

# 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](mailto:roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk) \* This is Litir 314. 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 10 corresponds to Litir 314.*

Halo a-rithist. Tha sinn a’ leantainn leis an t-seann sgeulachd *Èirig Fhinn*. Bha am fear beag ìosal Iapanach ann an Rìoghachd nam Fear Mòra. Bha Fionn agus a thriùir cho-dhaltan air a dhol dhachaigh. Chuala am fear beag bho na bràithrean mu rèiseamaid shaighdearan agus mar a bhiodh cailleach le stopan draoidheil gan toirt beò a-rithist.

“An tig ach sin?” thuirt am fear beag.

“Thig rèiseamaid eile,” thuirt fear de na bràithrean ris. “Bidh cluicheadairean clàrsaich air an ceann. Cuiridh iadsan nad chadal thu.”

“An tig ach sin?” thuirt am fear beag.

“Thig bodach mòr,” thuirt bràthair eile. “Marbhaidh e thu, mura cum thu cath oidhche ris.”

“An tig ach sin?” thuirt am fear beag a-rithist.

“Thig cailleach mhòr mhòr,” thuirt an treas bràthair. “Ma gheibh i faisg ort, marbhaidh a h-anail thu.”

“An tig ach sin?” thuirt am fear beag.

“Cha tig duine eile,” fhreagair na bràithrean. Agus dh’fhalbh am fear beag.

Nuair a ràinig e an t-àite, chunnaic e rèiseamaid a’ tighinn. Chaidh e am falach. Chaidh na saighdearan seachad. Chaidh am fear beag air an cùlaibh agus mharbh e a h-uile fear aca. Thàinig a’ chailleach an uair sin. Bha stopan draoidheil aice. Laigh am fear beag am measg nan daoine marbh, mar gu robh e fhèin marbh.

Chuir a’ chailleach corrag anns an stopan. Chuir i a corrag ann am beul fear de na saighdearan, agus dh’èirich e beò. Chuir i a corrag ann am beul an fhir bhig. Thug esan a corrag dhith bho na rùdanan, le fhiacalan. Leig a’ chailleach glaodh. Leum am fear beag gu chasan agus gheàrr e dheth ceann an t-saighdeir agus ceann na cailliche.

Thàinig an rèiseamaid eile de shaighdearan. Bha cluicheadairean clàrsaich air an ceann. Thàinig sgìths uabhasach air an fhear bheag. Airson a chumail fhèin na dhùisg, chuir e ceann a’ chlaidheimh ri chois agus bàrr a’ chlaidheimh ri bhathais. A h-uile turas a bha an cadal a’ tighinn air, chum a chlaidheamh na dhùisg e. Nuair a chaidh na saighdearan seachad air, leum e a-mach orra agus mharbh e iad.

Bha aige ri feitheamh ris a’ bhodach mhòr. Rinn e toll domhainn anns an talamh. Thuit am bodach ann agus gheàrr am fear beag a cheann dheth.

An uair sin thàinig a’ chailleach mhòr mhòr. Nuair a bha i faisg air, bha a h-anail ga laigeachadh. Bha iad a’ sabaid le chèile fad na h-oidhche. Aig briseadh an là, dhùisg na bràithrean. Chaidh iad a-mach don àite far an robh am fear beag is a’ chailleach mhòr mhòr a’ sabaid.

“Cuir thusa do mheur anns an stopan,” thuirt am fear beag ri fear de na bràithrean, “agus cuir nam bheul e.” Rinn am bràthair sin agus gheàrr am fear beag ceann na cailliche mòire dhith. Thug na bràithrean am fear beag dhachaigh leotha air an guailnean.

Bha iad a' fuireach còmhla airson ùine gu dòigheil. Ach là a bha seo bha am fear beag ìosal lapanach a-muigh air chuairt anns a' mhonadh. Chunnaic e dubharadh froise a' tighinn às an àird an iar-thuath. Às a sin thàinig marcaiche steud dhuibh. Thug am marcaiche ionnsaigh chruaidh air an fhear bheag. Tharraing am fear beag a chlaidheamh agus ... uill, innsidh mi dhuibh dè thachair nuair a chuireas mi crìoch air an sgeulachd an ath-sheachdain.

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**Faclan na seachdaine:** Èirig Fhinn: *Fionn's Reparation*; stòpan: *small wooden vessel used for carrying milk or water*; rèiseamaid: *regiment*.

**Abairtean na seachdaine:** bha am fear beag ìosal lapanach ann an Rìoghachd nam Fear Mòra: *the wee low feeble man was in the Kingdom of the Big Men*; bha Fionn agus a thrìuir cho-dhaltan air a dhol dhachaigh: *Fionn and his three foster-brothers had gone home*; mar a bhiodh cailleach le stopan draoidheil gan toirt beò a-rithist: *how an old hag with a magic stopan would bring them to life again*; an tig ach sin?: *will none others than these come?*; bidh cluicheadairean clàrsaich air an ceann: *there will be harpers at their head*; ma gheibh i faisg ort, marbhaidh a h-anail thu: *if she gets close to you, her breath will kill you*; cha tig duine eile: *nobody else will come*; chaidh e am falach: *he hid*; air an cùlaibh: *behind them*; laigh X am measg nan daoine marbh: *X lay among the dead men*; mar gu robh e fhèin marbh: *as if he himself were dead*; chuir i a corrag ann am beul fear de na saighdearan: *she put her finger in the mouth of one of the soldiers*; thug esan a corrag dhith bho na rùdanan, le fhiaclan: *he took her finger off from the knuckles, with his teeth*; gheàrr e dheth ceann an t-saighdeir: *he cut off the soldier's head*; thàinig sgìths uabhasach air X: *a terrible tiredness came over X*; ceann a' chlaidheimh ri chois agus bàrr a' chlaidheimh ri bhathais: *the hilt of the sword to his foot and the point of the sword to his forehead*; bha a h-anail ga laigeachadh: *her breath was weakening him*; aig briseadh an là, dhùisg na bràithrean: *at daybreak, the brothers awoke*; air an guailnean: *on their shoulders*; dubharadh froise a' tighinn às an àird an iar-thuath: *the gloom of a shower coming from the north-west*; thàinig marcaiche steud dhuibh: *the rider of a black steed came*; thug X ionnsaigh chruaidh air Y: *X savagely attacked Y*; tharraing X a chlaidheamh: *X drew his sword*.

**Puing-chànain na seachdaine:** bha X a-muigh anns a' mhonadh: *X was out on the hill*. Monadh *doesn't easily translate into English (it refers to high country which might be extensive and take in mountain summits), but it is often translated as "hill" and I think this is the reason that many Scots refer in English to being "on the hill", where an Englishman might say "in the hills". On the other hand, the Englishman's preposition would be closer to traditional Gaelic usage, in which we say anns a' mhonadh (literally "in the hill"), not air a' mhonadh.*

**Gnàths-cainnt na seachdaine:** mura cum thu cath oidhche ris: *if you do not keep fighting him all night*. Bha X a' cur cath ri Y: *X was fighting Y*. Bha X a' cumail cath ri Y: *X was keeping on fighting Y*.

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