

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 rodny.maclea@bbc.co.uk * This is Litir 351. 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 47 corresponds to Litir 351.*

Bha mi air chuairt an là eile air earrann dhen t-seann rathad a thog an Seanalair Wade tro Bhàideanach. Thog e an rathad eadar seachd ceud deug, fichead 's a h-ochd (1728) agus seachd ceud deug is trithead (1730). Tha an earrann sin a' fàgail slighe an rathaid mhòir, an A9, aig Eadrais agus a' tilleadh ga ionnsaigh faisg air Ruadhainn. Tha na bailtean sin le chèile faisg air Bail' Ùr an t-Slèibh.

Eadar Eadrais agus Ruadhainn, tha baile-fearainn ann air a bheil Noid. Tha e coltach gur e seann ainm Ceilteach a th' ann an Noid, a' ciallachadh “àite ùr”. Cha do thachair cus a bha ainmeil ann, tha mi cinnteach. Ach a-mhàin aon rud. Bha Noid ainmeil airson bana-bhuidseach a bha uaireigin a' fuireach ann.

Chuireadh i eagal am beatha air muinntir an àite, a rèir beul-aithris. Duine sam bith a rachadh na h-aghaidh, bhiodh an crodh aca a' bàsachadh, agus bhiodh an cuid thaighean uaireannan a' dol na theine. Dh'fhàs e cho dona 's gu robh eagal air na daoine falbh bhon dachaigh aca gun chead bhon chaillich. Agus airson cead fhaighinn bhuaipe, dh'fheumadh iad airgead a thoirt dhi.

Là a bha seo, thàinig fear às a' Ghalltachd a dh'fhuireach anns an sgìre. Fhuair e taigh faisg air Ruadhainn. Cha robh e a' creidsinn ann am buidseachd idir. Gu dearbh, **bhiodh e a' magadh air a' bhana-bhuidsich** agus air a h-uile duine a thug creideas dhi. Dhiùlt e sgillinn ruadh a thoirt dhi.

Feasgar a bha seo, bha e a-muigh a' coimhead a chruidh. Chunnaic e maigheach a' dol timcheall nam bò, a' deothail nan sineachan air gach tè aca. Bha gunna aige. Fhuair e faisg gu leòr air a' mhaighich airson losgadh oirre. Leig e urchair ach cha do rinn e cron sam bith air a' mhaighich. Ruith i pìos beag air falbh is stad i. Shuidh i sìos is choimhead i air an tuathanach, gun choltas dragh oirre.

Goirid às dèidh sin, thiormaich na bà. **Chan fhaighte deur bainne bhuapa.** Chuir an tuathanach coire air lus sa phàirc far an robh an crodh-bainne ag ionaltradh. Ghluais e an crodh. Ach mean air mhean bha na beathaichean a' bàsachadh. Cha robh an duine Gallta airson creidsinn gur e a' bhana-bhuidseach a bu choireach, ach dè eile a bhiodh ag adhbharachadh sin?

Dh'iarr e air a bhuachaille dhol gu taigh na bana-bhuidsich le dà thunnaig. Thuirt e ris, “Thalla gu taigh na caillich, thoir na tunnagan dhi agus can rithe gu bheil mi an dòchas gun tachd iad i.”

Chaidh am buachaille gu taigh na caillich agus, gu dearbh, chan e fàilte chrìdheil a fhuair e. “Can ri do mhaighstir,” thuirt a’ chailleach ris a’ ghille, “gun tachd mise esan mus bi a’ ghealach ùr againn.”

Là a bha seo, bha an tuathanach a-muigh air an oidhche leis an dà chù aige faisg air Noid. A-mach às an dorchadas leum mial-chù mòr air, ag amas air amhaich. Dhìon na coin aige fhèin e. Bha sabaid mhòr ann. Mu dheireadh chuir coin an duine an teicheadh air a’ mhial-chù. Dh’fhalbh na trì coin a’ sabaid gu garg. Chuala an tuathanach Gallta guth, “Gairm air do choin, gairm air do choin.” Ach bha esan ro sgèth airson gairm air a choin. Agus bhon mhionaid sin fhèin chan fhacas is cha chualas na coin no a’ bhana-bhuidseach a-chaidh tuilleadh.

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Faclan na Litreach: Seanalair: *General*; baile-fearainn: *farm settlement*; Noid: *Nuide*; bana-bhuidseach: *witch*; a’ Ghalltachd: *the Lowlands*; dhiùlt e: *he refused*; maigheach: *hare*; buachaille: *herdboy*; tunnag: *duck*; thalla (gu): *go (to)*.

Abairtean na Litreach: earrann dhen t-seann rathad: *a section of the old road*; aig Eadrais agus a’ tilleadh ga ionnsaigh faisg air Ruadhainn: *at Ettridge and returning to it close to Ruthven*; tha na bailtean sin le chèile faisg air Bail’ Ùr an t-Slèibh: *those villages are both close to Newtonmore*; cha do thachair cus a bha ainmeil ann: *not too much happened there that was famous*; a bha uaireigin a’ fuireach ann: *who was living there at one time*; duine sam bith a rachadh na h-aghaidh: *any person who went against her*; bhiodh an crodh aca a’ bàsachadh: *their cattle would die*; bhiodh an cuid thaighean uaireannan a’ dol na theine: *their houses would sometimes go on fire*; gun chead bhon chaillich: *without permission from the old woman*; airson cead fhaighinn bhuaiphe: *to get permission from her*; dh’fheumadh iad airgead a thoirt dhi: *they would have to pay her [lit. give her money]*; cha robh e a’ creidsinn ann am buidseachd: *he didn’t believe in witchcraft*; a h-uile duine a thug creideas dhi: *every person who believed her*; chunnaic e maigheach a’ dol timcheall nam bò: *he saw a hare going around the cows*; a’ deothail nan sineachan air gach tè: *sucking the teats on each one*; leig e urchair: *he let go a shot*; gun choltas dragh oirre: *without the appearance of being upset*; thiormaich na bà: *the cows dried up*; chuir an tuathanach coire air lus: *the farmer blamed a plant*; far an robh an crodh-bainne ag ionaltradh: *where the milking cattle were grazing*; can rithe gu bheil mi an dòchas gun tachd iad i: *tell her that I hope they choke her*; gun tachd mise esan mus bi a’ ghealach ùr againn: *that I shall choke him before we have the new moon*; chuir coin an duine an teicheadh air a’ mhial-chù: *the man’s dogs chased away the greyhound*; gairm air do choin: *call [off] your dogs*; chan fhacas is cha chualas X a-chaidh tuilleadh: *X have not been seen or heard since*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: Chan fhaighte deur bainne bhuapa: *not a drop of milk could be obtained from them (lit. “a drop of milk would not be obtained from them”). I considered gum faighte taic bho na Spàinntich in Litir 347 on February 24. So I hope you were able to deal with this example (it’s a conditional passive). The point I want to make is that with the verb faigh, the use of the conditional can represent capability ie it can be translated “could(n’t)” rather than “would(n’t)”*.

Gnàths-cainnt na Litreach: bhiodh e a’ magadh air a’ bhana-bhuidsich: *he would mock the witch. A’ magadh air: mocking, ridiculing.*

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

