

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 343. 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 39 corresponds to Litir 343.*

An t-seachdain sa chaidh, bha sinn anns an Tulaich ann an Siorrachd Obair Dheathain. Faisg air a’ bhaile sin tha àite ris an canar Mòine Ailtridh. Anns an t-seachdamh linn deug, bha duine a’ fuireach ann a bha ainmeil. B’ esan Dòmhnall Òg MacFhearchair. Bha e ainmeil airson a bhith sgileil leis a’ chlaidheamh.

Ann an sia ceud deug is ceathrad (1640), chaidh Dòmhnall a Lunnainn. A rèir beul-aithris, choisinn e cliù a bharrachd dha fhèin ann an Lunnainn, far an robh mòran a’ bruidhinn mu dheidhinn Eadailteach anns a’ bhaile. Bha am fear sin sgileil leis a’ chlaidheamh. Bha e a’ cumail a-mach gum b’ esan an claidheamhair a b’ fheàrr air an t-saoghal.

Cha robh muinntir Lunnainn measail idir air an Eadailteach. **Bha e cus ro àrdanach.** Bhiodh e a’ spaidsearachd air na sràidean còmhla ri luchd-taic. Bhiodh drumair a’ coiseachd air thoiseach air. Chuireadh an drumair dùbhlán ro dhuine sam bith a bha timcheall – thig is feuch do chlaidheamh an aghaidh mo mhaighstir! Leis gu robh e cho àrdanach bha gràin eadhon aig an rìgh air an Eadailteach a bha seo. Ged a bha mòran airson sabaid na aghaidh, bha an t-eagal orra roimhe. Bha iad dhen bheachd gu robh draoidheachd aige, agus nach b’ urrainn do dhuine sam bith a’ chùis a dhèanamh air.

Là a bha seo, bha an rìgh a’ gearain mu dheidhinn. Thog cuideigin ainm an Albannaich, Dòmhnall Òg MacFhearchair à Mòine Ailtridh. Saoil an dèanadh esan a’ chùis air an Eadailteach, oir bha e cho sgileil leis a’ chlaidheamh? Fhuair an rìgh fios gu robh Dòmhnall ann an Lunnainn. Dh’iarr e air Dòmhnall a dhol a thadhal air. Air an rathad don lùchairt, thachair Dòmhnall air an Eadailteach agus a luchd-leantainn. Bha an drumair a’ cur dùbhlán ron t-sluagh – thig is feuch do chlaidheamh an aghaidh mo mhaighstir!

Chuir sin fearg air Dòmhnall. Tharraing e a chlaidheamh agus mharbh e an drumair. Chuir an t-Eadailteach dùbhlán ro Dhòmhnall. Chuir iad air dòigh gum biodh iad a’ sabaid air an làrna-mhàireach. Nuair a dh’innis Dòmhnall seo don rìgh, bha an rìgh air leth toilichte. Gheall e duais don Albannach nan dèanadh e a’ chùis air an Eadailteach.

Air an oidhche sin, lorg Dòmhnall fear-frithealaidh an Eadailtich. Fhuair e a-mach bhuaithe **gu robh an draoidheachd aig a mhaighstir ag obair mar a leanas:** nuair a shàthadh duine le claidheamh e, cho luath ’s a bha an claidheamh air a tharraing a-mach às a’ bhodhaig aige, thigeadh leigheas air an lot. ’S ann mar sin a bha an t-Eadailteach a’ dèanamh a’ chùis air a h-uile duine.

Thàinig an làrna-mhàireach agus thàinig a’ chòmhrag eadar an dithis. Shàth Dòmhnall Òg an t-Eadailteach le chlaidheamh. “Tarraing do chlaidheamh a-mach!” dh’èigh an t-

Eadailteach air. Ach bha cuimhne aig Dòmhnall air na thuirt am fear-frithealaidh. Dh'fhàg e an claidheamh ann, agus thuit an t-Eadailteach marbh.

Thug an rìgh poca òir do Dhòmhnall mar dhuais. Nuair a chuala an sluagh mu dheidhinn, ge-tà, bha iad mì-thoilichte. “Seall air an dìol-dhèirce Albannach a’ cur òr Sasannach na phòcaid,” dh’èigh iad. Chuir sin fearg air Dòmhnall. Thilg e na buinn don fheadhainn a bha ag èigheachd air, leis na faclan, “cha do choisinn na coin Sasannach an t-òr dhaibh fhèin, ach bhuannaich Albannach air an son e.”

Thill Dòmhnall a dh’Alba. Bha cogadh a’ dol eadar Muinntir a’ Chùmhnaint agus luchd-taic an rìgh. Dhìon Dòmhnall agus Clann ’ic Fhearchair baile Obair Dheathain an aghaidh feachd de luchd a’ Chùmhnaint. Ach fhuair saighdearan Cùmhnantach grèim air Dòmhnall agus mharbh iad e. Thathar ag ràdh gun deach a thiodhlacadh ann an Obar Dheathain.

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Faclan na Litreach: Mòine Ailtridh: *Monaltrie*; Dòmhnall Òg MacFhearchair: *Donald “Òig” Farquharson*; sgileil: *skilful*; a’ spaidsearachd: *sauntering*; draoidheachd: *magic*; lùchairt: *palace*; fear-frithealaidh: *manservant*.

Abairtean na Litreach: choisinn e cliù a bharrachd dha fhèin ann an Lunnainn: *he further developed his reputation in London*; sgileil leis a’ chladheamh: *skilful with the sword*; gum b’ esan an claidheamhair a b’ fheàrr: *that he was the best swordsman*; bhiodh drumair a’ coiseachd air thoiseach air: *a drummer would walk ahead of him*; chuireadh X dùbhlán ro dhuine sam bith: *X would challenge anyone*; bha gràin eadhon aig an rìgh air: *even the king hated him*; bha an t-eagal orra roimhe: *they were scared of him*; saoil an dèanadh esan a’ chùis air: *perhaps he would defeat*; thachair Dòmhnall air an Eadailteach: *Donald happened upon the Italian*; chuir iad air dòigh gum biodh iad a’ sabaid air an làrna-mhàireach: *they organised to fight the next day*; gheall e duais don Albannach nan dèanadh e a’ chùis air: *he offered the Scot a reward if he would defeat*; fhuair e a-mach bhuaithe: *he found out from him*; cho luath ’s a bha an claidheamh air a tharraing a-mach às a’ bhodhaig aige: *as soon as the sword was withdrawn from his body*; thigeadh leigheas air an lot: *the wound would heal*; a’ chòmhrag eadar an dithis: *the duel*; seall air an dìol-dhèirce Albannach a’ cur òr Sasannach na phòcaid: *look at the Scottish beggar putting English gold in his pocket*; cha do choisinn na coin Sasannach an t-òr dhaibh fhèin: *the English dogs did not earn the gold for themselves*; bhuannaich Albannach air an son e: *a Scot won it for them*; Muinntir a’ Chùmhnaint: *the Covenanters*; fhuair saighdearan Cùmhnantach grèim air: *Covenanter soldiers got hold of*; gun deach a thiodhlacadh: *that he was buried*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: Bha e cus ro àrdanach: *he was much too arrogant. You might not have seen cus used a great deal in this way and the dictionaries barely mention it. Cus is a masculine noun meaning a sufficiency or surfeit eg dh’ith mi cus (I ate too much), rinn e cus mhearachdan (he made too many mistakes). But it can also be used as an adverb, directly qualifying comparative adjectives or, as in the Litir, qualifying an adverb-adjective combination. Other examples of the latter are: bha e cus ro dhoirbh dhomh (it was much too difficult for me); bha sin cus ro shìmplidh (that was much too easy). The former are exemplified by: tha iad cus nas fheàrr a-nise (they are much better now); bha e cus na bu mhiosa na bha mi ’n dùil (it was much worse than I [had] expected); tha thu cus nas ghlice na chleachd [thu a bhith]! (you are much wiser than you used to be!)*

Gnàths-cainnt na Litreach: gu robh an draoidheachd aig a mhaighstir ag obair mar a leanas: *that his master’s magic worked as follows. Mar a leanas: as follows.*

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