

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 * This is Litir 298.*

Bu toigh leam spòrs a ghabhail an t-seachdain seo le bhith ag aithris sgeulachd thraidiseanta air a bheil “Morachan is Mionachan”. Bidh cuid eòlach air na prìomh characteran mar “Biorachan Mòr is Biorachan Beag” ach tha mise a’ dol a chleachdadh nan ainmean a th’ aca orra ann an Cataibh – Morachan is Mionachan.

Chaidh Morachan is Mionachan a-mach don choillidh, a dh’iarraidh chnothan. Ach bha Mionachan ag ithe cus dhiubh is cha robh gu leòr ann do Mhorachan. Chaidh Morachan a dh’iarraidh slat airson gabhail air Mionachan, airson stad a chur air.

Chaidh e far an robh slat. “Cà’il thu a’ dol?” dh’fhaighnich an t-slat. “Tha mi ag iarraidh slat,” arsa Morachan, “airson gabhail air Mionachan gus nach ith e cus de na cnothan.”

“Uill, chan fhaigh thu mise,” ars’ an t-slat, “mura faigh thu tuagh a bhuaineas mi.” Chaidh e far an robh tuagh. “Cà’il thu a’ dol?” dh’fhaighnich an tuagh. “Tha mi ag iarraidh tuagh,” arsa Morachan, “tuagh a bhuaineas slat, slat a ghabhas air Mionachan gus nach ith e cus de na cnothan.”

“Uill, chan fhaigh thu mise,” ars’ an tuagh, “mura faigh thu clach a bhleitheas mi.” Chaidh e far an robh clach. “Cà’il thu a’ dol?” dh’fhaighnich a’ chlach. “Tha mi ag iarraidh clach,” arsa Morachan, “clach a bhleitheas tuagh, tuagh a bhuaineas slat, slat a ghabhas air Mionachan gus nach ith e cus de na cnothan.”

“Uill, chan fhaigh thu mise,” ars’ a’ chlach, “mura faigh thu uisge a fhliuchas mi.” Chaidh e far an robh uisge. “Cà’il thu a’ dol?” dh’fhaighnich an t-uisge. “Tha mi ag iarraidh uisge,” arsa Morachan, “uisge a fhliuchas clach, clach a bhleitheas tuagh, tuagh a bhuaineas slat, slat a ghabhas air Mionachan gus nach ith e cus de na cnothan.”

“Uill, chan fhaigh thu mise,” ars’ an t-uisge, “mura faigh thu fiadh a shnàmhas mi.” Chaidh e far an robh fiadh. “Cà’il thu a’ dol?” dh’fhaighnich am fiadh. “Tha mi ag iarraidh fiadh,” arsa Morachan, “fiadh a shnàmhas uisge, uisge a fhliuchas clach, clach a bhleitheas tuagh, tuagh a bhuaineas slat, slat a ghabhas air Mionachan gus nach ith e cus de na cnothan.”

“Uill, chan fhaigh thu mise,” ars’ am fiadh, “mura faigh thu gadhar a ruitheas mi.” Chaidh e far an robh gadhar. “Cà’il thu a’ dol?” dh’fhaighnich an gadhar. “Tha mi ag iarraidh gadhar,” arsa Morachan, “gadhar a ruitheas fiadh,

fiadh a shnàmhas uisge, uisge a fhliuchas clach, clach a bhleitheas tuagh, tuagh a bhuaineas slat, slat a ghabhas air Mionachan gus nach ith e cus de na cnothan.”

“Uill, chan fhaigh thu mise,” ars’ an gadhar, “mura faigh thu ìm a shuathas mi air mo chasan.” Chaidh e far an robh ìm. “Cà’il thu a’ dol?” dh’fhaighnich an t-ìm. “Tha mi ag iarraidh ìm,” arsa Morachan, “ìm chasan gadhair, gadhar a ruitheas fiadh, fiadh a shnàmhas uisge, uisge a fhliuchas clach, clach a bhleitheas tuagh, tuagh a bhuaineas slat, slat a ghabhas air Mionachan gus nach ith e cus de na cnothan.”

“Uill, chan fhaigh thu mise,” ars’ an t-ìm, “mura faigh thu luch a sgròbas mi.” Chaidh e far an robh luch. “Cà’il thu a’ dol?” dh’fhaighnich an luch. “Tha mi ag iarraidh luch,” arsa Morachan, “luch a sgròbas ìm, ìm chasan gadhair, gadhar a ruitheas fiadh, fiadh a shnàmhas uisge, uisge a fhliuchas clach, clach a bhleitheas tuagh, tuagh a bhuaineas slat, slat a ghabhas air Mionachan gus nach ith e cus de na cnothan.”

Nise, tha an ùine air ruith orm agus chan urrainn dhomh mo sgeulachd a thoirt gu crìch an-dràsta. Cluinnidh sibh tuilleadh an ath-sheachdain.

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Faclan na seachdaine: caractaran: *characters*; arsa: *said*; clach: *stone*; dh’fhaighnich: *asked*.

Abairtean na seachdaine: tha mise a’ dol a chleachdadh nan ainmean a th’ aca orra ann an Cataibh: *I am going to use the names they have for them in Sutherland*; a-mach don choillidh: *out to the wood (coillidh is an alternative dative singular of coille)*; chaidh e far an robh slat: *he went to where there was a rod, stick*; chan fhaigh thu mise: *you won’t get me*; gus nach ith e cus de na cnothan: *so that he won’t eat too many of the nuts*; mura faigh thu uisge a fhliuchas mi: *if you don’t get water that will wet me*; fiadh a shnàmhas mi: *a deer which will swim me*; mura faigh thu gadhar a ruitheas mi: *if you don’t get a hunting dog (gadhar is an ancient word, no longer current in the language and is probably used in this story because of the unusual inflexion of cù – it also suggests the story, of which there are forms in other European languages, is very old)*; ìm a shuathas mi air mo chasan: *butter I can wipe on my legs/feet*; ìm chasan gadhair: *butter of a hunting dog’s legs/feet*; luch a sgròbas mi: *a mouse which will scrape me*; tha an ùine air ruith orm: *I am running short of time*; chan urrainn dhomh mo sgeulachd a thoirt gu crìch an-dràsta: *I can’t finish my story just now*.

Puing-chànain na seachdaine: clach a bhleitheas tuagh, tuagh a bhuaineas slat: *a stone that will grind [ie sharpen] an axe, an axe that will cut a rod. You will notice the abundance of –as endings in the verbs in the sequences in this story. They translate into English as “will” ie they represent the future tense, but they are not the normal future form (such as bleithidh, will grind; buainidh: will cut). The –as form is known as the relative future and we have looked at it in past Litrichean. It is employed here as it comes after the particle a. Here are some other examples of its use: ’S e Murdigan a chanas iad ris (they call him Murdigan); gheibh thu rud sam bith a dh’iarras tu (you will get anything you request); is esan am fear a chruinnicheas an t-airgead (he is the one who collects*

the money); 's e ise a bhios toilichte nuair a thilleas tu (it is herself will be happy when you return).

Gnàths-cainnt na seachdaine: “Cà’il thu a’ dol?” dh’fhaighnich X: “*where are you going?*” asked X. *Be aware of contractions like this, particularly in speech. In informal situations, this is more common than the full “càite a bheil thu a’ dol?”*

* Tha “*Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh*” air a maoinachadh le Seirbheis nam Meadhanan Gàidhlig