

God and Daphne - Jee as Daphne

*Skeel giare liorish Nigel Kneale
Çhyndaait dys Gaelg liorish Brian Stowell*

Daphne was four and had a white frock. Aunt Susan and Aunt Janet were very old indeed, and dressed in black. Aunt Susan had eyes that let tiny tears run down from the corners all day. Aunt Janet had one brown tooth, and white ones that wobbled when she chewed.

Va Daphne kiare as va gooyne bane eck. Va Naunt Susan as Naunt Janet shenn agglagh, as coamrit ayns eaddagh doo. Va sooillyn ec Naunt Susan va lhiggey da jeiryn minniagagh roie sheese veih ny corneilyn feiy'n laa. Va un eeackle dhone ec Naunt Janet, as fir vaney va lunjeaney tra v'ee caigney.

When Daphne was four years and six hours old - so Aunt Susan said - it was breakfast-time and there were birthday presents on the table: a little green purse to keep pennies in, from Aunt Janet; a new blue jumper that Aunt Susan had made; and some money from Uncle James, who lived a long way off. Aunt Janet put the money away so that it should not be wasted.

Tra va Daphne kiare bleeaney as shey oor dy eash - cordail rish Naunt Susan - she traan-jeeal v'ayn as va nastaghyn laa-ruggyree er y voayrd: sporran beg geayney dy chummal pingyn ayn, veih Naunt Janet; gansee gorrym noa va jeant ec Naunt Susan; as paart dy h-argid veih Naim James, va cummal foddey ersooyl. Hug Naunt Janet yn argid ersooyl er aggle dy ragh eh er jummal.

Daphne kissed Aunt Susan on the cheek, and there was a salty taste from the little tear that shone there. She kissed Aunt Janet also, but not on the cheek, for that had a mole with black hairs hanging from it.

Phaag Daphne Naunt Susan er y lieckan, as va blass sollanagh veih'n jeir beg va soilshean ayns shen. Phaag ee Naunt Janet myrgheddin, agh cha nee er y lieckan, er y fa dy row fahrane ayns shen as renaigyn dooey croghey veih.

She wrote a letter to Uncle James to thank him. Daphne held the pen with the long sharp nib while Aunt Susan made it form the marks. "We should write our thanks before we have time to forget," said Aunt Janet.

Screeu ee screeuyn gys Naim James dy chur booise da. Va greim ec Daphne er y phenn lesh gob liauyr as birragh, choud's hug Naunt Susan er cummey ny cowraghyn. "Lhisagh shin screeu nyn mooise roish my bee tra ain dy yarrood," dooyrt Naunt Janet. *When Daphne had eaten the porridge that was for breakfast, Aunt Susan gave her a dish with stewed apple rings in it. "Eat them up, dear," she said. "They are good for you." Daphne ate one slowly, pulling it into stretchy pieces. Apple rings were tough and old-smelling, like the dusty things in the lumber-room. When Aunt Susan and Aunt Janet went out of the room with the used dishes, Daphne took the apple rings that were left, some in each hand, and dropped them out of the window. They fell on the path outside with a tiny noise. She saw a striped cat smell them and walk on. She wiped her hands on the underside of the table.*

Ta va Daphne er nee yn phoddash v'ayn myr anjeeal, hug Naunt Susan jee jyst as fainaghyn ooylagh broit ayn. "Ee seose ad, veen," dooyrt ee. "Nee ad foays dhyt." Dee Daphne nane jeu dy moal as ee tayrn eh ayns meeryn lhoobagh. Va fainaghyn ooylagh reen as shenn soar oc, goll rish ny reddyn joanagh sy çhamyr voanlagh. Tra hie Naunt Susan as Naunt Janet magh ass y çhamyr lesh ny jystyn ymmydit, ghow Daphne ny fainaghyn ooylagh va faagit, paart jeu ayns gagh laue, as lhig ee daue tuittym magh ass yn uinnag. Huitt ad er y chassan çheu-mooie lesh sheean minniagagh. Honnick ee kayt rimmeigagh soaral ad as eisht shooyl er oi. Ren ee rubbey ny laueyn eck er çheu s'inshley yn voayrd.

Aunt Susan came back and said, "That's a good girl, but do I see something left?" Daphne drank the juice, while Aunt Susan waited for the dish. When the aunts had washed all the plates, they came back into the room, where Daphne was playing with the green purse. "Don't spoil it," said Aunt Janet, and they sat in their chairs by the fire. Haink Naunt Susan erash as dooyrt ee, "Shen inneen vie, agh vel mee fakin red ennagh faagit?" Diu Daphne yn soo as Naunt Susan fuirraghtyn rish y jyst. Tra va ny nauntyn er niee ooilley ny moggaidyn, haink ad erash sy çhamyr, raad va Daphne cloie lesh y sporran geayney. "Ny jean milley eh," dooyrt Naunt Janet, as hoie ad sheese ayns ny caairyn oc rish yn aile.

"Just think," said Aunt Susan, "Daphne's four whole years old!" She smiled and a small tear ran down her face.

"Smooinee er shen," dooyrt Naunt Susan, "Ta Daphne lane chiare bleeaney dy eash!" Vong ee as roie jeir beg sheese e h-eddin.

Aunt Janet went out of the room and came back with the big shiny book that the aunts sometimes looked at late on Sundays. "Daphne is old enough to know about the Bible, Susan," she said.

Hie Naunt Janet magh ass y çhamyr as haink ee erash lesh y lioar vooar as ghloasagh veagh ny nauntyn jeeaghyn er ny keayrtyn anmagh Jedoonee. "Ta Daphne shenn dy liooar fys y ve eck er y Vible, Susan," dooyrt ee.

She opened the book on her knee. It had no pictures, and the pages were covered with tiny words. "This is the Bible, Daphne," said Aunt Janet. "It tells all about God and is the most important book in the world."

"Did God write it all?" asked Daphne.

"Not exactly, dear," said Aunt Susan, "but it tells what He did."

"He made the earth, and the sun, and the moon, and the stars," said Aunt Janet.

"He must be very big," said Daphne.

"Very big," said Aunt Janet.

Doshil ee yn lioar er y ghlioon eck. Cha row jallooyn ayn, as va ny duillagyn coodit lesh focklyn minniagagh. "Shoh yn Vible, Daphne," dooyrt Naunt Janet. "T'ee ginsh gagh nhee bentyn rish Jee, as she yn lioar smoo scanshoil sy teihll t'ayn."

"Row eh ooilley screeut ec Jee?" vrie Daphne.

"Cha row dy jeeragh, veen," dooyrt Naunt Susan, "agh t'ee ginsh ny va jeant Echey."

"Ren Eh yn seihll, as y ghrian, as yn eayst, as ny rollageyn," dooyrt Naunt Janet.

"Gyn ourys t'Eh feer vooar," dooyrt Daphne.

"Feer vooar," dooyrt Naunt Janet.

"God is very good and kind," said Aunt Susan. "When people die -"

"Like Mrs. Stebbings' puppy?" asked Daphne.

Aunt Janet nodded. "Like the puppy. But people go to Heaven and puppies don't."

"Ta Jee feer vie as kenjal," dooyrt Naunt Susan. "Tra ta sleih geddyn baase -"

"Goll rish quallian Venainshtyr Stebbings?" vrie Daphne.

Ren Naunt Janet snoggal. "Goll rish y whallian. Agh ta sleih goll dys Niau, as cha nel quallianyn goll dys shen."

"Where is Heaven?" asked Daphne.

"No one exactly knows, dear," Aunt Susan said. "But God is there, and it is very beautiful." "Though God does not like bad people who do wicked deeds. They do not go to Heaven," said Aunt Janet.

"Wicked deeds?" said Daphne.

"Like making dirt, and worrying people, and wasting good things," Aunt Janet told her. Daphne remembered the apple rings lying outside on the path.

"C'raad ta Niau?" vrie Daphne.

"Cha nel fys ec peiagh erbee dy jeeragh, veen," dooyrt Naunt Susan. "Agh ta Jee ayns shen, as t'eh feer aalin."

"Agh cha mie lesh Jee drogh phobble ta jannoo olk. Cha nel adsyn goll dys Niau," dooyrt Naunt Janet.

"Jannoo olk?" dooyrt Daphne.

"Goll rish jannoo broid, as boirey er sleih, as jummal reddyng mie," dinsh Naunt Janet jee.

Va cooinaghtyn ec Daphne er ny fainaghyn ooylagh nyn lhie çheu-mooie er y chassan.

"How does God talk to people, Aunt Janet?"

"Sometimes He sends an angel with wings to talk to them. And sometimes He makes a sign." "Like a bush going on fire without any matches, dear," said Aunt Susan. Aunt Janet read a little from the Bible, which had a word called "begat" in it. Then she closed it.

"Cre'n aght ta Jee taggloo rish sleih, Naunt Janet?"

"Ny keayrtyrn, t'Eh coyrt ainle lesh skianyn dy haggloo roo. As ny keayrtyrn t'Eh jannoo cowrey."

"Casley rish thammag goll er aile fegooish foaddanyn, veen," dooyrt Naunt Susan. Ren Naunt Janet lhaih beggan veih'n Vible as y fockle "hooar" ayn. Eisht, v'ee dooint eck.

Daphne went into the garden and looked at the apple rings. They had soil on them and could not be eaten. She dug a small hole with her fingers and gently buried them. It was very wicked. She walked away down the path. Tears ran out of her eyes; Aunt Susan and Aunt Janet were going to Heaven and she was not.

Hie Daphne stiagh sy gharey as yeeagh ee er ny fainaghyn ooylagh. Va ooir orroo as cha dod ad goll er ee. Ren ee reuyrey towl beg lesh ny mairyn eck as hug ee dy mial fo halloo ad. V'eh feer olk. Hooill ee sheese y chassan. Roie jeiryn magh ass e sooillyn; veagh Naunt Susan as Naunt Janet goll gys Niau as cha beagh ish goll gys shen.

She knelt by a flower-bed and when she had moved a stone from under her knee, she put her hands together like saying prayers and said, "I am sorry about the apple rings, God."

Ghlioon ee sheese rish ymmyr-vlaa, as tra v'ee er scughey clagh va fo'n ghlioon eck, hug ee ny laueyn eck ry cheilley myr dy beagh ee goaill padjer, as dooyrt ee, "S'treih lhiam kyndagh rish ny fainaghyn ooylagh, Yee."

Nothing happened, and Daphne cried again. "Please say I'm not wicked," said Daphne. "Please, God, make a sign." There was the noise of a big drop of water on the path beside her, and a tiny bead splashed her leg. Daphne looked up into the sky that the drop of rain had fallen from. It was bright blue, and hot, and nowhere was there the smallest scrap of cloud. Her aunts had told her that rain came from clouds, but except for one of God's birds flying ever so high above, the sky was quite empty and clear.

Cha ren veg taghyrt, as ren Daphne keayne reesht. "My sailt, abbyr nagh vel mee olk," dooyrt Daphne. "My sailt, Yee, jean cowrey." Ren bine mooar dy ushtey feiyral er y chassan faggys jee, as ren bineen minniagagh skeolley noi'n lurgey eck. Yeeagh Daphne seose sy speyr va'n bine dy liaghey er duittym veih. V'ee gorrym-ghial, as cheh, as cha row yn veer sloo dy vodjal ry akin boayl erbee. Va ny nauntyn eck er ninsh jee dy daink y fliaghey veih ny bodjallyn, agh, er lhimmey jeh fer jeh ushagyn Yee getlagh feer, feer ard erskyn eck, va'n speyr lane follym as sullyr.

It was a sign. Only a little sign, but there had been only a few apple rings. "Thank you, God," said Daphne, politely and full of gladness. She watched God's bird fly slowly with wings that shone in the sunlight.

She cowrey v'ayn. Cha nee agh cowrey beg v'ayn, agh cha row monney fainaghyn ooylagh er ve ayn. "Gura mie eu, Yee," dooyrt Daphne dy cooyrtoil as ee lane dy voggey. Ren ee jeeaghyn er ushag Yee va getlagh dy moal lesh skianyn baney va soilshean ayns soilshey ny greiney.

YN JERREY