

**AT ELEVEN EVERY THURSDAY**

EXT. A RURAL IRISH COTTAGE. DOORSTEP. DAY

It's raining.

BERYL, 50s, rotund and short with hair died blond in an attempt to look younger, stands on the doorstep waiting.

She lifts up her flabby wrist and looks at the ivory face of her old watch. The hands reads thirty seconds to eleven.

She waits...

INT. SAME COTTAGE. LIVING ROOM. CONTINUOUS

An old ornate clock tick-tocks on the mantelpiece, the second hand reads twenty seconds to eleven.

PAULINE 50s, stern, rigid and tight-lipped, enters and lays a tray on a coffee table. On it are two China tea cups and a pot of tea, a jug of milk and a cup of sugar. This is a practised routine. She looks at a mirror, straightens her lapel, rolls her shoulders back.

The old clock reads eleven, exactly. The doorbell rings.

She goes out to answer it.

On the coffee table rests a recently-read ruffled newspaper.

PAULINE (O.S.)  
I thought you'd be late.

BERYL (O.S.)  
Late? Am I? I've just arrived.

Sound of door slamming. Footsteps.

PAULINE re-enters the room, followed by her sister BERYL 50s, They look alike.

PAULINE  
Well, you're not early. All well?

BERYL  
Oh stop wait till I tell ya I have  
this psoriasis  
(As she sits)  
It's this reddening on the skin.

PAULINE  
Oh right.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BERYL sits on a well used floral print couch. PAULINE pours tea.

BERYL  
Easy on the sugar.

PAULINE doesn't drop a second spoon of sugar into BERYLS cup.

PAULINE  
What?

BERYL  
I'm cutting down, keep me slim. You should....

PAULINE  
Fine.

She takes the cup.

PAULINE (CONT'D)  
Pour your own so.

BERYL grudgingly pours her own.

BERYL  
(Rubbing her thigh)  
So anyway...On the lower inside leg  
and it's flaky and a tad itchy.

PAULINE  
So it's like a skin rash.

BERYL  
Well a skin irritation.

PAULINE  
A skin irritation.

BERYL  
A skin rash. Well. I suppose.

PAULINE  
How come you were late?

BERYL  
Have I ever been late? Ever?

PAULINE  
You know I just cannot countenance  
bad punctuality. Even with rain.

BERYL has heard this before, she rolls her eyes.

They sup their tea. China cups rattle as they are replaced on saucers.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BERYL

Doctor Regan gave me steroid cream  
for it.

PAULINE

For...

BERYL

The psoriasis.

PAULINE

Oh the skin rash right. I hear his  
sister passed on.

BERYL

Oh she did. And Ted Murphy is after  
passing on too.

PAULINE

And Mick Stokes.

BERYL

And Verity Brady.

PAULINE

And Josie Tormey.

BERYL

And Maura Eustace.

PAULINE

Oh I was at the removal.

BERYL

On Monday?

She nods.

PAULINE

Yes Monday.

BERYL

Oh. I must have been at the one on  
Sunday then. Ted Murphy's.

PAULINE

Oh I missed that one.

BERYL

Oh it was nice.

PAULINE

A good one was it?

BERYL

It was.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

They sup their teas. BERYL glances at the ruffled newspaper.

BERYL (CONT'D)  
 (While looking at the  
 paper)  
 Did you hear about that fire in  
 Moate?

PAULINE  
 In the paper. Oh I did. Awful.  
 Shockin. The whole lot of them  
 burnt in their beds.

BERYL  
 I heard the dog too.

PAULINE  
 The dog too? I didn't hear that.  
 Terrible.

BERYL  
 Terrible.

They sup their teas. PAULINE'S eyes wander around the room.  
 BERYL follows her gaze, waiting for an opportunity to speak,  
 for something to say something about. PAULINE rests them on  
 the curtains, squints.

BERYL (CONT'D)  
 Did you do something to them  
 curtains?

PAULINE  
 No. No. Dusty though.

BERYL  
 I hear the febreze is great.

PAULINE  
 Oh?

BERYL  
 Ya. Great stuff. They have it...

PAULINE  
 Down in Tesco's?

BERYL  
 In Tesco's. Isn't it great.

PAULINE  
 Oh tis.  
 (Beat)  
 Think I'll stick with the duster  
 anyways.

Beat.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

Silence, sorely punctuated by the tick-tock of a mantelpiece clock.

BERYL  
Is that clock fast?

PAULINE  
No, don't think so.

BERYL  
Mum and Dads wedding gift was that.

PAULINE  
It was.

BERYL  
Always thought it was lovely.

PAULINE  
It is.

BERYL takes a sup from her tea.

BERYL  
And she left it to you.

PAULINE  
She did.

BERYL  
I'm very fond of it.

PAULINE just nods and gives her a fake smile.

BERYL (CONT'D)  
Ah well.

Neither of them have anything else to say. PAULINE takes a sup from her tea, draining the cup. She replaces it on the tray.

PAULINE  
Well.

BERYL drains her cup and replaces it on the tray.

BERYL  
It's just us now.

PAULINE  
What do you mean?

BERYL  
Well since  
(She hesitates)  
Gerry God rest him and....

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

PAULINE  
Michael God bless him.

BERYL  
And Michael God rest him.  
We should try and be...closer. More  
up front with eachother.

PAULINE stands and steps towards the door.

PAULINE  
So, you won't be late next week  
will you?

Beat.

BERYL  
Are you ever going to just face up  
to it? We're old and decrepit and  
our husbands are dead, yes *dead* and  
no man is going to have us now so  
we might as well be honest friends  
cause there's no one else, no one  
else, do you hear me?

PAULINE  
*How dare you.*

She begins to sob.

BERYL  
How dare me. Fine. You sit here and  
sob. I might not come next week.

PAULINE  
Fine.

BERYL  
Good. Anyway, I've to see Doctor  
Regan about the...

PAULINE  
The rash?

BERYL bites her lip before muttering...

BERYL  
The psoriasis.

She storms out of the room. Sound of the front door opening,  
slamming.

A beat before, in a whisper....

PAULINE  
Bye.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

She slouches onto the sofa, exhales, rubs her eyes. She sobs, more openly now, more freely. She starts to clear away the tea tray.

EXT. COTTAGE. GARDEN PATH. CONTINUOUS

BERYL shuffles down the garden path in the rain.

BERYL

Late? Fuckin late. I'll fuckin...  
Late? Am I ever fuckin...I've a  
good mind to go back...

She stops, turns, contemplates going back to the door and talking to PAULINE honestly.

BERYL (CONT'D)

Ah fuck it.

She marches off.

BERYL (CONT'D)

Fuck it. Fuck it. Fuck it.

She might never return.

INT. LIVING ROOM. A WEEK LATER.

The clock reads one minute to eleven.

PAULINE has all the tea set ready and laid out. She looks in the mirror, fixes her lapel. She stands waiting.

Waiting.

The hour hand passes eleven.

No BERYL.

PAULINE starts to cry. She wails. Louder. Louder.

She falls to her knees, sobs into her hands. Alone.

A beat.

The doorbell rings.