

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

A special programme, in the form of a “letter”, designed for 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, Ruairidh can be contacted at roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk. This is Litir 379. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 75 corresponds to Litir 379.

Chaidh mac Rìgh Lochlainn don taigh anns an robh Naois is a bhràithrean Ailleán is Àrdan, agus Deirdre, a’ fuireach. Sheall e a-staigh air toll na h-iuchrach, feuch sùil a thoirt air Deirdre. Bha Rìgh Uladh, Conachar, air iarraidh air brath a thoirt thuige co-dhiù bha a dreach is a dealbh fhèin air Deirdre fhathast.

Ach chunnaic Naois a shùil. Thog e fear de na dìsnean geala a bh’ air a bhòrd. Thilg e tron toll e cho luath ’s gun do chuir e sùil mac Rìgh Lochlainn **a-mach air cùl a chinn**.

Thuirt an Rìgh, “**Rachadh trì cheud gaisgeach sìos don taigh**. Thugadh iad Deirdre a-nìos thugam. Marbhadh iad càch.”

“Tha iad a’ tighinn,” thuirt Deirdre.

“Thèid mi fhìn a-mach agus caisgidh mi iad,” arsa Naois.

“Cha tu a thèid a-mach, ach mise,” thuirt am Boinne Borb, fear de mhic Fhearchair Mhic Ro. Chaidh e a-mach agus mharbh e trian de na gaisgich.

Thàinig an Rìgh a-mach. “Cò tha siud shìos air a’ bhlàr,” dh’fhaighnich e, “a’ marbhadh mo chuid ghaisgeach?”

“Tha mise, am Boinne Borb, ciad mhac Fhearchair Mhic Ro.”

“Thug mi fearann dha do sheanair, fearann dha d’ athair agus bheir mi fearann dhut fhèin ma thig thu a-nall dhan taobh agamsa,” thuirt Conachar. Agus chaidh am Boinne Borb a-null dha.

An uair sin, dh’òrdaich an Rìgh trì cheud gaisgeach dhol sìos don taigh airson Deirdre a thoirt a-nìos agus càch a mharbhadh.

“Tha iad a’ tighinn,” thuirt Deirdre.

“Tha,” arsa Naois, “ach thèid mi fhìn a-mach agus caisgidh mi iad.”

“Cha tu a thèid a-mach, ach mise,” thuirt an Cuillionn Cruaidh, fear eile de mhic Fhearchair Mhic Ro. Chaidh e a-mach agus mharbh e dà thrìan de na gaisgich.

Thàinig an Rìgh a-mach. “Cò tha siud shìos air a’ bhlàr,” dh’fhaighnich e, “a’ marbhadh mo chuid ghaisgeach?”

“Tha mise, an Cuillionn Cruaidh, dàrna mac Fhearchair Mhic Ro.”

“Thug mi fearann dha do sheanair, fearann dha d’ athair agus bheir mi fearann dhut fhèin ma thig thu a-nall dhan taobh agamsa,” thuirt Conachar. Agus chaidh an Cuillionn Cruaidh a-null dha.

An uair sin, dh’òrdaich an Rìgh trì cheud gaisgeach eile sìos don taigh airson Deirdre a thoirt a-nìos agus càch a mharbhadh.

“Tha iad a’ tighinn,” thuirt Deirdre.

“Tha,” arsa Naois, “ach thèid mi fhìn a-mach agus caisgidh mi iad.”

“Cha tu a thèid a-mach idir, ach mise,” ars’ am Fiallan Fionn, fear eile de mhic Fhearchair Mhic Ro. Chaidh e a-mach agus mharbh e trì trian de na gaisgich.

Thàinig an Rìgh a-mach. “Cò tha siud shìos air a’ bhlàr,” dh’fhaighnich e, “a’ marbhadh mo chuid ghaisgeach?”

“Tha mise, am Fiallan Fionn, treas mac Fhearchair Mhic Ro.”

“Thug mi fearann dha do sheanair, fearann dha d’ athair agus bheir mi fearann dhut fhèin ma thig thu a-nall dhan taobh agamsa,” thuirt Conachar.

“Uill, a Chonachair,” cha ghabh mi sin bhuat is chan fhaigh thu taing air a shon,” thuirt am Fiallan Fionn. “B’ fheàrr leam dhol dhachaigh agus innse do m’ athair na rinn mi, seach aon dad fhaighinn bhuatsa.”

Thill e a-steach don taigh airson bruidhinn ri Naois, Ailleann, Àrdan is Deirdre. “Tha mi a-nise,” thuirt e,” a’ dol dhachaigh a dh’innse do m’ athair gu bheil sibhse a-nise sàbhailte bho làmhnan an Rìgh.” Agus dh’fhalbh an gaisgeach òg dìreach, donn, ciatach dhachaigh, a dh’innse da athair gun robh Clann Uisne sàbhailte.

Bha seo tràth sa mhadainn, eadar oidhche is latha, aig uair na camhanaich. Thuirt Naois gum bu chòir dhaibh an taigh fhàgail agus tilleadh a dh’Alba.

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Faclan na Litreach: mac Rìgh Lochlainn: *son of the King of Scandinavia*; Rìgh Uladh: *King of Ulster*; disnean: *dice*; trian: *a third*; ciad: *first*; dàrna: *second*; a’ chamhanaich: *dawn*.

Abairtean na Litreach: sheall e a-staigh air toll na h-iuchrach: *he looked in through the keyhole*; feuch sùil a thoirt air Deirdre: *to try to see Deirdre*; bha X air iarraidh air brath a thoirt thuige: *X had asked him to bring him information*; co-dhiù bha a dreach is a dealbh fhèin air Deirdre fhathast: *whether Deirdre still had her beauty and form*; caisgidh mi iad: *I shall stop them*; cha tu a thèid a-mach, ach mise: *it’s not you that will go out, but me*; fear de mhic Fhearchair Mhic Ro: *one of Fearchar Mac Ro’s sons*; cò tha siud shìos air a’ bhlàr?: *who is that down on the [battle]field?*; a’ marbhadh mo chuid ghaisgeach: *killing my heroes*; bheir mi fearann dhut ma thig thu a-nall dhan taobh agamsa: *I will give you land if you come over to my side*; a-null dha: *over to him*; cha ghabh mi sin bhuat: *I won’t accept that from you*; chan fhaigh thu taing air a shon: *you won’t get thanks for it*; b’ fheàrr leam: *I would prefer*; dh’fhalbh an gaisgeach òg dìreach, donn, ciatach dhachaigh: *the young, upright, brown-haired splendid hero went home*; gum bu chòir dhaibh an taigh fhàgail: *that they should leave the house*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: **Rachadh trì cheud gaisgeach sìos don taigh:** *Let three hundred heroes go down to the house. Rachadh is here the third person plural imperative. The imperative is the mood of the verb which gives commands (dean e!, do it! would be an example in the second person singular). Here is another third person plural (“iad”) example: rachadh iad ann mas e sin an toil (let them go there if that is what they want). The third person plural imperative is formed by adding -(e)adh to the root of the verb. Two other verbs in the same paragraph of the Litir have the same grammatical status: Thugadh iad Deirdre a-nìos thugam (let them bring Deirdre up to me, the irregular verb thoir) and Marbhadh iad càch (let them kill the others).*

Gnàths-cainnt na Litreach: **a-mach air cùl a chinn:** *out at the back of his head. We generally say “a-mach air” for “out of” eg a-mach air an uinneig (out of the window).*

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

