

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 400. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 96 corresponds to Litir 400.

Bha Fionn agus a laoch ann an Taigh a’ Bhlàir Bhuidhe. Ach cha robh sgeul air a’ chuir a bha iad an dùil fhaighinn. Dh’iarr Fionn air fear aca dhol a-mach, feuch am faiceadh e duine sam bith a’ tighinn le biadh. Ach cha b’ urrainn do dhuine aca èirigh. Lean am màsan ris na h-àitean-suidhe, buinn an cas ris an ùrlar agus an dromannan ris na ballachan. Ghlaodh Conan ri Fionn far leac an teine, agus a dhruim is fhalt a’ leantainn rithe, “Nach do dh’innis mise tràth **mar dh’èireadh dhut?**”

Cha tuirt Fionn guth. Chuimhnich e air a dheud-fios – no *knowledge teeth*. Chuir e a mheur fodha. Fhuair e a-mach nach robh nì air bith a dh’fhuasgladh iad às an àite ach fuil triùir chloinne Rìgh Innis Tìle air a sìoladh tro amalan airgid ann an cupaichean òir. Chuimhnich Fionn gun robh Laoghaire, Mac Rìgh nan Sealg, agus Oscar a dhìth air a’ chuideachd an latha seo. Bha an Gurra-fiodha aige – ’s e sin fìdeag air a dhèanamh de dh’fhiodh. Cha do shèid e an Gurra-fiodha riamh ach nuair a bha e ann am fìor èiginn. Nuair a sheinneadh e i, rachadh a fuaim tro sheachd iomaill an domhain. Nuair a chluinneadh Laoghaire agus Oscar am fuaim, thigeadh iad far an robh Fionn.

Shèid e an Gurra-fiodha trì uairean. Mun d’ èirich a’ ghrian air an ath mhadainn bha Oscar a’ glaothaich taobh a-muigh an taighe, “A bheil thu an seo, Fhinn?” “Cò tha sin?” thuirt Fionn on taobh a-staigh. “Is e **an dà latha** e nuair nach aithnich thu mo ghuth-sa agus nach eil ach leud balla taighe eadarainn,” fhreagair Oscar. “Tha mise, Oscar, an seo, agus Laoghaire còmhla rium. Gu dè th’ againn ri dhèanamh?”

Dh’innis Fionn dhaibh an cruaidh-chàs anns an robh iad, agus nach robh nì air bith a dh’fhuasgladh iad às an àite ach fuil triùir chloinne Rìgh Innis Tìle air a sìoladh tro amalan airgid ann an cupaichean òir. Dh’fhaighnich Oscar càite am faigheadh iad sin. Thuirt Fionn, “Bheir thu aire mhath do bheul-atha na h-abhainn ud thall mu dhol fodha na grèine.” Ach ’s e a’ mhadainn a bh’ ann, agus bha an t-acras air na laoch. Dh’iarr Fionn air Oscar is Laoghaire biadh fhaighinn dhaibh.

Chaidh Oscar is Laoghaire gu Taigh Mòr faisg air làimh. Chaidh iad a-steach. Nuair a ràinig iad àite na còcaireachd chunnaic iad coltas ceatharnach fiadhaich a’ togail ceathramh fèidh à coire. Thuirt Oscar ri Laoghaire, “Lean mise agus thoir leat am biadh. Bheir mise an aghaidh air an duine.” Nuair a chaidh Oscar a-steach, cha robh sgeul air an duine. Na àite bha clamhan mòr le sgiathan sgaoilte, deas gu leum a-nuas air a cheann. Bha craosnach – no *dart* – aig Oscar. Thilg e an craosnach air a’ chlamhan. Bhris e sgiath dheth, agus thuit an clamhan air an ùrlar, is chan fhacas tuilleadh e. Thug Oscar is Laoghaire leotha gach mìr bìdh air an d’ fhuair iad grèim.

Ràinig iad an taigh anns an robh Fionn. Rinn iad toll ann am balla an taighe, agus chuir iad am biadh a-steach. Thuir Fionn gum biodh sluagh mòr còmhla ri triùir mhac Rìgh Innis Tìle aig beul-atha na h-abhainn aig dol fodha na grèine. “Ciamar a dh’ aithnicheas sinn triùir mhac Rìgh Innis Tìle?” dh’ fhaighnich Oscar.

“Bidh iad a’ coiseachd air leth air an t-sluagh air an làimh dheis, agus deiseachan uain’ orra,” thuir Fionn. Agus innsidh mi dhuibh **gu dè dh’èirich dhaibh** anns an ath Litir.

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Faclan na Litreach: fideag: *whistle*; cruaidh-chàs: *adversity*; ceatharnach: *freebooter*; craosnach: *dart*; deiseachan: *suits, clothes*.

Abairtean na Litreach: a bha iad an dùil fhaighinn: *that they were expecting to get*; feuch am faiceadh e: *to see if he could see*; cha b’ urrainn do dhuine aca èirigh: *none of them could get up*; lean am màsan ris na h-àitean-suidhe: *their backsides stuck to the sitting places*; buinn an cas ris an ùrlar: *the bottom of their feet [stuck] to the floor*; an dromannan ris na ballachan: *their backs [stuck] to the wall*; far leac an teine: *from the hearthstone*; agus a dhruim is fhalt a’ leantainn rithe: *with his back and hair sticking to it*; chuir e a mheur fodha: *he put his finger under it [knowledge teeth – a singular word in Gaelic]*; nì air bith a dh’ fhuasgladh iad: *anything that would free them*; fuil triùir chloinne Rìgh Innis Tìle: *the blood of the three children of the King of Iceland*; air a sìoladh tro amalan airgid ann an cupaichean òir: *given by the collector as “filtered through silver rings into cups of gold”*; ann am fìor èiginn: *in an emergency*; rachadh a fuaim tro sheachd iomail an domhain: *its sound would pass through the seven borders of the world*; shèid e X trì uairean: *he blew X three times*; agus nach eil ach leud balla taighe eadarainn: *and only the width of a house wall between us*; nach robh nì air bith a dh’ fhuasgladh iad: *that there was nothing that would free them*; bheir thu aire mhath do bheul-atha na h-abhainn ud thall: *watch well the ford-mouth of the river yonder*; a’ togail ceathramh fèidh à coire: *lifting a quarter of a deer from a cauldron*; bheir mise an aghaidh air: *I’ll attack*; clamhan mòr le sgiathan sgaoilte: *a large buzzard with outspread wings*; chan fhacas tuilleadh e: *it was never seen again*; ciamar a dh’ aithnicheas sinn?: *how will we recognise?*; air leth air an t-sluagh: *separate from the host*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: Is e **an dà latha** e nuair nach aithnich thu mo ghuth-sa: *a great change has come over you when you don’t recognise my voice. I would love to know the origin of this idiom (if you know please contact me)*. Dà latha means a “great change” in this instance, not “two days”. Here are other examples: nach ann air an dùthaich seo a thàinig an dà latha? (*hasn’t this country changed enormously?*); b’ e sin an dà latha (*that was a great change*). And here is a proverb: chan eil duine gun dà latha, ach duine gun latha idir (*the only person who may not expect great changes in their life is a person with no life – ie we all experience times of great change*).

Gnàths-cainnt na Litreach: nach do dh’ innis mise tràth **mar dh’èireadh dhut?**: *didn’t I tell you in good time what would happen to you?* The same idiom appears in the last sentence of the Litir: innsidh mi dhuibh **gu dè dh’èirich dhaibh** (*I’ll tell you what happened to them*).

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