



Sùil-a-Sporan agus Sùil-a-Dia

Chuala mise mar a bha sìod-ach ann triob. . . dithis fhìrionnach, agus bha iad a' fùireach còmhla a's an aon taigh; agus 'e e Sùil-a-Dia a bheirte ri fear aca, agus 's e Sùil-a-Sporan a bheirte ri fear eil' aca. Agus Sùil-a-Dia a bha seo-ach, 's ann an Dia a bha e 'creidsinn, agus Sùil-a-Sporan, cha robh e ach a' creidsinn a's a' sporan fhéin. Bhiodh iad daonnan a' falbh 's a' tighinn còmhla, có-dhiùbh, agus an triob a bha seo-ach thàinig car de dh'argumaid eatorr' agus thuir Sùil-a-Sporan . . . ri Sùil-a-Dia,

"A uell, " ors' esan, "nì a' sporan dhòmh-s', " ors' esan, ". . . Gheibh a' sporan dhòmh-s', " ors' esan, "rud 'sam bith, " ors' esan.

"O, chan'eil fhios 'am, " orsa Sùil-a-Dia, ors' esan. "Gheibh e dhuit, " ors' esan, "rud a cheannaicheas airgid dhuit, " ors' esan, "ach bheir Dia dhòmh-s', " ors' esan, "rud, " ors' esan, "a bharrachd air a sin, " ors' esan.

"O, . . . cha toir, " orsa Sùil-a-Sporan, ors' esan.

"O, bheir, " orsa Sùil-a-Dia, ors' esan. "Ged a chuireadh tu, " ors' esan, ". . . Ged a chuireadh tu 'n dà shùil asam-s', " ors' esan, "cuiridh Dia sùilean unnam 'nan àite."

Uell, 's e seo a' rud a rinn iad. Chaidh iad, car, a mach cho fad' air a chéil' agus gu'n do chuir Sùil-a-Sporan an dà shùil a Sùil-a-Dia, agus dh' fhàg e . . . ann a shin e.

Ach, có-dhiùbh, bha e nist air fhàgail ann a sheo, agus bha taigh ann a shin - fàsach a bh' ann de . . . de thaigh beag - agus . . . 'n uair a bhathar a' cuir a mach nan cat, a's a' bhaile bh' ann, as an taigh air an oidhche bhiodh iad a' cruinneachadh dh'an taigh a bh' ann a sheo-ach, a h-uile gin dhe na cait, agus bhiodh iad ann. Agus, có-dhiùbh, a seo-ach, an oidhche bh' ann a sheo-ach bha iad cruinn ann - an oidhche chuireadh na' sùilean a Sùil-a-Dia. Agus 's e ' rìgh a bh' air na cait a bha sin . . . 'S e 'n comandair a bh'orra, 's e Gugtrabhad a bheireadh iad ris agus dh' iarr e - Gugtrabhad a bha seo-ach - dh'iarr e air fear dhe na cait eile coimhead a mach feuch a faiceadh e a' Phiseag Shalach Odhar a' tighinn. Agus tha e coltach leam gur h-ann aig a' Phiseag Shalach Odhar a bhiodh a h-uile naidheachd a bha 'dol 's an àite 'uca, có-dhiùbh. Agus cha robh i 'tighinn, ach thàinig i, 'seo.

"Seadh, " ors' ise, orsa Gugtrabhad rithe, "tha thu air tighinn."

I once heard of two men there, and they were living together in the same house, and one of them was called Sùil-a-Dia and the other Sùil-a-Sporan. And this Sùil-a-Dia, it was in God he believed, and Sùil-a-Sporan believed in nothing at all but the purse. They always went about together however, and this time a bit of an argument started between them and Sùil-a-Sporan said to Sùil-a-Dia,

"Ah, well, " said he, "for me the purse will. . . The purse will get anything for me. "

"Oh, I don't know, " said Sùil-a-Dia. "It will get you anything money can buy for you, " said he, "but God will give me something more than that. "

"Oh, no He won't, " said Sùil-a-Sporan.

"Oh, yes He will, " said Sùil-a-Dia. "Even if you put. . . Even if you were to put both my eyes out God will give me other eyes in their place. "

Well, this is what they did. They sort of fell out so badly that Sùil-a-Sporan put Sùil-a-Dia's eyes out, and he left him there. Well, anyway, here he was now, left there, and there was a house there - it was a deserted little house - and when the cats in the town were put out at night they gathered in this house, all of the cats, and there they'd be.

And, now, anyway, they were gathered in the house this night - the night that Sùil-a-Dia's eyes were put out. And the king of the cats, their commander, it was Gugtrabhad they called him and he told them, this Gugtrabhad, he told one of the other cats to take a look outside to see if the Piseag Shalach Odhar [Scruffy Dun-coloured Kitten] was coming. And it was the Piseag Shalach Odhar, it seems, who brought them news of everything that was happening in the place, anyway. And she wasn't coming, but then she arrived.

"Well, " said Gugtrabhad, "you've got here, then. "

"Tha," ors' ise,

"Uell, seadh, dé chual' thu 'n diugh?"

O, thòisich i air innse nan naidheachdan, 's thòisich i air innse ma dheidhinn tobar a bh' air fhaighinn agus nach robh anshocair . . . seòrs' anshocair a bhiodh air duine 'sam bith - na' faigheadh e suathadh dhe 'n uisg' ad, na deoch dhe 'n uisg' ad - nach leighiseadh e, agus ged a . . . chailleadh tu do . . . fradharc fhéin gu . . . na' faigheadh tu suathadh dhe 'n uisg' ad gu faigheadh tu fradharc.

Uell, có nis an t-àite thug Sùil-a-Dia a mach 'n uair'a dh'fhalbh e . . . O, dh'fhalbh e . . . Cha robh e ach a' falbh air a chràgan 's air a ghlùinean có-dhiùbh - cha'n fhaiceadh e c'à robh e 'dol - ach . . . thàinig e 'n tacs balla bha seo-ach agus . . . lean e 'm balla suas gos an d'fhuair e fosgladh air agus chaidh e staigh ann. Agus lean e sìos am ball' air ais agus thachair . . . mar gu'm biodh ballan mór ris a sin-ach de thuba agus chaidh e staigh fo bheul an tuba.

Agus có 'n taigh a bha seo-ach ach an taigh a's a robh na cait a' cruinneachadh agus bha e ann a sheo shìos fo bheul an tuba agus bha e 'cluinntinn nan . . . na cait shuas agus gnòthan ac' an dràsda 's a rithist agus chual' e, 'seo-ach, ma dhéidhinn an tobair a bh'air fhaighinn a seo-ach. Agus dh'innis ise far a robh 'n tobar - dé 'n ùine bha e bho 'n taigh, agus a h-uile sìon, agus a' rathad a ghabht' 'ige. Bha Gugtrabhadh 'ga ceasnachadh agus bha i 'g innse h-uile sìon.

Ach, có-dhiùbh, 'n uair a sguir iad 's a ghabh iad ma thàmh dh'fhan esan bog balbh mar a bha e agus . . . gos 'n do ghabh à-san ma thàmh agus gu robh e cinnteach gu robh iad air cadal uileag, agus, 'n uair a bha, dh'fhalbh e, 'seo-ach, agus shlèagair e mach fho'n tuba agus lean e 'm balla . . . air a' rathad air an tàinig e gos an d'fhuair e 'n dorus, agus chaidh e mach as an taigh.

Uell, bha e 'ga studaigeadh fhéin a nis, a réir mar a thug ise seachad, có-dhiùbh, có rathad a ghabhadh e; agus bha e 'falbh, có-dhiùbh, . . . air a chràgan 's air a ghlùinean a sin, agus cha robh lòn a thachradh ris a's an cuireadh e làmh nach robh e 'ga shuathadh ri shùilean agus, ma dheireadh, a seo-ach, thachair dha gu'n tàinig e chon an tobair agus bhog e làmh a's an uisge bh'ann a sheo-ach, có-dhiùbh, agus shuath e ri shùilean a làmh, agus cha do thàrr e shuathadh 'n uair a bha fradharc aig' air ais.

Agus, dh'éirich e 'n uair-sin 'na sheasamh agus thug e treis air e fhéin a ghlanadh 's a . . . Ach, có-dhiùbh, . . . dh' fhalbh e agus thug e aghaidh air an taigh, agus bha a' latha ann ma'n deache dhachaidh. Chaidh e dhachaidh agus bha Sùil-a-Sporan a's a' leabaidh.

"Yes," said she.

"Well, then, what did you hear today?"

O, she started telling the news, and she started telling about a well that had been discovered and that there wasn't an affliction . . . not an affliction that anyone in the world could have that it would not heal if he got a rub of that water or a drink of that water, and that even if you were to lose your sight that you would get it back if you got a rub of that water.

Well, now, what place did Sùil-a-Dia happen to come on when he set off. Oh, he went. . . He was just going on his hands and knees anyway - he couldn't see where he was going - but he came up against a wall and he followed the wall round till he found an opening in it, and he went in through it. And he followed the wall back round again and he came to what seemed to be a large wooden vessel like a tub, and he went and hid under the tub.

And what should this be but the very house the cats used as a meeting-place, and he was down here under the tub and he could hear the cats muttering off and on up there, and then he heard about this well that had been discovered. And she told where the well was - how far it was from the house, and everything, and the road one should take to get to it. Gugtrabhadh was questioning her and she was telling all about it.

But anyway, when they left off and settled down for the night he lay there dead quiet and . . . till they had settled down and he was sure they were all asleep, and, when he was quite sure, he went and crawled out from under the tub and followed the wall round the way he had come till he found the door, and he went out of the house.

And he now began to work out which way he should go - at least according to the directions she had given - and he kept going, anyway, on his hands and knees like that, and every time he happened to come to a pool on the way, and got his hand in it, he would rub his eyes with the water. And, here, at last, he happened to come to the well and he dipped his hand in this water, anyway, and wiped his eyes with his hand, and no sooner had he touched them than he had his sight back again.

And he stood up then and he spent some time cleaning himself and . . . Anyway, he set off and headed for home, and it was daylight before he got there. He went in and Sùil-a-Sporan was in bed.

"Bheil thu air tighinn!" orsa Sùil-a-Sporan.

"O, tha," ors' esan, "tha mi air tighinn gun teagamh," ors' esan, "is nach robh mi 'g ràdha riut-s'," ors' esan, "gu'n cuireadh Dia . . . ged a chaillinn-sa fradharc," ors' esan, "gu faighinn fradharc air ais," ors' esan.

Agus, "Uell, glé cheart ma tha," orsa Sùil-a-Sporan, "falbhaidh tus'," ors' esan, "còmhla rium-sa 'n diugh," ors' esan, "agus cuiridh tu asam," ors' esan, "an dà shùil," ors' esan, ". . . a's a' cheart àite 's an do chuir mise asad fhéin iad."

'S ann mar seo-ach a bha, cò-dhiùbh. Dh'fhalbh e a' làrna-mhàireach . . . 'n uair a fhuair iad air dòigh dh'fhalbh iad agus chuir Sùil-a-Dia, chuir e 'n dà shùil a Sùil-a-Sporan. Agus bha e nis air fhàgail ann a shìod agus cha robh fhios aige c'à rachadh e, ach, cò-dhiùbh, a seo-ach, mar a thachair do Shuil-a-Dia, thog e air n-aghaidh agus . . . thàinig e chon an taighe bha seo-ach, taigh nan cat, agus bha à-san gun chruinneachadh ann. Agus thàinig e staigh . . . Fhuair e staigh ann agus fhuair e . . . fo'n cheart thuba fho'n bha Sùil-a-Dia - thachair e ris agus chaidh e foidhe, agus bha e ann a shin.

Dh'fhairich e, 'seo, miaghal cait a' tighinn, 's dh'fhairich e grunn a' tighinn, 's dh'fhairich e iad a' torghan shuas ma cheann eile 'n taighe agus dh'fhairich . . . Chual' e, 'seo-ach, . . . Gugtrabhad 's i 'g iarraidh orra sealltainn a mach feuch a robh Phiseag Shalach Odhar a' tighinn - nach robh tuar orra tighinn an nochd idir. Agus, bhathar a' sealltainn a mach 's cha robh i 'tighinn, ach bha i treis a seo-ach gun tighinn 's thàinig i, 'seo,

"Seadh," orsa Gugtrabhad . . . "gu dé," ors' ise, "a chùim," ors' ise, "cho fad' seo thu gun tighinn?" ors' ise.

"Bha mo mhaighistir," ors' ise, "dh'fhalbh e 'n diugh," ors' ise, "'s cha do thill e fhathast," ors' ise, "agus bha mi 'feitheamh," ors' ise, "feuch an tilleadh e."

"O, seadh," orsa Gugtrabhad "Seadh, ma tha," ors' ise, "gu dé," ors' ise, "chual' thu 'n diugh?" ors' ise.

"Brith," ors' ise, "gu dé chuala mise 'n diugh," ors' ise, . . . " . . . Chan'eil sibh," ors' ise, "'dol a chluinntinn smid dhe na chuala mise 'n diugh," ors' ise, "gos a rannsaich sibh an taigh," ors' ise. "Agus a' naidheachd," ors' ise, "thug mise seachad a seo a' raoir," ors' ise, ". . . Bh. òganach shìos a sin," ors' ise, "'gar n-éisdeachd," ors' ise, "agus tha e 'n diugh," ors' ise, "air a leigheas air a shàileamh," ors' ise.

"You're here!" said Sùil-a-Sporan.

"O, yes," said he, "I'm here all right, and didn't I tell you that God would give . . . even if I lost my eyesight that I'd get it back again."

And, "Well, very well then," said Sùil-a-Sporan, "you'll go with me today and you'll put my eyes out . . . in the very same place as I put yours out."

Anyway, this is what they did. He went next day . . . when they were ready they set off and Sùil-a-Dia put Sùil-a-Sporan's eyes out. And there he was now, left there not knowing where to go, but, here, anyway, as happened to Sùil-a-Dia, he started on his way and he came to this house, the cats' house, and they hadn't gathered there yet. And in he came. . . He managed to get in and he got under the very same tub that Sùil-a-Dia had been under - he stumbled on it, and he went and hid under it, and there he stayed.

Next, he heard a cat's mew approaching, and he heard a lot of them coming, and he heard them muttering up there at the other end of the house and . . . Then he heard Gugtrabhad telling them to take a look outside to see if the Piseag Shalach Odhar was coming - that it seemed as if she wasn't to come at all tonight. And they were taking a look outside now and again and there was no sign of her coming, and it was some time before she came, but then she came at last.

"Well," said Gugtrabhad, "what kept you so long?"

"My master," said she, "he went off today and he hasn't got back yet, and I was waiting to see if he'd come."

"O, I see," said Gugtrabhad. "Well, then, what did you hear today?"

"Whatever I heard today," said she, ". . . You're not going to hear a syllable of what I heard today till you search the house. And the news I told you here last night," said she, ". . . There was a fellow down there listening to us, and he's healed today because of it."

Ghabh iad sìos, geang dhe na cait, air feadh an taighe 's thòisich siubhal thall 's . . . a's na h-oiseinean, 's a h-uile h-oisein a bh'ann. 'S thill iad a nuas:

"Cha robh sìon shìos a siod."

"'N do dh'fheuch sibh, " ors' ise, " 'm ballan mór tha shìos a sin?" ors' ise.

Chaidh iad sìos a rithist 's chaidhear an ìneachas ris a' bhallan 's a dh'aindeoin 's . . . Olc na éiginn, có-dhiùbh, fhuair iad car a chuir dhe 'n tuba 's bha Sùil-a-Sporan ann a shin. Chaidh na cait 'na luib 's shlaodadh a nuas e chon an teine.

"Siuthadaibh, " ors' Gugtrabhad, ors' ise, "slòbaibh, " ors' ise, "Mac Mharais, agus gabhaibh cùl na spòige ris, " ors' ise.

Thòisich iad air slòbadh Mac Mharais aig an teine - Sùil-a-Sporan - agus thòisich cùl a' spòige, agus thug iad treis air a sin.

"Siuthadaibh a nis, " orsa Gugtrabhad, ors' ise, "gabhaibh a cùl 's a h-aghaidh, " ors' ise.

Thòisich na fir air "cùl 's a h-aghaidh, " 's ma dheireadh, ma'n do stad iad, cha robh greim air fhàgail a Shùil-a-Sporan nach robh air a reubadh as a chéile, agus chaidh crìoch air Sùil-a-Sporan bochd ann a shin.

Uell, 'n uair a dh'éirich Sùil-a-Dia a' lárna mhàireach thuig e ceart gu leòr gu robh rud-eiginn cearr 'n uair nach do thill è, agus dh'fhalbh e agus fhuair e ann e, agus e air a reubadh as a chéil' aig na cait 's air a mharbhadh.

Uell, ghabh e cùram dheth, có-dhiùbh, agus thug e air falbh as e. Agus, a sin, thug e fainear an taigh a bh'ann a sheo . . . teine chuir ris, agus an oidhche bh'ann a sheo-ach 'n uair a bha e 'smaointinn a bha h-uile gin dhe na cait a bh'ann cruinn a's an taigh. . . Bha gnothaichean air a chuir ann - chuir e smodal . . . de rudan a staigh 'na bhroinn. Dhùnadh an dorus, 's dhùnadh a h-uile toll a bh'air, 's chàireadh teine ris 's loisgeadh na cait.

Agus sin mar a dh'fhàg mis' iad agus . . . an déidh Sùil-a-Sporan bochd a mharbhadh.

SA 1969/120/A1 Recorded from Donald Alasdair Johnson, Ardmore, South Uist by Angus John MacDonald. Mr Johnson heard the story from his father. This is a fine version of the international tale The Two Travellers (Truth and Falsehood) listed as No. 613 in the

Off went a gang of the cats right through the house and they started searching here and . . . in the corners, and in every corner of the house. And back they came:

"There was nothing down there."

"Did you try that big tub down there?" said she.

Down they went again and they started to claw away at the tub and in spite of . . . Anyway, one way or another, they managed to overturn the tub and there was Sùil-a-Sporan. The cats got to grips with him and they dragged him up to the fire.

"Right, " said Gugtrabhad, " stroke Mac Mharais,* and take the back of the paw to him. "

They started to stroke Mac Mharais by the fire - Sùil-a-Sporan - and they began with the back of the paw and they went on like that for a while.

"Right, now, " said Gugtrabhad, "try both back and front. "

The lads started with "back and front" and, at last, before they stopped, there wasn't a bit of Sùil-a-Sporan left that hadn't been torn to pieces, and that was the end of poor Sùil-a-Sporan.

Well, when he got up next morning Sùil-a-Dia knew quite well that there was something wrong when he hadn't come back, and he went and found him lying dead there and torn to pieces by the cats.

Well, he took care of him, anyway, and he carried him away from there. And then he made up his mind to set fire to this house, and one night when he thought every one of these cats had gathered in the house . . . He had got the place ready - he had put bits and pieces of things inside. The door was shut, and every hole was closed up, and he set fire to the place and the cats were burnt to death.

And that's how I left them, and poor Sùil-a-Sporan was dead.

*The storyteller does not explain why the cats called Sùil-a-Sporan by this name.

Aarne-Thompson classification. It is, in fact, the only recorded version noted in the indexes of the School of Scottish Studies. A further recording (SA 1970/214/A1) of the same story was made from Mr Johnson by Mr D:R. MacDonald, Principal Gaelic teacher, Portree High School.

Text transcription, translation and notes by Angus John MacDonald.