

A Few Notes About "Tar Éis"

In our thrilling *Dúnmharú* tale, we're seeing this phrase *tar éis* quite a bit. We have encountered the following construction a few times:

Bhí sé *tar éis* impresean maith a dhéanamh ar Biggles ...

Bhí sé *tar éis* a rá léi ag am suipéir gur ...

Bhí sé ar nós duine a bhí *tar éis* druga a thógáil.

In Hiberno-English you'll sometimes hear an expression like, "He's *after* having made a good impression ..." where we would say, "He had just made a good impression." Similarly, "He had just said to her" or "He was like a person who had just taken drugs."

Basically, in these sentences, *tar éis* = "just", but often with a sense of a perfect tense -- he *had just* made -- which is interesting and useful, because there are no perfect tenses in Irish, that is, no way to conjugate the verb so the form of the verb itself conveys a perfect sense.

Éis?

There is no use of the word *éis* by itself. At one time it may have referred to a track or a trace, and in the plural, to reins, but it is no longer a stand-alone word. It is very widely used in this *tar éis* construction, but it is also sometimes found in other combinations (never on its own).

I'm used to saying *théis* rather than the separate words *tar éis*, I know that happens in the west, but I'm not sure how that plays out in the other regions. (*Thar éis* is also very common.)

Other Uses

Another way to use it in a perfect sense is with the preposition *do*, and this pops up in our story:

...chuaigh sé timpeall an chúinne go dtí an stáisiún, agus *tar éis do* cúpla ceist a chur air ...

Similarly, *tar éis a titim dó*, "after he had fallen", *tar éis do na doine imeacht*, "after the people had left."

In our story, we also saw this phrase used in time expressions to mean "after" or "past":

Bhí sé a leathuair *tar éis* a hocht ... Bhí sé *tar éis* a dó ar maidin ...

Some other uses of *tar éis*:

- ◆ Tar éis an lae, "at the end of the day"
- ◆ Tar éis an tsaoil, "after all"
- ◆ Tar éis a dhéanta, "after it was done", "after its completion"
- ◆ Tar éis sin, "after that"
- ◆ An bhlian dá éis, "the following year"
- ◆ Tar m'éis, "after my time"
- ◆ Tar éis a bháis, "after his death"
- ◆ D'éis a chéile, "one after another" or "by degrees"