

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 rodny.macleam@bbc.co.uk
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Bha tuathanach ann uaireigin a bha beartach. Bha triùir mhac aige agus nuair a bha e air leabaidh a bhàis, thuirt e riutha, “anns an dràthair agam anns an t-seòmar eile, gheibh sibh suim òir. Roghnaichibh i eadaraibh gu cothromach.”

Goirid as dèidh sin, chaochail e. Nuair a bha an tiodhlacadh seachad, chaidh na bràithrean còmhla don dràthair. Ach bha e falamh. “Chan eil fios gu robh òr a-riamh ann,” thuirt am fear a b’ òige.

“Feumaidh gu robh,” thuirt an darna mac.

“Cha do dh’innse ar n-athair breug a-riamh,” thuirt am fear a bu shine.

Chaidh iad còmhla gu taigh bodaich. Bha am bodach gu math eòlach air an athair, agus dh’iarr e air na bràithrean fuireach còmhla ris airson deich latha gus am faigheadh e cothrom smaoinachadh mu dheidhinn an t-suidheachaidh. As dèidh deich latha, dh’iarr e orra coinneachadh ris. Thòisich e air sgeulachd innse.

“Bha uaireigin gille,” thuirt e, “a bha bochd. Ghabh e trom-ghaol air nighean nàbaidh a bha beartach, agus ghabh ise gaol airsan. Ach, leis cho bochd ’s a bha e, cha b’ urrainn dhaibh pòsadh. Thug iad gealladh-pòsaidh do chàch a chèile, ge-tà, agus dh’fhalbh an duine òg a dh’fhuireach anns an taigh aige fhèin.

As dèidh greis, thàinig suirghiche eile. Bha esan gu math beartach agus thug athair na h-ìghne oirre an duine seo a phòsadh, agus ’s e sin a thachair. As dèidh na bainnse, lorg an duine a bhean ùr anns an t-seòmar-chadail, agus i a’ gul is a’ caoineadh. ‘Dè tha a’ cur ort?’ dh’fhaighnich e, agus mhìnich i dha mar a bha i air gealladh-pòsaidh a thoirt don fhear eile.

‘Thig còmhla rium,’ thuirt an duine rithe, agus chuir e air muin-eich i. Chaidh iad còmhla air an each gu taigh an fhir bhoichd. Chuir an duine a bhean ùr air an stàirsnich, chnag e an doras agus dh’fhalbh e.

Thàinig am fear bochd don doras. Cò bh’ ann ach an leannan aige, agus dreasa-bhainnse oirre. ‘Dè tha thu a’ dèanamh an seo?’ dh’fhaighnich e, agus dh’innis i dha gu dè bh’ air tachairt. ‘Fuirich an seo,’ thuirt e, agus dh’fhalbh e air an each gu taigh an t-sagairt.

Thug e an sagart dhachaigh leis, agus dh’fhuasgail an sagart am boireannach bhon ghealladh-pòsaidh a bha i air a thoirt don duine bochd. Chuir an duine bochd air muin an eich i, agus thuirt e rithe, ‘a-nise thalla dhachaigh gu taigh do chèile.’

Ach cha robh i air a dhol fada nuair a thachair i ri triùir robairean a chuir an greim i. ‘Leigibh leam dhol don duine agam,’ thuir i riutha. ‘Tha an duine dha robh mi geallta roimhe air mo shaoradh. Seo agaibh deich not’ ann an òr. Gabhaibh e agus leigibh saor mi.’

‘Bheir mi dhachaigh thu,’ thuir fear de na robairean, ‘cha ghabh mi sgillinn bhuat.’ Ach cha robh an dithis eile cho truasail agus, mus do dh’fhalbh i, ghoid iad an t-òr bhuaipe.”

“Nise,” dh’fhaighnich am bodach dhen triùir bhràithrean, “cò an duine a b’ fheàrr a bh’ ann.”
“Am fear a thug am boireannach don duine dha robh i geallta roimhe,” thuir am bràthair a bu shine. “Bha esan onarach.”

“Ach rinn am fear a bha fo ghealladh-pòsaidh na b’ fheàrr nuair a thug esan don duine eile i,” thuir an darna mac.

“Ge-tà,” thuir am fear a b’ òige, “nach iad na robairean a fhuair an t-airgead an fheadhainn a bu ghlice?”

“Is tus’ a ghoid an t-òr a bh’ aig d’ athair,” thuir am bodach ris an fhear òg. Agus b’ fheudar don fhear òg aideachadh gu robh e ceart.

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Faclan na seachdaine: tuathanach: *farmer*; dràthair: *drawer*; suim òir: *a sum of gold*; tiodhlacadh: *funeral*; a bu shine: *the oldest*; nàbaidh: *neighbour*; suirghiche: *suitor*; muin-eich: *horseback*; stàirsneach: *doorstep*; sagart: *priest*; robairean: *robbers*; truasail: *sympathetic*.

Abairtean na seachdaine: bha triùir mhac aige: *he had 3 sons*; roghnaichibh e eadaraibh gu cothromach: *divide it among yourselves fairly*; chan eil fios gu robh òr a-riamh ann: *one can’t be sure that there was ever gold (here)*; feumaidh gu robh: *there must have been*; cha do dh’innse ar n-athair breug a-riamh: *our father never told a lie*; chaidh iad còmhla gu taigh bodaich: *they went together to an old man’s house*; dh’iarr e orra coinneachadh ris: *he asked them to meet with him*; a’ gul is a’ caoineadh: *crying and weeping*; dè tha a’ cur ort?: *what is the matter (with you)?*; dh’fhuasgail X am boireannach bhon ghealladh-pòsaidh: *X liberated the woman from the promise of marriage*; thalla dhachaigh gu taigh do chèile: *go home to your husband’s house*; dha robh mi geallta: *to whom I was promised*; gabhaibh e agus leigibh saor mi: *take it and let me go*; cha ghabh mi sgillinn bhuat: *I won’t take a penny from you*; nach iad X an fheadhainn a bu ghlice?: *weren’t X the wisest ones?*; b’ fheudar don fhear òg aideachadh gu robh e ceart: *the young one had to admit he was right*.

Puing ghràmair na seachdaine: Is tus’ a ghoid an t-òr a bh’ aig d’ athair: *it is you that stole your father’s gold. Last week we looked at how idiomatic Gaelic often commences a sentence with “is”, the assertive verb. Here, in this week’s Litir, is another example, in which the use of this verb emphasises the personal pronoun following it. This is a common phraseology, and you should note the presence of a second verb, in this case “ghoid”. Here is another example: Is tus’ a thilg a’ chlach, nach tu? (it is yourself that threw the stone, is it not?). If the past tense is being emphasised, the old man in the Litir might have used the past form of the assertive verb and said “bu tus’ a ghoid ...” Commonly the second verb in such constructions is the verb “to be” in active form and it is this which is emphasised by the speaker eg: Is mi a tha gorach! (lit. it is me that is stupid!) This is a common self-deprecating statement. A conversation might go like this: Q: A bheil thu deimhinne às? (are you certain of it). A: Is mi a tha! (absolutely! lit. it is me that is). Q: A bheil Dòmhnall làidir? (is Donald strong?) A: ’S e a tha! Cho làidir ri each! (He certainly is. As strong as a horse).*

Gnàths-cainnt na seachdaine: Nuair a bha e air leabaidh a bhàis: *when he was on his death-bed. NB. The Litir this week is an edited version of an ancient story from Gaelic tradition.*

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