

Litir do Luchd-Ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

*A special programme, in the form of a “letter”, written and compiled by Roddy Maclean, and specifically aimed at Gaelic learners who already have some knowledge of the language. A short vocabulary and comments on points of grammar and figures of speech are included with the text. If you have comments, Roddy can be contacted by e-mail at roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk**

An t-seachdain ’s a chaidh, gheall mi dhuibh gun innsinn dhuibh criomag de sheann sgeulachd an t-seachdain-sa. ’S e an t-ainm a th’ oirre Sgeulachd a’ Ghille Charaich, Mac na Banntraich. Agus seo am pàirt far a bheil an gille carach a’ deanamh a’ chùis air a’ bhuachaille. Aig toiseach ghnòthaich, bu chòir dhomh mìneachadh gu robh an gille carach air a chur roimhe a bhith na mhèirleach agus gu robh e a’ fuireach còmhla ri fear a bha a’ teagasg na sgilean sin dha – an gadaiche dubh.

Co-dhiù, bha fear beartach anns a’ bhaile a fhuair cuireadh dhol gu banais agus dh’iarr e air a’ bhuachaille aige falbh don mhonadh airson caora a thoirt dhachaigh mar phrèasant-bainnse. Nise, bha an gille carach a’ cumail sùil air a’ bhuachaille, agus thuirt e ris a’ ghadaiche dubh, “Cuiridh mi geall gun goid mi a’ chaora sin mus ruig am buachaille an taigh aige.” Agus dh’fhalbh e a-mach. Bha aig a’ bhuachaille ri dhol tro choille agus ruith an gille carach air thoiseach air. Shalaich e tè de na brògan aige agus dh’fhàg e ann am meadhan an rathaid i. An uairsin chaidh e am falach.

Nuair a ràinig am buachaille a’ bhròg, thuirt e, “Nam biodh do leth-bhreac ann, thogainn thu is ghlainn thu.” Ach cha robh aon bhròg gu mòran feum dha, gu h-àraidh leis gu robh i salach, agus chaidh e seachad oirre.

Bha an gille carach air a h-uile facal dheth sin a chluinntinn. Thog e a’ bhròg shalach, is ruith e mar a’ pheilear tron choille gus am faigheadh e air thoiseach air a’ bhuachaille a-rithist. An uairsin, chuir e a bhròg eile ann am meadhan an rathaid. Nuair a ràinig am buachaille an t-àite, thuirt e ris fhèin, “’s e seo leth-bhreac na bròige salaich.” Dh’fhag e a’ chaora ann a sin, agus ruith e air ais airson a’ bhròg shalach a thogail gus am biodh paidhir aige.

Agus fhad ’s a bha e air falbh, ruith an gille carach a-mach às a’ choille, thog e an darna bròg agus a’ chaora agus theich e dhachaigh gu luath.

Uill, cha robh an duine beartach ro thoilichte, ach dh’iarr e air a’ bhuachaille dhol a-mach don mhonadh a-rithist airson gobhar fhaighinn. Agus nuair a chunnaic an gille carach am buachaille, thuirt e ris a’ ghadaiche dubh, “Cuiridh mi geall gun tèid agam air an gobhar a ghoid bhuaithe mus ruig e an taigh aige.”

A-rithist, b’ fheudar don bhuachaille dhol tron choille agus ruith an gille carach air thoiseach air. Chaidh e am falach agus, nuair a bha am buachaille faisg air, thòisich e air mèilich, a’ deanamh fuaim mar a bhios caora. “O,” ars’ am buachaille ris fhèin, “’s e sin a’ chaora a chaill mi an-dè.” Cheangail e an gobhar ri craobh, agus dh’fhalbh e a lorg na caorach.

Agus fhad 's a bha e air falbh, ghoid an gille carach an gobhar agus chaidh e dhachaigh leis. 'S e a bha carach, seòlta gun teagamh!

Tha an sgeulachd a' leantainn, leis a' ghille carach a' dèanamh a' chùis air mòran eile. Ach bha a mhàthair air a bhith ri fàidhearachd mu dheidhinn a bhàis bho bha e na bhalach òg, nan cumadh e a' dol mar mhèirleach. Thuirt i gun d'rachadh a chrochadh ann an Eirinn. Agus, anns an sgeulachd, tha an gille carach a' dol a dh'Eirinn. Ach dè thachras dha mu dheireadh? Uill, mholainn gun leugh sibh an sgeulachd fhèin ann am *Popular Tales of the West Highlands*, Leabhar a h-aon. Tha i an dà chuid ann am Beurla is Gàidhlig agus chan eil rian nach còrd i ribh.

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Faclan na seachdaine: gadaiche: *thief, robber*; banais: *wedding*; buachaille: *herdsman*; shalaich e: *he dirtied*; theich e: *he fled*.

Abairtean na seachdaine: Sgeulachd a' Ghille Charaich, Mac na Bantraich: *the Story of the Shifty Lad, the Widow's Son*; far a bheil X a' deanamh a' chùis air Y: *where X gets the better of Y*; mus ruig am buachaille an taigh aige: *before the herdsman reaches his house*; bha aig a' bhuachaille ri dhol tro choille: *the herdsman had to go through a wood*; ruith X air thoiseach air: *X ran ahead of him*; chaidh e am falach: *he hid*; nam biodh do leth-bhreac ann, thogainn thu is ghlanainn thu: *if the other one of your pair was here, I would pick you up and clean you*; gu mòran feum dha: *of much use to him*; ruith e mar a' pheilear: *he ran like the wind (lit. like the bullet)*; thòisich e air mèilich: *he started to bleat*; 's e sin a' chaora a chaill mi an-dè: *that's the sheep I lost yesterday*; 's e a bha carach, seòlta gun teagamh: *it's him that was shifty and cunning without doubt*; bha a mhàthair air a bhith ri fàidhearachd mu dheidhinn a bhàis: *his mother had been prophesying about his death*; gun d'rachadh a chrochadh ann an Eirinn: *that he would be hanged in Ireland*; chan eil rian nach còrd i ribh: *there is no way you will not enjoy it*.

Puing ghràmair na seachdaine: bu chòir dhomh mìneachadh gu robh an gille carach air a chur roimhe a bhith na mhèirleach: *I should explain that the shifty lad had determined on being a robber. If we look at this expression in the past tense, it is chuir e roimhe – he put in front of him. It is an idiomatic Gaelic equivalent to “he made up his mind to..” and should be employed rather than the English-influenced rinn e suas inntinn which is not a Gaelic idiom. To employ this phrase you must have a good grasp of the phases of the prepositional pronouns associated with ro (before) – ie romham, romhad, roimhe, roimhpe, romhainn, romhaibh and romhpa. Here are some other examples: Chuir mi romham a bhith nam fhiaclair (I decided to become a dentist); Chuir i roimhpe cuideam a chall (she decided to lose weight); chuir iad romhpa a bhith modhail (they decided to be polite). How would you say in Gaelic “when did you decide to go in for the ministry?”?*

Gnàths-cainnt na seachdaine: cuiridh mi geall gun goid mi a' chaora: *I bet I'll steal the sheep. This is the best idiomatic way of saying “I bet” or “I'll wager”*. Chuir i geall gum buannaicheadh i (*she bet she would win*). Cuiridh mi geall gun tèid agam air an gobhar a ghoid (*I bet I'll manage to steal the goat*).

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