

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 roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk * This is Litir 313. 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 9 corresponds to Litir 313.*

An t-seachdain sa chaidh thòisich mi air an t-seann sgeulachd “Èirig Fhinn”. Thuirt mi seo mun fhear bheag ìosal lapanach: “Thug e leum nan trì eang agus bha e air tìr.” Tha mi airson rudeigin a ràdh mun fhacal seo *eang*. Tha e a’ ciallachadh *foot* no *footstep*. Ma chanas mi “cha ghluais mi eang”, tha e a’ ciallachadh nach urrainn dhomh cas no gàirdean a ghluasad. ’S e *leum nan trì eang* leum cho àrd no cho fada ’s a ghabhas dèanamh.

Sgrìobh am fear a chruinnich an sgeulachd, an t-Urr. Iain MacGriogair Caimbeul, rud car annasach mu dheidhinn *eang*. Sgrìobh e gur dòcha gu bheil e càirdeach don fhacal *cangarù* – a bhuineas do thùsanaich Astràilia. Carson? Uill, a rèir Mhgr Chaimbeul, tha ciall an fhacail – *cangarù* – agus fuaim an fhacail uabhasach coltach ri *eang a’ ruith* ann an Gàidhlig. Eang a’ ruith. Cangarù? Mmm. Cha chreid mi gu bheil e uabhasach coltach.

Co-dhiù, leanaidh sinn leis an sgeulachd. Ach mus tòisich mi – facal eile: *measan*. Tha *measan* a’ ciallachadh cù beag bìodach no *lap dog*.

Choisich an ceathrar còmhla – Fionn Mac Cumhail, a thriùir cho-dhaltan agus am fear beag ìosal lapanach. Thachair iad ri boireannach mòr aig an robh *measan* aig a sàil. A h-uile turas a choimhead am *measan* air Fionn bha fiaclan Fhinn air ais na bheul mar a bha iad riamh. Ach nuair a choimhead am *measan* air falbh, thuit na fiaclan a-mach.

Bha na co-dhaltan dhen bheachd gu robh èirig Fhinn aca. Thug iad am boireannach mòr agus an cù air ais don luìng. Dh’fhàg iad am fear beag ìosal lapanach anns an eilean. Ràinig esan taigh anns an robh solas. Chaidh e a-steach. Bha teine mòr ann ach cha robh duine a-staigh.

An uair sin, thàinig fear àrd a-steach. “Dè do naidheachd?” dh’fhaighnich e dhen fhear bheag. Fhreagair am fear beag nach robh naidheachd aige ach nan cluinneadh e naidheachd an fhir mhòir an toiseach.

“Chan eil mo naidheachd ach bochd,” ars’ am fear mòr. “Chaidh mo phiuthar àlainn a thoirt air falbh. Bhiodh i gam nighe anns a’ bhallan-ionnlaid gach là agus mi air a bhith a’ sabaid. Bhithinn deiseil an uair sin airson sabaid a-rithist an làrna-mhàireach.”

Thàinig bràthair eile dhachaigh. “Dè do naidheachd, fhir bhig ìosail lapanach?” dh’fhaighnich e. “Chan eil naidheachd agamsa,” thuirt am fear beag, “mura faigh mi naidheachd bhua fhèin an toiseach.”

“Chan eil mo naidheachd ach trom,” thuirt am fear eile. “Chaidh mo phiuthar ghràdhach a thoirt air falbh. ’S i a bhiodh gam nighe nuair a thiginn dhachaigh bho bhith a’ sabaid, gam dhèanamh dèiseil airson sabaid a-rithist air an làrna-mhàireach.

Thàinig treas bràthair dhachaigh agus bha an aon chòmhradh aca. Agus dè rinn am fear beag? Nìgh e na bràithrean anns a’ bhallan-ionnlaid gus am biodh iad deiseil airson sabaid air an làrna-mhàireach. An uair sin thuirt e, “Tha mise airson sabaid nur n-àite.”

“A dhuine thruaigh,” arsa fear de na bràithrean. “Dè tha thusa a’ dol a dhèanamh leat fhèin?” Dh’innis iad dha gu robh rèiseamaid shaighdearan ann. Ged a chuireadh na bràithrean an ceann far a h-uile duine aca, bha cailleach mhòr ann. Bha stòpan aice. Chuireadh i meur anns an stòpan is an uair sin ann am beul duine a chaill a cheann. Bhiodh e ag èirigh beò.

Dè bha am fear beag ìosal lapanach a’ dol a dhèanamh mu dheidhinn sin? Innsidh mi dhuibh an ath-sheachdain.

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Faclan na seachdaine: Èirig Fhinn: *Fionn’s Reparation*; an t-Urr. Iain MacGriogair Caimbeul: *Rev John Gregorson Campbell*; tùsanaich: *Aborigines*; gràdhach: *loving*; rèiseamaid: *regiment*; stòpan: *small wooden vessel used for carrying milk or water*.

Abairtean na seachdaine: leum nan trì eang: *leap of the three bounds (a great leap)*; nach urrainn dhomh cas no gàirdean a ghluasad: *that I can’t move leg or arm*; gur dòcha gu bheil e càirdeach don fhacal *cangarù*: *that it is perhaps related to the word kangaroo*; cha chreid mi gu bheil e uabhasach coltach: *I don’t think it’s terribly likely*; thachair iad ri boireannach mòr aig an robh measan aig a sàil: *they met a big woman who had a lap dog at her heel*; bha fiacilan Fhinn air ais na bheul: *Fionn’s teeth were back in his mouth*; thug iad am boireannach air ais don luing: *they took the woman back to the ship*; ràinig esan taigh anns an robh solas: *he reached a house in which there was a light*; nach robh naidheachd aige ach nan cluinneadh e naidheachd an fhir mhòir an toiseach: *that he had no news except that he should hear the big man’s news to begin with*; chaidh mo phiuthar àlainn a thoirt air falbh: *my beautiful sister was taken away*; bhiodh i gam nighe anns a’ bhallan-ionnlaid gach là agus mi air a bhith a’ sabaid: *she would wash me in the bath every day after I had been fighting*; airson sabaid a-rithist an làrna-mhàireach: *to fight again the next day*; mura faigh mi naidheachd bhuit fhèin an toiseach: *if I don’t get news from you first*; nuair a thiginn dhachaigh: *when I came [would come] home*; bha an aon chòmhradh aca: *they had the same conversation*; nìgh e na bràithrean: *he washed the brothers*; tha mise airson sabaid nur n-àite: *I want to fight in your place*; dè tha thusa a’ dol a dhèanamh leat fhèin?: *what are you going to do by yourself?*; ged a chuireadh na bràithrean an ceann far a h-uile duine aca: *though the brothers should decapitate every one of them*; bhiodh e ag èirigh beò: *he would come back to life (arise alive)*.

Puing-chànain na seachdaine: dè do naidheachd, fhir bhig ìosal lapanach?: *what’s your news, wee low feeble man? Here is a good example of a complex vocative. You will remember that masculine nouns lenite and slenderise in the*

singular vocative (eg “a bhalaich!”) The adjective follows the inflection of the noun so “wee man!” is “fhir bhig!” Here, however, we have three adjectives. What do we do? Follow the rules! Neither ìosal or lapanach lenites (in the written form) but both can be slenderised and that is exactly what happens. Fear beag ìosal lapanach becomes “fhir bhig ìosail lapanach!” Similarly, in the Litir duine truagh (a poor man) becomes a dhuine thruaigh in the vocative.

Gnàths-cainnt na seachdaine: cha ghluais mi eang: *I can't move a muscle.*

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