

*R*eligion, Sex And The Long Term Effects of Mispronunciation On The Ears Of The Young

In my early childhood my mother and her siblings upon hearing of tragedies or sombre occurrences, would reverently hang their heads, make the sign of the cross and exclaim; ‘God save us in garters!’ This was a regular and communally prescribed reaction to sad news, but its announcement never failed to highlight the imminence of my catastrophic and inevitable demise at the hands of the Satan himself.

I was aware of garters – courtesy of a Saturday afternoon film on can-can dancers and probably starring Tony Curtis – I also knew this attire resided in the realm of the unreachable closet of adulthood, deeming it unsuitable and morally ‘child unfriendly’ as a genuine line of enquiry. I had previously experienced this mortifying territory with my unrelenting questions as to what was the meaning of ‘virgin’, and had no desire to revisit that uninformative red-faced arena again. Garters, I had decided, must be kept resolutely to myself – but then what of stockings! If garters were at the forefront of allegiance with God heroically battling it out with forces of evil, then surely stockings were the foot soldiers, the necessary enforcements to ward off the corpse eating demons.

My mother and her sisters went about their daily concerns-no doubt - garter clad and, I assumed, secure in the knowledge that they were cocooned from the darker realms of ungodly terror. I was easy prey – anxious and vulnerable unable to fend off iniquity nor fight the swooping wings of malevolence, unprotected and alone. Clearly I was product of bad parenting. It became apparent with a short passing of time; my melodrama and mental histrionics were both unreasonable and unfounded. I came to fully appreciate the soft nuances of my mother’s Irish accent, as she and her sisters continue to declare upon hearing of ill-fated events – ‘God save us and guard us!’

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