

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 593. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 289 corresponds to Litir 593.

Tha mi a’ dol a chur crìoch air an stòiridh thraidiseanta, *Bilidh*, a chaidh a chruinneachadh ann am Barraigh anns an naoidheamh linn deug. Tha cuid de na faclan anns an stòiridh rud beag seann-fhasanta. Bha am fear òg seo, Bilidh, uabhasach measail air mèirle. Bha e air stuth a ghoid air an duine uasal a bha a’ fuireach faisg air. Dh’iarr an duine uasal air a dhol a dh’ionnsachadh na mèirle gu ceart. Feumaidh gun robh plana aige airson Bilidh.

Co-dhiù, bha Bilidh air mèirle ionnsachadh, ceart gu leòr, ach bha an duine uasal airson aon deuchainn a bharrachd a chur air.

“Bidh claidheamh agam air a’ bhòrd,” thuirt e, “agus daga làn urchair. Mura toir thu leat an lion anart – no siota – fo dhruim mo mhnà, cha bhi tuilleadh saoghail agad.”

“Gu dearbh,” arsa Bilidh, “tha e a cheart cho math dhuibh mo mharbhadh far a bheil sinn.”

“Mura dèan thu siud,” thuirt an duine uasal a-rithist, “cha bhi mòran saoghail agad.”

“S e seo an rud a bu dorra a chaidh mu mo choinneimh riamh,” arsa Bilidh. Ach dh’fhalbh e air an oidhche sin fhèin agus chaidh e don chladh. Thog e corp a bh’ air ùr-thiodhlacadh ann is chuir e aodach air. Thug e an corp leis. Bha ròp aige. Ràinig e taigh an duine uasail is chaidh e suas air a’ mhullach. Leig e an corp sìos an similear air an ròp.

Dh’fhairich an duine uasal fuaim. Dh’èirich e agus las e solas. Chunnaic e casan a’ tighinn sìos an similear.

“**Mac an fhir ud!**” smaoinich e (bha e dhen bheachd gur e Bilidh a bh’ ann). “Bheir mise air **nach bi tuilleadh saoghail aige**. Cha loisg mi air a chasan. Ach nuair a nochdas a chorp ’s ann an uair sin a loisgeas mi air.”

Nuair a thàinig an corp a-nuas, loisg an duine uasal air. “Sin e!” thuirt e. “Fàgaidh mi an sin e gus an tig an latha.”

“Air gaol Dhè, na fàg!” ars a bhean. “Thalla leis agus tiodhlaic e, mus adhbharaich e do bhàs fhèin.”

Chuir an duine uasal an corp air a ghualainn. Ghabh e a-mach leis. Nuair a mhothaich Bilidh gun robh an duine uasal air falbh leis a’ chorp, a-staigh a ghabh e. Anns an dorchadas thug e a chreidsinn do bhean an duine uasail gum b’ esan an duine aice. “Tha e cho trom,” thuirt e ann an guth uasal, “’s nach urrainn dhomh falbh leis an-dràsta.”

Agus chaidh Bilidh don leabaidh le bean an duine uasail. Beag air bheag, dh'obraich e an lìon anart don taobh aigesan. Nuair a bha e aige, dh'èirich e is dh'fhalbh e a-mach.

Thàinig an duine uasal às dèidh dha an corp a thiodhacadh. “Tha mi sgìth agus air mo shàrachadh,” thuirt e.

“Dè, a ghràidh, a dh'fhàgadh sgìth thu?” dh'fhaighnich a bhean. “Chan eil dà mhionaid on a dh'fhàg thu mi anns an leabaidh.”

Sheall an duine uasal air an leabaidh. Mhòthaich e gun robh an lìon anart a dhìth. Bha Bilidh air a' chùis a dhèanamh air. “Biodh e fhèin agad cuideachd,” thuirt an duine uasal ri a bhean. Dh'fhalbh an duine uasal agus bha an taigh agus bean aige aig Bilidh. Tha mi cinnteach nach robh dragh air Bilidh tuilleadh mu bhith ri mèirle.

* * * * *

Faclan na Litreach: Bilidh: *Billy*; seann-fhasanta: *old-fashioned*; claidheamh: *sword*; cladh: *cemetery*; a dhìth: *missing*.

Abairtean na Litreach: measail air mèirle: *keen on thieving*; bha an duine uasal airson aon deuchainn a bharrachd a chur air: *the gentleman wanted to set him another test*; daga làn urchair: *a pistol full of shot*; mura toir thu leat an lìon anart: *if you don't take with you the sheet*; fo dhruim mo mhnà: *under my wife's back*; tha e a cheart cho math dhuibh mo mharbhadh: *it's as well for you to kill me*; an rud a bu dorra a chaidh mu mo choinneimh riamh: *the most difficult thing that ever faced me*; thog e corp a bh' air ùr-thiodhacadh: *he raised a body that had been newly buried*; sìos an similear: *down the chimney*; dh'fhairich X fuaim: *X heard a noise*; nuair a nochdas a chorp 's ann an uair sin a loisgeas mi air: *when his body appears, it's then that I'll fire at [on] it*; gus an tig an latha: *until the day[light] comes*; air gaol Dhè, na fàg!: *for the love of God, don't [leave it]!*; thalla leis agus tiodhlaic e: *go with it and bury it*; mus adhbharaich e do bhàs fhèin: *before it causes your own death*; a-staigh a ghabh e: *in he went*; thug e a chreidsinn do bhean an duine uasail gum b' esan an duine aice: *he pretended to the gentleman's wife that he was her husband*; cho trom 's nach urrainn dhomh falbh leis: *so heavy that I can't leave with it*; beag air bheag: *little by little*; dh'obraich e an lìon anart don taobh aigesan: *he worked the sheet to his side*; às dèidh dha an corp a thiodhacadh: *after he had buried the body*; air mo shàrachadh: *harrassed*; dè, a ghràidh, a dh'fhàgadh sgìth thu?: *what, dear, would leave you tired?*; biodh e fhèin agad: *let him be yours*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: Bheir mise air nach bi tuilleadh saoghail aige: *I'll make sure he doesn't live long. This is a traditional usage. Although we tend to think of saoghal as meaning “world” – eg muinntir an t-saoghail (the people of the world), dè air an t-saoghal mhòr a tha a' dol? (what on Earth is happening?), it can also mean “life”. Here are some examples of usage: tha mi an dòchas gum bi saoghal fada agad (I hope you have a long life), tha i faisg air deireadh a saoghail, tha eagal orm (she is close to the end of her life, I'm afraid), ma gheibh mi saoghal, nì mi mo dhìcheall a bhith nam dhuine math (if I survive, I'll try to be a good person).*

Gnathas-cainnt na Litreach: Mac an fhir ud!: *that fiend!* [lit. the son of that man].

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