

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 * This is Litir 263.*

Is fhada o nach robh sgeulachd againn ann an Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh, agus bu mhath leam tè innse dhuibh an-diugh. 'S e tè thraidiseanta a th' innte air a bheil “A Chaora Bhiorach Ghlas”.

Bha Rìgh agus Bànrigh ann, agus bha nighean aca. Chaochail a' Bhànrigh agus phòs an Rìgh teile. Ach bha an tè seo olc. Bhiodh i a' gabhail air a' bhana-phrionnsa, agus ga cur a-mach air an doras. B' fheudar don nighinn falbh a-mach a bhuachailleachd nan caorach fad an t-siubhail. Agus chan fhaigheadh i rud sam bith ri ithe. Bha a' Bhànrigh ùr an dòchas gum faigheadh i bàs le cion bìdh.

Ach gu h-iongantach mhair i beò. Cha robh fios aig a' Bhànrigh, ach bha aon chaora san treud a' cuideachadh na h-ìghne. Bha i a' toirt biadh dhi. B' e sin a' chaora bhiorach ghlas.

Cha robh fios aig a' Bhànrigh mar a bha an nighean a' faighinn biadh agus dh'innis i mun dragh a bh' oirre do cailleach nan cearc. Chuir cailleach nan cearc a nighean fhèin a-mach a bhuachailleachd nan caorach cuide ri nighean an Rìgh, feuch faighinn a-mach ciamar a bha i a' faighinn biadh. Ach fhad 's a bha a' chaileag seo ann, cha tigeadh a' chaora bhiorach ghlas faisg air a' bhana-phrionnsa le biadh.

Bha a' bhana-phrionnsa a' gabhail fadachd airson a' bhìdh aice, agus thuirt i ri nighean cailleach nan cearc, “Cuir do cheann air mo ghlùn agus fasgabaidh mi thu.” Tha sin a' ciallachadh gun cuireadh i falt na h-ìghne ann an òrdugh. Agus chuir nighean cailleach nan cearc a ceann air glùn an teile. Bha i sgìth, agus chaidil i an sin. Agus fhad 's a bha i na cadal, thàinig a' chaora bhiorach ghlas a dh'ionnsaigh nighean an Rìgh le biadh dhi.

Ach bha sùil ann an cùl ceann nighean cailleach nan cearc agus bha i sin fosgailte. Chunnaic an nighean na bha a' tachairt, ged a bha i na cadal. Nuair a dhùisg i, dh'fhalbh i dhachaigh agus dh'innis do a màthair gu dè bh' air tachairt, 's gur e a' chaora bhiorach ghlas a bha a' toirt biadh don bhana-phrionnsa. Agus chaidh cailleach nan cearc don lùchairt airson a' chùis aithris don Bhànrigh.

Bha a' Bhànrigh feargach, agus thuirt i gum marbhadh iad a' chaora bhiorach ghlas. Ach chuala a' chaora mu dheidhinn a' phlana. Chaidh i a dh'ionnsaigh nighean an Rìgh, agus thuirt i rithe, “Tha iad a' dol gam mharbhadh. Ach goid thusa mo chraiceann. Trus mo chnàmhan is mo ladhran agus roilig nam chraiceann iad. Agus thig mi beò a-rithist, agus thig mi gad ionnsaigh a-rithist.”

Mar a dh'innis a' chaora e, 's ann a thachair e, cha mhòr. Chaidh a marbhadh, agus ghoid a' bhana-phrionnsa a craiceann is a cnàmhan. Roilig i na cnàmhan sa

chraiceann agus theich i. Ach dhìochuimhnich i mu na ladhran. Agus nuair a thàinig a' chaora beò a-rithist bha i crùbach. Cha robh comas aice tuilleadh biadh fhaighinn airson nighean an Rìgh.

Gu fortanach, bha prionnsa anns an nàbaidheachd. Bha e a' sealg. Thachair e ris an nighinn agus ghabh e gaol dhi. Ach chunnaic nighean cailleach nan cearc e, agus dh'innis i do a màthair mu dheidhinn. Agus chaidh cailleach nan cearc a dh'innse mu dheidhinn don Bhànrigh.

Dh'iarr a' Bhànrigh air nighean an Rìgh thighinn a-steach don lùchairt airson a bhith na searbhant dhi. Agus chuir i an nighean aice fhèin a-mach a bhuachailleachd, agus an tachradh i ris a' phrionnsa an ath-thuras a thigheadh e a shealg. Agus innsibh mi dhuibh dè thachair an ath-sheachdain.

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Faclan na seachdaine: teile: *another female (it comes from tè eile)*; olc: *evil*; glùn: *knee*; chaidil i: *she slept*; roilig: *roll*; dhìochuimhnich i: *she forgot*; crùbach: *lame*; nàbaidheachd: *vicinity*.

Abairtean na seachdaine: bhiodh i ga cur a-mach air an doras: *she would put her out the door*; b' fheudar don nighinn falbh a-mach a bhuachailleachd nan caorach: *the daughter/girl had to go out and herd the sheep*; fad an t-siubhail: *all the time*; gum faigheadh i bàs le cion bìdh: *that she would die because of a lack of food*; cha tigeadh a' chaora bhiorach ghlas faisg: *the sharp grey sheep wouldn't come close*; bha i a' gabhail fadachd: *she was getting weary*; nighean cailleach nan cearc: *the daughter of the hen-woman*; fasgabhaidh mi thu: *I will dress your hair (archaic)*; falt na h-ìghne: *the girl's hair*; thàinig i a dh'ionnsaigh nighean an Rìgh: *it (she) came up to the king's daughter*; dh'innis do a màthair: *she told her mother*; gum marbhadh iad a' chaora: *that they would kill the sheep*; goid thusa mo chraiceann: *[you] steal my skin*; trus mo chnàmhan is mo ladhran: *gather up my bones and hooves*; ghabh e gaol dhi: *he fell in love with her*; airson a bhith na searbhant dhi: *to be a servant to her*; gus an tachradh i ris a' phrionnsa: *so she would meet the prince*; an ath-thuras a thigheadh e a shealg: *the next time he came [would come] to hunt*.

Puing-ghràmar na seachdaine: *If you are reading this without listening to the broadcast version, you might well have done a “double take” on the following sentence: Cha robh comas aice tuilleadh biadh fhaighinn airson nighean an Rìgh. With your knowledge of grammar (now finely honed, I hope!), you might have thought, “well, tuilleadh commands a noun in the genitive so it should be tuilleadh bìdh instead of tuilleadh biadh.” (just as we say beagan bìdh or taigh-bìdh). But does tuilleadh here command the noun? In fact it doesn't because it is not a noun, but an adverb qualifying the clause “cha robh comas aice”. I was saying “she no longer had the ability to get food for the king's daughter”. If tuilleadh were here a noun, then I would have said “tuilleadh bìdh” and the sentence would have meant “she didn't have the ability to get more food...” Of course (and you will note that the Litir is deliberately a bimedia exercise), the spoken version would tell you what is meant by its placing of emphasis relative to the meaning, something which is not immediately obvious on the page.*

Gnàths-cainnt na seachdaine: Bhiodh i a' gabhail air a' bhana-phrionnsa: *she would beat the princess.*

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