

Discussion Questions

The Ginger Man

1. How did you experience the book? Were you engaged immediately? How did you feel reading it?
2. Do Dangerfield's misogyny and behavior fit the criteria for a picaresque novel? Did you find it humorous?
3. How did you like the author's writing style? Do you think the book warrants its place on Modern Library's list of 100 Best Novels of the 20th Century? Did you notice any of the references to James Joyce?
4. The novel was banned in Ireland and the US. Does the book seem as ribald as it must have been to the censors in 1955? Has it prepared the way for more candid discussions of sexuality? How does it compare with contemporary books such as *Tropic of Cancer* or *From Here to Eternity*? (Henry Miller, James Jones)
5. Are Dangerfield's articulations of middle-class clichés mockery, hypocrisy, or irony? What are his American characteristics?
6. What is Dangerfield's relationship with Kenneth O'Keefe? Does the author intend us to see O'Keefe as Dangerfield's victim? Why do you think Marion stays with her husband? Is there any point where he seems likeable? Why is he "The Ginger Man"?
7. The book has many lyrical passages. Which ones struck you as profound or insightful? Dangerfield and his friends have colorful speech. Did you enjoy their dialog?
8. Dangerfield eagerly anticipates his father's death. When the death finally occurs, how do you think it will ultimately affect him? How do you imagine he developed such a grandiose self-concept?
9. What were your impressions of Marion, Christine, Mary, and Lily Frost? How did the author develop these characters?
10. Is the plot realistic or fantastical?

