

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

A' Bhanarach agus an Sealgair (2)

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 1,421. There is also a simpler version – An Litir Bheag – which is broadcast at 2:30pm each Sunday. Litir Bheag 1,117 corresponds to Litir 1,421. The Litir is also available at www.bbc.co.uk/litir and www.learnghaelic.scot/litir. Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learnghaelic.scot.

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh an sgeul à Gallaibh – ‘A’ Bhanarach agus an Sealgair’. Chaidh an Gille Garbh don bhothan-àirigh far an robh Miss Calder agus clann-nighean eile. Bha Miss Calder à baile-fearainn ann an **Srath Dhùn Bheathadh**. Bhuineadh i do theaghlach mòr. Bha dusan bràthair aice, agus grunn pheathraichean. Bha a h-uile duine dhen bheachd gum b’ ise an tè a bu bhòidhche anns an t-srath.

Ghabh an Gille Garbh gaol oirre agus ghabh ise gaol aisans. Ach chuala a h-athair mu dheidhinn agus dh’òrdaich e i gun a dhol faisg air. Cha do ghabh i ri sin, agus bhiodh i fhèin agus an Gille Garbh a’ coinneachadh ri chèile gu dìomhair anns a’ mhonadh.

Bha buachaille aig athair Miss Calder. ‘S e Mànas Gunnach an t-ainm a bh’ air. Bha Mànas eas-onarach agus bha e ag iarraidh a bhith beartach. Co-dhiù, bhruidhinn An Gille Garbh agus Miss Calder ris agus rinn iad aonta eatarra. Air an oidhche, bhiodh an triùir aca a’ falbh gu sgìre eile, agus a’ toirt cuid de chrodh nan Calders leotha.

Ràinig iad àite uaigneach faisg air Cill Donnain ann am Bràigh Chat. Thog iad bothan ann. Nuair a thuig na Calders dè bh’ air tachairt, bha iad fiadhaich. Thuirt bràithrean Miss Calder gun dèanadh iad dìoghaltas air a’ Ghille Gharbh. Ach bha an t-eagal orra dhol ro fhaisg air, oir bha e fìor chomasach le claidheamh agus bogha.

Ge-tà, bha Mànas pòsta. Bha e air a bhean fhàgail aig an taigh ann an Srath Dhùn Bheathadh. Bho àm gu àm, bhiodh e a’ dol a chèilidh oirre air an oidhche gus nach biodh fios aig na Calders.

Ach fhuair na Calders a-mach gun robh sin a’ tachairt. Oidhche a bha seo, le taic bho Lòchran Loch Iall, bha Mànas a’ coiseachd tarsainn a’ mhonaidh air a shlighe a Shrath Dhùn Bheathadh nuair a dh’èirich fear de bhràithrean Miss Calder às an fhraoch air a bheulaibh. Ghabh Mànas eagal. Bha e deiseil gus teicheadh no sabaid.

Ach bha am fear eile laghach dha. ‘Ciamar a bu toigh leat a bhith beartach, a Mhànais?’ thuirt e ris.

‘Ist, cha bhi mise beartach a-chaidh,’ arsa Mànas.

‘Ma bheir thu taic dhomh fhìn ’s do mo bhràithrean,’ thuirt am fear eile, ‘faodaidh tus’ a bhith am measg nan daoine as beartaiche ann an Srath Dhùn Bheathadh.’

‘Ciamar?’ dh’fhaighnich Mànas.

‘Thog an Gille Garbh agus mo phiuthar a’ chuid as fheàrr dhen chrodh againn,’ thuirt am fear eile. ‘Dh’fhàg sin ar teaghlach bochd. Ma bhios tu a’ brathadh a’ Ghille Ghairbh, faodadh tusa dà-thrian dhen chrodh aige fhaighinn dhut fhèin.’

Mar a thuirt mi cheana, bha Mànas eas-onarach. Cha tug e feart air na briathran sa Bhìoball – ann an Leabhar Mharcais, Caibideil 8 – ‘Ciod e an tairbhe do dhuine, ged a chosnadh e an saoghal gu h-iomlain, agus anam a chall?’ Lean e air le bhith a’ dèanamh plana airson an Gille Garbh a bhrathadh.

Dh’aontaich e – air a leithid seo a dh’oidhche, nuair a bha an Gille Garbh na chadal – sreang a bhogha a ghearradh gus nach obraicheadh am bogha. Mar an ceudna ghearradh e gach sreang eile anns an taigh. Rinn e sin. Agus dè thachair nuair a thàinig na Calders? Innsidh mi dhuibh san ath Litir.

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Faclan na Litreach: Banarach: *dairy maid*; sealgair: *hunter*; bothan-àirigh: *shieling bothy*; buachaille: *cowherd*; Mànas Gunnach: *Magnus Gunn*; eas-onarach: *dishonest*; beartach: *wealthy*; pòsta: *married*; bothan-àirigh: *shieling bothy*.

Abairtean na Litreach: Bhuineadh i do theaghlach mòr: *she belonged to a big family*; bha dusan bràthair aice, agus grunn pheathraichean: *she had twelve brothers, and several sisters*; gum b’ ise an tè a bu bhòidhche anns an t-srath: *that she was the most beautiful woman in the strath*; chuala a h-athair mu dheidhinn agus dh’òrdaich e i gun a dhol faisg air: *he ordered her not to go near him*; a’ coinneachadh ri chèile gu dìomhair anns a’ mhonadh: *meeting secretly in the hills*; àite uaigneach faisg air Cill Donnain ann am Bràigh Chat: *a remote place near Kildonan in the upland of eastern Sutherland*; gun dèanadh iad dìoghaltas air a’ Ghille Gharbh: *that they would gain revenge on the Gille Garbh*; fìor chomasach le claidheamh agus bogha: *very capable with a sword and bow*; oidhche a bha seo, le taic bho Lòchran Loch Iall: *one particular night, with the help of a full moon* (‘Locheil’s lantern’); nuair a dh’èirich fear de bhràithrean Miss Calder às an fhraoch air a bheulaibh: *when one of Miss Calder’s brothers rose from the heather in front of him*; cha bhi mise beartach a-chaidh: *I’ll never be wealthy*; ma bhios tu a’ brathadh X, faodadh tusa dà-thrian dhen chrodh aige fhaighinn dhut fhèin: *if you betray X, you can have two-thirds of his cattle for yourself*; Leabhar Mharcais, Caibideil 8: *the book of Mark, Chapter 8*; ciod e an tairbhe do dhuine, ged a chosnadh e an saoghal gu h-iomlain, agus anam a chall?: *what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul?*; sreang a bhogha a ghearradh: *to cut the string of his bow*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: Srath Dhùn Bheathadh: *Dunbeath Strath*. This is the strath running inland from the coastal village of Dunbeath in Caithness, made famous by the author Neil Gunn in his novel ‘Highland River’. The name is interesting. While often given as originally Dùn Beithe ‘hillfort of birch’, the pronunciation, gathered among local Gaelic speakers many decades ago, and among Gaels of the far north of Sutherland more recently, is actually Dùn

Bheathadh. *Some have suggested that the specific might contain a personal name but Ainmean-Àite na h-Alba tell us that Beathadh is indeed a variant form of Beithe 'birch'.*

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: a' chuid as fheàrr: *the best part.*

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