

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

*A special programme, in the form of a “letter”, designed for 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, Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.macleam@bbc.co.uk. This is Litir 408. Note that there is also a simplified version called *An Litir Bheag* which is likewise available on the BBC website. *Litir Bheag 104* corresponds to *Litir 408*.*

Tha aon stòiridh beag eile agam mu Chalum Beag. 'S dòcha gum bi cuimhne agaibh gun robh Calum mì-chliùiteach airson a bhith a' goid sprèidh. Bha e a' fuireach anns na Srianan ann an sgìre Àird Chlach faisg air Inbhir Narann. 'S e caractar a bh' ann gun teagamh agus, ged a bha eas-onarach, bha e fhèin agus Fear Chaladair, an t-uachdaran, glè mhòr aig a chèile. Bho àm gu àm bhiodh an t-uachdaran ga dhìon nuair a bha Calum fo chasaid aig uachdarain eile gun robh e air a bhith ri creach air an fhearann aca.

Co-dhiù, turas a bha seo, ghoid Calum molt. Sin caora fhireann a th' air a spothadh – molt. Chaidh Calum a ghlacadh, **agus am molt na chois**, agus chaidh a thoirt air beulaibh Fear Chaladair. Cha robh fios aig an uachdaran dè dhèanadh e. Bha an fhianais làidir oir bha am molt aig Calum! Air an làimh eile, bha peanas mòr ann aig an àm sin airson mèirle, agus cha robh an t-uachdaran airson 's gum biodh Calum a' fulaing.

Smaoinich an t-uachdaran mun chùis. An uair sin, dh'òrdaich e gum biodh Calum agus am molt air an cur còmhla do chealla anns a' chaisteal. Bha a' chealla os cionn na talmhainn agus bha tuill bheaga sa bhalla airson èadhar is beagan solais a leigeil a-steach.

Aig an aon àm, fhuair na daoine, a bha a' toirt casaid de mhèirle às leth Chalum, deoch is biadh gu leòr. Fhad 's a bha na daoine sin ag ithe 's ag òl, chaidh an t-uachdaran suas don chealla far an robh Calum.

“A bheil sgian gheur agad?” dh'fhaighnich e de Chalum.

“Tha,” fhreagair Calum. Tha sin car annasach oir shaoileadh tu gum biodh iad air a leithid sin a thoirt bhuaithe. Co-dhiù, tha seo a' tighinn thugainn bho bheul-aithris. Mas breug bhuan e, 's breug thugam e.

“Cuiridh mi luchd-ceannach thugad airson do mhuilt,” thuirt Fear Chaladair ri Calum. Agus dh'fhalbh e. 'S e rud neònach a bha rin ri ràdh, nach e? “Cuiridh mi luchd-ceannach thugad airson do mhuilt.” Ach bha fios aig Calum dè bha an t-uachdaran a' ciallachadh. Thug e an sgian aige a-mach agus mharbh e am molt. An uair sin, gheàrr e closach a' mhuilt ann am pìosan beaga. Thilg e na pìosan a-mach air na tuill sa bhalla.

Shìos fodha, bha an t-uachdaran air sgaoth chon fhàgail. Bha an t-acras orra. Rinn iad a' chùis air a' mholt gu luath. Às dèidh ùine, dh'iarr an t-uachdaran gum biodh Calum Beag, agus an fhianais na aghaidh, air an toirt air a bheulaibh. Agus nuair a chaidh a' chealla fhosgladh, cha robh sgeul air a' mholt – dìreach Calum fhèin (ged a bu mhiann leam faighinn a-mach ciamar a ghlan e an seòmair!) Nuair a nochd Calum air a bheulaibh, thuirt Fear Chaladair nach robh cùis ann oir cha robh fianais ann gun robh e air dad a ghoid!

Aig a' cheann thall, cha b' urrainn eadhon don uachdaran Calum Beag a shàbhaladh. Bha Fear Chill Rathaig airson Calum a chrochadh gu bàs. Chaidh Fear Chaladair gu ruige Cill Rathaig. Bha seo air Latha na Bliadhn' Ùire. Thuirt Fear Chaladair gun robh e ag iarraidh fàbhar bhon fhear eile mar chomharra dhen Bhliadhn' Ùir. "Nì mi rud sam bith dhut," arsa Fear Chill Rathaig ris, "ach a-mhàin aon rud. Cha toir mi maitheanas do Chalum Beag." Dh'fhalbh Fear Chaladair agus, goirid às dèidh sin, chaidh Calum Beag don chroich agus thàinig a bheatha gu crìch.

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Faclan na Litreach: eas-onarach: *dishonest*; sgian: *knife*; gheàrr: *cut*; maitheanas: *forgiveness*; ùpraid: *uproar*.

Abairtean na Litreach: mì-chliùiteach airson a bhith a' goid sprèidh: *infamous for stealing livestock*; 's e caractar a bh' ann gun teagamh: *he was a character without doubt*; bha e fhèin agus Fear Chaladair glè mhòr aig a chèile: *he and the Laird of Cawdor were very fond of each other*; fo chasaid aig uachdarain eile gun robh e air a bhith ri creach air an fhearann aca: *accused by other landlords that he had been plundering on their land*; caora fhireann a th' air a spothadh – molt: *a male sheep that has been castrated – a wedder*; bha peanas mòr ann airson mèirle: *there was a heavy penalty for theft*; cha robh an t-uachdaran airson 's gum biodh Calum a' fulaing: *the laird didn't want Calum to suffer*; air an cur còmhla do chealla anns a' chaisteal: *put together in a cell in the castle*; os cionn na talmhainn: *above the ground*; bha tuill bheaga sa bhalla airson èadhar is beagan solais a leigeil a-steach: *there were little holes in the wall to let air and a bit of light in*; a bha a' toirt casaid às leth Chalum: *who were accusing Calum*; gum biodh iad air a leithid sin a thoirt bhuaithe: *that they would have taken such a thing away from him*; mas breug bhuaime, 's breug thugam e: *I'm only repeating what I've been told*; cuiridh mi luchd-ceannach thugad airson do mhuilt: *I'll send you some buyers for your wedder*; sgaoth chon: *a large pack of dogs*; bu mhiann leam faighinn a-mach ciamar a ghlan e an seòmar: *I'd like to find out how he cleaned the room*; nach robh cùis ann: *that there was no case to answer*; gun robh e air dad a ghoid: *that he'd stolen anything*; cha b' urrainn eadhon don uachdaran X a shàbhaladh: *even the laird couldn't save X*; Fear Chill Rathaig: *the Laird of Kilravock*; chaidh X don chroich agus thàinig a bheatha gu crìch: *X went to the gibbet and his life came to an end*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: Shìos fodha: *down below [him]*. Are you confident about when to use shìos rather than the unlenited form sìos? Generally speaking, shìos is used of a situation where the object is static. With sìos the object is usually moving. Chaidh mi sìos an rathad (*I went down the road*) but bha mi shìos aig an stèisean (*I was down at the station*). Also ceann shìos – bha mi aig ceann shìos an rathaid (*I was at the bottom end of the road*). Similar comments can be made of shuas (static) and suas (moving). Thig suas uaireigin (*come up/over sometime*). Bha mi shuas an sin fad ùine mhòr (*I was up there for ages*). Bidh mi aig ceann shuas an rathaid (*I'll be at the top end of the road*).

Gnàths-cainnt na Litreach: agus am molt na chois: *with the wedder in his company*.

* Tha "Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh" air a maoineachadh le Seirbheis nam Meadhanan Gàidhlig.