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Woman

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ON DANGER MAN

AS TOLD TO JOAN REEDER

"Looking back, I should say I was about as inflexible, arrogant and stubborn as any twelve year old boy could be—a really awkward little cuss."

It was a Tuesday evening last April, about 8 p.m., when this powerfully-built character with the white hair came charging after us, shouting.

My wife, Joan, and I were strolling down Lexington Avenue, New York, as usual.

After fourteen and a half years we're still not used to the fact that we're an adult, married, and the parents of three daughters. Let off on our own together, especially in a strange city, we still feel as though we're dating. There's always the touch of the stolen honeymoon about it—fights and all.

Normally, every evening, Mondays to Fridays, sees me arriving home after nine hours' filming at Shepperton (Middlesex) as John Drake—DANGER MAN.

But last April the DANGER MAN schedules had taken me away from the studios and out to New York.

The programmes had just done more than a bit of good for themselves by becoming the first non-American series to be bought by the U.S. for forty-five weeks' screening on a national-wide network.

"My boy," said Lew Grade, my boss in A.T.V., who had pulled off this $1 million export deal, "they want to meet you out there—go over and talk to them for a couple of weeks." So Joan and I went and were taking an hour off to look around.

She wanted to see Fifth Avenue, I wanted to see Park. We'd just found ourselves on Lexington and were busy blaming each other when this voice shouted: "Patrick me boy! PATRICK!"—and silenced us both.

That was a fine achievement until I realized that, while no one in New York knew me yet, a few thousand New Yorkers could certainly answer to the name of Patrick.

We began to move on when "Patrick! PATRICK me boy!" stopped us again.

There, petting after us, was my Uncle Michael Fitzpatrick and his wife Margaret—and that's how the party began.

Though I'm prepared to believe that a Fitzpatrick would recognize a McGooohan practically anywhere, I certainly hadn't expected to be hailed by any mother's eldest brother in the middle of Lexington Avenue on my first evening in New York.

He had known Joan and I were coming out. My mother, who was Rose Fitzpatrick, till she married a McGooohan, had written, and I had met him once, when he'd stayed with us in England.

But now here he was, clapping my shoulders with delight at having found me in the middle of the largest city in America, before he'd even had time to phone our hotel.

Promptly we all repaired to the nearest bar.

There'll be a great re-union Pat, a great re-union. At my home in Yonkers, on Friday night. All the family will be there.

On the Friday Joan and I arrived to find "all the family" meant all SEVENTY-FIVE of them.

Seventy-five aunts, uncles, first, second and third cousins, seventy-three of whom I'd never seen before.

They streamed out of the door, hung out of the windows to welcome us, and were busy laying bets as to how many of them I'd be able to recognize from snapshots and from family likenesses.

I wasn't doing too badly.

"Aunt Mary McGooohan?"

"Yes!"

"Uncle Thomas Fitzpatrick?"

"Yes!"

"Aunt Kate?"

"You're right!"

"Uncle Charles Fitzpatrick?"

"He has it again!"

Nearly half a century ago my mother had six Fitzpatrick brothers, four of whom emigrated to America. About as many McGooohans emigrated from my father's family, too.

Their children, their grandchildren, even some great-grandchildren, now filled round me.

"Hallo cousin Peadar—you must be cousin Kathleen," I was saying.

"Sure and he knows his Fitzpatricks from his McGooohans," they chorused admiringly.

Truth of it was you couldn't go wrong. Call any of them Patrick, Patricia, Joseph, Mary or Kate, and you were right. If it wasn't their first name it was bound to be their second.

Across the room I caught sight of Joan, going down for the third time,
John Drake—Danger Man—as Patrick McGoohan sees him, is no phoney hero-type. He has no time for promiscuity. He is dedicated to his job. He is an ordinary man, with an ordinary man's brand of courage, but working in extraordinary circumstances.

Patrick McGoohan and his wife Joan—they met when they were both acting in the same Sheffield repertory company.

The McGoohan family on the balcony of their London home. Left to right: Patrick, youngest daughter Frances (4), Anne (5), Catherine (13) holding Honey (the family's Corgi) and Joan.

NEXT WEEK:
An introduction to the theatre—and to Joan.
under a deluge of fond hugs, kisses and embraces.

Till that night she'd been able to count the heavy boots on the fingers of one hand. Those days were gone. Forty new in-laws were joyfully clapping her black hair and eyes made her a true McGoohan; the other thirty-five were busy proclaiming her a real Fitzpatrick.

In place she's half Viennese, half Scots and, till I married her, was called—Drummond.

They had an iced cake for us, a yard square, with "Welcome to Pat and Joan" on it: a bar in the basement with shots of the hard stuff coming over in plates, and Uncle Michael picking enough horseradish on the side to set St. Patrick himself dancing. About 2 a.m. I persuaded him round the family we were booked on a 7 a.m. flight to Chicago. "Joan and Pat won't be able to stay very long, and that's the truth," he said—and picked up his bow again.

At 3 a.m. he put it down to answer the telephone. "They'll not be staying long time, more's the pity."

By 4 a.m. he'd got around to agreeing. "You'll have plenty of time for the flight. At 5 a.m. he was thinking we had "just a comfortable little old place" to rest in, which to catch it.

Someone was still playing a jiggie on the side as they all crowded to see us.

The car ride back to Manhattan seemed like a journey to another planet. The fact that a good two thirds of them had never been Ireland, Sebastian's policemen succeeded in making the two in Yonkers much more a part of County Limerick than a suburb of New York City.

As we walked out into the cool, early morning air I'd been half surprised not to find the dew falling on the fields of my childhood. I'd never seen those fields myself but for the fact that they had called me back from New York where he, too, had emigrated, and where I was born—Astoria, Long Island, on 19th March, 1929.

Born in their mid-twenties, my parents had travelled steerage from America as soon as they were married, which was the pattern of things then. Whitney man from Mullingar took a wife from the nearby village of Drumshambo, the jobs which earned a living were "over the horizon," in America.

My father found one, with the Eastern Company, and my mother, a skilled dressmaker and tailoress since she was fifteen, also found one at Macy's, the big store.

They did well for three years. But, when I was born, my father made the decision. We were going back. Back to the family farm in Mullingar, Co. Limerick, where McGoohans had been born for four hundred years, and where he wanted me to grow up.

This was more important than all the dollars he could earn in New York and he left me the first seven years of childhood which were rich, at any rate, in the simplicity and disciplines of Irish life.

A green cart track led to McGoohan's forty, mixed, Irish acres where the family had a cottage which hid its small window and stot white walls under a deep thatched roof.

My father had the tall flax-yarn on the side of the farmyard, but the leaning stone wall on the others had been there for generations. Separating the yard from the sloping garden it was covered, in summer, with fat, rambling vines.

Their scent used to filter indoors

where it mingled with all the other smells I remember as part of childhood, peat fires, oatmeal cooking, animals, and new mown hay.

The one-storey cottage had three rooms in different levels. In the lower one I, and later, my sister slept. The higher one was my parents' bedroom.

In the middle the main room with its low beams and flagged floor was the crowded heart of everything. Along one wall, heavy wooden chests made comfortable seats as well as storing our home-grown grain: opposite stood an old-fashioned dresser stacked with china. Hams, or a side of bacon, were dried on racks from the rafters and iron cooking pots hung over the black hearth where the peat fire burned day and night, all year round.

In the rocking chair, by the fire, my Grandmother McGoohan often sat, the red flannel of her petticoat glinting brightly beneath the long black skirts of her dress, much as her lively brown eyes still glinted brightly at us from under the brim of her black bonnet. I never saw her without that bonnet.

At the big scrubbed table my mother seemed always busy, washing clothes, kneading dough, plucking chickens for market.

Market days were red letter days. We often took the pony-and-trap into Carlingallen, but when there was a fair or some pigs to be sold we took the proper horse-and-cart to the bigger markets at Carrick-on-Shannon, or Mohill.

Then it would be home again and, occasionally, there would be a get-together of neighbours, named people (pronounced comeel) as we called it, in one of the scattered farmhouses, ours ours.

People sat around the peat fire, tea would be brewed and, later, when the lamps were lit, a few jars of ale passed round.

My father, something of an expert on Irish traditional music, would sit to start off the singing, or even a bit of dancing.

After that the story telling would begin. If, now and then, there was a touch of the nonsense about all this, there was something of an art as well.

And it would be a poor talker indeed who sacrificed the flight of a fine phrase to the dull proses of accuracy.

The magic of these words came tumbling and spinning, and we lost any seven year old ear, capturing my imagination.

By the time my mother, a brilliant mimic, had recreated the Simkins in the family feud of her childhood—"the enemy" led by a character called Red Johnny, the Fitzpatrick clan led by her father, Skitty Fitz—visualized in my maternal grandparents, in terms of the local Danger Man of Drumshambo!

In fact, even now, Danger Man pales into insignificance beside my childhood picture of Skitty Fitz, so called because he always had a swallow-tailed coat and, as it seemed to me then, did nothing but talk, sing, and dance his way over to America whenever fenders were needed to carry on the feud when he'd replenished them.

The Fitzpatricks would always leap in where angels feared to tread. The McGoohans tended to talk and do a bit of thinking about it all.

So it was in character that, when my quiet father was presented with a story, he could create an atmosphere in which you felt your skin prickling.

Please turn to page 93
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DOSSEUR ON DANGER MAN

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and your hands growing damp in apprehension. There was the tale of how, as a young man, he went fishing at midnight. As I sat listening, he could smell the carcide from his dim bicycle lamp as he rode down the dark, lonely lane to the loch, hear the splash of the feet made in the rushes while he untied the boat, each solitary creak and slap of the oars as he rowed out.

Then he would reach the part where he described this moment of extraordinary stillness. Not a ripple on the flat surface of the lake, not a tremor among the reeds. The very air was hard and silent, the man in the boat, became part of this total silence.

It was then he heard the music... strange... compelling...

Next day I relived those feelings exactly. I went down our lane to fetch water from the well. Suddenly I was aware of the same great stillness of which my father had spoken, was aware, to immobilize every blade of grass, every bee and darting fly in the bright, busy afternoon.

I sat down, half terrified, half willing the sound of strange music to echo in my ears. Rigid, heart thumping, eyes tightly shut, I felt every hair on the back of my neck rise, one by one. My ears strained to the point of aching, were suddenly filled—not with music but with an unearthly noise which came from the very guts of hall.

With a howl any demon would have envied I shot three feet in the air, fell over my bucket, and flew giddily up the lane to the safety of the cottage.

Behind me, with her tongue still out, stood our favourite cow, maddened and astonished that a gentle lick on the back of my neck and a friendly moo in the ear should have touched off such an explosion of activity in an otherwise tranquil afternoon.

That gave me a good lesson in bringing my flights of fancy down to earth. But, despite this, I still remember those evenings of talk and story telling for the sense of adventure and limitless horizons they created in my imagination.

To a child everything seems possible, and anything at all can always be about to happen. My parents understood this, so that I and my four sisters could always share their great and extravagant ideas with them and never knew the rebuff of being told we were "silly" or "talking nonsense."

In return they shared everything with us, problems as well as hopes.

Fifteen years of marriage still hasn't stopped either of my parents from reminiscing about their courting days when, according to them, she was the blue-eyed, rye-haired pride of Drumshando and he the equally blue-eyed blade who won her.

My mother was born with one of those volatile, buoyant natures nothing defeats for long. My father, in his quieter way, has always had a quality of unshakeable strength. But neither of them ever gave up to us, as children, the slightest illusion that they were self-sufficient without their faith. That came first: anything they achieved came from it.

I remember standing with my mother by the farm gate, both of us waiting as my father pedalled his bike down the lane towards Carrigan.

As he rode out of sight she said in a quiet, strange voice: "Please God, he'll be all right." Then quickly, before I had time to sense the sadness, she turned to me in her normal, light-hearted way. "We're going to look after things by ourselves for a while," she explained.

My father had gone to England to look for work. The farm wasn't making enough money to keep us and would have to be sold, now that I had Patrica, Kathleen, and the baby, Marie, as sisters.

Not only was there work, but good schools and scholarships in England, and that would be fine for us. Once again my parents were going to emigrate.

Emigrating to me meant standing

please turn to page 95

WOMAN CROSSWORD

ACROSS:
1. According to the saying they die hard (2, 6)
2. Put little Violet in front of the vehicle and the parrot will appear (5)
3. ... and this girl will certainly give the people of the Republic a start (5)
4. Agreement (4)
5. Move stealthily (5)
6. This sort of play is a take-off (4)
7. Small measure for the young child (3)
8. Intend (4)
9. Display (5)
10. Heavily (4)
11. Do this for the job you want (5)
12. I get in, it is implied (5)
13. The Apostle's bacon is suggested by this material (5)
14. Widow for basket-making (5)
15. Cover loosely with material (5)
16. For fishing (4)
17. No doubt he will be found in a brown study (7)
18. Generally-accepted principle (5)
19. Bicycle wheel has an ancient city (4)

Please turn to page 96 for your answers.
on the deck of the Dublin to Holyhead boat being caulked by my mother to sing a song which one of her exiled brothers had written in America, hopefully entitled "His First Return." The fact that it was my first departure didn't seem to matter a bit. Unswervingly I began: "Here I stand, on the deck of a liner so grand, and gazing once more, on my own native land"—with my back firmly turned on it.

I can't sing now, I couldn't sing then, and my teardrops pattering through this party-piece blend of at least as much about my Uncle Fitzpatrick's heart-felt words as a policeman's boots to a ballerina.

No matter, our fellow emigrants insisted on loving it, assuring my mother: "Ah! but he has a great feel for it!"

We went to a narrow terraced house in Sheffield, where my father had found work as a building contractor and where, for me, there began what I chose to regard as the monotonous penance of school-days, coupled with several years of illness.

I developed acute bronchial asthma. All I can remember of that time is a stream of different doctors, each to my small bed, the smell of camphorated oil and inhalants, and a polka over-the-backboard.

That and my mother repeating firmly: "No, thank you, Doctor, I'll not have him any more. I'll nurse him through it myself." And she did.

By the time I was eleven the war had started. My mother, my sisters and I were all evacuated for a while to different homes in Loughborough, leaving my father in Sheffield.

Moving to Leicestershire meant a new school. Because I'd missed whole terms at a stretch in Sheffield I was always backward in lessons and games. That hadn't suited me at all, so I promptly decided to loathe and despise both.

I took this lofty attitude with me to the Loughborough school, where they had no time for you if you couldn't keep up. I couldn't, so, stubbornly, I wouldn't try.

But, though I didn't realize it, nearly four years of illness had left me like a sponge starved of water, wanting, in fact, to absorb everything.

Oddly, the one thing I found I could pick up quickly, without endangering my dignity by revealing anything so despicable as trying, was maths.

This small hint of promise was noticed, and a year later, to everyone's delight except mine, I was selected for a free place to yet another school, the Catholic Public School, Ratcliffe College, in Leicester.

The uniforms lists arrived, demanding, demanding, clothes for me than the entire family possessed.

Wool jacket, striped pants, stiff white collar; blue blazer, grey flannel, white flannel, endless shirts, vests, shoes.

My mother began to sit up all night at her sewing machine. I remembered her doing this once before, when my father had nearly died from blood poisoning. Not only did she nurse him, but she sewed through the night to earn some money so that we should not go without while he was too ill to work.

Patricia, my oldest sister, and I used to take it in turns to help her stay awake by talking to her, and making endless cups of tea.

She always sat totally alert, and the only way we knew she had fallen asleep was when the constant whirr of the machine ceased.

Now she was sewing all night again.

We couldn't begin to buy all the things the boarding school list

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BERNIE and the naughty crow

1. Bernie is blowing some lovely soap bubbles with his new clay pipe

2. 2. A naughty crow swoops down and bursts them all. Bernie has an idea

3. He goes indoors and blows up some balloons. That will surprise the crow

4. When a balloon is popped it goes BANG! The crow soon flies away

95
CAT! She always looks so expensively dressed yet I know she doesn't spend more than me. Makes me hopping mad. Could be her sly-puss secret is she knits her own Jaeger. Top fashion, new and exciting wools, knitting instructions you can't go 3950, price 1s, in Crinkle-Spun at takes 14 ozs. Slightly flared skirt wool or pattern locally write to London W1. You get so much -

DODGER MAN

continued from previous page

demanded. She had to make most of them herself.

My father, by now, had found an opportunity to return to farming and was baliff to the Convent of Notre Dame, on the outskirts of Sheffield.

Once more we lived in a farmhouse, surrounded by fields but, with five children to keep—Annette, the youngest, had been born in Sheffield—there was never a penny to spare.

To my parents "The Scholarship," the first in the family, was worth all their hard work and frugality, so it was just as well I couldn't tell them how I felt about it—or schools in general. I was becoming more and more unable to tell anybody anything. Ever since I had been a small boy I had wanted to be a priest. In a Catholic, rural country this is no more unusual than a boy who lives within sight of ships wanting to become a sailor.

It is a frequent and honoured custom in Ireland for the first-born son to enter the Church and, when a child there says he wants to be a priest, everyone takes him seriously.

My family took me seriously, including my four little sisters—I saw to that. Whenever I could round them up I would rehearse my "sermons" to them. While I stood on a chair I expected them to sit in front of me, their four pairs of blue eyes fixed dutifully on my face, their four light brown heads bowing obediently when I made the sign of the Cross.

Even Patrice, the eldest, who has inherited all the irrepressible gaiety of the Fitzpatricks, didn't quite dare to cheek me back when I was "sermonizing" but—though she always made up for it afterwards.

But there were days when she led the only too willing Kathleen, Marie and Annette into open rebellion, telling me to preach to myself. Then I'd wait until dark and retaliate, not with sermons but with ghost stories, the spookier the better.

The tertified, rant attention these commanded from all my four sisters should have made it clear to me that my sermons were sadly lacking in compassion. But I was much too satisfied with the effect I was having to appreciate this lesson in humility. By the time I was twelve, and ready to go to Ratoath, my sense of vocation for the priesthood was the dominating influence in my life. That, and thinking about myself.

Looking back, I should say I was about as inflexible, arrogant and stubborn as any twelve year old boy could be. A really awkward little cuss. The only mitigating thing I can find for this attitude, now, is that my sense of vocation was real, and powerful, to me.

Possibly fairly long periods of ill-

ness had accustomed me to more solitude than a healthy active child knows and my ego had thrived in this.

I was totally absorbed in testing my militancy, single-mindedness and strength of purpose in measuring up to what I had decided were the necessary standards for a priest.

It rarely occurred to me to bother about what other people thought of me. But, when it did, as on my cigarette, I didn't much care for the picture I presented.

Walking up the long drive towards the big, red-walled house where I had to live and learn for the next five years I saw myself, briefly, as the four hundred other boys there might see me: tall, skinny, highly likely to come bottom in class and a chronic non-starter in sport.

Hardly the qualifications for distinction in a large public school.

I quickly turned my back on this unpleasing aspect. The succinct philosophy: "If you can't beat 'em—join 'em" hadn't yet crossed my horizons in any case my attitude was very much the reverse! "Don't join them—don't even deign to beat them."

In terms of mixing, competing, and games, I couldn't speak their language, nor was I going to try.

Instead of attempting to join in I deliberately opted out.

I had to go through the blundering motions of playing cricket, sitting through lessons, but I pretended it was somebody else doing all this. The real me refused to conform or participate in any way.

I even extended this attitude to the Brothers who taught us. While realizing—almost to the point of feeling grateful sometimes—that they wanted to help, teach and integrate me into school life, I resented the fact that help and integration were thought necessary, and rejected it.

I went on like this for two years and all I succeeded in doing in my self-appointed isolation was to lose the ability to communicate with anyone, even my family.

In the holidays I took my abed attitudes home with me. Moody and introspective I was now the sort of boy who, if I left the family was intruding on my seclusion, would show it.

I shut a door with such slyly quiet umbrage that my silences echoed much more loudly through the house than the good healthy slam and bang of temper. Then I would sit, refusing to speak. The general discomfort caused in our cheerful, talkative home was known to my sisters as "One of Pat's Days."

Sometimes it ended in an argument as three or four of "Pat's Days" in a row. Back at school there came one of the mid-term examinations.

A boy called Jack, who had finished please turn to page 101

CROSSWORD ANSWERS

from page 93

Across:

Down:
Evelyn Home

Friend and counsellor to those with a personal problem

Shared children

As a mother, divorced with two sons, I feared the "competition" of their much wealthier father if I allowed thoughts of visitation to become reality. But although he left me in hardship, I determined never to speak ill of him to the boys, or to keep them away from him. I did my best to show them his love. But I reasoned that they would one day leave me to marry and felt I was doing the right thing.

So it has proved. Now they are both married; I am on the best possible terms with them—and I am now remarrying myself. I shall never regret fighting the temptation to be a jealous mother.

Love in the fifteen

I am fifty-one, my wife two years older, and after over twenty years of happy married life we are now able to look forward to our retirement. We are more worried about the consequences than we were.

It has been like a honeymoon all over again—but much better. There is just one question: will our sexual interest remain as strong as ever?

The frequency of intercourse was found to average three times during a fortnight for men between the ages of forty-one to forty-five, dropping to slightly less than once a week for men over fifty.

A specialist wrote that if infidelity is followed by great fatigue, obviously less sexual activity is advisable. If, on the other hand, relaxation and ease follow the sex act, then the chosen frequency is not too great.

To say that I am still as young as I was is an understatement. I think about sex often. I often worry about what my husband has and why I never have it. I am still very much in love with my husband. I love him dearly. When I met her I saw that she had everything—money, a beautiful home... no wonder she wanted me out of the way.

Now I want to get back to normal and put him out of my life, and stop thinking about him. But how?

Move away from his home town; don’t leave any forwarding address and don’t take any exercises of his with you.

He may have given you gifts and affection, but he took more than he gave—years of your youth, your good reputation and your love.

In a year or two, among new losses, you will begin again. This time, I hope your love life will have a future.

Dealing with suspicion

When I got home from a long vacation evening, I found my mother was entertaining a strange man. She nervously introduced him as a friend, then he quickly went.

My father is very devoted to her. I wondered if I should tell him.

Speak to your mother about this; don’t bottle it up and brood about it. She will almost certainly be able to explain why the man was there and why she was flattered when you came home. There are all sorts of perfectly good reasons and no need to jump to the worst conclusions.

Above all, don’t make trouble by telling tales to your father. He may know all about it anyway—but it is only fair to talk to your mother first.

Test of moods

Mostly I feel that I love my fiancé very much and am delighted that I shall be marrying him soon. But there are days when I feel I cannot tolerate him as his wife, and these moods of depression can last as long as a week. During such times I can barely bear to be alone. Should I be honest with him even though we have gone so far with our plans? Or have I left it too late?

No, you haven’t left it too late. Tell him at once exactly how you feel and beg for a spell of separation to give you an opportunity of testing your deepest doubts.

The separation (even if it means postponing the wedding) should last at least three months. And it should be complete; no letters, phone calls or meetings.

If, after that, you still want to marry your fiancé, you can be sure that these fluctuating moods are just moods. On the other hand, if you find that marriage becomes more unlikable than you had thought, never mind the immediate fears; better a pause now than a thoroughly unhappy and soon-broken marriage.

Boy’s problem

I love my girl friend very much; my feeling for her is genuine and if I were older, I’d want to marry her.

We’re both sixteen. At the same time, most of my other friends have their own boy or girl and whole I prefer their company. Is there any danger that I may be homosexual?

Not the least, I’d say. It sounds as if you’re simply growing through the phase of being most attached to your own sex and gradually discovering the attractions of the other.

Dr. E. R. Matthews has written a book entitled Sex, Life and Society (Gollancz) specially for boys, which contains an excellent explanation of how sexual feelings develop.

Get it from your library, or buy it for yourself. In paper covers, it costs 6s. from any bookseller.

Question-time

Would you say most boys prefer the girl-who-remains chaste? Or would they rather have the good-time girl who says “yes” without argument?

As a wife (the experts say) most boys still greatly prefer the girl who remains chaste. And most girls (we all know) much prefer to be wives. You can work out the rest of the puzzles out for yourself.

“Worried” (Bournemouth)

You need to have a long talk with your local social worker, who will know the answers to all the questions you ask. Do seek her out at once. Her address will be found at your local council offices, or the vicar of your parish church will know it. Or the National Council for the Unmarried Mother and Her Child, 255 Kentside Town Road, London, N.W.S. will put you in touch with her.