

# **CHARITY BEGINS**

**BY**

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**Series One, Episode Four, "Deborah"**

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**SCENE ONE****ATMOS: INT. THE BACK ROOM. MORNING.****F/X: RUSTLING BAGS, CLICK OF TAGGER.**

BEV I said to 'im, I said, 'Seamus, give over clipping your toenails in the lounge, I keep finding them in my macaroni.'

EVIE Tea?

**F/X: KETTLE BOILING, CHINK OF CUPS.**

BEV Please. (Pause.) It would have been fine, but he's got Athlete's Foot, I've been put right off parmigiano.

EVIE You'd think he'd go in the bathroom.

BEV He tried that when I threw him out of the bedroom, but then they kept getting caught in my slippers.

EVIE Sugar?

BEV Two – I've gone off those sweeteners, they weren't working. Seamus kept complaining that me lips tasted of eucalyptus.

EVIE Have you thought about sending him to a chiropodist?

**F/X: A CUP OF TEA IS MADE.**

BEV Thanks Evie. (Pause.) It's an idea, I suppose – although he's never been good with folk touching his feet. Remember, I came in with that black eye.

EVIE                   And you said he looked worse off than you.

BEV                   Well that were only because when he kicked me, I had hold of his toe and pulled it out its socket. We were in A and E for hours. I thought I were going to get arrested.

**F/X:                   BAG RUSTLES.**

EVIE                   Who would send this into a charity shop?

BEV                   What is it?

EVIE                   A used potty.

BEV                   Used as in stained, or used as in -

EVIE                   Used as in there is a small brown object stuck to the bottom of it.

BEV                   You don't mean?

EVIE                   Well it's certainly not Ferrero Rocher.

BEV                   Just throw it in the bin, Evie, before I throw up that macaroni and cheese.

**F/X:                   BAG RUSTLES, DROPPED IN BIN.**

**MARTIN ENTERS**

MARTIN               Sorry, I'm late, I was at the police station with my Grandad last night, Nan's told me to call it an altercation with the customer service attendant at a high street chain store.

BEV                   And what's he saying?

- MARTIN                    He threw his change at the Sainsbury's checkout boy because he refused to let him buy anymore pork pies.
- BEV                         And what's the truth?
- MARTIN                    He'd hidden three packets on his body and there was a bottle of Famous Grouse where bottles of Famous Grouse should never go. He was also so drunk when he got asked to walk in a straight line, he told them to stop the line moving.
- BEV                         That sounds more like our Alf.
- EVIE                        Tea, Martin?
- MARTIN                    Please. Have you found a new venue yet?
- EVIE                        I was this close to finding the perfect location when there was a kitchen fire. As the chef told me on the phone, he was lucky to get away with two casualties – his eye-brows.
- MARTIN                    So, it's back to the drawing board?
- EVIE                        I'm thinking of giving up entirely and giving people vouchers for M and S. How did your Sociology presentation go?
- MARTIN                    They told me that there can't really be that many sociological implications of charity shops and did I have any of fields of research. I said that the only other place I go is the allotment with my grandfather – and they weren't too fond of that idea.
- BEV                         Why?

MARTIN I thought it would show the difference between generations of men. The tutor wanted me to give an exciting presentation – something about the drug culture, or how Jeremy Kyle has changed life on local council estates.

EVIE So you have to re-do it?

MARTIN No, I took the mark. I'm thinking of dropping out and studying French anyway. Apparently there are more job opportunities if you have a second language under your belt.

BEV And you're looking for other job opportunities?

MARTIN That's for my Nan, Bev. Grandad says French women are much more game. I just want to go to Paris and be able to have a conversation where I don't get mineral water every time I ask for Coca-Cola.

**F/X: DOORBELL RINGS.**

MARTIN Since when do we have a doorbell?

EVIE Since Deborah thought it was common to knock on doors.

BEV I'll get it.

**F/X: FOOTSTEPS ON CARPET. BACK DOOR OPENED.**

### DEBORAH ENTERS

BEV Oh, it's you, Deborah.

DEBORAH Beverly, how nice to see you, Seamus is well I trust? Yes, well, you're fired.

BEV                    What?

DEBORAH            Please collect your things, hand in your identification badge plus lanyard and leave immediately.

BEV                    Hang on a minute – what exactly are you sacking me for?

EVIE                    Deborah, you can't just fire people.

DEBORAH            Oh, but I can, Evie. I've decided that I'm making some changes around here. You'll be happy to know that I've found a venue for the Christmas Do.

**SCENE TWO****ATMOS: INT. SHOP. MORNING.****F/X: BELL ABOVE DOOR TINKLES. HANGERS SCRAPE ON RAILS. TILL DINGS.**

MARTIN Thank you, bye!

DEBORAH No, I'm afraid that's not quite right, Martin. We want customers to understand just who they are supporting. I'll show you with the next customer.

**SAMANTHA AND GEOFF ENTER**

SAMANTHA Here's a CD, Geoff.

GEOFF I don't want a CD. I only have a record player.

SAMANTHA You could play it in your car – it's Tom Jones – you like Sex Bomb.

GEOFF I don't like Sex Bomb.

SAMANTHA Are you sure?

GEOFF Have they got Il Divo?

SAMANTHA They've got G4.

GEOFF No.

SAMANTHA We'll take that please.

GEOFF I don't want G4.

SAMANTHA You won't know the difference after a few cans.

DEBORAH Oh, G4, I haven't had the pleasure of listening to their music, but I'm sure they are a delight. What do they sing? Bohemian Rhapsody – I can't say I was ever a fan of the song, myself, but perhaps there are different nuances with this cover. Now, how much are CDs?

MARTIN It's a pound, Deborah, it says on the shelf. You came up with the prices.

DEBORAH I did, didn't I? Oh yes, well, that is a good price, don't you think and all of it goes to a good cause. That will be one pound please.

**F/X: TILL KEYS PRESSED. RECEIPT PRINTS.**

SAMANTHA Can we just buy it?

DEBORAH Well, of course.

**F/X: TILL DINGS OPENED. MONEY DROPPED. TILL CLOSED.**

MARTIN Would you like a bag?

DEBORAH Martin, please! I will handle this: although we understand the threat of global warming, we appreciate that sometimes you will need a bag in which to carry your purchases. Our bags are recycled, donated by customers to help the cause – if you take one, we have introduced a new policy and ask that you place a penny in the charity box.

SAMANTHA            No thanks, we've got pockets.

DEBORAH            Goodbye, thank you for supporting the East Cheshire Relief Fund  
for the Bewildered Elderly.

**F/X:                    BELL ABOVE DOOR TINKLES. DOOR SLAMS.**

MARTIN             We've never charged for bags before, Deborah.

DEBORAH            It's a new initiative. I'm starting it today – loyal customers have  
donated these bags and we're prepared to just give them away.  
It beggars belief.

**SCENE THREE****ATMOS: INT. OFFICE. MORNING.****F/X: COMPUTER HUMS. PAPER RUSTLES.**

BEV She can't sack me, Evie, not without warning – isn't there some sort of tribunal I can take her to?

EVIE I'm not sure, there's nothing in the handbook about area managers firing employees. I mean she might have had complaints – you have a thing about throwing confectionary goods.

BEV But so does every red-blooded woman from Cheshire, it's not an automatic reason to give them the sack.

EVIE She offered to pay you until the end of the month.

BEV And then what, Evie, me and Seamus are meant to be going to an all-inclusive resort in Majorca, I can't be losing my job now.

EVIE My hands are tied, Bev. I can't go over her head – she is the head – she's the head honcho. She makes the decisions. I'm not saying they're always the right ones –

BEV Where's she arranged the Christmas Do?

EVIE The office car park – her new fella, Pete, has a gazebo, and his sister does finger sandwiches. Deborah's bought a Christmas Cake, and she's going to do a raffle – the person who wins the raffle wins the cake.

BEV And does that sound like a good idea?

EVIE I might just stay here, put on a Best of Christmas album and get drunk.

BEV Now that sounds like a plan.

**DEBORAH ENTERS**

DEBORAH Evie, I was wondering about the cabinets! (Pause) Are you still here? I thought I'd asked you to leave.

BEV I wanted to make sure you were in your rights to sack me.

DEBORAH And am I?

BEV We've checked the handbook and it says you are. I've left me ID by the kettle.

**MARTIN ENTERS**

MARTIN Evie, I need your help out here – the customers are complaining about the new penny scheme. One woman's bought a wicker basket and can't get it back to her car without a bag – but she doesn't have a penny because she paid by card. (Pause) Bev, what're you doing?

BEV I'm leaving, Martin. I'm going to go to pastures new – maybe there'll be a vacancy at the British Heart Foundation, they always had a good selection of DVDs.

MARTIN Then I'm going to.

DEBORAH What?

MARTIN                    Bev is one of the best things about this shop. You can call her common all you like, Deborah, but she understands what folk are talking about – and they don't want to be talked to by the most pretentious, arrogant, narcissistic, self-serving busybody, this side of East Cheshire.

**F/X:                    ID BADGE THROWN ON COUNTER.**

MARTIN                    Come on Bev.

**F/X:                    DOOR OPENED AND SLAMMED.**

**MARTIN AND BEV EXIT.**

DEBORAH                Now, I think that that was most unprofessional.

EVIE                        I think we're well and truly buggered.

**SCENE FOUR****ATMOS: INT. SHOP. MORNING.****F/X: CUSTOMERS SCRAPE HANGERS ON RAILS. TILL DINGS.  
DOOR OPENS AND CLOSES. CUSTOMERS CHATTER.**

DEBORAH           And you see if we offered an elite service online, for usual window stock, then we could, in fact serve food.

EVIE                But we'd have to apply for a new licence. And what sort of food are you talking about?

DEBORAH           Nothing fancy – just the new modern foods – paninis, muffins, maybe a few brie and cranberry sandwiches.

EVIE                And you're sure this is what our customers want? Because if you'd met Martin's grandfather, you'd know you can't get him to do anything without half a dozen pork pies.

DEBORAH           Yes, that's another thing. I don't like all these common customers hanging around. This is a charity shop – I want to attract the higher class of individual.

EVIE                This isn't Alderley Edge, Deborah, if we want a higher class of customer, we need a higher class of produce. Our customers donate bric-a-brac and second-hand clothes, they don't donate anything that denotes higher class.

DEBORAH           If we put the prices up, then those patrons of a higher class will wish to enter the shop and support the charity.

EVIE                I can't condone someone paying three pound fifty for fifty-pence worth of bric-a-brac.

DEBORAH I'm not asking you to condone it, I'm telling you to do it.

EVIE Where are Bev and the turkey leg when you need them? (Pause)  
I'm going into the back, do you want a brew?

DEBORAH If you're getting coffee, nip to the Costa down the road. I'll have a large caramel macchiato with soya milk. It gives off an air of sophistication, I find.

EVIE I'll see you in a bit.

**F/X: DOOR OPENED AND CLOSED.**

**EVIE EXITS**

**MARIE ENTERS**

MARIE Oh, hello, a new face it seems. I wonder whether you might be able to help me.

DEBORAH But of course, here at the East Cheshire Relief Fund for the Bewildered Elderly, our first priority is always to help our customers who so wish to help our charity.

MARIE If only the other staff thought this way – I have often been met with incompetent, inadequate, under-qualified remarks from idle shop-workers in the past.

DEBORAH I understand your thoughts entirely, which is why I have deigned to make some changes around here.

MARIE Really? The shop looks the same.

DEBORAH           It might do now, but trust me, soon you will take note. I have finally got rid of those awful shop assistants, and I am in the process of arranging to sell food – paninis and the like.

MARIE             Oh, I do believe that is a mistake.

DEBORAH           You do?

MARIE             Paninis are over-done – you want to sell basic foods that showcase the best of British. Get your produce off local farms, and support the labour.

DEBORAH           I refuse to support labour! I have and always been conservative, and I will not change just because of a few liberals who choose to help the farmer. He can't be that unfortunate, he has enough time to go around fields all day on a tractor.

MARIE             (Affronted) That's his job! Farmers check their stock, there's a lot of work goes into it.

DEBORAH           Still, I think paninis are the way to go and customers who disagree can go to Oxfam for all I care.

MARIE             I was wrong – you're less helpful than an umbrella in a tsunami. Bring back the lady with the hips.

DEBORAH           She's long gone.

MARIE             More's the pity.

**SCENE FOUR****ATMOS: INT. SHOP. AFTERNOON.****F/X: A DRILL. CUSTOMERS CHATTER. DOOR OPENS.****EVIE ENTERS**

EVIE                    I'm back. It wouldn't have taken so long, but the barista had to go and buy soya milk.

DEBORAH            It's quite all right, I got Pete in to fix the locks on the cabinets whilst you were out.

EVIE                    Pete?

DEBORAH            The man with the drill.

**F/X: DEBORAH SLURPS HER COFFEE. MAKES A DISGUSTED SOUND.**

DEBORAH            Oh, I didn't mean soya, I meant skimmed, I do get them mixed up sometimes. It'll do I suppose. (Pause) Pete! Pete! You can leave that now, come and have this coffee.

**F/X: DRILLING STOPS.**

PETE                    Thanks love. (Slurps) Aye, that's all right, that is. I'm Pete, you must be Evie.

EVIE                    That's right – Deborah hasn't really told me much about you.

PETE                    I'm her guilty secret I suppose. She likes me really – I should hope so after what we just did in the back room. Found a new use for net curtains didn't we, Debs?

DEBORAH             Pete, not in front of the customers.

EVIE                    I'll just be in the back.

DEBORAH             You do still rag net curtains, don't you?

EVIE                    Did you weigh the bag?

DEBORAH             But of course.

EVIE                    Then we still rag net curtains. I'll be in the office.

**SCENE FIVE****ATMOS: INT. BACK ROOM. AFTERNOON.**

EVIE                    Are you sure you won't come back, Martin? ... Yes, I know she's a bit ... difficult to get on with, but I desperately need your help ... Edith can't be happy with what you're doing ... Yes, sorry, low-blow ... Oh, you're sticking to your guns – I can see why she'd like that ... No, I don't think you can use this as your sociological presentation – we are not cattle! ... Sorry, Martin, I don't mean to shout, it's just bad. It's not going well at all... I'll leave you to get on with your work ... Bye, Martin, bye.

**F/X: PHONE PUT DOWN, EVIE SIGHS.**

EVIE                    Well that went well, didn't it, Evie?

**F/X: KNOCK AT DOOR.**

EVIE                    Just a minute!

**F/X: DOOR OPENED.**

EVIE                    And I thought today couldn't get much worse. I was wrong.

**DEREK ENTERS**

DEREK                I'm not here to cause trouble, Evie, I met Bev in town, she said that she shouted at me and said she'd been sacked. She thinks I made some complaint.

EVIE                    Did you?

- DEREK                    I'm not petty, Evie, I only wanted to talk. I came to see what I could do to help.
- EVIE                      No, you came back to show me how much you think you've changed. We've been through this, Derek, you haven't changed, I bet you still eat pasta right out of the pan.
- DEREK                    It saves a plate.
- EVIE                      It's horrible. (She sniggers) Come on, I need a cup of tea.
- F/X:                      EVIE WALKS INTO BACK ROOM. KETTLE SWITCHED ON. CUPBOARDS OPENED. CUPS TINKLING.**
- DEREK                    So what's going on?
- EVIE                      Do you remember Deborah?
- DEREK                    The woman I said broke her femur?
- EVIE                      I think it would have been better if she had. She's sacked Bev, Martin's walked out, the customers are complaining that the prices are doubling throughout the day, and at lunchtime she shouted at a child for getting gingerbread crumbs on the floor. She gave them a dust pan and brush and forced them to stay until the rug was clean.
- DEREK                    Teaching the child some discipline.
- EVIE                      He was in a pram! One minute, he's sat there, playing with a teddy and eating a gingerbread man, the next he's on the floor being forced into child labour the likes of which we haven't seen since the Victorian times.

DEREK                    So the reign of Deborah's a bad thing?

EVIE                      She's only doing it because of her new fella. Once we started selling clocks made out of vinyl records because her boyfriend was an artist. He spent ten grand on an artistic trip to Prague and never came back.

**F/X:                      A CUP OF TEA IS MADE.**

DEREK                    What did she do?

EVIE                      He still sends her Christmas cards every year, from Hugo and Ken. Biscuit? We've got bourbons.

DEREK                    Please.

**F/X:                      BISCUIT TIN OPENED. DEREK CRUNCHES.**

EVIE                      I don't know what I'm going to do with her, Derek.

DEREK                    I could help you sort through donations.

EVIE                      There aren't any, Deborah told customers they'd have to ring ahead first.

DEREK                    Let me get a look at her.

**F/X:                      DEREK WALKS ACROSS THE ROOM. OPENS THE DOOR.**  
**CUSTOMERS CHATTER HEARD, SCRAPING OF HANGERS**  
**ON RAILS.**

DEREK                    Is that her at the till? She's a rough un, isn't she, Evie?

EVIE                      She wants to start serving paninis.

DEREK                   What's a panini when it's at home?

EVIE                     A posh cheese toastie.

DEREK                   And who's that she's got her arms around?

EVIE                     Her new fella, Pete.

DEREK                   I know Pete. He comes down the Queen's. I'm sure he's got a wife – what's her name? Tina. That's it. Pete and Tina, they have one of those dogs with the funny names.

EVIE                     A shih tzu?

DEREK                   A Shar Pei! That's right a Shar Pei called Fang.

EVIE                     And this helps how.

DEREK                   You'd be surprised, Evie.

**SCENE SIX****ATMOS: INT. SHOP. AFTERNOON.**

DEREK Ay up, Pete, lad, how's the missus?

PETE (Awkward) 'ow at, Derek, uh, yeah, she's all right.

DEBORAH (Overjoyed) You've told people about me, Pete. I knew it was serious. We might have only been together for two days but I felt it in my bones that you were the one.

DEREK Sorry, love, but I wasn't on about you.

DEBORAH (Inquisitive) But you said?

**F/X: DOORBELL TINKLES, DOG BARKS, STOMP OF FEET**

PETE Tina!

DEBORAH I'm sorry, but we don't allow dogs in the shop.

TINA Then who the heck let you in?

DEBORAH I will have to ask you to leave. The dog can wait on the doorstep.

TINA Oh I don't mind where I knock your teeth in. Standing there all high and mighty – I'd set Fang on you but you look like you'd do him more harm than good.

PETE Tina, babe.

TINA Don't babe me, you lying two-timing beggar. What will I say to Fang when you don't come home to sing him a lullaby? You know that he can't sleep if he doesn't hear *Old McDonald*.

PETE I can still come home, Tina. This with Deborah is nothing – she means nothing to me.

DEBORAH Pete, how can you say such a thing?

DEREK Yeah, Pete, you were holding her that close you were practically conjoined twins.

EVIE ENTERS

EVIE Will the lot of you keep it down?

PETE Oh, I see.

DEREK You catch on quickly do you, lad?

PETE Course I do – we've all seen the pictures of the great Evelyn, the one that got away. From what I remember, you can't say anything about me and Debs, not after all the things you've done.

EVIE What's he talking about, Derek?

TINA Don't try and change the subject, Pete. Hanging on to a woman old enough to be your great grandmother. You're my husband. I can forgive you for dipping your fishing tackle in an old pond, but I won't forgive you for lying to me.

DEBORAH What a model to society, you are. Pete wouldn't leave me. Pete loves me.

TINA                    It's been two days – I've still been making his tea, you're nothing more than a fart in a bubble bath. You're here, but you're easily forgettable.

DEBORAH            (Whimpering) Pete?

EVIE                    Derek, get Pete and Tina out of here. Deborah get in the back room and pull yourself together. I'll man the till and I tell you all now, if any of you so much as whispers in this shop again I will show you just how we deal with soiled donations.

**F/X:**                    **GRUMBLING, DOOR OPENING, FOOTSTEPS, CUSTOMERS TALK.**

**SCENE SEVEN****ATMOS: INT. BACK ROOM. AFTERNOON.**

EVIE                    You understand that we don't have a license to serve food, Deborah?

DEBORAH            Oh I do wish you wouldn't put a dampener on things, Evie, I've friends on the council, I'm sure they can appreciate we're trying to raise money for charity.

EVIE                    Are you sure this isn't about your MBE again?

DEBORAH            Everything is about the MBE. All the other bijou shops are doing it, a café gets people in.

EVIE                    That may be so but planning permission – these things take time, you can't just waltz in here on a Tuesday morning and think that you can set up a panini machine beside the bric-a-brac.

DEBORAH            Where else do you expect me to put it? Pete's measured the entire shop – it's the most appropriate place for it to go. Otherwise there's the worry of the public burning themselves. As you are well aware, the customers are always my priority.

EVIE                    It's a good job they've all cleared off then.

DEBORAH            I'm sorry, Evie?

EVIE                    No, Deborah, I'm sorry, I know that you're the area manager and you think this gives you the authority to be a complete pillock but since when have the customers been your priority? Your staff mean nothing to you – Bev has been a loyal member of staff for

nearly twenty years and you sacked her quicker than you'd scrape dog muck from your shoes. You arrived today and immediately started throwing your weight around where it was not wanted nor was it needed. You want me to find you a venue for the Christmas party of the New Millennium without offering the slightest bit of help. It surprises me that you're in the job. Frankly, it amazes me that you ever got a job in the first place.

(Awkward silence. 0.5 seconds.)

DEBORAH            I cannot say I am not shocked by your outburst, Evie. I will let you alone to cool down and perhaps we can talk about this soon when you begin to understand that I will always do right by the customers.

EVIE                I expect Hell will have to cool down as well, Deborah, because you're more incompetent than a gnat on a good day.

**SCENE EIGHT****ATMOS: INT. BACK ROOM. AFTERNOON.****F/X: KETTLE BOILING, TEA IS MADE.**

BEV (enthusiastic) You never said that! Blooming heck, Evie, what a day to grow a backbone.

EVIE I was two seconds away from pointing out that outright sacking you is illegal. She did not follow any of the correct procedures and she didn't check anything with your manager.

BEV What about the whole café idea?

EVIE She'll roll it around with the trustees but it'll never get anywhere.

BEV We've definitely got our jobs back.

EVIE You and Martin can start work again tomorrow.

BEV And Derek?

EVIE Derek is someone from my past. You saw one photo in a newspaper, let's leave it at that.

BEV But how are you feeling, Evie, isn't this getting to you in the slightest?

EVIE Derek let's people down.

BEV I don't know about you, but once I've finished this brew I'm going to nip off to the Hare and Horse.

EVIE I've got to get home. Tom's got some important ... school thing.

BEV You sure you're not avoiding something?

EVIE When it comes to Derek, I will avoid the subject like Usain Bolt avoids fish and chips.

**SCENE NINE****ATMOS: INT. OFFICE. EVENING.****F/X HUM OF THE COMPUTER. KNOCK AT THE DOOR.**

EVIE Come in Derek.

**F/X DOOR OPENS**

DEREK How'd you know it was me?

EVIE I knew you'd be back to explain yourself. So go ahead, explain yourself. Explain why you feel the need to interrupt my every working day.

DEREK I miss you, Evie.

EVIE Then don't. I don't have time for you to miss me, Derek. I have donations to sort – Mrs Bracegirdle donated thirty-seven bags of her dead husband's underwear today and I've not been able to get through them because I've got to find a venue for a Christmas party that I don't think has any hope of going ahead because my area manager is more dense than a lemon bun.

DEREK Then let me help.

EVIE You lied to me.

DEREK When?

EVIE When you said that you were the area manager. When I saw your wedding photos in the newspaper and we'd -

DEREK                    You can say it, Evie.

EVIE                      I can't. In the last eleven years I've had to rebuild my life because of you and I'm not prepared to let you come back and ruin it. Now, I can't stop you from going about your business but if you do miss me, then you can keep missing me, because I know full well that all you miss is the idea.

DEREK                    The idea of what?

EVIE                      Of us.

DEREK                    I –

EVIE                      I don't want to hear anymore.

DEREK                    (Pleading) Evie.

EVIE                      No. I'm asking you not to come back, Derek.

DEREK                    Why?

EVIE                      Because I try my best to forget you.

DEREK                    Oh. All right, Evie. Well, thank you.

**F/X                      DOOR OPENS, FOOTSTEPS, DOOR CLOSES.**

EVIE                      (Sighs) Well, Evie, you know what they say. Love never dies a natural death.