

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 **

Bha mi aig fuaran anns an Eilean Dubh uaireigin, fuaran a tha pìos beag air falbh on rathad, ach a bha uaireigin ainmeil air feadh na sgìre. Nuair a ràinig mi e, chunnaic mi liùdhag bheag ri thaobh, le rudan ceangailte rithe. Tha e coltach gu robh cuideigin air a cur ann a dh’aona-ghnothach. ’S dòcha gu robh iad a’ creidsinn, mar a bha mòran o shean, gun tigeadh leigheas air an duine a bh’ air a riochdachadh leis an liùdhaig nan robh e tinn. No an robh creideamh na bu doilleire co-cheangailte rithe?

O shean bha cleachdadh ann, anns am biodh daoine a’ dèanamh corp crèadha, ’s e sin nàdar de liùdhag a bh’ air a dèanamh le crèadh. Bha an corp a’ riochdachadh cuideigin. Bhiodh daoine le droch rùn a’ stobadh prìnichean a-steach don chorp agus bheireadh sin droch shlàinte don duine a bha an corp a’ riochdachadh. Bhathar a’ creidsinn gum b’ urrainn cuideigin a mharbhadh anns an dòigh sin. ’S ann tric a bhiodh corp crèadha air fhàgail ann an allt, agus tha uillt fhathast ann air a bheil Allt nan Corp mar ainm air sgàth sin.

Tha sgeulachd agam mu dheidhinn cleachdadh a’ chuirp chrèadha anns an eilean far an robh sinn an t-seachdain sa chaidh – Diùra. Bha fear ann uaireigin, Caimbeulach a bha na bhàillidh don eilean, ged a bha e a’ fuireach air tìr-mòr. Chanadh daoine “am bàillidh mòr” ris. Nuair a thàinig e air tìr turas ann an Diùra, thachair ban-fhiosaiche ris agus thug i rabhadh dha. Dh’fheumadh e dhol don Chnoc Chrom cho luath ’s a b’ urrainn dha, oir bha cuideigin ann a sin ag obair na aghaidh le corp crèadha. Thuirt i ris dèanamh air a’ chiad sholas a chitheadh e nuair a ruigeadh an Cnoc Crom.

Dh’fhalbh am bàillidh agus fear-taic aige na chois. Ach, nuair a fhuair iad faisg air a’ Chnoc Chrom, thòisich casan a’ bhàillidh air fàs fann. As dèidh greis, cha b’ urrainn dha coiseachd, agus b’ fheudar don duine eile a ghiulain air a dhruim. Ach dh’fhas e na bu mhiosa agus bha eagal air an duine eile gu robh am bàillidh a’ dol a bhàsachadh.

“Cha dèan seo feum,” thuirt e, agus chuir e am bàillidh sìos air leac faisg air a’ Chnoc Chrom. Ruith e a dh’ionnsaigh nan taighean agus chaidh e don fhear a b’ fhaisge, anns an robh solas. Choimhead e a-steach agus chunnaic e triùir boireannach, is tè aca a’ cur prìnichean a-steach do chorp crèadha. Dh’èigh an duine rudeigin – innsidh mi dhuibh ann an tiotan dè bh’ ann – agus thuig na boireannaich gu robh an taigh na theine. Ruith iad a-mach airson an sàbhaladh fhèin agus, aig an aon àm, ruith an duine a-steach. Thilg e an corp crèadha air an làr agus phronn e fo chois e gus nach robh càil air fhàgail dheth. Agus nuair a thill e don bhàillidh mhòr, bha am fear eile air èirigh bhon lic far an robh e. Bha e slàn fallain a-rithist.

Agus dè dh'èigh an duine? Uill, a reir beul-aithris ann an Diùra, dh'èigh e, “taigh na galla, taigh ri theine!” Dh'fhaodadh tu sin a ghabhail ann an dà dhòigh gu dearbh, is chan eil tè seach tè dhiubh uabhasach modhail, ach thathar a' cumail a-mach gur e “Taigh na Galla” a chanadh muinntir an àite ris an taigh sin airson ùine mhòir as dèidh làimh! No 's dòcha gu robh an sgeulaiche ri beagan spòrs leis an fhear a chruinnich an sgeulachd, is a chuir air pàipear i. B' esan an t-Urramach Teàrlach Robasdan.

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Faclan na seachdaine: fuaran: *well, spring*; corp crèadha: *clay body*; droch rùn: *bad intentions*; bàillidh: *factor*; ban-fhiosaiche: *prophetess, female fortune-teller*; rabhadh: *warning*; fann: *weak*; leac: *slab, flat rock*; sgeulaiche: *storyteller*.

Abairtean na seachdaine: chunnaic mi liùdhag bheag ri thaobh: *I saw a small doll beside it (masc)*; gun tigeadh leigheas air an duine a bh' air a riochdachadh leis an liùdhaig: *that the person represented by the doll would be healed*; an robh creideamh na bu doilleire co-cheangailte rithe: *was a darker belief linked to it (fem)*; a' stobadh prìnichean a-steach: *sticking pins in*; gum b' urrainn cuideigin a mharbhadh: *that somebody could be killed*; thuirt i ris dèanamh air a' chiad sholas a chitheadh e: *she said to him to make for the first light he would see*; agus am fear-taic aige na chois: *and his assistant with him*; b' fheudar don duine eile a ghiulain air a dhruim: *the other man had to carry him on his back*; cha dèan seo feum: *this is no use*; chunnaic e trìuir bhoireannach: *he saw three women*; ruith iad a-mach airson an sàbhaladh fhèin: *they ran out to save themselves*; bha am fear eile air èirigh bhon lic: *the other man had arisen from the slab*; dh'fhaodadh tu sin a ghabhail ann an dà dhòigh: *you could take that in two ways*; chan eil tè seach tè dhiubh uabhasach modhail: *neither is particularly polite*.

Puing-ghràmar na seachdaine: Phronn e fo chois e: *he crushed it under his foot. Can you analyse the sentence and tell me why cas (foot) appears as chois here? You should be able to do this (even if you need a dictionary for help) with any noun. Firstly, it is a feminine noun. Secondly it is in the dative singular case, following the simple preposition, fo. Feminine nouns slenderise in the dative singular. In the case of cas, it changes to cois. But it is his foot and the masculine third person singular possessive adjective, a (here not written because it is virtually elided in speech) lenites any lenitable consonant at the start of the noun, whatever case it is in. So cois changes to chois. From time to time, pick a noun at random in a piece of Gaelic prose and try to work out what case it is in, and explain any lenition or slenderisation of the form found in the dictionary (which is always the nominative singular). Such practices will help your understanding of Gaelic grammar.*

Gnàths-cainnt na seachdaine: Taigh na galla, taigh ri theine!: *the house of the bitch, the house on fire! It was the taigh ri theine that would have got the women out of the house, but the first part would have made the shouter feel better. Although it literally means “the house of the bitch” and might have been a slight upon the owner, it is actually used as a Gaelic imprecation, somewhat equivalent to “damn you!”*. A thaigh na galla leat!: *to hell with you! You might hear somebody use galla in denouncing a machine that will not work, eg tractar na galla! (blasted tractor!). It is likely the Diùraich had this as a little joke in which they could tell an inquisitive visitor (and perhaps even the Rev. Charles Robertson) that if they wanted to see where the corp crèadha was made, they could “go to Taigh na Galla!*

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