

Chapter 7 – Dating at a Certain Age

Peadar McDermott nervously dialed the number to Katie's apartment knowing that Angela would answer the phone. Even though they had a great time together on Tuesday, Peter was feeling very tentative about calling Angela. Like millions of insecure males in the world he was fearful of rejection by this woman he found so attractive.

Like Angela, Peadar was not an expert at this dating thing. His wife had passed ten years earlier. They had a great life together. They lived at Oxford when he was there for his post doctoral fellowship. They also lived at the Sorbonne in Paris when he was invited there as a visiting professor for a year. They lived in the United States as well, when he was invited to help Boston College set up an Irish Studies program.

They never had children though they desperately wanted a family. While they were living in Massachusetts, Siobhan, Peadar's wife, was diagnosed with cervical cancer. Subsequent surgeries eradicated any opportunity to have children, and though they had the best care in the world available to them, they returned to Ireland so she could die peacefully in her own home.

He was a scholar, loved his life, and appreciated his reputation. He was also aware of how lonely he was. For the longest time he could not conceive of being with anyone but his wife. He loved Siobhan dearly and cherished every moment with her until she succumbed to cancer. She was a great companion to him and loved him to the point where she could see him beyond his scholar and professor status. He was simply Peadar, the love of her life. He reveled in this. He maintained his professionalism after her death but just couldn't bring himself to socialize again...at least until he saw Angela in church.

As a scholar and professor, he felt he was above the fray. He was very much a part of the faculty community and a good companion to his colleagues. However, it all felt pretty superficial to him. Acquaintances, however many, were not necessarily friends. He yearned for the intimacy he once enjoyed.

When he was at Mass last Sunday, he saw Angela with Katie, and figured out that she was Katie's mother. He was instantly smitten even though her eyes were blackened and she walked with a slight limp. He didn't know what that was all about but was determined to find out. He had an appointment with Katie the next morning to discuss her publishing assignment and he plotted to meet at Katie's apartment so he could meet her mom. As things turned out his meeting with Katie went well, as he expected it would. His meeting with Katie's mom was spectacular and they spent almost two hours sipping tea and just talking. Then they had a great date for tea on Tuesday and spent most of their time in conversation and getting comfortable with each other.

"Hello," said Angela, thinking that she was going to pick up a call for Katie.

"Hello Angela, this is Peadar. I'm sorry to be calling at a last minute but I just received word that a meeting I was supposed to attend has been postponed. I would be honored if

you would join me for dinner over at Lahinch this evening. I belong to the club and I think you will enjoy seeing it. It is a facility with a lot of character. The food is also excellent.”

Angela knew that Lahinch was a prominent golf club and said that she would love to go. She did have a problem though. She had some decent clothes with her but Katie had gone to Leveegee to pick up clothes and other items from the house and wasn't expected back until Sunday.

“The clothes you wore on Sunday would be perfect, Angela. If you could outfit yourself with those clothes or something similar, you will be fine. We are going to dinner and not a fancy dress ball.”

Angela laughed. “Yes, I'll put something together and try to look my best.”

“Ah, you would even look good in a burlap bag.”

“Go away with ya,” said Angela. “You really know how to flatter a girl.”

“Thank you,” said Peadar, impressed with himself. He was very encouraged that his attempt to flirt was not rejected. “I'll pick you up at five o'clock. That way we will be able to see the loveliness of the course while it is still daylight.”

“I'll be ready and I look forward to a delightful evening,” said Angela. Peadar rang off and danced around the room.

Angela did indeed assemble herself very nicely and without panic. The bruises around her eyes were almost gone. With the help of a little of Katie's makeup there was no sign of bruises at all. Her hip was fine and she no longer required the pain pills. She found a soft blue suit among her clothes that would be appropriate for doing business, which she had never done, but which made her look very presentable for a dinner out.

Peadar arrived a little before five. He was dressed in grey slacks, a blue blazer, and a blue and white striped power tie, rather than his professorial bow tie. He wore a white handkerchief in the front pocket of the blazer and gave the impression of casual elegance. They would indeed be considered a handsome couple.

As they drove away in his Mercedes, he told Angela how beautiful she looked. She blushed at the flattery and told Peadar that he had changed from being a professor to being a movie star.

“Lahinch is over in County Clare,” he said. “We'll have to drive around Galway Bay but we'll be there in about forty minutes.”

It was an enjoyable ride. While Angela had been to Galway City before, she had never gone into Clare. The setting sun highlighted the Burren and the dazzling white of the lime

stone mountains created a sharp contrast with the multi colored spring flowers scattered along the base of the mountain. Across the road from the mountain was the always restless Atlantic Ocean into which the setting sun was soon to fall. It was a breathtaking sight. Peadar talked about the mysticism associated with the mountain and told Angela about the burial grounds for the families of ancient chieftains. From the road, they could see the majestic Cliffs of Moher, one of the wonders of the world and a must visit stop for tourists visiting Ireland.

They had already passed through to little village of Doolan, and Peadar described it as the Irish Traditional Music capital. He told stories, culled from his own research, of the Celtic migration from the Middle East to lands end, Ireland. There were two migration tracks, one through northern Europe and the other through the southern part of the continent. The two tracks of migration are still identified by the presence of shepherds who are also pipers. The tunes they played were heard in the sounds the wind made as it blew through the trees, the chirping of birds, and the sounds of a running stream. Shepherds turned the sounds they heard into music.

Doolan is on the Atlantic coast and looks up hill to the Burren. The swirling winds blowing from the sea and playing over the pure limestone mountains make extraordinary sounds if you listen carefully enough. Peadar mentioned the names of several musicians, all of whom were familiar names to Angela, but having spent most of her life in the Midlands, this was all new to her.

She loved the rich deepness of his voice, his lilting Connemara accent, the deep richness of his knowledge, and the fact that he did not speak to her as if she was a student. She loved listening to his stories. Here she was, Angela O'Bierne, dressed to the nines and riding in a Mercedes with one of the leading scholars in Europe, a man who had absorbed her attraction, one who was obviously attracted to her. "Me, Angela O'Bierne, a non descript widow from a non descript county that no one who lives outside of Ireland ever visits. What did I ever do to deserve this?" She was feeling very happy with this unexpected turn in her life.

They pulled up to the main door of the clubhouse. Peadar handed the keys to a valet and a porter held the door for them to enter, "Good evening Doctor," said the porter and smiled at Angela. She was very impressed that everyone seemed to know Peadar. Of course, he was a member of the club, but he must be considered an important member.

The Maitre d' asked if they would like a table overlooking the golf course, or one that overlooks the ocean. "We'll take a walk on the course after dinner. I'm sure the first fairway won't change much" Peadar, told him. "We will dine watching the setting sun and the ever changing sea."

Angela was a little surprised at the clubhouse. It was a fairly contemporary building, not at all what she expected. She was anticipating a nineteenth century manor house with rooms of beamed ceilings and rich looking dark wood paneling. She was looking for shelves filled with books and knick knacks. That was her image of club rooms that she

remembered from watching soap stories on television. She was surprised by the modernity of the building and its antiseptic look compared with her image of the nineteenth century manor house. She thought that it looked interesting, but it was different than her expectation. It was large with different levels to accommodate the differing needs of the members. There were several dining rooms and the one they were in was a main room strictly reserved for members and their guests.

The head waiter led them to a table next to a rather large picture window on the western side of the dining room overlooking the flaming red Atlantic Ocean as it prepared to receive the setting sun. For Angela, it was a spectacular scene.

“Would you like your usual drink, Doctor, asked the head waiter?” Peadar nodded assent. “And what may I bring for you, madame?” Angela asked for a glass of Merlot.

After the waiter left, Angela leaned in toward him and said that this whole scene was spectacular. She couldn’t even dream of anything as beautiful as the ride to the club and the setting for their dinner.

“Do you play golf here Peadar,” she asked?

“It is more that I play at golf here,” said Peadar. “I am not a very good golfer, but I play well enough to join some friends and play five or six times a season. It is a good place to relax. I enjoy dinner here. Most of all, I can be unnoticed here. They protect my privacy. I notice that after a day or an evening here, I am recharged to face whatever I have to deal with the next day. I don’t share this with many people, but I especially wanted to share it with you.”

“Thank you for that, Peadar. I have enjoyed every minute from the time you picked me up and we haven’t even begun dinner yet.”

They ordered their dinner, she, baked Irish salmon marinated in a delicate mustard sauce, and he, roast duck. Each ordered another glass of wine.

The dinner conversation was fascinating with Peadar telling stories of his life abroad and Angela describing her life at Leveegee and some great stories about raising Katie.

Both declined dessert and finished their meal with a cup of tea.

Peter invited Angela to walk with him on the first fairway which was lighted to appeal to the vision of the diners on the east side of the dining room

Angela removed her shoes and carried them. The heels dug into the ground and she did not want to ruin the course for golfers. There was something extremely sensual about walking barefoot in the damp grass.

Peadar took her hand. Her hand was small in his larger hand but the feeling of warmth spread throughout her entire body as they slowly walked hand in hand to the green at the end of the fairway. The artificial light created interesting patterns of shadows especially where the bracken at the edge of the fairway and around the natural contours and swords of the God-made course swayed in the gentle breeze.

He directed her to a bench near the second tee back in the shadows. He put his arm around her shoulders and held her close to him as they looked back at the beauty of the lighted fairway they had just traversed.

Angela was just about to say something when Peadar kissed her. She was surprised, pleasantly so. The kiss was gentle and tender and she didn't hesitate to return it and she definitely felt the reverberations throughout her body. The earth didn't move but it was everything short of an earthquake.

Peadar started to say something and Angela feared it would be an apology. She quickly put her index finger over his lips. She smiled and said, "That was very, very nice Peadar. Let's do it again in case I suddenly wake up from this dream."

They kissed again, this time a little more passionately. She could feel his hand rubbing up and down over her back and it felt soooo good.

They didn't speak. They just held each other close, touched each others cheek and kissed again and again. Two hours flew by as rapidly as two minutes when the club flickered the lights warning walkers that they would be extinguished in ten minutes. Peadar and Angela reluctantly rose from the bench and slowly started to walk back toward the clubhouse.

They were walking silently, hand in hand, when Angela stopped and looked him straight in the eye. "Peadar, I haven't been kissed like that in over 25 years. In fact, I have never been kissed quite like that."

Peadar didn't know how to respond and he blurted out, "I don't know what came over me."

"Well whatever it is," said Angela, "don't get over it." She hugged him and kissed him deeply under the flickering lights. They walked back to the clubhouse in darkness, and then around to the front of the building where the valet had Peadar's car ready.

