

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 at roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk * This is Litir 324. Note that Roddy also broadcasts a simplified version – An Litir Bheag – on Monday evenings at 7.00 pm. This is also available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 20 corresponds to Litir 324.*

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh anns an Litir mu dheireadh mu Bhàillidh Thronairnis agus a’ Bhana-bhuidseach. ’S e sin seann sgeulachd bhon t-siathamh linn deug às an Eilean Sgitheanach. Ach cha do nochd a’ bhana-bhuidseach innte fhathast – bidh i a’ nochdadh an-diugh. Nuair a dh’fhàg sinn an sgeulachd, bha na gillean air bò na bantraich agus each a’ bhàillidh a chur a-null gu Eilean Thuilm, gun fhiosta don bhàillidh is don mhaor. Nuair a ràinig am bàillidh agus am maor am buaile, cha robh sgeul air a’ bhoin no air an each.

Choimhead am bàillidh agus am maor mun cuairt. Rùraich iad thall ’s a-bhos. Ach cha robh sgeul air a’ bhoin no air an each. Chaidh iad suas don chreig far an robh na gillean. “Am faca sibh neach sam bith a’ buntainn don bhoin no don each?” dh’fhaighnich iad.

Fhreagair na gillean nach robh iad air a bhith ann a sin fada, agus nach robh duine sam bith eile air a bhith ann bho thàinig iad. Bha sin fìor, gun teagamh. Thuirtear de na gillean gun robh cailleadh san taigh bheag ud shìos aig an robh fiosachd. Dh’innseadh ise ca’ robh a’ bhò agus an t-each. “Rach sìos ga h-iarraidh,” ars’ am bàillidh.

Dh’fhalbh dithis de na gillean nan deann a dh’ionnsaigh na caillich. ’S e Ciorstaidh an t-ainm a bh’ oirre. Ràinig na gillean an taigh aice agus dh’innis iad dhi an cleas a rinn iad. “An dèan sibh tuilleadh spòrs dhuinn?” dh’fhaighnich iad.

“’S mi a nì,” arsa Ciorstaidh.

Sgeadaich i i fhèin mar bhana-bhuidseach. Chuir i sùgan mu a casan mar ghartanan. Chuir i sùgan eile mu a meadhan mar chrìos. Chuir i craiceann gobhair mu a guailnean. Chuir i bonaid leathann air a ceann agus leig i a falt sìos a druim. Chuir i bata mòr na làimh. Bha i deiseil agus, gu dearbh, bha coltas bana-bhuidsich oirre! Dh’fhalbh i an uair sin air a socair còmhla ris na gillean. Is chaidh iad suas don àite far an robh càch nan seasamh, a’ feitheamh riutha. Chaidh i a dh’ionnsaigh a’ bhàillidh.

“An urrainn dhut innse dhomh,” dh’fhaighnich am bàillidh dhith, “càite a bheil a’ bhò agus an t-each a chuir sinne a-steach don bhuaile?”

“Cò bu leis iad?” ars’ an t-seann bhean.

“Tha a’ bhò leis an Rìgh, agus an t-each leamsa,” thuirtear am bàillidh.

“Tha thu breugach,” ars’ ise. “Dè bhiodh bò leis an Rìgh a’ dèanamh ann am buaile ann an Dùn Tuilm?”

“Thug am boireannach sin dhomh i mar a màl,” ars’ esan.

“Tha thu breugach a-rithist,” thuirt Ciorstaidh. “Cha tug. Ach thug thusa bhuaipe i. Agus tha sin a-nis ag innse dhomhsa ciod e bu chiall don rud a chunnaic mi o chionn tacain. Chunnaic mi sgaoth mhòr de na sìthichean a’ tighinn a-steach tro chùl an taighe. Bha iad a’ saodachadh bò agus each romhpa, agus ghabh iad tron teine agus a-mach tro aghaidh an taighe. Agus chaidh iad a-steach don chnoc ud thall. Nam biodh sibhse cho eòlach air na daoine beaga ud ’s a tha mise, cha tigeadh sibh do Chille Mhoire a chreach bhantraichean bochda ’s a thoirt bhuapa an cuid cruidh.”

Nuair a chuala am bàillidh seo, thug e a chasan leis. Is thathar ag ràdh nach tug e bò bho bhantrach tuilleadh cho fad ’s a bha e na bhàillidh air Trondairnis.

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Faclan na seachdainne: maor: *ground officer*; buaile: *cattle fold*; crios: *belt*; càch: *the others*; bata: *stick*; breugach: *untruthful*.

Abairtean na seachdainne: Bàillidh Thronairnis agus a’ Bhana-bhuidseach: *the factor of Trotternish and the witch*; cha do nochd a’ bhana-bhuidseach innte fhathast: *the witch hasn’t appeared in it [fem.] yet*; bò na bantraich agus each a’ bhàillidh: *the widow’s cow and the factor’s horse*; gun fhiosta do X: *unknown to X*; cha robh sgeul air a’ bhoin: *there was no sign of the cow*; choimhead X mun cuairt: *X looked around*; rùraich iad thall ’s a-bhos: *they searched here and there*; am faca sibh neach sam bith a’ buntainn don bhoin: *did you see anybody touching the cow*; bho thàinig iad: *since they came*; gun robh cailleach san taigh bheag ud shìos aig an robh fiosachd: *that there was an old woman in yonder wee house who could tell the future*; dh’innseadh ise ca’ robh X: *she would [could] tell where X was*; rach sìos ga h-iarraidh: *go down and get her*; dh’innis iad dhi an cleas a rinn iad: *they told her the trick they played*; tuilleadh spòrs: *more fun*; sgeadaich i i fhèin mar bhana-bhuidseach: *she dressed herself up as a witch*; chuir i sùgan mu a casan mar ghartanan: *she put a twisted straw rope around her legs like garters*; chuir i craiceann gobhair mu a guailnean: *she put a goat’s skin around her shoulders*; far an robh càch nan seasamh: *where the others were standing*; cò bu leis iad?: *to whom did they belong?*; tha a’ bhò leis an Rìgh, agus an t-each leamsa: *the cow is owned by the King, and the horse is mine*; mar a màl: *as her rent*; thug thusa bhuaipe i: *you took it [fem.] from her*; ciod e bu chiall don rud a chunnaic mi o chionn tacain: *what the meaning was of thing I saw a short while ago*; bha iad a’ saodachadh bò agus each romhpa: *they were driving a cow and a horse ahead of them*; cha tigeadh sibh do Chille Mhoire a chreach bhantraichean bochda: *you wouldn’t come to Kilmuir robbing poor widows*; ’s a thoirt bhuapa an cuid cruidh: *and taking from them their own cattle*; thathar ag ràdh nach tug e bò bho bhantrach tuilleadh: *it is said he never again took a cow from a widow*.

Puing-chànain na seachdainne: Dh’fhalbh dithis de na gillean nan deann: *two of the lads left at speed*. Note that although deann acts adverbially, it is actually a [feminine] noun meaning “haste/rush”. It is employed, in a phrase

like this, in the dative case and is preceded by the appropriate possessive article. It therefore must be lenited where appropriate eg thàinig e a-steach na dheann (he entered in a hurry); chaidh i a-mach na deann (she rushed out), chaidh sinn ann nar deann (we went there in haste). If that is not quite “fast” enough we might strengthen it with dearg eg dh’fhalbh e na dhearg dheann (he left in an incredible rush); dh’fhalbh i na dearg dheann (she left in an incredible rush). Note where the lenition occurs in these two examples.

Gnàths-cainnt na seachdaine: thug e a chasan leis: *he left, departed [lit. he took his feet with him].*

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