

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 361. 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 57 corresponds to Litir 361.*

Bha Dòmhnall MacAoidh ann an geòla faisg air Inbhir Theòrsa. Bha e fhèin is feadhainn eile a’ dol a dh’fhaighinn uisge ann am baraillean airson an t-soithich aca. Bha Dòmhnall air a thoirt am bruid ceithir bliadhna roimhe. A-nise bha e faisg air an dachaigh aige ann an Dùthaich MhicAoidh.

Cò chunnaic e ann am bàta eile ach feadhainn bhon sgìre aige fhèin. Dh’aithnich e iad agus dh’aithnich iadsan esan. Dh’èigh iad air a chèile. Cho luath ’s a thachair sin, thionndaidh na maraichean an geòla. Chaidh iad air ais don luing. Chuir iad an seòl an àirde agus dh’fhalbh iad.

Chaidh trì bliadhna eile seachad mus do rinn Dòmhnall dol-às. Bha e a-nise naoi bliadhna deug a dh’aois. Bha e air a dhol a-null gu soitheach eile beagan mhìosan roimhe. Cha robh an criutha ùr cho eòlach air eachdraidh.

Co-dhiù, bha iad a’ seòladh faisg air costa mu thuath na h-Alba. Bha uisge a dhìth orra is chaidh iad gu Loch Eurabol. B’ e sin an loch far an deach Dòmhnall a thoirt am bruid seachd bliadhna roimhe. Chuir e roimhe teicheadh dhachaigh.

Bha fios aige nach fhaigheadh e a thuarastal ach **bu choma leis sin**. Bha aodach is gnothaichean pearsanta aige air bòrd, ge-tà. Chuir e aodach eile fon aodach obrach aige agus lìon e a phòcaidean le rudan. Bha e an dòchas nach mothaicheadh duine do na bha e a’ dèanamh.

Chaidh e fhèin is fear eile gu tìr ann an geòla. Nuair a bha na baraillean làn uisge, dh’iarr Dòmhnall air an fhear eile leum a-steach don bhàta. Tharraing Dòmhnall an dà ràmh a-mach às na buthail-ràimh agus phut e an geòla gu muir. Cha robh comas snàimh aig an fhear eile. Dh’èigh e don fheadhainn air an t-soitheach mhòr, “Dh’fhalbh am balach bho thìr-mòr!”

Dh’èigh Dòmhnall airsan, “Beannachd leat!” Agus theich e. Air mullach cnuic choimhead e air ais. Bha an fheadhainn air an luing a’ leigeil geòla eile. Rinn Dòmhnall cabhag ach bha e uabhasach teth leis na bh’ air de dh’aodach. Bha am fallas air. Lorg e imir coirce. Bha adagan ann. Thug e sguab air falbh bho adag. Chaidh e am falach am broinn na h-adaig. Chuir e an sguab air ais na h-àite.

Làigh e gu sàmhach. Chuala e na maraichean a’ ruith seachad air. An ceann greis, thill iad. Làigh Dòmhnall gu sàmhach airson greis a bharrachd. An uair sin, dh’èirich e a-mach às an adaig. Cha robh sgeul air duine.

Chaidh e gu mullach cnuic. Chunnaic e na maraichean a’ cur nan geòlaichean air bòrd na luinge. Às dèidh seachd bliadhna bha Dòmhnall saor.

An làrna-mhàireach ràinig e Armadal. Chunnaic e athair ag obair anns an t-sabhal. Bha e air a dhol liath. Chunnaic an croitear an srainnsear òg seo a’ coiseachd dha ionnsaigh. Cha dh’aithnich e e. Dh’iarr Dòmhnall cuid na h-oidhche air – **rud a bha cumanta gu leòr sna làithean ud.**

“Ceart gu leòr,” thuirt athair, “ach feumaidh mi bruidhinn ris a’ bhean agam.” Chaidh iad a-steach còmhla agus thàinig màthair Dhòmhnail a-steach. Cha do dh’aithnich ise e na bu mhotha.

Cha b’ urrainn do Dhòmhnall na bha e a’ faireachdainn a chumail dha fhèin tuilleadh. “O mo mhàthair!” dh’èigh e. “Nach eil sibh gam aithneachainn?!” Uill, dh’aithnich an uair sin agus, às dèidh seachd bliadhna de dh’ionndrainn, tha mi cinnteach gu robh deòir an toileachais a’ sruthadh gu làidir.

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Faclan na Litreach: Dùthaich MhicAoidh: *The Mackay Country [N Sutherland]*; dol-às: *escape*; Armadal: *Armadale*; srainnsear: *stranger*.

Abairtean na Litreach: ann an geòla faisg air Inbhir Theòrsa: *who in a dinghy close to Thurso*; ann am baraillean airson an t-soithich aca: *in barrels for their vessel*; bha X air a thoirt am bruid ceithir bliadhna roimhe: *X was kidnapped four years earlier*; dh’aithnich e iad agus dh’aithnich iadsan esan: *he recognised them and they recognised him*; cho luath ’s a thachair sin: *as soon as that happened*; chaidh iad air ais don luing: *they went back to the ship*; bha e air a dhol a-null gu soitheach eile: *he had gone over to another vessel*; cha robh an criutha ùr cho eòlach air eachdraidh: *the new crew weren’t so aware of his history*; bha uisge a dhìth orra: *they were in need of water*; chuir e roimhe teicheadh dhachaigh: *he decided to flee [for] home*; nach fhaigheadh e a thuarastal: *that he wouldn’t get his wages*; nach mothaicheadh duine do na bha e a’ dèanamh: *that nobody would notice what he was doing*; tharraing Dòmhnall an dà ràmh a-mach às na buthail-ràimh: *Donald pulled the two oars out of the rowlocks*; dh’fhalbh am balach bho thìr-mòr: *the boy from the mainland left (he obviously only knew that Dòmhnall was a mainland lad and didn’t know he came from that particular area!)*; aig mullach cnuc choimhead e air ais: *at the summit of a hill he looked back*; bha an fheadhainn air an luing a’ leigeil geòla eile: *the ones on the ship were lowering another dinghy*; bha am fallas air: *he was sweating*; imir coirce: *field of oats*; adagan: *stooks*; am falach am broinn na h-adaig: *hiding inside the stook*; chuir e an sguab air ais na h-àite: *he put the sheaf back in its place*; làigh X gu sàmhach airson greis a bharrachd: *X lay quietly for a little longer*; cha robh sgeul air duine: *there was no sign of anybody*; air bòrd na luinge: *on board the ship*; bha e air a dhol liath: *he had gone grey*; dh’iarr X cuid na h-oidhche air: *X asked him for a night’s lodging*; cha do dh’aithnich ise e na bu mhotha: *she didn’t recognise him either*; nach eil sibh gam aithneachainn?!: *don’t you recognise me?!*; às dèidh seachd bliadhna de dh’ionndrainn: *after seven years of missing [each other]*; deòir an toileachais: *the tears of happiness*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: rud a bha cumanta gu leòr sna làithean ud: *a thing that was common enough in those days. Gaelic has three demonstrative (or “pointing”) pronouns – seo, sin and siud, meaning here, there and yonder. Seo is sometimes reduced to sa (eg na h-ùbhlan sa = these apples). And siud is sometimes reduced to ud eg an fheadhainn ud (those ones yonder). If you can see a hill in the distance you might call it an cnoc ud thall (“yon hill over there”). Ud can also be used for conceptual distance and can refer to distant past events on a timescale (as in the Litir).*

Gnàths-cainnt na Litreach: bu choma leis sin: *he didn’t care about that.*

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