

# Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

**le Ruairidh MacIlleathain**

*A special programme, in the form of a “letter”, written and compiled by Roddy Maclean, and specifically aimed at 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, Roddy can be contacted by e-mail at [roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk](mailto:roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk) \* This is Litir 278.*

An t-seachdain seo bu mhath leam tòiseachadh air seann sgeulachd a chaidh a chruinneachadh anns an naoidheamh linn deug ann an Eilean Eige. 'S e an t-ainm a th' air an sgeulachd “Craobh-òir agus Craobh-airgid”. Nì mi beagan nas giorra i na bha i bho thùs, agus rud beag nas sìmplidhe, ach cumaidh mi cho faisg air an t-seann chainnt 's as urrainn.

Bha rìgh ann uaireigin. Bha bean aige air an robh Craobh-airgid mar ainm. Bha nighean aige cuideachd, agus 's e an t-ainm a bh' oirrese Craobh-òir. Là de na làithean, chaidh Craobh-òir agus Craobh-airgid gu ruige gleann far an robh tobar. Anns an tobar bha breac.

Bhruidhinn Craobh-airgid ris a' bhreac. “A bhricein bhig bhòidhich,” thuirt i, “nach mise a' bhànrigh as brèagha san t-saoghal?”

“O gu dearbh, cha tu!” ars' am breac.

“Cò eile?” dh'fhaighnich a' bhànrigh.

“Tha Craobh-òir, do nighean.”

Chaidh Craobh-airgid dhachaigh, agus an caothach ga dalladh. 'S e an aon rud a shàsaicheadh i – nam faigheadh i cridhe agus gruthan Chraobh-òir, a nighean, ri ithe. Am beul na h-oidhche thàinig an rìgh dhachaigh agus dh'innseadh dha gu robh a bhean, Craobh-airgid, tinn. Chaidh e far an robh i agus dh'fhaighnich e dhith gu dè a bha ceàrr oirre.

“Chan eil rud sam bith a b' urrainn dhomh dhèanamh,” thuirt an rìgh, “nach dèanainn dhut.”

“Ma gheibh mi cridhe agus gruthan Chraobh-òir ri ithe, bidh mi slàn,” fhreagair Craobh-airgid.

Dh'fhalbh an rìgh agus chuir e a chuid ghillean a-mach a dh'iarraidh boc-goibhre. Thug e a chridhe is a ghruthan do bhean airson ithe. Dh'èirich i gu slàn fallain.

Dè thachair mun àm seo ach gun do nochd mac rìgh mhòir. Bha e ag iarraidh Craobh-òir a phòsadh. Thug an rìgh a chead agus dh'fhalbh an cupall a-null thairis.

Bliadhna an dèidh seo, chaidh Craobh-airgid don ghleann far an robh an tobar anns an robh am breac.

“A bhricein bhig bhòidhich,” thuirt i, “nach mise a' bhànrigh as brèagha san t-saoghal?”

“O, gu dearbh, cha tu.”

“Cò eile?”

“Tha Craobh-òir, do nighean.”

“Ge-tà, is fhada bho nach robh ise beò,” thuirt a’ bhànrigh. “Tha bliadhna ann bho dh’ith mi a cridhe agus a gruthan.”

“O, gu dearbh,” ars’ am breac, “is ise nach eil marbh. Tha i pòsta aig prionnsa mòr thall thairis.”

Chaidh Craobh-airgid dhachaigh agus dh’iarr i air an rìgh an long-fhada a chur air dòigh, oir bha i a’ dol a choimhead a h-eudail, Craobh-òir. Chaidh an long-fhada a chur air dòigh agus dh’fhalbh iad.

’S i Craobh-airgid fhèin a bh’ air an stiùir. Cha robh iad fada sam bith air a’ chuan oir bha an long luath. Nuair a ràinig iad an taobh thall, bha am prionnsa a-muigh a’ sealg. Chunnaic Craobh-òir long a h-athar agus thuirt i ri a seirbheiseach, “tha mo mhàthair a’ tighinn agus marbhaidh i mi.”

“Cha mharbh idir”, thuirt an seirbheiseach. “Glasaidh sinn a-staigh ann an seòmair thu far nach fhaigh i nad chòir.”

’S ann mar sin a bha e. Nuair a thàinig Craobh-airgid air tìr, thòisich i air èigheachd, “Trohad seo, tha do mhàthair air tighinn gad choimhead.” Chaidh a’ bhànrigh don doras.

“Nach cuir thu do mheur a-mach air toll na h-iuchrach,” thuirt i, “’s gun toir do mhàthair pòg dhi.”

Chuir Craobh-òir a meur a-mach air toll na h-iuchrach. Agus innsidh mi dhuibh dè thachair dhi an ath-sheachdain.

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**Faclan na seachdaine:** Eilean Eige: *The Isle of Eigg*; Craobh-òir: *Gold Tree*; Craobh-airgid: *Silver Tree*; sìmplidh: *simple*; oirrese: *on her (emphatic)*; breac: *trout*; cridhe: *heart*; gruthan: *liver*; ithe: *eating*; cupall: *couple*; long-fhada: *longship*; stiùir: *tiller*; luath: *fast*; sealg: *hunting*; trohad: *come here*; meur: *finger*.  
**Abairtean na seachdaine:** seann sgeulachd a chaidh a chruinneachadh: *an old story that was collected*; nì mi beagan nas giorra i: *I will make it [fem.] a bit shorter*; cho faisg air an t-seann chainnt ’s as urrainn: *as close to the old speech as possible*; gu ruige gleann far an robh tobar: *to a glen where there was a well*; a bhrichein bhig bhòidhich: *o, little bonny trout (vocative)*; nach mise a’ bhànrigh as brèagha: *am I not the most beautiful queen?*; o, gu dearbh, cha tu!: *you are certainly not!*; a shasaicheadh i: *that would satisfy her*; am beul na h-oidhche: *at dusk*; dh’innseadh dha: *he was told*; nach dèanainn dhut: *that I wouldn’t do for you*; ma gheibh mi: *if I get*; a dh’iarraidh boc-goibhre: *to get a billy goat*; gun do nochd mac rìgh mhòir: *that the son of an important king arrived*; is ise nach eil marbh: *she is not dead [lit. it is her that is not dead]*; bha i a’ dol a choimhead a h-eudail: *she was going to see her darling*; far nach fhaigh i nad chòir: *where she won’t get near you*; a-mach air toll na h-iuchrach: *out through the keyhole*.

**Puing-chànain na seachdaine:** Ge-tà, is fhada bho nach robh ise beò: *but it is a long time since she was alive. Do you notice the difference here from the sentence structure for the equivalent in English? In Gaelic we say literally “it is [a] long [time] from she wasn’t alive”. Note that the verb is a negative interrogative one. Similarly, if you meet a Gaelic-speaking friend whom you haven’t seen for a long time, he might say to you, “is fhad’ o nach fhaca mi thu”, using the same structure (the o being equivalent to bho), where you might expect him to say, “is fhad’ o*

chunnaic mi thu”. Although bho/o is usually given as meaning “from” it is here better translated as “since”.

**Gnàths-cainnt na seachdaine:** Tha i pòsta aig prionnsa mòr thall thairis: *she is married to an important prince overseas.* Tha X pòsta aig Y: *X is married to Y.* Not the use of the preposition aig in this idiom.

\* Tha “Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh” air a maoinachadh le Seirbheis nam Meadhanan Gàidhlig