

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

An Dreathan-donn (1)

Each week the West Highland Free Press publishes the text for Ruairidh's "Letter to Gaelic Learners" on BBC Radio nan Gàidheal (103.5-105 FM). Broadcasts are as follows: 2:55pm on Sunday as part of BBC Radio nan Gàidheal's hour-long learning zone, following the Gaelic Learners' programme 'SpeakGaelic Extra', with a repeat at 10.30 pm on Wednesday. This is Litir 1,261. There is also a simpler version – An Litir Bheag – which is broadcast at 2:30pm each Sunday. Litir Bheag 957 corresponds to Litir 1,261. The Litir is also available at www.bbc.co.uk/litir and www.learnghaelic.scot/litir. Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learnghaelic.scot.

Tha mi a' dol a dh'aithris sgeulachd dhuibh mu Dhreathan-donn. Chaidh a clàradh aig Ailidh Dall, Ailig Stiùbhart nach maireann, fear dhen luchd-siubhail agus sàr-sgeulaiche. Gabhaidh e cluinntinn ann an Gàidhlig air làrach-lìn Thobar an Dualchais. Tha dreach sgrìobhte dhith, ann am Beurla, anns an leabhar 'Scottish Traditional Tales'. 'S e an t-ainm a th' air an sgeulachd 'Mar a Fhuair Dreathan-donn Làmh-an-uachdair air Madadh-ruadh agus air Tuathanach'. No ann am Beurla, gu sìmplidh – *The Wren*. Nì mi fhìn i beagan nas giorra agus nas sìmplidhe.

Bha **oidhche cur-cathaidh** ann. Bha sneachd ann agus bha i fuar. Cha robh fios aig dreathan-donn càit an d' rachadh e. Thàinig e gu caora anns a' phàirc. 'O,' thuirt e ris a' chaora, 'an leig thu a-steach mi dha do chlàimh gu madainn?'

'Cha leig,' thuirt a' chaora.

Thàinig e gu caorag bheag eile. 'An leig thu a-steach mi dha do chlàimh gu madainn?' thuirt e.

'O, trobhad, a bhròinein,' ars ise. 'Cha dèan thu dolaidh orm a bhith a-staigh nam chlàimh.'

Nuair a bha an dreathan sa chlàimh, bha fallas air **leis cho blàth 's a bha e**. Ge-tà, anns a' mhadainn, bha sgòrnan na caoraig air a ghearradh. Bha a' chaorag marbh. Thuirt an dreathan-donn ris fhèin, 'feumaidh mis' am madadh fhaighinn a mharbh i.'

Chaidh e dhan tuathanach. Dh'innis e dha mar a thachair. Thuirt e nam biodh an tuathanach deònach am madadh a lorg, gum pàigheadh an dreathan-donn e.

Thuirt e ris an tuathanach, 'ma nì thu sin dhòmhsa, bheir mi dhut baraille-fion a thàinig a-staigh air a' chladach.'

Thug an tuathanach each agus càrn leis don chladach. Chuir e am baraille air a' chàrn. 'Nise,' thuirt an dreathan-donn, 'tha mi an dòchas gun lorg thu am madadh a mharbh a' chaorag.' Ach mhaoidh an tuathanach air gun cuireadh e ceann an dreathain dheth le a chorraig.

Thuirt an t-eun gun dòirteadh e am baraille-fion. 'Cò leis a dhèanadh tu sin?' thuirt an tuathanach. Agus thòisich an dreathan air dobaig is dobaig air. Thog an tuathanach tuagh às a' chàrn. Dh'fheuch e air an dreathan-donn. Ach bhuail e am baraille. Cha robh càil air fhàgail dheth!

‘Nì mi nas miosa na sin ort,’ ars an dreathan-donn. ‘Marbhaidh mi an t-each agad.’

‘Cò leis a dhèanadh tu sin?’ ars an tuathanach.

Chaidh an dreathan-donn a-null don each agus thòisich e air dobaigeadh fo a dhosan e. Thog an tuathanach an tuagh. Ach bhuail e ceann an eich leis agus chuir e eanchainn a-mach.

‘Nì mi nas miosa na sin ort,’ ars an dreathan-donn. ‘Brisidh mi an càrn agad.’ Bha an dreathan a’ dobaigeadh air a’ chàrn agus bha an tuathanach a’ feuchainn ri a bhualadh leis an tuagh. Aig a’ cheann thall bhris an tuathanach an càrn gu lèir.

‘Nì mi nas miosa na sin ort,’ ars an dreathan-donn. ‘Brisidh mi do lurgainn.’ Agus thòisich e air dobaigeadh air lurgainn an tuathanaich. Dh’fheuch an tuathanach air an eun le a thuagh. Ach bhris e a lurgainn fhèin agus cha robh comas aige èirigh. Agus chì sinn an-ath-sheachdain mar a thachair don dreathan-donn.

* * * * *

Faclan na Litreach: dreadhan-donn: *wren*; dall: *blind*; caorag: *little sheep*; càrn: *sledge (pulled by a horse)*; dobaig, dobaigeadh: *peck, pecking*; tuagh: *axe*; lurgainn: *shank*.

Abairtean na Litreach: Gabhaidh e cluinntinn ann an Gàidhlig air làrach-lìn X: *it can be heard on the X website*; beagan nas giorra agus nas simplidhe: *a little shorter and simpler*; cha robh fios aig dreathan-donn càit an d’ rachadh e: *a wren didn’t know where he would go*; thàinig e gu caora anns a’ phàirc: *he came to a sheep in the field*; an leig thu a-steach mi dha do chlàimh gu madainn?: *will you let me into your wool until morning?*; trobhad, a bhròinein: *come here, you poor thing*; cha dèan thu dolaidh orm: *you won’t harm me*; bha sgòrnan na caoraig air a ghearradh: *the wee sheep’s throat was cut*; nam biodh an tuathanach deònach am madadh a lorg, gum pàigheadh an dreathan-donn e: *if the farmer were willing to find the fox, that the wren would pay him*; ma nì thu sin dhòmhsa: *if you do that for me*; bheir mi dhut baraille-fion a thàinig a-staigh air a’ chladach: *I’ll give you a wine barrel (Ailidh Dall says casg-fion) that came in on the shore*; mhaoidh an tuathanach air gun cuireadh e ceann an dreathain dheth le a chorraig: *the farmer threatened to take the wren’s head off with his finger*; gun dòirteadh e: *that he would empty (pour)*; dh’fheuch e air: *he attempted to hit*; nì mi nas miosa na sin ort: *I’ll do worse than that to you*; cò leis a dhèanadh tu sin?: *with what would you do that?*; thòisich e air dobaigeadh fo a dhosan e: *he started to peck under its forelocks*; cha robh comas aige èirigh: *he was unable to get up*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: Bha oidhche cur-cathaidh ann: *it was a night of blizzarding snow. This was the phrase used by Ailidh Dall. Cur in this context means ‘snowing’ (tha i a’ cur = it’s snowing) and cathadh means the drifting of snow and the formation of snowdrifts. You will also hear oidhche de chur is cathadh or bha cur is cathadh ann, but cur-cathaidh is succinct and neat. Ailidh, one of the finest Gaelic storytellers of his generation, spoke Sutherland Gaelic.*

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: bha fallas air leis cho blàth ’s a bha e: *he was sweating because he was so warm.*

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