

**EXTRACTS FROM:**

**SISTERS**  
**(DILYS AND MIRIAM)**

**A ONE-ACT COMEDY**

**By Christopher Owen**

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## **CHARACTERS:**

**DILYS.**

**MIRIAM, Dilys' sister.**

**THE COMEDY IS SET IN DILYS SITTING ROOM  
IN HER HOUSE SITUATED IN A SMALL TOWN  
IN WALES.**

**Dilys and Miriam are sisters who have always been jealous  
of each other especially where men are concerned.**

## **FIRST EXTRACT:**

**DILYS AND MIRIAM ARE HAVING TEA.**

Dilys: You like another cup of tea, Miriam?

Miriam: Thank you, Dilys. Very nice.

Dilys: (TO MIRIAM): Another cake, is it? You don't seem to have eaten very much at all.

Miriam: No, no. I'm fine, thank you. I've got to watch the figure, see.

Dilys: There's some nice cream cakes here, got them in specially. I know how you like cream cakes, Miriam. Where's there's cream cakes you'll always find Miriam, that's what our mam used to say, eh?

Miriam: Thank you, Dilys, nothing more for the moment. I'm not one to be greedy.

Dilys: No.

Miriam: I'll have one of these biscuits though – I'm partial to a chocolate bourbon. It's very nice of you to have me over for tea.

Dilys: Well, it's the first Sunday of the month, Miriam. Since your Harry died, we've always get together on the first Sunday of the month. We can't have you on your own week after week. That's how I've always looked at it – one's own sister on her own, having Sunday tea on her own all the time. That's so, isn't it? With the children grown up and living so far away – our John in Dundee, Gwyneth in Canada – it's been nice to have the company. That's how I've looked at it over these last few years.

(AFTER A MOMENT): I'm worried about Brian, see.

Miriam: Brian?

Dilys: My husband. For God's sake, Miriam, you know who Brian is. I don't have to tell you who Brian is. Brian. My husband. You know. For God's sake.

Miriam: I know who Brian is.

Dilys: Of course you do. What's going to happen to him, to Brian while I'm in London? I'm not leaving, not without seeing him settled. Someone to look after him - eh, Miriam? Look at him. At dinner last night, it's always the same, he can't pour a glass of beer without spilling it. Spilling it on the tablecloth. He'll not manage on his own, that's for certain. He pretends he'll manage on his own, but you and I know differently, don't we?

Miriam: This bourbon biscuit is delicious, Dilys. Delicious it is. Did you make them?

Dilys: Of course I didn't make them. You know I don't make chocolate bourbons, Miriam. Whatever's got into your head – you making out as how I've made them?

Miriam: Lovely.

Dilys: (AFTER A MOMENT): And what about you, Miriam?

Miriam: What about me, Dilys?

Dilys: Every since your Harry died – when was it? – eighteen months is it now?

Miriam: Over two years now, Dilys. Your own sister – you'd think you'd remember how long it is since Harry died.

Dilys: You on your own in that big house. Talking to yourself at night, making conversation with those men on the television.

Miriam: I do no such thing. I'll have you know I do no such thing.

Dilys: You told me yourself, didn't you? Don't you sit there trying to deny it. That man on News At Ten, with the suit, you know him better there in your living room with the lights out than you know your own neighbours.

Miriam: You haven't met my neighbours, Dilys.

Dilys: All on your own as you are – it's not healthy, Miriam. Look at that all those bits of chocolate bourbon all over the table cloth. You're as bad a Brian, you are. Dropping food from your mouth like you're living in the jungle – the two of you – behaving like you're in the jungle. Wild animals, you might as well be, no mistake.

Miriam: It's only a little – a few crumbs.

Dilys: That's a sign, an indication of things to come, that's what it is. It's a warning. Crumbs on the table.

Miriam: Dear God, Dilys.

Dilys: I worry - I worry about the both of you, I do.

Miriam: Don't you worry about me, Dilys.

Dilys: You can't see what's staring you in the face, Miriam, that's the truth of it. You'd not appreciate the significance of Noah's Ark rising up outside your bedroom window, if you saw it. You'd see it, you'd say, oh, look, it's raining.

Miriam: It would be, Dilys. It would be raining. Noah's Ark floating up past my bedroom window, it'd not be far off the mark to say it was doing just that.

Dilys: You'd not see the wider significance. That's what I'm saying. Never could. Even when we were children. Mam used to say our Miriam can't see the wood for the trees.

**IN A SHOW OF IRRITATION, MIRIAM ABRUPTLY TAKES A CREAM CAKE.**

Dilys: I'm not leaving for London, Miriam, not until I feel assured you and Brian have agreed to settle down together.

Miriam: Settled down?

Dilys: Wedding bells, Miriam.

Miriam: (ALMOST CHOKING ON HER CAKE): God, Dilys, what are you talking about?

Dilys: Don't break down, for heaven's sake, Miriam.

**END OF FIRST EXTRACT.**

**SECOND EXTRACT:**

**DILYS PLONKS A CREAM CAKE ON MIRIAM'S PLATE.**

Miriam: Brian and I are planning to go away together for a weekend.

Dilys: A weekend? Where do you have in mind?

Miriam: Rome.

Dilys: Rome, is it? Brian told me you were both going to Bangor.

Miriam: He told you?

Dilys: He is still my husband, Miriam.

Miriam: We're not going to Bangor! We're going to Rome.

Dilys: Not according to Brian, Miriam. No. As far as Brian is concerned it's Bangor. A long weekend he said.

Miriam: Bangor?

Dilys: He said to me as how he thought he hadn't been to Bangor for a long time, and wouldn't it be nice for the two of you to go there. You and he could make a weekend of it, so to speak, round trip sort of thing. Go on the Saturday, back on the Sunday, call in at Criccieth on the way, sort of thing.

Miriam: I don't want to go to Bangor. I want to go to Rome.

Dilys: I grant you Rome is a much more romantic choice, but you know Brian. I'll have a word with him, would you like that? I'll have a word, tell him you want to go somewhere where it's romantic, like Rome. The two of you, I'll tell him. Italian skies, breakfast on the veranda. He'll need to get himself some suitable clothes. He can't go in that old jacket of his he's forever wearing despite the frayed cuffs and indelible soups stains. That might be alright for Bangor and such like, but Rome, he'll need something more lightweight. More debonair. He'll have to wash his hair. You know that, don't you? You'll have to see to that. The Italians don't like people with dirty hair. Or dirty fingernails.

Miriam: I'm not going to Bangor, I'm going to Rome.

Dilys: I'll have word, dear, I'll tell him, 'now then, Brian, don't be a spoil sport, don't upset the poor woman. Miriam has always loved you,' I'll remind him. You've always loved Brian, Miriam, ever since he and I first went out together, ever since our first date – I was just eighteen, wasn't I? Ever since that day he took me out dancing at the town hall, you remember. He asked Mam's permission, could he take me out dancing, and she said it'd be alright but he had to bring me back in one piece and a virgin by eleven o'clock. And we got home and there was Mam, and there was you, Miriam, and you of course, you take a shine to him straight away

as was to be expected with you, eh? Couldn't bear me to have anything of my own, anyone of my own. That's so, isn't it?

Miriam: I'm not listening. What nonsense you do talk. I never even noticed Brian. Not then. Not at that time.

Dilys: Fact is, as I said to him, anything, anyone I had, you'd have to have.

Miriam: What absolute rubbish.

Dilys: Peter – what about Peter Jenkins? You remember Peter Jenkins. Veronica Jones' boyfriend. He and I went dancing, he walked me home, you were green with envy, Miriam.

Miriam: What Peter Jenkins? I don't remember any Peter Jenkins. Such nonsense.

Dilys: He had a scar where he had had his appendix removed. You remember. You told me about it. Who first found out that Peter Jenkins had an appendix scar? You, Miriam. How long did that take you to discover, I'm wondering.

## **END OF SECOND EXTRACT.**

### **THIRD EXTRACT:**

Miriam: He'd have married me – he would - if you hadn't got yourself pregnant.

Dilys: I did not get myself pregnant.

Miriam: You planned it, you did.

Dilys: I did not. I certainly did not.

Miriam: Your boy John was born seven months after your wedding, and don't you try to deny it.

Dilys: So? It doesn't mean I planned it. Does it? You've no proof of that. Making your unfounded accusations. I'm not discussing it. I'm not. That's it.

Miriam: Everyone knew you planned it. It's always been the same. You accusing me of trying to take your boyfriends off you. I said to Brian, your Brian, I said what about Harry, my husband - Christmas, only a year before he died - Christmas Eve, on the landing, and no mistletoe to excuse Dilys' antics, Dilys, I said to him, Dilys' hands where they shouldn't be.

Dilys: My hands?

Miriam: You trying to upset him. I told Brian, you trying to come between me and my Harry. Harry going about the house, he was, for weeks after, like a spaniel, his jaw all loose and hanging. You did that to my Harry.

**MIRIAM ANGRILY TAKES ANOTHER CAKE.**

Dilys: You're welcome to Brian, Miriam. Go, you go off with him for God's sake. Go, go. I'm divorcing him, I told you. I'm going to London on the six twenty seven. He can take you to Bangor.

Miriam: Rome!

Dilys: Rome. Bangor, wherever. Don't bother to come back. Only thing is – brace yourself - the last I heard from Brian, last night after he got in from the pub, is he's not going to Rome or Bangor. He's going to Keswick.

Miriam: Keswick? He hasn't said anything about Keswick. He didn't ask me if I wanted to go to Keswick?

Dilys: You're not going to Keswick?

Miriam: Why say Keswick then?

Dilys: He's going to Keswick? With Rosemary.

Miriam: Rosemary? Who's Rosemary?

Dilys: She works at the bank. A clerk at the bank

**END OF THIRD EXTRACT.**



## **FOURTH EXTRACT:**

Dilys: What worries me is what you're going to do, Miriam, with Brian with Angharad Roberts and me and Alan in London, and there you are, you on your own in that big house of yours - with no one to talk to but that man on News At Ten. Such a shame, you by yourself, and no man of your own. Devastating for you, I'd say. You will promise me not to have a nervous breakdown?

Miriam: I can manage for myself, thank you.

Dilys: Have you got any man in mind you could approach, try your little tricks on?

Miriam: I'm not without my friends, Dilys. So don't you think I am.

Dilys: You'll be alright then. You could try Mr Roberts – Brian's Angharad Roberts' husband - Roberts the baker. He'll be on his own one, won't he? - at least while his wife's in London with my husband.

Miriam: I can look after myself without any help from you, Dilys.

Dilys: Roberts the baker – he's a bit overweight, of course – all those cakes - what would he be ? Twenty two stone?

Miriam: I'm not the least bit interested in Mr Roberts, thank you very much.

Dilys: There's Mr Cartwright. Now, he's a very nice man.

Miriam: I don't know who you're talking about.

Dilys: Mr Cartwright, came to unblock the drains. Wart on the side of his nose. (EXAGGERATING THE SIZE OF THE WART): Out here.

Miriam: I don't know any Mr Cartwright. He's not a man whose services I've engaged. You can be sure of that.

Dilys: You were here. When he came to do the drains. Quite charming, very polite, did wonders with my blockage. Wart. Out here.

Miriam: I don't know him.

Dilys: False teeth. When he laughed the top set fell out. He'd do very well for you, Miriam.

Miriam: I'm not listening to you, Dilys.

Dilys: Teeth fell on the floor, he picked them up, wiped them clean on his shirt tails. For goodness sake, Miriam, you wouldn't forget a man like that. We'll have to find you someone. Brian and I won't feel happy, us away as we'll be, without finding someone suitable for you.

Miriam: For God's sake! If you want to know, I am seeing someone.

Dilys: Oh? You're seeing someone? Who?

Miriam: What's that you, Dilys?

Dilys: Quite right. It has nothing to do with me. No, no.

Miriam: If you want to know –

Dilys: It doesn't matter, Miriam.

Miriam: - If you want to know it's my dentist.

Dilys: Your dentist? He's homosexual.

**END OF EXTRACTS**