

Minuke

Skeel giare liorish Nigel Kneale v'er ny hyndaa dys Gaelg liorish Brian Stowell

The estate agent kept an uncomfortable silence until we reached the car. "Frankly, I wish you hadn't got wind of that," he said. "Don't know how you did: I thought I had the whole thing carefully disposed of. Oh, please get in." He pulled his door shut and frowned. "It puts me in a rather awkward spot. I suppose I'd better tell you all I know about that case, or you'd be suspecting me of heaven-knows-what kinds of chicanery in your own." As we set off to see the property I was interested in, he shifted the cigarette to the side of his mouth. "It's quite a distance, so I can tell you on the way there," he said. "We'll pass the very spot, as a matter of fact, and you see it for yourself. Such as there is to see."

Hannee yn jantagh-thalloon ny host dy neuhouyr derrey raink shin gys y ghleashtan. "Dy firrinagh, saillym nagh row shiu er chlashtyn mychione shen," dooyrt eh. "Cha s'aym er yn aght cheayll shiu: heill mee dy row mee er gheddyn rey rish y clane red. Oh, my sailliu, tar-shiu stiagh." Hayrn eh yn dorrys echey dy ve dooint as ren eh grouigey. "T'eh cur orrym dy ve ayns stayd beggan neuchooie. Ta mee shein dy bare dou ginsh diu ooilley shione dou mychione y chooish shen, er nonney bee shiu gourys dy vel mee jannoo dy chooilley horch dy chialg sy chooish euish." Myr hie shin roin dy yeeaghyn er y thie as anaase aym er, scugh eh yn jaaghag gys cheu e veeal. "T'eh foddey dy liooar voish shoh, myr shen foddym ginsh diu er y raad dys shen," dooyrt eh. "Hemmayd shaghey'n voayl hene, yn irriney 'insh, as hee shiu diu hene eh. Y stoo ta ry akin, ta shen dy ghra.

It was away back before the war (said the estate agent). At the height of the building boom. You remember how it was: ribbon development in full blast everywhere; speculative builders sticking things up almost overnight. Though at least you could get a house when you wanted it in those days.

V'eh roish y chaggey (dooyrt y jantagh-thalloon). Ec mullagh y visheydys-troggal. Ta cooinaghtyn mie euish er yn aght v'eh: lhasaghey-rybban goll goll rish y jouyl dy chooilley voayl; troggyderyn sheiltynagh cur stoo seose harrish yn oie, bunnys. Agh, ec y chooid sloo, oddagh oo geddyn thie tra v'ou laccal eh ayns ny laghyn shen.

I've always been careful in what I handle - I want you to understand that. Then one day I was handed a packet of coast-road bungalows, for letting. Put up by one of those gone tomorrow firms, and bought by a local man. I can't say I exactly jumped for joy, but for once the things looked all right, and - business is inclined to be business.

Bentyn rish y stoo ta mee dellal rish, ta mee er ve kiarailagh dy kinjagh - ta mee gearree dy vel oo toiggal shen. Eisht laa dy row, va paggaid dy hieyn injil er raad slyst-marrey currit dou, dy gholl er soiaghey rish tannysyn. Troggit ec nane jeh ny colughtyn shen vees ersooyl laa ny vairagh, as kionnit ec dooinney ynnydagh. Cha noddym gra dy lheim mee lesh boggey, agh son un cheayrt, va reddyng jeeaghyn dy ve kiart, as - ta beoyn er dellal dy ve ny ghellal.

The desirable residence you heard about stood at the end of the row. Actually, it seemed to have the best site. On a sort of natural platform, as it were, raised above road level and looking straight out over the sea. Like all the rest, it had a simple two-bedroom, lounge, living-room, kitchen, bathroom layout. Red-tiled roof, roughcast walls. Ornamental portico, garden strip all round. Sufficiently far from town, but with all conveniences.

Y cummal yeeearreeoil ren shiu clashtyn mychione, v'eh ec kione y roa. Dy ve firrinagh, v'eh jeeaghyn dy row yn ynnyd share echey. Er keint dy h-ardan dooghyssagh, my ta, troggit erskyn leval y raad as jeeaghyn dy jeeragh magh harrish y cheayn. Casley rish ooilleyn'n chooid elley, she cummey neuchramp v'ayn: daa hamyr-lhiabbagh, shamyr-soie, shamyr-vaghee, shamyr-aarlee as shamyr-oonlee. Mullagh y thie lesh slateyn ruy, boallaghyn garroo-hilgit. Porçh jesheenagh, garey coon ooilleyn mygeayrt y mysh. Foddey dy liooar veih'n valley, agh lesh gagh seyraad.

It was taken by a man named Pritchard. Cinema projectionist, I think he was. Wife, a boy of ten or so, and a rather younger daughter. Oh - and dog, one of those black, lop-eared animals. They christened the place "Minuke," M-I-N-U-K-E. My nook. Yes, that's what I said too. And not even the miserable excuse of its being phonetically correct. Still, hardly worse than most.

V'eh goit ec dooinney enmyssit Pritchard. She tilgeyder thie-fillym v'ayn, er lhiam. Ben-heshey, guilley jeih bleeaney dy eash, ny myr shen, as inneen cooid veg ny saa. Oh - as moddey, nane jeh ny beiyen shen ta doo as cam-chleayshagh. Denmys ad y boayl "Minuke," M-I-N-U-K-E. My nook. She, shen ny dooyrt mish neesht. As cha nee eer y leshtal treih dy row eh kiart dy sheeanagh. Agh ny yei, cha row eh ny smessey na'n chooid smoo.

Well, at the start everything seemed quite jolly. The Pritchards settled in and busied themselves with rearing a privet hedge and shoving flowers in. They'd paid the first quarter in advance, and as far as I was concerned, were out of the picture for a bit.

Wahll, ayns y toshiaght, v'eh jeeaghyn dy row gagh nhee gennal dy liooar. Ren lught Pritchard soiaaghey ad hene stiagh, as v'ad tarroogh cur er cleigh-privad dy aase as seiy blaaghyn stiagh. V'ad er neeck y mayl son y chied raiee ro laue, as, choud's v'eh bentyn rhymys, cha row mee smooiinaghtyn my nyn gione rish tammylt.

Then, about a fortnight after they'd moved in, I had a telephone call from Mrs. P. to say there was something odd about the kitchen tap. Apparently the thing had happened twice. The first time was when her sister was visiting them, and tried to fill the kettle: no water would come through for a long time, then suddenly squirted violently and almost soaked the woman. I gather the Pritchards hadn't really believed this - thought she was trying to find fault with their little nest - it had never happened before, and she couldn't make it happen again. Then, about a week later, it did: with Mrs. Pritchard this time. After her husband had examined the tap and could find nothing wrong with it, he decided the water supply must be faulty. So they got on to me.

Eisht, mysh kegeesh lurg daue v'er narraghey stiagh, hooar mee eam-çhellvane veih Bnr P. dy row red ennagh quaagh bentyn da'n fyseid sy çhamyr-aarlee. V'eh jeeaghyn

dy row eh er daghyrt daa cheayrt. Y chied cheayrt, va shen tra hug yn çhuyr eck shilley orroo, as phrow ish y choirrey veg y lhieneey: cha darragh ushtey trooid rish traa foddey, eisht skioot eh dy niartal dy doaltattym, as ren eh fliughey yn ven trooid as trooid, bunnys. Ta mee shein nagh row lught Pritchard er chredjal shoh dy firrinagh - smooinee ad dy row ee prowal cur y loght er yn edd beg oc - cha row eh rieu er daghyrt roie, as cha dod ee cur er taghyrt reesht. Eisht, mysh shiaghtin lurg shen, haghyr eh reesht: haink eh er Bnr. Pritchard y cheayrt shoh. Erreish da'n dooinney eck v'er scrutaghey yn fyseid as cha dod eh feddyn red erbee ersooyl cam ayn, smooinee eh dy row fout ayns ny piobyn-ushtey. Myr shen, hug ad fys orrym.

I went round personally, as it was the first complaint from any of these bungalows. The tap seemed normal, and I remember asking if the schoolboy son could have been experimenting with their main stop, when Mrs. Pritchard, who had been fiddling with the tap, suddenly said, "Quick, look at this! It's off now!" They were quite cocky about its happening when I was there.

She mish hene hie dys shen, er y fa dy nee shoh va'n chied phlaiynt veih fer erbee jeh ny thieyn-injil shoh. Cha row eh jeeaghyn dy row yn fyseid quaagh, as s'cooin lhiam briaght noddagh y scollag er ve jannoo prowaltysyn lesh yn ard-stap oc, tra ren Bnr. Pritchard, v'er ve cloie lesh y fyseid, ren ee gra dy doaltattym, "Dy tappee, jeeagh er shoh! T'eh mooghit nish!" V'ad daaney dy liooar er yn oyr dy row eh taghyrt as mish ayn.

It really was odd. I turned the tap to the limit, but - not a drop! Not even the gasping gurgle you hear when the supply is turned off at the main. After a couple of minutes, though, it came on. Water shot out with, I should say, about ten times normal force, as if it had been held under pressure. Then gradually it died down and ran steadily.

Dy firrinagh, v'eh quaagh. Hyndaa mee yn fyseid cho foddey as dod mee, agh - dyn bine! Dyn eer y sorçh dy ghlugernee scredey t'ou clashtyn tra ta ushtey er ny vooghey ec yn ard-fyseid. Agh lurg minnid ny ghaa, haink eh rish. Spooyt ushtey magh lesh, yiarrins, mysh jeih keayrt y niart cadjin, myr dy beagh eh er ny chummal fo hraastey. Eisht, ny veggan as ny veggan, ren eh leodaghey as v'eh roie dy rea.

Both children were in the room with us until we all dodged out of the door to escape a soaking - it had splashed all over the ceiling - so they couldn't have been up to any tricks. I promised the Pritchards to have the pipes checked. Before returning to town, I called at the next two bungalows in the row: neither of the tenants had had any trouble at all with the water. I thought, well, that localised it at least.

Va'n daa phaitçhey sy çhamyr marin derrey ren shin ooilley clyshtey magh ass y dorrys dy haghney goll er fliughey trooid as trooid - v'eh er spreih ooilley harrish y far-voalley - myr shen, cha noddagh adsyn er nyannoo clinkyn erbee. Yiall mee da lught Pritchard dy ragh ny piobyn er scrutaghey. Roish my daink mee erash gys y valley, hug mee shilley er y daa hie injil sniessey sy roa: cha row yn daa hannys er ve boirit ec yn ushtey. Smooinee mee, wahll, er y chooid sloo, cha nel eh ayn agh ayns un thie.

When I reached my office there was a telephone message waiting from Pritchard. I rang him back and he was obviously annoyed. "Look here," he said, "not ten minutes after you left, we've had something else happen! The wall of the large bedroom's

cracked from top to bottom. Big pieces of plaster fell, and the bed's in a terrible mess." And then he said, "You wouldn't have got me in a jerry-built place like this if I'd known!" Tra raink mee gys yn offish aym, va çhaghteraght-çhellvane veih Pritchard fuirraghtyn rhym. Dyll mee erash as v'eh baghtal dy row ferg er. "Eisht," dooyrt eh, "cha nee jeih minnid erreish dhyt v'er naagail, haink red ennagh elley orrin! Ta boalley yn çhamyr-lhiabbagh vooar scoltit veih bun gys baare. Huitt meeryn mooarey dy phlaastyr sheese as ta'n lhiabbee ny brock agglagh." As eisht dooyrt eh, "Cha beagh oo er chur orrym goll stiagh ayns boayl corragh myr shoh dy beagh fys er ve aym!"

I had plasterers on the job next morning, and the whole water supply to "Minuke" under examination. For about three days there was peace. The tap behaved itself, and absolutely nothing was found to be wrong. I was annoyed at what seemed to have been unnecessary expenditure. It looked as if the Pritchards were going to be difficult - and I've had my share of that type: fault-finding cranks occasionally carry eccentricity to the extent of a little private destruction, to prove their points. I was on the watch from now on.

Hug mee fys er plaastreideryn dy ve gobbraghey yn moghrey er giyn, as reagh mee dy ragh y lane livrey-ys jeh'n ushtey gys "Minuke" er scrutaghey. Rish mysh tree laa va shee ayn. Cha jagh y fyseid ersooyl cam, as cha row red erbee feddynit va aggairagh. Va mee jeant fergagh kyndagh rish ceau argid gyn resoon, v'eh jeeaghyn. V'eh jeeaghyn dy beagh lught Pritchard doillee - as va dy liooar er ve aym jeh'n torçh shen: nish as reesht, clinkymyn ta feddyn foutyn, ta'n chorrid oc cur orroo jannoo traartys preevaadjagh beg, dy phrowal nyn gooish. Va mee er my hwoaie veih'n traas shen magh.

Then it came again. Pritchard rang me at my home, before nine in the morning. His voice sounded a bit off. Shaky. "For God's sake can you come round here right away," he said. "Tell you about it when you get here." And then he said, almost fiercely, but quietly and close to the mouthpiece, "There's something damned queer about this place!" Dramatising is a typical feature of all cranks, I thought, but particularly the little mousy kind, like Pritchard.

Eisht, reesht, haink eh rish. Dyll Pritchard orrym ec y thie aym, roish nuy sy voghrey. Va'n coraa echey sheaney beggan ersooyl cam. Er craa. "Son graih Yee, nod oo çheet dys shoh dy jeeragh nish," dooyrt eh. "Inshym dhyt my e chione tra hig oo dys shoh." Eisht dooyrt eh, bunnys dy h-elgyssagh, agh dy feagh as faggys da'n veealag, "Ta red ennagh quaagh agglagh bentyn da'n voayl shoh!" Cur er reddyn dy ve dramadagh, shen tro cadjin ec gagh clinkym, smooinee mee, agh erskyn ooillee ec y torçh beg as neuvreeoil, goll rish Pritchard.

I went to "Minuke" and found that Mrs. Pritchard was in bed, in a state of collapse. The doctor had given her a sleeping dose. Pritchard told me a tale that was chiefly remarkable for the expression on his face as he told it.

Hie mee dys "Minuke" as hooar mee dy row Bnr. Pritchard ny lhie ayns stayd feer olk. Va'n fer-lhee er chur lheihs-cadlee jee. Dinsh Pritchard dou skeeal va cronnalagh son y chooid smoo kyndagh rish y dreagh er yn eddin echey as eshyn loayrt.

I don't know if you're familiar with the layout of that type of bungalow? The living-room is in the front of the house, with the kitchen behind it. To get from one to the other you have to use the little hallway, through two doors. But for convenience at meal-times, there's a serving-hatch in the wall between these rooms. A small wooden door slides up and down over the hatch-opening.

Cha s'aym nhione dhyt cre goll rish ta'n sorçh shen dy hie-injil? Ta'n çhamyr-vaghee ec oaie yn thie, as y çhamyr-aarlee cooyl eck. Dy gholh veih'n derrey hamyr gys yn jeh elley, shegin dhyt goll trooid y far-hamyr veg, trooid daa ghorrys. Agh son caays ec traaghyn-lhongee, ta cooylley-shirveish sy woalley eddyr y daa hamyr shoh. Ta dorrys fuygh beg skirrey neese sheese harrish beeal y chooylley.

"The wife was just passing a big plate of bacon and eggs through from the kitchen," Pritchard told me, "when the hatch door came down on her wrists. I saw it and heard her yell. I thought the cord must've snapped, so I said, 'All right, all right!' and went to pull it up because it's only a light wooden frame."

"Va'n ven aym cur moggaid mooar dy vagoon as oohyn trooid veih'n çhamyr-aarlee," dinsh Pritchard dou, "tra haink y dorrys beg neose er mwannalyn ny laueyn eck. Honnick mee eh as cheayll mee ish screeaghey. Smooinnee mish dy row yn coyrd er ny vrishey, myr shen dooyrt mee, 'Mie dy liooar, mie dy liooar!' as hie mee dy hayrn seose eh er y fa nagh nee agh frame fuygh injil t'ayn."

Pritchard was a funny colour, and as far as I could judge, it was genuine. "Do you know, it wouldn't come! I got my fingers under it and heaved, but it might have weighed two hundredweight. Once it gave an inch or two, and then pressed harder. That was it - it was pressing down! I heard the wife groan. I said, 'Hold on!' and nipped round through the hall. When I got into the kitchen she was on the floor, fainted. And the hatch-door was hitched up as right as ninepence. That gave me a turn!" He sat down, quite deflated: it didn't appear to be put on. Still, ordinary neurotics can be almost as troublesome as out-and-out cranks.

Va daah quaagh er eddin Pritchard, as choud's dod mee jannoo briwnys, v'eh firrinagh. "Vel fys ayd, cha darragh eh! Hug mee ny mairyn aym fo as ren mee troggal, agh oddagh y trimmid echey er ve ny shlee na daa cheead punt. Keayrt, lhig eh lesh oarlagh ny ghaa, as eisht hraast eh sheese ny smoo niartal. Shen eh - v'eh *traastey* sheese! Cheayll mee my ven soghal. Dooyrt mee, 'Fuirree!' as hie mee mygeayrt dy tappee trooid y far-hamyr. Tra raink mee gys y çhamyr-aarlee v'ee er y laare, my neealoo. As va'n dorrys beg tayrnit seose, dyn red erbee ersooyl cam lesh. Hug shen yn olk orrym!" Hoie eh sheese, lhag-chreeagh dy liooar: cha row eh jeeaghyn dy row eh lhiggey er. Ny yei, foddee nearoishee cadjin ve cho boiragh, bunnys, as clinkymyn kiart.

I tested the hatch, gingerly; and, of course, the cords were sound and it ran easily. "Possibly a bit stiff at times, being new," I said. "They're apt to jam if you're rough with them." And then, "By the way, just what were you hinting on the phone?" He looked at me. It was warm sunlight outside, with a bus passing. Normal enough to take the mike out of Frankenstein's monster. "Never mind," he said, and gave a sheepish half-grin. "Bit of - well, funny construction in this house, though, eh?" I'm afraid I was rather outspoken with him. Let alone any twaddle about a month-old bungalow being

haunted, I was determined to clamp down on this "jerry-building" talk. Perhaps I was beginning to have doubts myself.

Phrow mee ny coyrdyn dy kiarailagh; as, yindys mooar, va ny coyrdyn fondagh as roie eh dy h-aashagh. "Beggan neulhoobagh ny keayrtyn, foddee, er yn oyr dy vel eh noa," dooyrt mee. "Ta beoyrn orroo çheet dy ve jingit my t'ou barb orroo." As eisht, "Red elley, dy jeeragh, cre'n faaue v'ou cur er y çhellvane?" Yeeagh eh orrym. Va soilshey-greiney çeh çheu-mooie, as barroose goll shaghey. Cadjin dy liooar dy yannoo neunhee jeh beisht Frankenstein. "Ny jean boirey," dooyrt eh, as ren eh lieh-ghyrnal dy faitagh. "Beggan dy, wahl, troggal quaagh sy thie shoh ny yei, nagh vel?" S'treih lhiam dy loayr mee rish er aght va jeeragh dy liooar. Jarrood tutlerys erbee mychione scaanjoon ayns thie injil ta un vee dy eash, va mee soit er cur sthap er taggloo mychione troggal er aght corragh. Foddee dy row mish hene goaill toshiaght dy ve ouryssagh.

I wrote straight off to the building company when I'd managed to trace them, busy developing an arterial road about three counties away. I dare say my letter was on the insinuating side: I think I asked if they had any record of difficulties in the construction of this bungalow. At any rate I got a sniffy reply by return, stating that the matter was out of their hands: in addition, their records were not available for discussion. Blind alley.

Dy çhelleeragh, screeu mee gys y cholught-troggal tra haink eh lhiam feddyn ad, as adsyn tarroogh lhiasaghey raad mooar mysh tree counteeyn ersooyl. S'lhoys dou gra dy row my screeuyn beggan shliawinagh: er lhiam dy vrie mee row recortys erbee ayn jeh doilleeidyn tra v'ad troggal y thie injil shoh. Ansherbee, y laa er giyn hooar mee freggyrt sonnaasagh ren gra dy row yn chooish ass ny laueyn oc: ny sodjey na shen, cha row ny recortysyn oc ry gheddyn cour resooney. Dyn raad er oi.

In the meantime, things at "Minuke" had worsened to a really frightening degree. I dreaded the phone ringing. One morning, the two Pritchards senior awoke to find that nearly all the furniture in their bedroom had been moved about, including the bed they had been sleeping in: they had felt absolutely nothing. Food became suddenly and revoltingly decomposed. All the chimney pots had come down, not just into the garden, but to the far side of the high road, except one which appeared, pulverised, on the living-room floor. The obvious attempts of the Pritchards to keep a rational outlook had put paid to most of my suspicions by this time.

Ec y tra cheddin, va cooishyn ec "Minuke" er jeet dy ve ny smessey er aght agglagh ass towse. Ghow mee aggle vooar roish y çhellvane clinckal. Moghrey dy row, ghooisht y daa Phritchard shinney d'eddyn dy row bunnys ooilley'n stoo-thie ayns nyn shamyr-lhiabbagh er ny arraghey mygeayrt, goaill stiagh y lhiabbee v'ad er ve nyn gadley ayn: cha row ad er nennaghtyn red erbee. Dy doaltattym, haink bee dy ve loau er aght eajee. Va ooilley ny crockyn er jeet neose, cha nee sy gharey ny lomarcán, agh er y çheu hoal jeh'n ard-raad, er lhimmey jeh nane haink rish as eh beihlt er laare y çhamyr-vaghee. Eabyn baghtal lught Pritchard dy smooiinaghtyn er aghtyn resoanagh, v'ad er scughey ersooyl y chooid smoo jeh'n drogh-ourys aym ec y tra shen.

I managed to locate a local man who had been employed during the erection of the bungalows, as an extra hand. He had worked only on the foundations of "Minuke," but what he had to say was interesting.

Haink eh lhiam feddyn dooinney ynnydagħ v'er ve failt myr obbree elley as ad troggal ny thieyn injil. Cha row eh er nobbraghey agh er undyn "Minuke", agh ny va grait echey, v'eh anaasagh.

They had found the going slow because of striking a layer of enormous flat stones, apparently trimmed slate, but as the site was otherwise excellent, they pressed on, using the stone as foundation where it fitted in with the plan, and laying down rubble where it didn't. The concrete skin over the rubble - my ears burned when I heard about that, I can tell you - this wretched so-called concrete had cracked, or shattered, several times. Which wasn't entirely surprising, if it had been laid as he described. The flat stones, he said, had not been seriously disturbed. A workmate had referred to them as "a giant's grave," so it was possibly an old burial mound. Norse, perhaps - these are fairly common along this coast - or even very much older.

Hooar ad magħ dy jagħ yn obbyr er oi dy moal, kyndagħ rish roshtyn jastan dy chlagħyn rea as gloutagħ, sclate skeoighit, v'eh jeeagħyn. Agh, er y fa dy row yn ynnyd mie er baghtal er lhimmey jeh shen, hie ad er, as ad gymmydey yn chlagħ myr undin raad v'ee cooie da'n phlan, as cur sheese rubbyl raad nagh row. Y crackan concraidagħ harrish y rubbyl - losht my chleayshyn tra cheayll mee mychione shen, foddym ginsh dhyt - y choncraid agglagh shoh, myr yein, v'ee er ny scoltey ny brishey shiartanse dy cheayrtyn. Cha derragh shen yindys ort dy bollagh, my v'ee currit sheese er yn agh dooyrt eh. Ny claghyn rea, dooyrt eh, cha row ad er nyn goyrt ass ynnyd dy mooar. Va co-obbree er ghra "oaie-foawr" roo. Myr shen, foddee dy nee carnane-oanluckee v'ayn. Loghlynnagh, foddee - t'ad shoh cadjin dy liooar ec y clyst-marrey shoh - er nonney, eer foddey ny shinney na shen.

Apart from this - I'm no diehard sceptic, I may as well confess - I was beginning to admit modest theories about a poltergeist, in spite of a lack of corroborative knockings and ornament-throwing. There were two young children in the house, and the lore has it that kids are often unconsciously connected with phenomena of that sort, though usually adolescents. Still, in the real estate profession, you have to be careful, and if I could see the Pritchards safely off the premises without airing these possibilities, it might be kindest to the bungalow's future.

Er lhimmey jeh shoh - cha nel mee my ouryssagh neuchaghlaaee, bare dou goaill rish - va mee goaill toshiagħ dy chredjal sheinyssyn fastagħ mychione scaanjoon feiyral, ga dy row genney dy chrangkal co-niartaghey as genney dy cheau jesheenyn. Va daa phaitçhey aeg sy thie, as coardail rish yn oayllys, ta paitçhyn dy mennick co-chianlt gyn yss daue hene lesh taghyrtyn quagħ myr shen, ga dy nee aeglee t'ayn dy cliagħtagħ. Agh ny yei, shegin dhyt goaill kiarail as oo dty yantagħ-thalloom. As dy noddins reaghey dy jinnagh lught Pritchard faagail y thie dy sauçhey gyn mish y ve fockley ny jargagħtyn shoh, foddee dy beagħ shen y red smoo foaysagh da'n thie injil sy traay heet.

I went to "Minuke" the same afternoon. It was certainly turning out an odd nook. I found a departing policeman on the doorstep. That morning the back door had been burst in by a hundredweight or so of soil, and Mrs. Pritchard was trying to convince herself that a practical joker had it in for them. The policeman had taken some notes, and was giving vague advice about "civil action" which showed that he was out of his depth.

Hie mee gys "Minuke" y fastyr cheddin. Son shickyrys, v'eh çheet dy ve ny chooilleg whaagh. Ec sole y dorrys, va meoir-shee faagail. Y moghrey shen, va'n dorrys cooyl er ny woalley stiagh ec ny smoo na keead punt dy ooir, as va Bnr. Pritchard prowal cur urree credjal dy row spotçheyder-obbee jannoo orroo. Va notyn ennagh goit ec y veoir-shee, as v'eh cur coyrle neuvaghtal mychione "cooish-leigh theayagh", ren soilshaghey dy row eh caillt.

Pritchard looked very tired, almost ill. "I've got leave from my job, to look after them," he said, when we were alone. I thought he was wise. He had given his wife's illness as the reason, and I was glad of that. "I don't believe in - unnatural happenings," he said. I agreed with him, non-committally. "But I'm afraid of what ideas the kids might get. They're both at impressionable ages, y'know." I recognised the symptoms without disappointment. "You mean, you'd rather move elsewhere," I said. He nodded. "I like the district, mind you. But what I -" There was a report like a gun in the very room.

Va Pritchard jeeaghyn feer skee, bunnys çhing. "Hooar mee kied traas seyr veih'n chiartey aym, dy yeeaghyn moo," dooyrt eh tra va shin nyn lomarcán. Heill mee dy row eh creeney. V'eh er ghra dy nee çhingys e ven va'n oyr, as va mee jeant booiagh ec shen. "Cha nel mee credjal ayns - ayns taghyrtyn neughooghyssagh," dooyrt eh. Choard mee rish, dy neuchiangltagh. "Agh ta mee goaill aggle roish eieyn erbee oddys ny paitçhyn geddyn. Ta eashyn so-chleayney ec y jees oc, ta fys ayd." Hug mee enney er ny cowraghyn gyn y ve mollit. "Y red t'ou çheet er, bare lhiu garraghey gys boayl ennagh elley," dooyrt mee. Ren eh snoggal. "S'mie lhiam yn ard, t'ou toiggal. Agh ny ta mee - " Va polt casley rish gunn syn eer-hamyr hene.

I found myself with both arms up to cover my face. There were tiny splinters everywhere, and a dust of fibre in the air. The door had exploded. Literally. To hark back to constructional details, it was one of those light, hollow frame-and-plywood jobs. As you'll know, it takes considerable force to splinter plywood: well, this was in tiny fragments. And the oddest thing was that we had felt no blast effect.

Va'n daa roih aym heose, yn eddin y choodaghey. Va skirragyn minniagagh dy chooilley voayl, as joan dy rauaigyn syn aer. Va'n dorrys er vleaystey. Dy jeeragh. Goll erash gys mynphointyn yn agh v'eh jeant, v'eh nane jeh ny dorryssyn eddrym shen ta jeant ass frame as filley-fuygh. Myr bee fys ayd, ta feme er niart mooar filley-fuygh y skeiltey: wahll, va shoh ayns meeryn minniagagh. As y red smoo quaagh, va shen nagh dennee shin sheid erbee.

In the next room I heard their dog howling. Pritchard was as stiff as a poker. "I felt it!" he said. "I felt this lot coming. I've got to knowing when something's likely to happen. It's all round!" Of course I began to imagine I'd sensed something too, but I doubt if I had really; my shock came with the crash. Mrs. Pritchard was in the doorway by this

time with the kids behind her. He motioned them out and grabbed my arm. "The thing is," he whispered, "that I can still feel it! Stronger than ever, by God! Look, will you stay at home to-night, in case I need - well, in case things get worse? I can phone you."

Cheayll mee yn moddey oc gullyrnee sy nah hamyr. Va Pritchard neulhoobagh ass towse. "Dennee mee eh!" dooyrt eh. "Dennee mee dy row shen cheet. Ta mee er jeet d'ennaghtyn y chosoylaght dy daghyr red ennagh. T'eh ooille mygeayrt!" Dy dooghyssagh, ghow mish toshiaght dy hein dy row mish er nennaghtyn red ennagh neesht, agh ta ourys orrym dy row dy firrinagh; she yn polt hug y ghreain orrym. Va Bnr. Pritchard sy dorrys eisht as ny paitçhyn cooyl eck. Hug eh cowrey daue dy gholl magh as ghow eh greim er my roih. "Y red t'ayn," dooyrt eh myr sannish, "dy noddym foast gennaghtyn eh! Ny stroshey na v'eh rieu, dar m'ennym! Jeeagh, jean uss tannaghtyn ec y thie noght, er aggle dy bee feme orrym - wahll, er aggle dy jig reddyn dy ve ny smessey? Foddym çhellvane ort."

On my way back I called on the town library, and managed to get hold of a volume on supernatural possession and what-not. Yes, I was committed now. But the library didn't specialise in that line, and when I opened the book at home, I found it was very little help. "Vampires of south-eastern Europe" type of stuff. I came across references to something the jargon called an "elemental" which I took to be a good deal more vicious and destructive than any poltergeist. A thoroughly nasty form of manifestation, if it existed. Those Norse gravestones were fitting into the picture uncomfortably well; it was fashionable in those days to be buried with all the trimmings, human sacrifice and even more unmentionable attractions.

Er y raad erash, hug mee shilley er lioarlann y valley. as haink eh lhiam dy gheddyn lioar mychione shellooderys erskyn dooghys as y lheid. She, va mee currit da nish. Agh cha ren y lioarlann sur-oaylleaght er stoo myr shen, as tra doshil mee yn lioar ec y thie, hooar mee magh dy dod mee geddyn agh feer veggan dy chooney veih. Stoo casley rish "Sooderyn-folley veih'n Oarpey hiar-ass." Hooar mee imraaghyn jeh red ennagh va'n ghlare er l'eh gra "bun-dooghys" rish, red va mee coontey dy ve foddey ny s'goanlyssee as ny smoo stroialtagh na scaanjoon feiyral erbee. Keint slane eajee dy chorporaght, my v'eh ayn. Ny claghyn-oaie Loghlynnagh shen, v'ad cheet dy ve feer chooie da'n chooish er agh meegherjoilagh; v'eh fassanagh ayns ny laghyn shen dy ve oanluckit lesh ooille yn jesheenys, oural sleih as cleaynyn eer ny smoo neuimraagh. *But I read on. After half a chapter on zombies and Rumanian werewolves, the whole thing began to seem so fantastic that I turned seriously to working out methods of exploding somebody's door as a practical joke. Even a totally certifiable joker would be likelier than vampires. In no time I'd settled down with a whisky, doodling wiring diagrams, and only occasionally - like twinges of conscience - speculating on contacting the psychic investigation people.*

Agh lhaih mee ny sodjey. Lurg lieh-chabdy dy chirp fo ghruaighys as conreeaghtyn Roomainagh, ghow yn slane red toshiaght dy ve cho ard-yindyssagh dy row mish croo saaseyn dy trome-chooishagh ry hoi bleaystey seose y dorrys ec peiagh ennagh myr spotçh-obbee. V'eh ny s'cosoylee dy row eer spotçheyder slane keoi ayn na sooderyn-folley. Ayns beggan dy hraa va mee soit lesh ushtey bea, jannoo breckeydys jeh

jallooyn-soilsheragh strengaghey. Cha nee agh nish as reesht - myr minniagyn dy chooinsheanse - va mee shein cur fys er lught y scrutaghey-sheekoaylleaght.

When the phone rang I was hardly prepared for it. It was a confused, distant voice, gabbling desperately, but I recognised it as Pritchard. "For God's sake, don't lose a second! Get here - it's all hell on earth! Can't you hear it? My God, I'm going crazy!" And in the background I thought I was able to hear something. A sort of bubbling, slushing "wah-wah" noise. Indescribable. But you hear some sounds on telephones at any time. "Yes," I said, "I'll come immediately. Why don't you all leave -" But the line had gone dead.

Tra chlink y çhellvane, s'feer nagh row mee aarloo da. She coraa fud y cheilley, foddey ersooyl v'ayn, agh hug mee enney dy nee Pritchard v'ayn. "Son graih Yee, ny caill grig! Tar dys shoh - she niurin ayns y teihll t'ayn! Nagh vod oo clashtyn eh? My Yee, ta mee goll ass my cheeall!" As sy chooylrey heill mee dy dod mee clashtyn red ennagh. Sorçh dy heean bolganey, skirraghtyn, myr "wah-wah". Erskyn insh. Agh t'ou clashtyn sheeanyn ennagh er çhellvaneyn traa erbee. "Foddym clashtyn," dooyrt mee, "higym dy çhelleeragh. Cre'n fa nagh vel shiu ooilley faagail -" Agh va'n linney marroo.

Probably I've never moved faster. I scrambled out to the car with untied shoes flopping, though I remembered to grab a heavy stick in the hall - whatever use it was to be. I drove like fury, heart belting, straight to "Minuke" expecting to see heaven knows what. S'cosoylagh nagh ghleash mee rieu ny s'tappee. Ren mee siyragey magh gys y gleashtan as my vraagyn neuchianlt flapperagh, ga dy chooinee mee dy ghreimmey maidjey trome sy far-hamyr - cha bione dou cre'n ymmyd veagh eh. Dimman mee goll rish y jouyl, cree bwoalley dy niartal, dy jeeragh gys "Minuke", jerkal d'akin cha bione dou cre'n red agglagh.

But everything looked still and normal there. The moon was up and I could see the whole place clearly. Curtained lights in the windows. Not a sound. I rang. After a moment Pritchard opened the door. He was quiet and seemed almost surprised to see me.

Agh va dy chooilley nhee jeeaghyn kiune as reilt ayns shen. Va rehollys ayn as dod mee fakin y slane boayl dy cronnal. Soilshaghyn curtanit ayns ny h-uinnagyn. Dyn sheean. Ren mee clinckal. Lurg shallid doshil Pritchard y dorrys. V'eh feagh as bunnys jeeaghyn dy ghow eh yindys mish 'akin.

I pushed inside. "Well?" I said. "What's happened?" "Not a thing, so far," he said, "That's why I didn't expect -" I felt suddenly angry. "Look here," I said. "what are you playing at? Seems to me that any hoaxing round here begins a lot nearer home than you'd have me believe!" Then the penny dropped. I saw by the fright in his face that he knew something had gone wrong. That was the most horrible, sickening moment of the whole affair for me. "Didn't you ring?" I said. And he shook his head.

Heiy mee stiagh. "Wahll?" dooyrt mee. "C' red t'er daghyrt?" "Dyn red erbee, choud as shoh," dooyrt eh. "Shen y fa nagh yerck mee -" Haink ferg orrym dy doaltattym. "Jeeagh," dooyrt mee, "Cre'n gamman t'ou cloie? T'eh jeeaghyn dooys dy vel cluicyn erbee ayns shoh goaill toshiaght foddey ny sniessey da'n thie na veagh uss cur orrym credjal!" Eisht va toiggalys ayn. Liorish yn aggle er yn eddin echey, hoig mee dy bione

da dy row red ennagh ersooyl cam. Dooy's, va shen y çhallid s'agglee as s'eajee jeh'n clane chooish. "Nagh ren oo clinckal?" dooyrt mee. As chrie eh yn kione echey.

I've been in some tight spots. But there was always some concrete, actual business in hand to screw the mind safely to. I suppose panic is when the subconscious breaks loose and everything in your head dashes screaming out. It was only just in time that I found a touch of the concrete and actual. A kiddie's paintbox on the floor, very watery. "The children," I said. "Where are they?" "Wife's just putting the little 'un to bed. She's been restless to-night: just wouldn't go, crying and difficult. Arthur's in the bathroom. Look here, what's happened?" I told him, making it as short and matter of fact as I could. He turned ghastly.

Ta mee er ve ayns staydyn doillee ennagh. Agh va kinjagh dellal fondagh ennagh ayn d'akeragh yn aigney rish dy sauçhey. Ta mee shein dy nee sevrein t'ayn tra ta'n fo-chooinsheanse brishey seyr as ta gagh red ayns dty chione screeaghey magh ass dy bieu. Cha nee agh dy jeeragh ayns tra dy dooar mee red ennagh beg va rieugh. Kishtey-daah paitçhey er y laare, feer ushtagh. "Ny paitçhyn," dooyrt mee. "C'raad t'ad?" "Jeeragh nish, ta'n ven aym cur y fer beg ny lhie. T'ee er ve neufeagh noght: cha jinnagh ee goll, keayney as doillee. Ta Arthur sy çhamyr-lhiabbagh. Jeeagh, c'rad t'er daghyrt?" Dinsh mee da, cur er dy ve cho giare as neuchast as dod mee. Haink eh dy ve scaanagh.

"Better get them dressed and out of here right away," I said. "Make some excuse, not to alarm them." He'd gone before I'd finished speaking. I smoked hard, trying to build up the idea of "Hoax! Hoax!" in my mind. After all, it could have been. But I knew it wasn't. Everything looked cosy and normal. Clock ticking. Fire red and mellow. Half-empty cocoa mug on the table. The sound of the sea from beyond the road. I went through to the kitchen. The dog was there, looking up from its sleeping-basket under the sink. "Good dog," I said, and it wriggled its tail.

"Bare cur yn eaddagh moo as magh lhieu ass shoh dy çhelleeragh," dooyrt mee. "Jean leshtal ennagh, dyn dy chur aggle orroo." V'eh ersooyl roish my dug mee jerrey er loayrt. Ren mee toghtaney dy jeean, prowal troggal seose yn eie jeh "Cluic! Cluic!" syn aigney aym. Lurg ooilley, oddagh eh er ve. Agh bione dou nagh row. Va dy chooilley nhee jeeaghyn soccoil as reilt. Clag grigyracht. Aile jiarg as gennal. Meddyr-choco lieh follym er y voayrd. Sheean ny marrey veih'n çheu elley jeh'n raad. Hie mee trooid dys y çhamyr-aarlee. Va'n moddey ayns shen, jeeaghyn seose veih'n vastag-chadlee echey fo'n deayrtal. "Moddey mie," dooyrt mee, as chass eh yn famman echey.

Pritchard came in from the hall. He jumped when he saw me. "Getting nervy!" he said. "They won't be long. I don't know where we can go if we - well, if we have to - to leave to-night -"

Haink Pritchard stiagh veih'n far-hamyr. Voost eh tra honnick eh mee. "Çheet dy ve er jeid!" dooyrt eh. "Cha bee ad foddey. Cha nhione dou c'raad oddys mayd goll my vees - wahll, my vees orrin - orrin faagail noght -"

"My car's outside," I told him. "I'll fix you up. Look here, did you 'hear things'? Odd noises?" I hadn't told him that part of the telephone call.

"Ta'n gleashtan aym çheu-mooie." dooyrt mee rish. "Reaghym diu eh. Jeeagh, ren shiu 'clashtyn reddyn'? Sheeanyn quaagh?" Cha row mee er ninsh da yn aynr shen jeh'n eam-çhellvane.

He looked at me so oddly I thought he was going to collapse. "I don't know," he said. "Can you?"

Yeeagh eh orrym er aght cho quaagh as dy smooinee mee dy row eh er-çhee tuittym. "Cha s'aym," dooyrt eh. "Nod uss?"

"At this moment?" I listened. "No," I said. "The clock on the shelf. The sea. Nothing else. No."

"Jeeragh nish?" Deaisht mee. "Cha noddym," dooyrt mee. "Y clag er y skelloo. Y keayn. Veg elley. Cha noddym."

"The sea," he said, barely whispering. "But you can't hear the sea in this kitchen!" He was close to me in an instant. Absolutely terrified. "Yes, I have heard this before! I think we all have. I said it was the sea: so as not to frighten them. But it isn't! And I recognised it when I came in here just now. That's what made me start. It's getting louder: it does that." He was right. Like slow breathing. It seemed to emanate from inside the walls, not at a particular spot, but everywhere.

"Y keayn," dooyrt eh, myr sannish faase. "Agh cha nod oo clashtyn y keayn sy çhamyr-aarlee shoh!" V'eh faggys dou ayns thootçh. V'eh agglit ass dy bollagh. "She, ta mee er chlashtyn shoh roë! Er lhiam dy vel shinyn ooilley er chlashtyn eh. Dooyrt mish dy nee yn keayn v'ayn: dyn dy chur aggle orroo. Agh cha nee yn keayn v'ayn! As hug mee enney er tra haink mee stiagh dys shoh minnid ny ghaa er henney. Shen hug orrym moostey. T'eh çheet dy ve ny stroshey nish: shen ny t'eh jannoo." V'eh kiart. Goll rish tayrn ennal dy moal. V'eh sheeaney dy row eh çheet veih dy chooilley voayl çheu-sthie jeh ny boallaghyn, cha nee veih un ynyyd er l'eh.

We went into the hall, then the front room: it was the same there. Mixed with it now was a sort of thin crying. "That's Nellie," Pritchard said, "The dog: she always whimpers when it's on - too scared to howl. My God, I've never heard it as loud as this before!" Hie shin stiagh sy far-hamyr, eisht sy çhamyr-toshee: va'n red cheddin ayns shen. Mestit lesh nish va sorçh dy cheayne faase. "Shen Nellie," dooyrt Pritchard. "Y moddey: t'ee kinjagh soghal tra t'eh ayn - ro agglit dy ghullyrnee. My Yee, cha ren mee rieu clashtyn eh cho sheeanagh as shoh!"

"Hurry them up, will you!" I almost shouted. He went.

"Cur orroo jannoo siyr!" ren mee bunnys gyllagh magh. Hie eh roish.

The "breathing" was ghastly. Slobbering. Stertorous, I think the term is. And faster. Oh, yes, I recognised it. The background music to the phone message. My skin was pure ice. "Come along!" I yelled. I switched on the little radio to drown the noise. The old National Programme, as it was in those days, for late dance music. Believe it or not, what came through that loudspeaker was the same vile sighing noise, at double the volume. And when I tried to switch off, it stayed the same.

Va'n "ennal" scaanagh. Gushlaghey. Stronnagh, shen y fockle, er lhiam. As ny s'tappee. Oh, she, hug mee enney er. Y cooyl-chiaull rish y çhaghteraght-çhellvane. Cha nee agh rio va'n crackan aym. "Er oi lhiu!" dyll mee magh. Hug mee bree da'n radio beg y

sheean y vooghey. Y shenn Chlaare Ashoonagh, myr v'eh ayns ny laghyn shen, son kiaull-daunse anmagh. Creid eh ny dyn, shen ny haink trooid y chiaulleyr, v'eh yn feiyr soghal eajee cheddin, lesh dooble y niart. As tra phrow mee eh y vooghey, hannee eh myr v'eh.

The whole bungalow was trembling. The Pritchards came running in, she carrying the little girl. "Get them in the car," I shouted. We heard glass smashing somewhere. Above our heads there was an almighty thump. Plaster showered down. Half-way out of the door the little girl screamed, "Nellie! Where's Nellie? Nellie, Nellie!" "The dog!" Pritchard moaned. "Oh, curse it!" He dragged them outside. I dived for the kitchen, where I'd seen the animal, feeling a lunatic for doing it. Plaster was springing out of the walls in painful showers. In the kitchen I found water everywhere. One tap was squirting like a fire-hose. The other was missing, water belching across the window from a torn end of pipe. "Nellie!" I called.

Va'n slane thie-injil er craa. Haink lught Pritchard stiagh as ad roie, ee hene gymmyrkey yn inneen veg. "Sy ghleashtan lhieu," dyll mee magh. Cheayll shin gless goll er smoashal boayl ennagh. Erskyn ain, va polt feer niartal. Haink plaastyr neose myr frass. Lieh-raad ass y dorrys, screeagh yn inneen veg, "Nellie! C'raad ta Nellie? Nellie, Nellie!" "Y moddey!" dooyrt Pritchard dy soghallagh. "Oh, mollaght er!" Hayrn eh magh ad. Lheim mee lesh y çhamyr-aarlee, raad va mee er nakin y cretoor, as coontey mee hene dy ve my ghooiney keoi son jannoo eh. Va plaastyr lheim magh ass ny boallaghyn ayns frassyn gonnagh. Ayns y çhamyr-aarlee hooar mee ushtey dy chooilley voayl. Va un fyseid spooytey goll rish pioban-aile. Cha row yn fer elley ayn as va ushtey deayrtey magh tessan yn uinnag veih kione brisht dy phiob. "Nellie!" dyll mee.

Then I saw the dog. It was lying near the oven, quite stiff. Round its neck was twisted a piece of painted piping with the other tap on the end. Sheer funk got me then. The ground was moving under me. I bolted down the hall, nearly bumped into Pritchard. I yelled and shoved. I could actually feel the house at my back.

Eisht honnick mee yn moddey. V'ee ny lhie faggys da'n oghe, slane neulhoobagh. Mygeayrt e mwannal, va meer dy phiob slaait as y fyseid elley ec y chione. Haink feer aggle orrym eisht. Va'n thalloo gleashaghey foym. Hea mee sheese y far-hamyr, bunnys bwoalley noi Pritchard. Dyll mee magh as heiy mee. Dy jarroo, dod mee ennaghtyn y thie cooyl aym.

We got outside. The noise was like a dreadful snoring, with rumbles and crashes thrown in. One of the lights went out, "Nellie's run away," I said, and we all got into the car, the kids bawling. I started up. People were coming out of the other bungalows - they're pretty far apart and the din was just beginning to make itself felt. Pritchard mumbled, "We can stop now. Think it'd be safe to go back and grab some of the furniture?" As if he was at a fire: but I don't think he knew what he was doing.

Chossyn shin magh. Va'n feiyr casley rish strinnoogh agglagh, lesh tharmaneyn as smoashyn ceaut stiagh. Hie nane jeh ny soilshaghyn er mooghey. "Ta Nellie er roie ersooyl," dooyrt mee, as hie shin ooilley stiagh sy ghleashtan as ny paitçhyn gyllagh magh. Hug mee fo raad eh. Va sleih çheet magh ass ny thieyn injil elley - ta spoar dy liooar eddyr oc as cha row yn feiyr agh goaill toshiaght dy ve ry ennaghtyn. Ren

Pritchard mungley, "Fodmayd scuirr nish. Vel oo smooïnaghtyn dy beagh eh sauçhey dy gholl erash as geddyn greim er stoo-thie ennagh?" Myr dy beagh eh ec aile: agh cha nel mee smooïnaghtyn dy bione da ny v'eh jannoo.

"Daddy - look!" screeched the boy. We saw it. The chimney of "Minuke" was going up in a horrible way. In the moonlight it seemed to grow, quite slowly, to about sixty feet, like a giant crooked finger. And then - burst. I heard bricks thumping down. Somewhere somebody screamed. There was a glare like an ungodly great lightning-flash. It lasted for a second or so.

"Yishag - jeeagh!" screeagh y guilley. Honnick shin eh. Va çhimlee "Minuke" goll seose er agh atçhimagh. Sy reholllys, v'eh jeeaghyn dy ve gaase, moal dy liooar, gys red goll rish tree feed trie, goll rish mair cham foawragh. As eisht - vleayst eh. Cheayll mee breekyn donkal sheese. Boayl ennagh, screeagh peiagh ennagh. Eisht va ard-sollys ayn myr çhent mooar dy hendreil meechrauee. V'eh ayn rish grig ny myr shen.

Of course we were dazzled, but I thought I saw the whole of "Minuke" fall suddenly and instantaneously flat, like a swatted fly. I probably did, because that's what happened, anyway. There isn't much more to tell. Nobody was really hurt, and we were able to put down the whole thing to a serious electrical fault. Main fuses had blown throughout the whole district, which helped this theory out. Perhaps it was unfortunate in another respect, because a lot of people changed over to gas.

Son shickyrys, hie shin er dallaghey, agh smooinee mish dy vaik mee dy huitt "Minuke" ooilliu dy doaltattym as eh çheet dy ve rea dy tullaghtagh, myr quailag woallit. S'cosoylagh dy vaik mee, er y fa dy nee shen ren taghyrt, ansherbee. Cha nel monney ny smoo d'insh. Cha row peiagh erbee lhottit dy olk, as dod shin gra dy row yn loght er fout mooar lectragh. Hie ard-fiooseyn er lostey feiy'n clane ard, ren cooney lesh y çheinys shoh. Foddee dy row eh meefortanagh er agh elley, er yn oyr dy ren ram sleih caghlaa gys gas.

There wasn't much recognisably left of "Minuke". But some of the bits were rather unusual. Knots in pipes, for instance - I buried what was left of the dog myself. Wood and brick cleanly sliced. Small quantities of completely powdered metal. The bath had been squashed flat, like tinfoil. In fact, Pritchard was lucky to land the insurance money for his furniture.

Cha row monney faagit jeh "Minuke" yinnagh oo cur enney er. Agh va paart jeh ny meeryn beggan neuchadjin. Crontyn ayns piobyn myr sampleyr - doanluck mee hene ny va faagit jeh'n voddey. Fuygh as breek slissit dy glen. Mooadyn begghey dy veddyl va poodyrit dy bollagh. Va'n tobbyr-oonlee er ve traastit dy ve rea, myr scroggyl stainnagh. Dy firrinagh, va Pritchard aighoil dy dooar eh yn argid urryssaght son e stoo-thie.

My professional problem, of course, remained. The plot where the wretched place had stood. I managed to persuade the owner it wasn't ideal for building on. Incidentally, lifting those stones might reveal something to somebody some day - but not to me, thank you! I think my eventual solution showed a touch of wit: I let it very cheaply as a scrap-metal dump.

Son shickyrys, va'n doilleeid gherrymoil aym foast ayn. Y preaban raad va'n thie treih ny hassoo. Haink eh lhiam coyrlaghey da'n chellooder nagh row eh cooie cour troggal. Dy taghyrtagh, troggal ny claghyn shen, foddee dy jean eh jeeaghyn red ennagh da peiagh ennagh laa ennagh - agh cha nee dooys, gura mie ayd! Y feaysley jerrinagh aym, er lhiam dy hoilshee eh beggan dy ghashtid inçhynagh: ren mee soiaghey feer neugheyr eh myr clash shenn veddyl.

Well? I know I've never been able to make any sense out of it. I hate telling you all this, because it must make me seem either a simpleton or a charlatan. In so far as there's any circumstantial evidence in looking at the place, you can see it in a moment or two. Here's the coast road ...

Wahll? Shione dou nagh dod mee rieu feddyn keeall erbee ayn. S'feohdagh lhiam ginsh ooilleey shoh dhyt, er y fa dy vel eh cur orrym dy ve myr bolvane ny molteyr. Ayns wheesh as ta feanish taghyrtagh erbee ry gheddyn liorish jeeaghyn er y voayl, foddee oo eh y akin ayns minnid ny ghaa. Shoh raad y clyst-marrey...

The car pulled up at a bare spot beyond a sparse line of bungalows. The space was marked by a straggling, tufty square of privet bushes. Inside I could see a tangle of rusting iron: springs, a car chassis, oil drums. "The hedge keeps it from being too unsightly," said the estate agent, as we crossed to it. "See - the remains of the gate." A few half-rotten slats dangled from an upright. One still bore part of a chrome-plated name. "MI -" and, a little farther on, "K."

Scurr y gleashtan liorish meer dy halloo lhome cheu hoal jeh linney coon dy hieyn-injil. Va'n boayl cowrit magh liorish kerrin dossagh dy hammagyn privad garroo. Cheu-sthie jeu honnick mee mestey-vestey dy yiarn mergagh: lheimaghany, chassis gleashtan, drummyn ooill. "Ta'n cleigh lhiattal eh veih jeeaghyn ro ghraney," dooyrt y jantagh-thallooin, choud's va shin shooyl noon huggey. "Jeeagh - y chooid er-mayrn jeh'n ghat." Va kuse dy lattyn lieh-loau croghey veih peesh dy fuygh va ny shassoo jeeragh seose. Er nane jeu va foast ry-akin ayn jeh ennym kroym-choodit. "MI -" as, red beg sodjey ny lurg shen, "K."

'Nothing worth seeing now,' he said. I peered inside. "Not that there ever was much - Look out!" I felt a violent push. In the same instant something zipped past my head and crashed against the car behind. "My God! Went right at you!" gasped the agent. It had shattered a window of the car and gone through the open door opposite. We found it in the road beyond, sizzling on the tarmac. A heavy steel nut, white-hot. "I don't know about you," the estate agent said, "but I'm rather in favour of getting out of here." And we did. Quickly.

"Dyn veg feeu ry akin nish," dooyrt eh. Vlake mee stiagh. "Cha nel shen dy ghra dy row rieu monney - Bee er dty hwoaie!" Dennee mee seiyy niartal. Sy ghrig cheddin dettyl red ennagh feer tappee shaghey my chione as smoash eh noi'n ghleashtan cooyl ain. "My Yee! Hie eh dy jeeragh hood!" scred y jantagh. Va uinnag y ghleashtan mynvrish ec y red, as v'eh er gholl trooid y dorrys foshlit beedal rish. Hooar shin hoal sy raad eh, shissernee er y terracadam. Cro staillin trome, bane-cheh. "Cha nhione dou cre by vie lhiats," dooyrt y jantagh thallooin, "agh by vie lhiam immeeaght magh ass." As dimmee shin. Dy tappee.

Yn Jerrey