

Lotus for Jamie

By Nigel Kneale

Jamie wiped the home-made hair-cream from his fingers on to his soft brown beard, while sister Emily neatly arranged his parting.

Lotus son Jamie

Gaelg liorish Brian Stowell

Scugh Jamie yn varrag-folt thie-jeant veih ny mairyn echey gys y faasaag veein as dhone echey, choud as reagh e huyr Emily yn scoltey sy folt echey dy jesh.

"Emily," said Jamie.

"Emily," dooyrt Jamie.

"Yes, dear," said Emily.

"She, veen," dooyrt Emily.

"I couldn't sleep last night, Emily. I just lay quiet and there were little pains in my head, Emily. Why couldn't I sleep?"

"Cha dod mee cadley riy, Emily. Cha ren mee agh lhie dy feagh as va pianyn beggey ayns my chione, Emily. Cre'n fa nagh dod mee cadley?"

"Your brain was upset, dear," said Emily. "I think there are still one or two aspirins left and I would have given them to you if you had called me."

"Va ny inçhyn ayd boirit, veen," dooyrt Emily. "Er lhiam dy vel aspryn ny ghaa faagit, as oddins er chur dhyt ad dy beagh oo er chur fys orrym."

"Yes," said Jamie, "I like to have an aspirin when I can't sleep. Because, after a while, I have lovely dreams, Emily."

"She," dooyrt Jamie, "S'mie lhiam goaill aspryn tra nagh voddym cadley. Er yn oyr, lurg tammylt, ta dreamalyn aalin aym, Emily."

"Do you, dear?" said Emily. She smiled with the little wise look in her eyes that came there when Jamie told about himself.

"Vel, veen?" dooyrt Emily. Vong ee as y jeeaghyn creeney beg ayns e sooillyn haink rish tra va Jamie ginsh mychione echey hene.

"I see all sorts of exciting things, Emily. Like it says about in books. I do exciting things, too, Emily. I do brave things. There's people. There's a man - a sort of little man. He's got a beard like me. And he's awful kind as well, Emily. But I'm stronger than he is."

"Ta mee fakin dy chooilley horçh dy reddyn greese, Emily. Myr t'eh ginsh mychione ayns lioaryn. Ta mee jannoo reddyn greese neesht, Emily. Ta mee jannoo reddyn dunnal. Ta sleih ayn. Ta dooinney ayn - sorçh dy ghooiney beg. Ta faasaag echey, goll rhym. As t'eh kenjal agglagh neesht, Emily. Agh ta mee ny stroshey na eshyn."

"It's all dreams, Jamie," said Emily.

"She dreamalyn t'ayn ooilley ccoidjagh, Jamie," dooyrt Emily.

"Sometimes we go hunting in the woods, Emily, and there's big animals and things there, and then I'm frightened - a bit. But we always win, Emily."

"Ny keayrtyn ta shin shelg ayns ny keylljyn, Emily, as ta beiyn mooarey as reddyn ayn, as eisht ta mee goaill aggle - beggan. Agh ta shin kinjagh cosney yn varriaght, Emily."

"Yes, dear," said Emily.

"She, veen," dooyrt Emily.

When the postman came with a letter, Emily read it with tiny lines between her eyes and said, "I've got to go away for the day, Jamie. Uncle Jacob is very ill."

Tra haink y fer-post lesh screeuyn, lhaih Emily eh as craplagyn beggey eddyr e sooillyn. Eisht dooyrt ee, "Shegin dou goll ersooyl son y laa, Jamie. Ta Naim Jacob feer çhing."

"Poor Uncle Jacob," said Jamie.

"Naim Jacob boght," dooyrt Jamie.

"I'll lay the table for your meals," said Emily. "You must be quiet: and if I don't come back early, go to bed at eight o'clock."

"Neeym y boayrd y yeshaghey da dty lhongaghyn," dooyrt Emily. "Shegin dhyt ve kiune: as mannagh jigym erash dy Leah, gow dy lhie ec hoght er y chlag.

When she had gone, Jamie sat in the garden and looked at the pictures in his comics. He read one or two of the stories, but they were not so interesting as the pictures and took too long to make out.

Tra v'ee ersooyl, va Jamie ny hoie sy gharey as v'eh jeeaghyn er ny jallooyn ayns ny pabyryn aitt echey. Lhaih eh nane ny jees jeh ny skeealyn, agh cha row ad cho symoil as ny jallooyn, as ghow ad rouyr tra dy hoiggal.

In the afternoon, when he had drunk his milk and eaten his salad, he sat in the sunny garden again and tried hard to think of the bearded dream-man. But he would not come into Jamie's head, nor the wood with the strange animals. There was just the yellow hot field beyond the garden.

Ayns yn astyr, tra va e vainney iut as e ghlassan eeit echey, v'eh ny hoie sy gharey grianagh reesht as v'eh prowal dy creoi dy smooïnaghtyn er y dooinney faasaagagh ayns e ghreamal. Agh cha darragh eh stiagh ayns kione Jamie, as cha darragh y cheyll lesh ny beiyn quaagh rish noadyr. Cha row ayn agh y magher çheh bwee çheu elley jeh'n gharey.

Suddenly he had an idea. It was a clever idea, and Jamie smiled and pulled at his brown beard in pleasure. He found his black tin money-box with the slot to put the pennies in. Once he had had one shaped like a dog, but Emily said that it was too silly for a man of forty.

Dy doaltattym, va eie echey. She eie aghtal v'ayn, as vong Jamie as hayrn eh er e aasaag ghone lesh taitnys. Hooar eh e chishtey-argid va jeant ass stainney lesh y scoltan dy chur ny pingyn stiagh ayn. Keayrt dy row, va fer er ve echey va cummit myr moddey, agh dooyrt Emily dy row eh ro hootagh da dooinney va daeed blein dy eash.

Jamie opened it with a heavy stone and took the money in his big white hands. There were a number of pennies, and two bright shillings, and five half-crowns. He put the coppers in one pocket and the silver in another, and with his best hat in his hand, set off down the lane.

Doshil Jamie eh lesh clagh hrome, as ghow eh yn argid ayns e laueyn mooarey baney. Va kuse dy phingyn ayn, as daa skillin gial, as queig lieh-chrooinyn. Hug eh ny pingyn

stiagh ayns un phoggaid as yn argid elley ayns fer elley, as hie eh roish sheese y lhoan, as yn edd share echey ayns e laue.

He waited a long time at the place where the brown bus stopped. At last it came. It made a great noise, and for a moment Jamie was frightened. The conductor had a loud voice. "Don't you want to get in?" Jamie took a seat at the front, and his wide eyes watched trees and poles and houses fly past.

Duirree eh tra liauyr ec y voayl raad scuirr y barroose dhone. Haink eh fy yerrey. Ren eh feiyr mooar, as ghow Jamie aggle son grig. Va coraa lajer ec y stiureyder. "Nagh vel shiu laccal cheet stiagh?" Ghow Jamie soiaq ec beaal y varroose, as yeeagh eh lesh sooillyn lhean er biljyn as cruin as thieyn getlagh shaghey.

Presently the conductor came and Jamie gave him one of his pennies. The conductor winked at a man behind and said something Jamie did not understand, about "tip."

Dy chelleeragh, haink y stiureyder as hug Jamie nane jeh e phingyn da. Veek y stiureyder rish dooinney cooyl echey as dooyrt eh red ennagh mychione "dhooraght" nagh hoig Jamie.

"It's to pay for the bus," said Jamie. "I'm going to town."

"T'eh ry hoi eeck son y turrys," dooyrt Jamie. "Ta mee goll dys y valley."

The conductor made a hissing laugh and began to explain in a slow, loud voice. At last Jamie gave him one of the shillings. All the people in the bus were laughing. A young woman with two ducks on her knee looked at him and said, "Ought not to be allowed on buses!" Jamie wondered if she meant the ducks. He put the pretty blue ticket carefully inside his hat-band, as Emily had once showed him.

Ren y stiureyder gearey myr thassaney as ghow eh toshiaght dy hoilshaghey magh lesh coraa ard as moal. Fy yerrey hug Jamie nane jeh e skilleeyn da. Va ooilley yn sleih sy varroose garaghtee. Ben aeg as daa hunnag er e glioon, yeeagh ee er as dooyrt ee, "Cha lhisagh eh ve lowit er barrooseyn!" Ren Jamie gindys row ee cheet er ny thunnagyn. Hug eh yn tiggad bwaagh gorrym ayns boandey yn edd echey, myr va Emily er nyeeaghyn da keayrt dy row.

When they reached the town, he looked round anxiously, but he remembered to stay in his place until all the other people had left. Then he left too. Near the market-place he bought a cake; a pretty cake made of red and green stuff with cream on it. He ate it slowly and rapturously as he went towards the chemist's.

Tra raink ad y balley, yeeagh eh mygeayrt y mysh dy imneagh, agh chooinee eh dy hannaghtyn syn ynnyd echey gys va ooilley yn sleih elley er naagail. Eisht daag eshyn myrgeddin. Faggys da'n ynnyd-margee, chionnee eh berreen; berreen bwaagh jeant ass stoo glass as jiarg, as key er. Dee eh dy moal as dy eunyssagh eh, as eh goll gys shapp y photecaree.

At this shop, he wiped his hands on his coat before he remembered not to do so. He took all the money in his sticky fingers, and tried to talk in the way Emily said was proper, because he was doing an important task.

Ec y chapp shoh, ghlen eh e laueyn er e chooat roish my chooinee eh dyn shen y yannoo. Ghow eh ooilley yn argid ayns e vairyng lhiantagh, as phrow eh dy loayrt er yn agh ren Emily gra va cooie da, er y fa dy row eh jannoo kiartey scanshoil.

"I want aspirins," he told the chemist, and added, "sir." The man produced a very small bottle with a printed label. "I want a lot," said Jamie. "Emily and me, we live a long way from places. I want them to last a long time - sir." The man brought two more bottles. "Another one as well," said Jamie. That made four. "They're bottles of fifty," said the chemist.

"Ta mee laccal aspyrnyn," dooyrt eh rish y photecaree, as, ny sodjey, dooyrt eh "vainshtyr." Ghow yn dooinney magh boteil feer veg as lipeid chlout urree. "Ta mee laccal ram," dooyrt Jamie. "Emily as mish, ta shin cummal foddey ersooyl veih buill. Ta mee laccal ad farraghtyn traal iauyr - vainshtyr." Ren y dooinney cur lesh daa voteil elley. "Fer elley neesht," dooyrt Jamie. Va shen kiare. "She boteilyn dy lieh-cheead t'ayn," dooyrt y potecaree.

Jamie laid the half-crowns out on the counter and looked at the chemist. The man's eyes closed a little and his mouth quivered as if a smile was trying to come. He handed three of the coins back to Jamie, and also a shilling from a machine that rang. Jamie put the bottles in his pocket and left the shop, the coins clutched in his hand. His ears burned. He had forgotten to say "Thank you."

Hug Jamie ny lieh-chrooinyn er y voayrd-coontee as yeeagh eh er y photecaree. Va sooillyn y dooinney dooint beggan, as chrie e veeal myr dy beagh mongey prowal cheet rish. Hug eh tree jeh ny cooinaghyn erash da Jamie as, chammah as shen, skillin veih greie ren clinckal. Hug Jamie ny boteilyn stiagh ayns e phoggaid as daag eh yn chapp, as ny cooinaghyn glackit ayns e laue. Va ny cleayshyn echey goll er lostey. V'eh er nyarood dy ghra "Gura mie eu."

There were many people in the streets as he went to finish his shopping, and a great noise of talk and walking and cars and lorries. Jamie's head jerked from side to side as he watched. He knew his mouth was open, and he shut it hard, as he had been told. A little girl who went by said, "That man's got cream on his beard," and Jamie wondered whom she meant. He could see no one with a beard.

Shimmey peiagh v'er ny straidyn as eh goll dy chur jerrey er shappal. Va feiyr mooar ayn jeh taggloo as cosheeaght as gleashtanyn as carryn-laadee. Ren kione Jamie clistal veih'n derrey heu gys y cheu elley as eh jeeaghyn. Bione da dy row e veeal foshlit, as yeigh eh dy lajer eh, myr v'er ny insh da. Inneen veg hie shaghey, dooyrt ee, "Ta key er faasaag y dooinney shen, as ren Jamie gindys quoy v'ee cheet er. Cha dod eh fakin peiagh erbee as faasaag echey.

At the newspaper shop he spent a long time looking at the comics, until the shopkeeper asked him what he wanted. Then he took three of a kind of comic that had no stories, and counted pennies into the man's hand until he was satisfied. It was not until Jamie was in the brown bus again that he found the comics were all exactly the same. At first he felt angry with the shopkeeper: then he tore two of them up and threw them under the seat.

Ec shapp ny pabyryn-naight, cheau eh traal iauyr as eh jeeaghyn er ny pabyryn aitt, gys vrie yn shappeyder jeh c'ed v'eh gearree. Eisht ghow eh tree jeh sorch dy phabyr aitt lesh ymmodde jallooy, gyn skeealyn erbee, as ren eh coontey pingyn stiagh ayns laue yn dooinney derrey v'eh jeant booiagh. Cha doar Jamie magh dy row ooille ny

pabyryn aitt dy jeeragh yn un red gys v'eh ayns y varroose dhone reesht. Hoshiaght, v'eh jeant corree ec y çhappeyder: eisht, raip eh jees jeu seose as cheau eh fo'n toiaq ad.

The conductor said, "You back again, chum?" and made him buy another ticket before the bus started. "You wanted a return," he said, and winked at the driver, who peered back from his seat like the funny horse in the comic, looking through a gate.

Dooyrt y stiureyder, "T'ou ayn reesht, ghooiney?" as hug eh er tiggad elley y chionnaghey roish my jagh y barroose. "V'ou ayns feme jeh tiggad goll as çheet," dooyrt eh, as veek eh rish yn immanagh, ren blakey ergooyl veih'n toiaq echey casley rish y chabbyl aitt sy phabyr aitt va jeeaghyn trooid giat.

Jamie did not understand, but he felt the pockets where the shining bottles were, to make sure they were safe, and looked at the pictures in his comic while the bus took him slowly home. When he looked up, still smiling at the funniest of the jokes, he did not know where they were, and a strange cold feeling came in his head, and his legs trembled. He sat stiffly, with the comic in one hand and the hot half-crowns and the ticket in the other; he knew his mouth was open, and he looked out of the window, then across through the one opposite.

Cha hoig Jamie, agh dennee eh ny poggaidyn raad va ny boteilyn sollys, dy hickyragey dy row ad sauchey, as yeeagh eh er ny jallooyn sy phabyr aitt echey, choud's va'n barroose cur lesh eh dy valley dy moal. Tra yeeagh eh seose as eh foast mongey kyndagh rish y spotçh smoo aitt, cha row fys echey raad v'ad, as haink ennaghtyn feayr quaagh stiagh sy chione echey, as va ny lurgaghyn echey er craa. V'eh ny hoie dy neulhoobagh, as y pabyr-aitt sy derrey laue as ny lieh-chrooinyn as y tiggad sy laue elley; bione da dy row e veel foshlit, as yeeagh eh magh ass yn uinnag, as eisht trooid y fer hoal.

At last the conductor came and patted his shoulder. "This is where you want to get off, chum," he said, and giggled at the driver as the bus slowed down. Jamie climbed out of the bus and crossed the road. It was the right place. "Hi, you've forgotten something," shouted the conductor. When Jamie went back, he handed him the torn-up comics. Jamie took them politely, and the half-crowns clattered on the ground from his open hand. The blue ticket floated into a pool of oil. The conductor was winking at an old man on the back seat as the bus rumbled on up the hill. Jamie found the money, and hurriedly hid the wasteful, torn papers in a deep briar bush. The precious aspirin bottles were safe.

Fy yerrey, haink y stiureyder as hug eh bassag eddrym da'n gheaylin echey. "Shoh y boayl raad ta feme eu faagail, my charrey," dooyrt eh, as ren eh giggleragh rish yn immanagh myr hie yn barroose ny smelley. Ghrap Jamie magh ass y varroose as hie eh tessan y raad. She yn boayl kiart v'ayn. "Clasht-shiu, ta shiu er nyarood red ennagh," dyllee y stiureyder magh. Tra hie Jamie erash, hug eh da ny pabyryn aitt va raipit seose. Ghow Jamie dy cooyrtoil ad, as huitt ny lieh-chrooinyn dy feiyral er y ghrunt veih e laue foshlit. Ren y tiggad gorrym floateil stiagh ayns dubbey beg dy ooill. Va'n stiureyder meekey rish shenn dooinney er y toiaq chooyl as y barroose tharmanaghey

er oi seose yn ughtagh. Hooar Jamie yn argid as, dy tappee, dollee eh ny pabyryn raipit as jummallagh ayns dress ghowin. Va ny boteilyn-aspyrn ennoil sauchey.

It was a long walk home past Clew's old empty farm and the waterfall and the three broken cottages. As Jamie went by the waterfall and smelled the warm wetness of the hedges that the high trees shaded, he saw something move in the long grass at the side of the road.

She cosheeaght liauyr v'ayn, as eh goll dy valley shaghey gowaltys follym shenn Clew, as yn eas as ny tree cottyn brisht. As tra va Jamie goll shaghey'n eas as eh soaral fliughys cheh ny cleighyn v'ayns scadoo ny biljyn ard, honnick eh red ennagh va gleashaghey sy faiyr liauyr ec cheu yn raad.

A dark-coloured furry creature crept out and raised a pointed nose, sniffing blindly. Jamie stuffed the last comic into his pocket with the aspirins, and picked the mole up. It did not struggle, and Jamie stroked its loose coat gently as he held it against his chest. Animals never ran away from him as they did from other people. "It must be because you're sort of - special, Jamie, dear," Emily told him.

Snaue cretoor keeir as fynneydagh magh ass, as hrog eh stroin virragh, as eh stronnaghey dy doal. Phron Jamie yn pabyr aitt s'jerree stiagh ayns e phoggaid marish ny aspyrnyn, as hrog eh seose y kyaghan. Cha strep eh, as struge Jamie yn fynney lhag echey dy mial, as eh greimmey eh noi e chleeau. Cha roie ny beiyen rieu ersooyl voish myr roie ad ersooyl voish sleih elley. "Gyn ourys, er y fa dy vel oo sorçh dy - sorçh dy pheigh er l'eh, Jamie veen," dooyrt Emily rish.

When he reached home, it was growing late and cool, for the bus ride had been a long one. He set the aspirins in a neat row on the table. "You're my friend now," he said to the mole. Its tiny black eyes winked, not like the bus conductor's, but honestly. "You're Mister Mole," said Jamie.

Tra raink eh yn thie, v'eh cheet dy ve anmagh as feayr, er yn oyr dy row yn turrys sy varroose er ve liauyr dy liooar. Hug eh ny aspyrnyn ayns roa jesh er y voayrd. "Uss my charrey nish", dooyrt eh rish y chyaghan. Veek e hooillyn doo as minniagagh, cha nee goll roosyn ec stiureyder y varroose, agh dy ynricks. "Uss Mainshtyr Kyaghan," dooyrt Jamie.

After supper, he gathered the sleepy animal into his big hands and put it down on the foot of his bed. He brought a heavy blue-patterned jug of water to drink, and began to prepare for bed, for it was eight o'clock. Mister Mole yawned; his wet pink mouth shone in the darkness of his fur as Jamie patted him.

Lurg shibber, ghow eh yn baagh cadlagh ayns e laueyn mooarey, as hug eh sheese eh er sthock e lhiabbee. Ren eh cur lesh podjal hrome dy h-ushtey as jesheenaght ghorrym urree, as ghow eh toshiaght dy yannoo aarloos dy gholl dy lhie, er y fa dy row eh hoght er y chlag. Ren Mainshtyr Kyaghan mennuigh; va'n beeal jiarg-bane as fliugh echey soilshean ayns y dorraghys jeh'n fynney echey, as Jamie cur bassag eddrym da. *Emily came back some time later. "Are you all right, dear?" she called softly, and when a sleepy voice answered, she opened the door of Jamie's room. Seeing her, the mole scrambled clumsily down from the foot of the bed and crept into a corner. "Whatever's that!" she said.*

Haink Emily erash paart dy hraa lurg shen. "Vel oo mie dy liooar, veen?" dyllee ee magh dy mial, as tra dreggyr coraa cadlagh, doshil ee dorrys shamyr Jamie. Tra v'ee fakinit echey, hayrn y kyaghan eh hene dy staghyllagh sheese veih sthock y lhiabbee as ren eh snaue stiagh ayns corneil. "Cre sy teihll ta shen!" dooyrt ee.

Small empty bottles chinked on the bed as Jamie swallowed the last few of the two hundred aspirins, and lowered the jug. He looked up drowsily with eyes that were black slits. "Em'ly," he said, "they'll last a nice long time. I do like dreams, Em'ly."

Ren boteilyn beggey follym clingeragh er y lhiabbee as Jamie sluggey yn shiartanse s'jerree jeh daa cheead aspyrn, as hug eh sheese y phodjal. Yeeagh eh seose dy saveenagh lesh sooillyn va nyn scoltaghyn dooey. "Em'ly," dooyrt eh, "Nee ad farraghtyn traas braew liauyr. Dy jarroo, s'mie lhiam dreamal, Em'ly."

Yn Jerrey