

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 345. 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 41 corresponds to Litir 345.*

Bha Sanndaidh MacLeòid à Gleann an t-Slugain a’ dol a mharbhadh an tuirc, air an robh *Tad-Logann* mar ainm. Bha an torc mòr is sanntach. Bha aig a h-uile teaghlach san sgìre ri bò a thoirt don uachdaran airson an torc a bhiathadh. Bha an t-uachdaran a’ fuireach ann an Caisteal Ceann na Drochaid ann am Bràigh Mhàrr.

Bha Sanndaidh air taobh thall an uillt bho tholl an tuirc. Bha e tràth tràth sa mhadainn agus bha e fhathast dorch. Anns an dorchadas, chunnaic e freiceadan air bàrr balla a’ chaisteil. Dh’fheumadh Sanndaidh a bhith faiceallach – agus sàmhach. Choimhead e a-steach don toll. Cha robh sgeul air an torc. Bhiodh e na chadal anns an t-saobhaidh aige. Thug an gille grèim air casan a’ chapail-choille mhairbh a bh’ aige. Thilg e closach an eòin thairis air an allt is a-steach don toll.

Thàinig an torc a-mach às an t-saobhaidh. Chaidh e gu far an robh closach a’ chapail-choille. Bha Sanndaidh deiseil. Loisg e saighead air. Chaidh an t-saighead tro chridhe an tuirc agus thuit am beathach marbh. Cha do rinn e fuaim sam bith. Rinn Sanndaidh a shlighe dhachaigh agus chaidh e air ais a leabaidh.

Anns a’ mhadainn bha muinntir a’ chaisteil air bhoil. Bha an torc nimhe aig an uachdaran marbh, agus saighead na chridhe. Thachair e fo shròn an fhreiceadain. Bha esan anns an toll-dhubh airson a bhith dearmadach. ’S e an rud a bu mhios’ a bh’ ann gu robh dùil air Rìgh Calum anns an sgìre an ath-là. Bha an t-eagal ann gum feuchadh am boghadair air an rìgh. Air an làimh eile, bha na daoine cumanta toilichte gu robh an torc marbh. Cha bhiodh aca ri bò a thoirt seachad don uachdaran tuilleadh.

Bha an t-uachdaran feargach. Chuir esan roimhe am boghadair a lorg. Thug e sùil gheur air an t-saighead a mharbh an torc. Bha na h-itean air an cur oirre ann an dòigh shònraichte. Chuir e fios mun cuairt, feuch faighinn a-mach cò am fleistear a bh’ ann, cò am fear a bhiodh a’ dèanamh shaighdean anns an dòigh sin. Chuir e daoine a-mach gu gach taigh airson saighdean a lorg a bha coltach ris an tè a mharbh *Tad-Logann*. Ro chiaradh an fheasgair, thill dithis aca le Sanndaidh MacLeòid nan cois. **Thilg iad Sanndaidh don toll-dhubh.**

Air an làrna-mhàireach, chaidh Sanndaidh a thoirt a-mach. Nochd e mu choinneimh an uachdarain. Mhìnich an gille don uachdaran mar a mharbh e an torc airson bò a mhàthar a shàbhaladh. Ach cha robh tròcair sam bith aig an uachdaran dha. Thuirt e ri Sanndaidh gum biodh e air a chrochadh an ath mhadainn air a’ chroich air Creag Choinnich.

Bha màthair Shanndaidh, a’ Bhantrach NicLeòid, troimh-a-chèile mu na thachair. Uair is uair choirich i i fhèin air a shon. Bha i dhen bheachd gum b’ ise a bu chòir a bhith a’ dol air a’ chroich, seach an gille aice. Ach dè dhèanadh i? Bha fios aice nach biodh tròcair sam bith

aig an uachdaran dhi. 'S e duine cruaidh, an-iochdmhor a bh' ann. Cha dèanadh e feum sam bith dhi dhol a dh'iarraidh tràcair bhuaithe.

Ge-tà, bha beagan dòchais aice, oir chuala i gu robh an rìgh gu bhith ann an Caisteal Ceann na Drochaid an ath-là. Calum a' Chinn Mhòir fhèin. Chuir i roimhpe coinneachadh ris an rìgh mus ruigeadh e Bràigh Mhàrr airson a' chùis a mhìneachadh dha. Agus innsidh mi dhuibh **mar a chaidh dhi** anns an ath Litir.

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Faclan na Litreach: Sanndaidh: *Sandy*; sanntach: *greedy*; freiceadan: *sentry*; saobhaidh: *animal den*; tràcair: *mercy*.

Abairtean na Litreach: bha aig a h-uile teaghlach ri bò a thoirt don uachdaran: *every family had to give the landlord a cow*; bha e tràth tràth sa mhadainn: *it was very early in the morning*; dh'fheumadh Sanndaidh a bhith faiceallach: *Sandy would have to be careful*; cha robh sgeul air an torc: *there was no sign of the boar*; thug e grèim air casan a' chapail-choille mhairbh: *he took hold of the legs of the dead capercaillie*; thilg e closach an èoin: *he threw the bird's carcass*; chaidh an t-saighead tro chridhe an tuirc: *the arrow went through the boar's heart*; rinn X a shlighe dhachaigh: *X made his way home*; bha X air bhoil: *X were in a frenzy*; thachair e fo shròn an fhreiceadain: *it happened under the sentry's nose*; anns an toll-dhubh airson a bhith dearmadach: *in the dungeon for being negligent*; 's e an rud a bu mhios' a bh' ann: *the worst thing was*; gum feuchadh am boghadair air an rìgh: *that the archer would try [to kill] the king*; cha bhiodh aca ri bò a thoirt seachad tuilleadh: *they would no longer have to give away a cow*; bha na h-itean air an cur oirre ann an dòigh shònraichte: *the feathers were put on it [fem.] in a particular way*; feuch faighinn a-mach cò am fleisdear a bh' ann: *to try to find out who the fletcher/arrowmaker was*; ro chiaradh an fheasgair: *before dusk*; mar a mharbh e an torc airson bò a mhàthar a shàbhaladh: *how he killed the boar in order to save his mother's cow*; gum biodh e air a chrochadh: *that he would be hanged*; uair is uair choirich i i fhèin: *time and again she blamed herself*; gum b' ise a bu chòir a bhith a' dol air a' chroich: *that is was herself should be going on the gibbet*; 's e duine cruaidh, an-iochdmhor a bh' ann: *he was a hard, unmerciful man*; coinneachadh ris an rìgh mus ruigeadh e Bràigh Mhàrr: *to meet the king before he reached Braemar*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: **thilg iad Sanndaidh don toll-dhubh:** *they threw Sandy into the dungeon. I have taken the traditional view of leniting the second element of toll-dubh in the dative singular with the article. But the main point I want to make is the use of the preposition do (or dialectually dha – I might have said dhan toll-dhubh). In relation to a location, as here, and with the use of a verb like “tilg”, it means “to and into”. You might have expected me to say, “thilg iad Sanndaidh anns an toll-dhubh” but it would be possible to understand from that that Sandy was already in the dungeon and was being thrown about within it. The use of do/dha makes it clear that he is being thrown into the dungeon. Similarly thuit e don abhainn would mean “he fell into the river” (from another place eg the bank or a bridge), whereas thuit e san abhainn suggests that he was already in the river when he fell.*

Gnàths-cainnt na Litreach: innsidh mi dhuibh **mar a chaidh dhi** anns an ath Litir: *I'll tell you **how she got on** in the next Litir.*

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