

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 592. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 288 corresponds to Litir 592.

Tha mi a’ leantainn leis an sgeulachd *Bilidh* bhon t-seachdain sa chaidh. Bha Bilidh ag ionnsachadh mèirle. Chaidh e dhachaigh leis a’ cheud nota a fhuair e bho fhear an taigh-sheinnse. Thàinig an duine uasal.

“A bheil thu ionnsaichte a-nis a Bhilidh?” dh’fhaighnich e.

“Tha,” fhreagair Bilidh.

“Cha chreid mi gu bheil,” thuirt an duine uasal. Agus chuir e deuchainn air Bilidh. Bha e a’ cur chairtean is chairtearan air falbh bhon taigh. Dh’iarr e air Bilidh fear de na h-eich aca a ghoid.

Dh’fhalbh na cairtearan. Agus dh’fhalbh Bilidh. Chaidh e air cùl cnuic ri taobh an rathaid. Bhiodh na cairtearan a’ tilleadh air an rathad sin. Bha toll choineanach ann. Nuair a bha na cairtean a’ tilleadh, agus a’ tighinn faisg, rug Bilidh air coineanach. Bhris e tè de chasan a’ choineanaich agus leig e air falbh air cliathaich a’ chnuic e. Nuair a chunnaic na cairtearan an coineanach, às a dhèidh a bha iad. Rinn Bilidh an aon rud air dà choineanach eile. Às an dèidh a bha na cairtearan.

Dh’fhàg na cairtearan na cairtean gun duine a’ gabhail gnothach riutha. Thàinig Bilidh agus dh’fhuasgail e fear de na h-eich. Air a mhuin a bha e agus ràinig e taigh an duine uasail leis.

“Tha mi a’ faicinn gur mèirleach math thu,” thuirt an duine uasal, “ach cuiridh mi deuchainn eile ort. Cuiridh mi each ann an stàball, agus còignear ga dhìon, ceathrar na bhroinn agus a h-aon air an taobh a-muigh. Feumaidh tu an t-each a ghoid.”

“S e sin,” arsa Bilidh, “rud cho doirbh ’s a dh’fheuch mi fhathast.”

Chaidh an còignear a ghlèidheadh an eich. **Thug Bilidh an taigh-seinnse air.** Thug e às **ceithir botail uisge-bheatha.** Bha treud mhuc faisg air làimh. Chaidh Bilidh sìos far an robh na mucan, agus na botail na phòcaid. Laigh e an sin mar gun robh e marbh. Mhòthaich an fheadhainn a bha a’ gleidheadh an eich rudeigin a’ dol rathad nam muc. Thuirt fear dhiubh, “Rachamaid sìos a choimhead air na mucan, eagal ’s nach eil duine gan goid.”

Chaidh iad sìos. Agus dè lorg iad ach fear “marbh” am measg nam muc. Thug iad an duine marbh air ais. Chunnaic iad botail na phòcaid. Thug iad dà bhotal a-mach is thòisich iad air òl. Cha do dh’fhàg iad deur annta. Chuir iad car dhen duine mharbh agus fhuair iad dà bhotal na phòcaid eile. Thòisich iad orra is cha do dh’fhàg iad deur annta. Bha an còignear air fad a-nise air mhisg.

Agus bha iad coma mun each. Cha do dh'fhuirich iad aig an stàball. Dh'fhàg iad an t-each anns an stàball agus dh'fhalbh iad sìos don taigh-sheinnse. Nuair a bha iad air falbh, dh'èirich an duine “marbh” – Bilidh – agus thug e leis an t-each. Cha b' fhada gus an robh e air taigh athar a ruigsinn.

Chuala an duine uasal gun do ghoid Bilidh an t-each agus chuir e fios air.

“Ghoid thu an t-each,” thuirt an duine uasal.

“Ghoid,” arsa Bilidh.

“Cuiridh mi deuchainn eile ort,” thuirt an duine uasal. “Is e seo an deuchainn as dorra a bh' agad fhathast – an deuchainn mu dheireadh agad.”

Agus ch'ì sinn dè an deuchainn a bha sin nuair a chuireas mi crìoch air an stòiridh an-ath-sheachdain.

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Faclan na Litreach: Bilidh: *Billy*; mèirle: *thieving*; duine uasal: *gentleman*; ionnsaichte: *learned, trained, taught*; cairtearan: *carters*; toll choineanach: *rabbit hole*; stàball: *stable*; treud mhuc: *herd of pigs*; air mhisg: *drunk*; coma: *indifferent*; mu dheireadh: *final*.

Abairtean na Litreach: leis a' cheud nota a fhuair e bho fhear an taigh-sheinnse: *with the hundred pounds he got from the publican*; cha chreid mi gu bheil: *I don't think so*; chuir e deuchainn air: *he set a test for*; fear de na h-eich aca a ghoid: *to steal one of their horses*; air cùl cnuic ri taobh an rathaid: *behind a hill beside the road*; bhris e tè de chasan a' choineanaich: *he broke one of the rabbit's legs*; leig e air falbh air cliathaich a' chnuic e: *he released it on the side of the hill*; às an dèidh a bha X: *X set off after them*; gun duine a' gabhail gnothach riutha: *without a person involved with them [looking after them]*; air a mhuin a bha e: *on to its back he went [was]*; gur mèirleach math thu: *that you're a good thief*; còignear ga dhìon, ceathrar na bhroinn agus a h-aon air an taobh a-muigh: *five people guarding it, four inside and one on the outside*; rudeigin a' dol rathad nam muc: *something happening near the pigs*; rachamaid sìos a choimhead air: *let's go down to look at*; eagal 's nach eil duine gan goid: *in case somebody's stealing them*; dè lorg iad ach fear “marbh” am measg nam muc: *what did they find but a “dead” man among the pigs*; botail na phòcaid: *bottles in his pocket*; cha do dh'fhàg iad deur annta: *they didn't leave a drop in them*; far an robh X: *where X was*; chuir e fios air: *he sent for him*; an deuchainn as dorra a bh' agad fhathast: *your most difficult test yet*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: Thug e às ceithir botail uisge-bheatha: *he took away four bottles of whisky. Whisky is uisge-beatha; beatha is not lenited as it works like an adjective qualifying the masculine noun uisge. However, lenition is introduced in both the dative form of the compound (eg anns an uisge-bheatha) and in its genitive form as in the Litir eg blas an uisge-bheatha (the taste of the whisky). Even without the article the lenition occurs eg ceithir seòrsaichean uisge-bheatha (four types of whisky). This is a traditional grammatical mode and uisge-beatha, being a very old word, follows it. Taigh-seinnse (originally a “change house”) is not so clear cut – the lenition of seinnse might be dependent on dialectal variation eg anns an taigh-seinnse or anns an taigh-sheinnse (dative); doras an taigh-seinnse or doras an taigh-sheinnse (genitive).*

Gnathas-cainnt na Litreach: Thug Bilidh an taigh-seinnse air: *Billy went to the pub.*

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