

An Còmhradh

Iain Mac a' Ghothainn





Obair 1 Faigh a-mach

- Dè as aithne dhut mu ùghdar na sgeulachd?
- Faigh a-mach beagan mu dheidhinn fhèin, a bheatha agus a bheachd-smuaintean.

What do you know about the story's author, Iain Crichton Smith? Find out what you can about himself; his life and common themes in his work. This may help you to better understand this story (and other works of his). Share what you find out with your class.



Obair 2

- Leughaidh an sgeulachd còmhla mar chlas.
- Faodaidh tu èisteachd ris an sgeulachd air làrach-lìn Ceumannan 5 cuideachd.
- Coimhead air na faclan is abairtean.
- Cuidichidh an tidsear thu le tuigse.
- Sgrìobh geàrr-chunntas goirid air cò mu dheidhinn a tha an sgeulachd.

Read the story "An Còmhradh" together, as a class. You can also listen to the story on the *Ceumannan* website. Your teacher will help you to understand the story. Use the faclan is abairtean below to help you too. Write a brief summary of a few lines outlining what the story is about.



An Còmhradh

Tha mi toilichte gun tàinig thu. Chan e mo choire-sa nach robh thu seo roimhe, ach leis an fhìrinn innse 's e Tormod fhèin bu choireach . . .

Pian? Bha e cho geal aig an deireadh. Sia bliadhna deug cuideachd. (Sin an aois a bha e. An e bliadhna th' aig' ort fhèin?) Ach tha sinn ann an làimh Dhè. Nach eil cuimhn' agam an latha a ghoid sibh an silidh air a' chaillich, 's a ruith sibh? 'S an oidhch' a chroch sibh an radan bhon ròpa am meadhan an taighe? Tha cuimhn' agam air.

Cha robh Tormod airson a chluinntinn idir aig an deireadh. Ach bha am ministear a-staigh gun sgur. Ò cha robh e furast'. Bhiodh e na laighe an siud, cho geal, 's am ministear a' feuchainn ri innse dha cho dona 's a bha e. Cha chreideadh e an toiseach. No cha do smaoinich e air. Ach dh'innis sinn dha e. Dia! Dh' fheumadh e smaoinichadh air. Dia is teine ifrinn.

Ministear math cuideachd, chan e ur ministearan maide. Cha robh càil air aire Thormoid an toiseach ach gàireachdainn. Cha robh e a' tuigsinn cho faisg 's a bha e air a' bhàs. 'S dh'innseadh e gach nì a rinn e, 's e na shuidhe anns an leabaidh — an oidhche a bha sibh a' gnothachadh air na dorsan 's an oidhche a leig sibh each Mhurchaidh saor 's e a' ruith 's a' ruith: 's mu dheidhinn na sgoile cuideachd. Am prìne 's an luch! Bha e a' cur eagal orm, na nithean sin. Ach esan, cha robh ann ach fealla-dhà dhàsan.

Ach bha am ministear dìleas. Uaireannan chanadh e riumsa: "Chan urrainn sinn càil a dhèanamh. Togaidh e am Bìoball ach leagaidh e an-ath-mhionaid 's e a' sealltainn rium. 'S ann a shaoileadh duine gur e nàmhaid a th' annam dha, an àite . . ."

Ach 's e ministear math a bh' ann. Latha an dèidh latha thigeadh e.

Tha cuimhn' agam aon oidhche. Chuala mi Tormod a' sgrìachail 's chaidh mi steach. Bha aodann na bu ghile na b' àbhaist. Dh'èigh e orm 's ruith mi null far an robh e. Chuir e a cheann air mo bhroilleach, is fhalt fliuch le fallas. Bha am ministear na shuidhe air a' chathair 's a bhata na làimh.

“Dè tha ceàrr?” thuirt mi ri Tormod. “Dè tha ceàrr?”

“Tha e ag ràdh,” chuala mi e a' ranail, “tha e ag ràdh gu bheil mi. . .”

“Seadh, a ghràidh?”

“Gu bheil mi. . .” Cha mhòr gum faigheadh e air bruidhinn.

“Gu bheil mi. . .”

. . . dol a . . .

bhàsachadh!”

“Tha sinn uile dol a bhàsachadh,” ars am ministear. Cha tuirt mi smid. Dè b' urrainn dhomh a ràdh, 's mo làmh a' ruith tro fhalt. Dè b' urrainn dhomh a ràdh? Nach e 'n fhìrinn a bh' aig a' mhinistear? Ach air mo shon-sa . . .

“Bu chòir dhuinn ùrnaigh a dhèanamh,” ars am ministear, 's lùb sinn ar glùinean.

Bhon oidhche sin — taing do Dhia — thòisich e a' leughadh a' Bhìobail mar gum biodh e air eagal a ghabhail. Ach aig amannan bhiodh e a' sealltainn riumsa mar nach robh e a' tuigsinn rudeigin. Dh'èigheadh e orm ach aig a' cheart àm . . .

Agus, a thaobh a' mhinisteir, bhiodh Tormod ga iarraidh-san cuideachd na bu trice na bha e gam iarraidh fhìn mar gum biodh fhios aig a' mhinistear air rùn-dìomhair . . . Is sguir e a dh'innse nan sgeulachdan ud. Cha robh e a' gàireachdainn a-nis idir. Bha e na bu shàmhaiche na chleachd e. Ò bha e an làimh Dhè, bha sin soilleir gu leòr. Chuir am ministear fhèin umhail air.

“Tha e cho math,” bha e 'g ràdh, “cho ciùin, tha a bheatha a' fosgladh dha.” Airson uairean a thìde air cheann bhiodh e a' sealltainn suas ri mullach an taighe gun ghluasad.

An oidhche a bhàsaich e bha e cho sàmhach. Cha mhòr gun robh e a' bruidhinn idir a-nis ach ga mo leantainn le a shùilean air feadh an taighe mar gum biodh e 'g iarraidh rudeigin. Dh'fhaighnich sinn dha aon latha an robh e airson gin de a chompanaich fhaicinn ach cha robh. Co-dhiù cha do fhreagair e sin. Aig amannan nuair a bhiodh a' ghrian ann chuireadh e a làmh air a' bhalla anns a' bhlàths.

Bha e a' leughadh a' Bhìobail dìreach mus do bhàsaich e. 'S e am Bìoball an aon leabhar a bha mi a' toirt dha. Thuit am Bìoball às a làmhan chun an làir. Chaidh mi null gu thogail a' smaoineachadh gur ann air tuiteam na chadal a bha e ach cha b' ann, 's ann bha e marbh. B' e latha teth a bh' ann 's tharraing mi na cùirtearan.

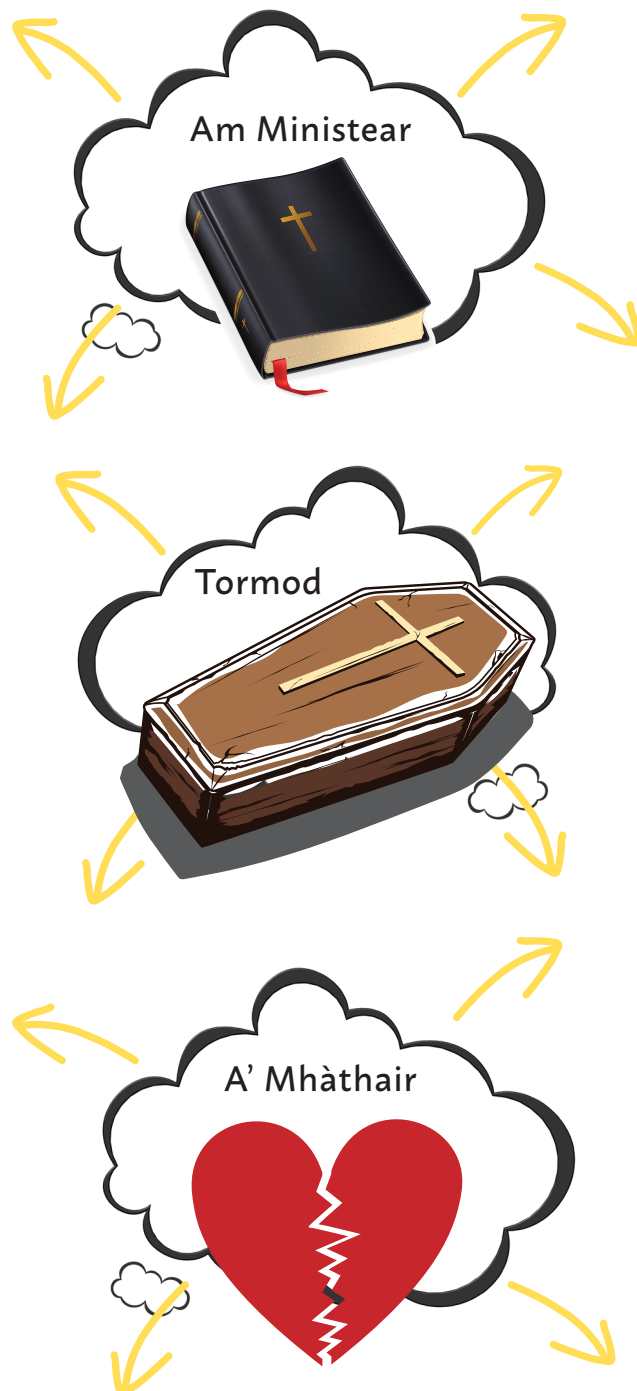
Tha cuimhne agam gun robh an làr fon Bhìoball blàth leis a' ghrèin. Ach bha am Bìoball fhèin fuar nuair thog mi e, cho fuar 's gun do chuir e gairisinn orm, mar gun suathadh duine ann an iarann a tha trom le deigh.



Obair 3 Map caractair

- Tagh caractar bhon stòiridh.
- Dèan map caractair air a s(h)on le bhith a' sgrìobhadh na 's urrainn dhut mu d(h)eidhinn timcheall air (a h-) ainm.
- Faodaidh tu am fiosrachadh bhon sgeulachd a chleachdadh a thuilleadh air do bheachdan fhèin air a' caractar.
- Cruinnichidh an tidsear am fiosrachadh air gach caractar air a' bhòrd gheal.
- Sgrìobh sìos fiosrachadh sam bith nach robh agad mu thràth.

Choose one of the three characters: Tormod, his mother or the minister. Make a mind map for your chosen character. To do this, write down what you know about them from the story, any suitable words that describe them, or facts about them. You may also write down what kind of person you think they are, in your own opinion. You should be able to explain your answers. Your teacher will collate everyone's ideas on the board and you can discuss each character.





Obair 4 Ceistean

- Freagair na ceistean a leanas.
- Bu chòir dhut fianais a thoirt bhon teacsa airson do fhreagairtean a dhaingneachadh mas urrainn dhut.

Answer the following questions. You should support your answers where possible with quotations or reference to the text.

1. To what do you think the title of the story refers? How could it be seen as ironic?
2. How does the writer capture the reader's attention from the start?
3. Ellipses (...) can be used in literature to create a number of effects. Find two differing examples in the story. Explain the effect that each one creates.
4. How does the writer show us that Tormod originally had a close relationship with his mother?
5. What kind of boy was Tormod before he knew he was dying? Give examples from the text.
6. What place do you think the church had in the community in which Tormod and his mother lived?
7. The purpose of a short story of this particular genre is to make the reader analyse the effect that one particular moment can have on people's lives and to explore their state of mind as a result. This particular moment in "An Còmhradh" comes when the minister tells Tormod he is going to die.
 - a. Why do you think the minister told Tormod this?
 - b. What is Tormod's immediate reaction to the minister's revelation?
 - c. How do you think Tormod's mother felt about the minister telling her son what he did?
 - d. How do you feel about what happened?
 - e. Choose some information from the story to illustrate how 'the moment' changed Tormod.
8. There are some particularly striking images in the story. Comment on each one below.
 - i. "Bha am ministear na shuidhe air a' chathair 's a bhata na làimh."
 - ii. "Aig amannan nuair a bhiodh a' ghrian ann chuireadh e a làmh air a' bhalla anns a' bhlàths."
 - iii. "Tha cuimhne agam gu robh an làr fon Bhìoball blàth leis a' ghrèin. Ach bha am Bìoball fhèin fuar nuair a thog mi e, cho fuar 's gun chuir e gairisinn orm, mar gu suathadh duine ann an iarann a tha trom le deigh."
9. How do you think you would have dealt with the situation if you were:
 - a. Tormod's mother?
 - b. Tormod?
10. How do you think Tormod's mother feels, as she recounts events and reflects upon them?
11. On the surface, "An Còmhradh" appears to be a very simple short story. However, it contains some fairly weighty themes and raises some complex questions. Make a list of the themes you think are dealt with in the story.
12. The writer employs some interesting literary techniques in the story. Identify some of the techniques used and comment on their effectiveness.
13. From your reading of the story, what view do you think the writer has about religion? You should support your answer with evidence from the text.
14. Consider the story as a whole. What effect, if any, did it have on you? How did it make you feel? Did it make you think about a particular moment in your own life? Did it make you consider how you might have felt if you were in a similar situation? Try to give a detailed answer, making reference to the text where possible.



Obair 5 Cothrom smaoinichaidh, cothrom deasbaid

The story "An Còmhradh" deals with the emotional fallout resulting from the moment a teenager is told he is terminally ill. Nowadays, advances in medical science mean it is possible by genetic testing to discover what conditions we may be predisposed to in the future. For example, some types of cancer, Huntington's disease and Alzheimer's — all of which can be life limiting and possibly fatal.

Consider the implications that possessing this kind of knowledge could have — positive or otherwise. Given the opportunity to be tested, do you think you would like to find out what your life chances are? Is forewarned forearmed? Or is ignorance bliss? Discuss your views with your group/class.

A bheil e nas fheàrr fios a bhith agad air galairean sam bith a dh'fhaodadh a bhith air thoiseach ort, no gun fhios a bhith agad?



Obair Adhartach

- Sgrìobh aiste bheachdail air a' chuspair a bha sibh a' deasbad gu h-àrd.
- Bu chòir dhut a bhith comasach air mu 250 facal a sgrìobhadh.
- Coimhead air na duilleagan 'Faclan feumail airson aiste bheachdail'.

Write a discursive essay of around 250 words on the above topic you discussed in **Obair 5**. You should try to write around 250 words. Look at the 'Faclan feumail airson aiste bheachdail' pages for help with this.