

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.macleon@bbc.co.uk. This is Litir 562. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 258 corresponds to Litir 562.

Tha mi a’ dol a chur crìoch air an stòiridh *An Rìgh agus an Searrach*. Bha an searrach aig an tuathanach air a dhol dhachaigh don chaisteal le gearran an rìgh. Cha robh an rìgh deònach an searrach a thoirt air ais don tuathanach.

Latha a bha seo, bha an rìgh a-muigh a’ sealg. Chaidh an tuathanach don chaisteal a bhruidhinn ri bean an rìgh. Mhìnich e dhi mar a bha cùisean.

“Nist,” thuir i, “thig tràth sa mhadainn agus thoir leat bucaid de shalann. Tòisich air salann a chur anns a’ phàirc. Thig an rìgh a-mach a choimhead feuch gu dè tha thu a’ dèanamh. Can ris gu bheil thu a’ crathadh salainn. Faighnichidh e dhìot a bheil thu an dùil gum fàs an salann. Can ris gu bheil e **a cheart cho coltach gum fàs salann anns an talamh ’s a tha e gum bi searrach aig gearran**. Agus cha chan mi an còrr.”

Rinn an tuathanach mar a thuir bean an rìgh. Bha bucaid aige de shalann. Bha e **a’ crathadh an t-salainn** air an talamh.

“Dè tha thu a’ dèanamh an sin?” dh’fhaighnich an rìgh.

“Nach eil mi,” ars esan, “a’ crathadh salainn?”

“Agus a bheil thu a’ smaoinichadh gum fàs an salann?” thuir an rìgh.

“Chan eil mi cinnteach gum fàs,” ars an duine. “Ach tha e cho coltach gum fàsadh salann anns an talamh ’s a tha e gum bi searrach aig gearran.”

“Tha sin fìor,” dh’aidich an rìgh. Ach cha robh e deònach an searrach a thoirt seachad. ’S e searrach air leth math a bh’ ann. Chaidh an rìgh a-steach. “Thug thusa comhairle don tuathanach, nach tug,” thuir e ri a bhean. Dh’aidich i gun tug.

“Tha mi cinnteach,” ars esan, “gu bheil cuimhne agad air na cùmhnantan air ar pòsadh.”

“Tha cuimhne agam orra,” fhreagair a bhean.

“Uill,” ars esan, “faodaidh tu dèanamh deiseil airson an caisteal fhàgail.”

“Tha sin math gu leòr,” ars ise, “ach bidh cuimhne agad fhèin air a’ chùmhnant eile – gum faodainn trì eallaich a thoirt leam a-mach às a’ chaisteal.”

“Ceart gu leòr,” thuir an rìgh. “B’ e sin an cùmhnant.” Leis a sin, lìon a bhean ciste le òr is airgead is seudan. Chuir i a’ chiste taobh a-muigh a’ chaisteil

agus thill i a-steach. Thog i a' chreathall anns an robh an gille aca. B' e sin an dàrna eallach a bha cead aice a thoirt a-mach às a' chaisteal.

Bha an rìgh a' coimhead gu math mì-thoilichte. Bha e a' meòrachadh air cho gòrach 's a bha e nuair a rinn e cùmhnantan a' phòsaidh. Ach cha robh a bhean deiseil. Bha an treas eallach aice fhathast. Agus seo na rinn i. Dh'fhàg i a' chreathall taobh a-muigh a' chaisteil. Thill i a-steach agus rug i air làmh an rìgh fhèin. Thug i a-mach air an doras e.

Bha i air trì eallaich a thoirt a-mach às a' chaisteal. Ach cha robh duine na bhroinn. Dh'fhaodadh duine sam bith an caisteal a ghabhail thairis. Mar sin, thuirt an rìgh, "Tillidh thusa a-steach don chaisteal agus thèid mi fhìn a-steach cuideachd. Giùlainidh mi a-steach na h-eallaich a thug thu a-mach."

Agus sin mar a dh'èirich e don nighinn seòlta a bh' aig an t-seann duine. Bha i fhèin agus an rìgh sona gu leòr. Agus tha mi an dùil gun d' fhuair an tuathanach a shearrach air ais.

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Faclan na Litreach: An Rìgh agus an Searrach: *The King and the Foal*; tuathanach: *farmer*; gearran: *gelding*; creathall: *cradle*.

Abairtean na Litreach: mhìnich e dhi mar a bha cùisean: *he explained to her how things were*; thoir leat bucaid de shalann: *bring with you a bucket of salt*; tòisich air salann a chur anns a' phàirc: *start to plant salt in the field*; a choimhead feuch gu dè tha thu a' dèanamh: *to see what you are doing*; can ris gu bheil thu a' crathadh salainn: *tell him you are sprinkling salt*; faighnichidh e dhìot: *he will ask you*; a bheil thu an dùil gum fàs an salann: *do you expect the salt to grow*; cha chan mi an còrr: *I won't say any more*; cha robh e deònach an searrach a thoirt seachad: *he wasn't willing to give up the foal*; thug thusa comhairle don tuathanach: *you gave advice to the farmer*; dh'aidich i gun tug: *she admitted that she did*; bidh cuimhne agad fhèin air a' chùmhnant eile: *you will remember the other condition*; gum faodainn trì eallaich a thoirt leam: *that I could take three loads with me*; lìon a bhean ciste le seudan: *his wife filled a chest with jewels*; a' meòrachadh air cho gòrach 's a bha e: *contemplating how foolish he was*; rug i air làmh an rìgh fhèin: *she took hold of the king's hand*; giùlainidh mi a-steach na h-eallaich a thug thu a-mach: *I will carry in the loads you took out*; sin mar a dh'èirich e don nighinn seòlta: *that's what happened to the crafty daughter*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: Bha e a' crathadh an t-salainn air an talamh: *he was sprinkling the salt on the ground*. The Gaelic for salt – salann (it's related to similar words in many European languages) – is masculine. Thus it slenderises in the genitive singular (to salainn). However, because it starts with an "s" and is masculine, where the article is present, the genitive form is preceded by t- (and note the "s" is no longer sounded). This is a general grammatical rule in the language. Here are some other examples: tha mi a' faicinn an t-saighdeir, tha e a' libhrigeadh an t-soisgeil, tha i air mullach an t-sithein. In the example in the Litir, salann is in the genitive because it is commanded by a verbal noun (a' crathadh).

Gnathas-cainnt na Litreach: a cheart cho coltach gum fàs salann anns an talamh 's a tha e gum bi searrach aig gearran: *just as likely that salt will grow in the ground as it is that a gelding will have a foal.*

Tha “Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh” air a maoineachadh le MG ALBA