

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 at rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk * This is Litir 312 . Note that Roddy also broadcasts a simplified version – An Litir Bheag – on Monday evenings at 7.00 pm. This is also available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 8 corresponds to Litir 312.*

Ann an ochd ceud deug, ochdad ’s a h-ochd (1888) chaidh pàipear a leughadh aig coinneamh de Chomunn Gàidhlig Inbhir Nis. ’S e an t-Urramach Iain MacGriogair Caimbeul, ministear ann an Tiriodh, a sgrìobh e. ’S e an tìotal a bh’ air *Fionn’s Ransom* agus ’s e a bh’ ann seann sgeulachd à Tiriodh. Fhuair am ministear ann an Gàidhlig i bho fhear Iain MacIlleDhuinn. ’S e an tìotal a th’ oirre *Èirig Fhinn*. Chan eil mi cinnteach an e *Fionn’s Ransom* an tìotal as fheàrr ann am Beurla. ’S dòcha gur e *Fionn’s Reparation* as fheàrr. Co-dhiù seo an sgeulachd agus, leis gu bheil i fada, tha mi ga dèanamh nas giorra agus nas sìmplidhe.

Là a bha seo, chaidh Fionn ’s a thriùir cho-dhaltan don bheinn sheilg. B’ iad a cho-dhaltan an Ridire Dearg, Ridire a’ Chùirn agus Ridire a’ Chlaidheimh. Bha iad nan suidhe air cnocan bòidheach, nuair a thuirt Ridire a’ Chlaidheimh, “An robh e ann a-riamh fear a dhèanadh tàir air Fionn Mac Cumhail, agus a thriùir cho-dhaltan còmhla ris?”

Cho luath ’s a thuirt e sin, thàinig marcaiche steud dhuibh às an àird an iar-thuath. Rinn e air Fionn is bhuail e mun bheul e. Chuir e trì fiaclan a-mach gu h-àrd is trì fiaclan a-mach gu h-ìosal.

Thuirt Ridire a’ Chlaidheimh gum faigheadh iad “Èirig Fhinn”. Thuirt an dà cho-dhalta eile an aon rud. Sìos don chladach leotha far an do rinn iad long deiseil airson falbh. Chunnaic iad fear beag ìosal lapanach a’ teannadh dlùth. Dh’fhàiltich iad e. Dh’fhaighnich e de Ridire a’ Chlaidheimh am faigheadh e cead falbh leotha air an luing.

“Chan fhaigh,” fhreagair an Ridire. “Dè feum a dhèanadh duine leibideach coltach riutsa falbh leinne?”

Dh’fhaighnich am fear beag an aon cheist dhen dithis ridirean eile. Dhiùlt iad e. Chaidh e gu Fionn. Leig Fionn leis dhol air bòrd còmhla riutha. “’S fheàrr thu na clach co-dhiù,” thuirt Fionn.

Chuir iad a-mach an long. Thug iad a toiseach ri muir is a deireadh ri tìr. Thog iad na siùil. Rinn Fionn Mac Cumhail iùil na toiseach agus stiùir na deireadh. Shuidhich e a cùrsa gu Rìoghachd nam Fear Mòra.

An dèidh dà là aig muir, dh’iarr Fionn air na ridirean sealltainn on chrann, feuch tìr fhaicinn. Chaidh iad astar beag suas is thill iad. Thuirt iad nach robh dad ri fhaicinn.

Dh’èirich am fear beag ìosal lapanach is thuirt e, “Mura dèanadh sibh na b’ fheàrr na siud, bha e a cheart cho math dhuibh fuireach far an robh sibh.” Leum e suas agus ràinig e bàrr a’ chrainn. Nuair a thill e, thuirt e ri Fionn, “Tha e mòr a dh’fheannag is beag a dh’fhearann, ach cum romhad mar a tha thu.”

An làrna-mhàireach bha iad sa chala ann an Rìoghachd nam Fear Mòra. Ach chan fhaigheadh iad air tìr. Bha trì gathan teinnteach a' cuairteachadh a' chala. Chuir am fear beag ìosal lapanach sgiath bhacaideach air a làimh chli agus sgiath bhacaideach air a làimh dheis. Thug e leum nan trì eang agus bha e air tìr. Agus innsidh mi dhuibh dè thachair an uair sin an ath-sheachdain.

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Faclan na seachdaine: Iain MacGriogair Caimbeul: *John Gregorson Campbell*; Iain MacIlleDhuinn: *John Brown*; long: *ship*; crann: *mast*.

Abairtean na seachdaine: chaidh pàipear a leughadh aig coinneamh de Chomunn Gàidhlig Inbhir Nis: *a paper was read at a meeting of the Gaelic Society of Inverness*; tha mi ga dèanamh nas giorra agus nas sìmplidhe: *I am making it [fem] shorter and simpler*; chaidh Fionn 's a thriuir cho-dhaltan don bheinn sheilg: *Fionn and his three foster-brothers went to the hunting mountain*; Ridire a' Chùirn agus Ridire a' Chlaidheimh: *The Knight of the Cairn and the Knight of the Sword*; an robh e ann a-riamh fear a dhèanadh tàir air X?: *was there ever the man who would deride X?*; thàinig marcaiche steud dhuibh às an àird an iar-thuath: *a rider of a black steed came from the north-west*; chunnaic iad fear beag ìosal lapanach a' teannadh dlùth: *they saw a wee low feeble man coming close*; dh'fhàiltich iad e: *they welcomed him*; dè feum a dhèanadh duine leibideach coltach riutsa falbh leinne?: *what good would an inept man like you do leaving with us?*; 's fheàrr thu na clach co-dhiù: *you're better than a stone [ie ballast] anyway*; thug iad a toiseach ri muir is a deireadh ri tìr: *they pointed her bow to the sea and her stern to the land*; rinn X iùil na toiseach agus stiùir na deireadh: *X piloted her at the bow and took the helm at her stern*; mura dèanadh sibh na b' fheàrr na siud, bha e a cheart cho math dhuibh fuireach far an robh sibh: *if you couldn't [wouldn't] do better than that, you would have been as well staying where you were*; tha e mòr a dh'fheannag is beag a dh'fhearann: *it is [too] large for a crow and [too]small for land*; bha trì gathan teinnteach a' cuairteachadh a' chala: *three fiery darts were going around the harbour*; sgiath bhacaideach air a làimh chli: *a defensive shield on his left hand*; leum nan trì eang: *leap of three bounds (a great leap)*.

Puing-chànain na seachdaine: shuidhich e a cùrsa gu Rìoghachd nam Fear Mòra: *he set her course for the Kingdom of the Big Men. Old stories are wonderful for their richness of language and construction and all learners should try to tackle them at some stage (but not until you can read, say, a newspaper article without too much trouble). They also provide a salutary reminder of the grammatical rules, and here is a good example. Fear in the nominative plural is fir. It is pluralised by slenderisation. The genitive plural is therefore identical to the nominative singular. For Kingdom of the Men we therefore say Rìoghachd nam Fear. Then we simply add the adjective. Kingdom of the Small Men would be Rìoghachd nam Fear Beaga.*

Gnàths-cainnt na seachdaine: cum romhad mar a tha thu: *keep going ahead of you (ie as you are)*. Romhad is the prepositional pronoun for the second person singular formed from ro (before).

* Tha "Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh" air a maoinachadh le Seirbheis nam Meadhanan Gàidhlig