

Younger women

Once a Catholic
By Mary O'Malley

Scenes F/F

COMEDY

Act II, Scene 5

This comedy takes place in the Convent of Our Lady of Fatima, a school for girls near London. All the girls in class 5A are named Mary and all of them are trying to reconcile the dogma they are being taught in school with their own budding needs.

Mary Gallagher is a "sensible attractive" student. She is going out with Cuthbert a Catholic 6th former. Mary considers herself quite modern and in the scene below she prods her friend and classmate, Mary Mooney into reveling her own extra-curricular activities with men. Mary Mooney is reticent at first but gives in to the urge to share her secret. As the scene opens both girls are in the garden of the Convent. They are suppose to be praying silently.

MARY GALLAGHER:

Oh Jesus, I'm bored out of my mind.

(MARY MOONEY: puts her finger to her lips.)

MARY GALLAGHER:

Don't tell me you're not bored

(MARY MOONEY: shrugs her shoulders.)

MARY GALLAGHER:

I'm sure they're trying to drive us mad. It's a well known fact that too much silence can drive a person insane. It's all right for them. They're already round the bend. Especially Mother Peter. If she hadn't put her self into a convent somebody would have locked her up in the loony bin.

MARY MOONEY:

Sssh!

MARY GALLAGHER:

It's all right. There's nobody about. Although they've probably put a load of microphones into the bushes. And they're sure to have stationed Reverend Mother down in the basement on a periscope. Why the hell can't they have their idiotic retreats in the holidays? D'you want a smartie? *(She takes a tube out of her pocket. MARY MOONEY: shakes her head.)* Oh have one, will you, for Christ's sake. We're not supposed to be fasting, you know. Hold out your hand. *(She pours some Smarties into Mary Mooney's reluctant hand.)* Are you keeping quiet just to annoy me, by any chance? *(MARY MOONEY: shakes her head.)* I suppose you're scared of getting caught.

MARY MOONEY:

No I'm not

MARY GALLAGHER:

You are.

MARY MOONEY:

I'm not

MARY GALLAGHER:

Well, what are you being so holy for? Come to think of it, thought, you always have been a bit that way inclined.

MARY MOONEY:

I have not. I'm no more holy than you are.

MARY GALLAGHER:

Not much. I doubt if you've ever committed a genuine mortal sin in all your life.

MARY MOONEY:

Oh yes I have. I've definitely committed one.

MARY GALLAGHER:

Ooooooh one. That's a lot isn't it?

MARY MOONEY:

Why, how many have you committed?

MARY GALLAGHER:

Millions

MARY MOONEY:

Have you really?

MARY GALLAGHER:

Yes. You know that box of Tampax?

MARY MOONEY:

Yes

MARY GALLAGHER:

They were mine

MARY MOONEY:

They weren't

MARY GALLAGHER:

They were, you know.

MARY MOONEY:

Why didn't you go up and claim them?

MARY GALLAGHER:

You must be joking. She didn't suspect me for a minute.

MARY MOONEY:

Who got the blame in the end?

MARY GALLAGHER:
Maria Zajackowski

MARY MOONEY:
That wasn't very fair

MARY GALLAGHER:
She's not bothered. They could just as easily have been hers. She went red when Mother Peter cross-examined her. Did you know she's going out with a really old man?

MARY MOONEY:
No

MARY GALLAGHER:
Yes. He must be at least twenty-five. Nearly everybody in our form has got a bloke. It's time you got yourself one, isn't it?

MARY MOONEY:
You think I've never been out with a bloke don't you?

MARY GALLAGHER:
Well you haven't, have you?

MARY MOONEY:
Oh yes I have, if you want to know.

MARY GALLAGHER:
Oh yes? Since when?

MARY MOONEY:
Since just after Easter, actually

MARY GALLAGHER:
How come you've kept so quiet about it then?

MARY MOONEY:
If I told you something really confidential would you promise to keep it a secret?

MARY GALLAGHER:
Yes of course

MARY MOONEY:
Would you swear to God never to tell a soul?

MARY GALLAGHER:
Yes. You can trust me.

MARY MOONEY:
Cross your heart and hope to die.

MARY GALLAGHER:

All right

MARY MOONEY:

You know when you were in Fatima

MARY GALLAGHER:

Yes

MARY MOONEY:

Well, I met a bloke in the street and he asked me to go to his house with him, so I did.

MARY GALLAGHER:

What, you let a bloke pick you up just like that? And you didn't even know who he was?

MARY MOONEY:

No I mean yes. I did know who he was. That's just the trouble. You know who he is too.

MARY GALLAGHER:

WHO?

MARY MOONEY:

Promise you won't tell anyone in all the world.
Especially not Mary McGinty?

MARY GALLAGHER:

Why not her?

MARY MOONEY:

Well, see, this bloke...It was her boyfriend Derek

MARY GALLAGHER:

Cor! No!

MARY MOONEY:

Yes

MARY GALLAGHER:

Are you sure you're not making it up? I can't imagine you and him together.

MARY MOONEY:

Well we were.

MARY GALLAGHER:

Christ. She'd go berserk if she ever knew

MARY MOONEY:

You won't tell her will you? Please

MARY GALLAGHER:

I wouldn't dare. Did he ask to see you again?

MARY MOONEY:

I wouldn't want to see him again, not as long as I live. He's horrible.

MARY GALLAGHER:

Is he? How come Mary McGinty's so mad about him then?

MARY MOONEY:

He was nice at first. But then he turned nasty. Well not exactly nasty but rude. Do all blokes try to do rude things to girls?

MARY GALLAGHER:

The majority of them, yes, if they get the chance.

MARY MOONEY:

Has Cuthbert ever tried to be impure?

MARY GALLAGHER:

He never thinks about anything else

MARY MOONEY:

But he's a Catholic

MARY GALLAGHER:

Yes. Terrible, isn't it

MARY MOONEY:

You've been going out with Cuthbert for a long time, haven't you?

MARY GALLAGHER:

What about it?

MARY MOONEY:

Is that why you've committed so many mortal sins? Because he makes you?

MARY GALLAGHER:

He doesn't make me. What a thing to say. It's the devil who makes you commit sins.

MARY MOONEY:

That Derek must be possessed by the devil

MARY GALLAGHER:

Why? What did he do? Oh dear, you haven't lost your priceless virginity, have you?

MARY MOONEY:

NO No...but...

MARY GALLAGHER:

What?

MARY MOONEY:

I've couldn't possibly tell you.

MARY GALLAGHER:

I've probably heard it all before.

MARY MOONEY:

I couldn't possibly say what he did. But I've got written down in my diary. (She takes a book out of her pocket.) I have to keep it with me all the time in case anyone should ever find. My Mom'd swing for me if she saw it. You can have a look at it if you like.

MARY GALLAGHER: (reading the diary)

Cor, fancy letting a bloke do that to you the first time you ever go out with him.

MARY MOONEY:

I didn't want him to. But he was a lot stronger than me. He's not like a boy, that Derek. He's a proper big man you know.

MARY GALLAGHER:

They will usually stop if you tell them to.

MARY MOONEY:

I did. But he said we all know "no" means "yes". That doesn't make any sense though, does it?

MARY GALLAGHER:

It means you liked what he was doing but you didn't want to admit it.

MARY MOONEY:

I did not like it

MARY GALLAGHER:

Didn't you? You must be abnormal then.

MARY MOONEY:

I'm not

MARY GALLAGHER:

You must be. Everybody else likes it.

MARY MOONEY:

Well it wasn't all that bad, I suppose.

MARY GALLAGHER:

You want to find a bloke of your own. It's not the done thing to go round borrowing other people's.

MARY MOONEY:

Oh shut your rotten face. And give me back my diary.