He took a step forward and asked, 'May I introduce myself?'

'Yes', she managed. 'Yes, please do.'

The two men exchanged puzzled glances.

'I'm Alan Cornish.'

'I'm Teresa Barnard.'

There seemed to be nothing else to say. He gave a helpless shrug: 'I'm just doing what the song said.'

Oh Lord – *when you find your true love* – he can't mean – *never let her go*. She couldn't speak, only look into his eyes, searching to understand.

Then she knew, *Yes, I mean every word*.

She felt tears beginning to come, so she turned to the other young man: 'Alan, this is my brother Philip.'

Philip looked at him with speculative admiration as they shook hands.

'And this is my Dad.' The older man had been watching Alan steadily. He stepped forward and offered his hand. With a slight smile, he said, 'A man of courage, I see.'

Teresa was still looking at Alan wonderingly, but 'courage' settled her mind. The two women in the group had been talking, but were now watching with great interest. Teresa turned to one of them, dressed very elegantly, who moved forward.

'Mum,' she said, 'This is Alan Cornish.'

'Pleased to meet you, Alan. Are you a friend of Bob's?'

'We play cricket together.'

Mrs Barnard introduced Alan to the other woman, who was tall and thin, with a humorous bird-like face: 'Patsy, Alan Cornish. Alan, this is Mrs Tomlinson.'

Patsy gave the impression that the world seemed to her to be a huge practical joke. As she shook hands with Alan, she asked innocently, 'How long have you known Teresa?'

Surprised, he replied, 'Oh, about five minutes, I should say.'

'And you are a cricketer?'

'Yes', he confirmed, rather puzzled.

Patsy spoke commandingly: 'Then I must ask you the age-old question.

Have you ever bowled a maiden over?'

Alan looked at her questioningly, then turned to look at Teresa. He felt her soft warm hand take his and give it a gentle squeeze.

He smiled at Teresa and then replied to Patsy: 'I'll let you know.'

*Roy Chisholm*