

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 401. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 97 corresponds to Litir 401.

Bha Fionn agus a laoch ann an Taigh a’ Bhlàir Bhuidhe gun chomas èirigh. Cha robh nì air bith a dh’fhuasgladh iad ach fuil triùir chloinne Rìgh Innis Tìle air a sìoladh tro amalan airgid ann an cupaichean òir. Bha Oscar is Laoghaire a’ feitheamh ris an triùir aig beul-atha na h-abhainn aig dol fodha na grèine.

Thàinig sluagh mòr. Thug Oscar is Laoghaire ionnsaigh orra is cha do dh’fhàg iad aon duine beò. Dh’innis iad do Fhionn na thachair agus nach fhac’ iad clann an Rìgh. Dh’iarr Fionn orra dhol air ais gu beula-atha na h-abhainn a-rithist air an oidhche sin. Ach roimhe sin, bha an t-acras air Fionn is a chompanaich. “Faigh biadh dhuinn an-dràsta,” arsa Fionn.

Ràinig an dà laoch an Taigh Mòr. Nuair a fhuair Oscar sealladh air taigh na còcaireachd, chunnaic e duine fuathasach mòr, agus ceithir làmhan air, a’ togail na feòla às a’ choire. Chaidh Oscar a-staigh ach cha robh an duine a-nise ri fhaicinn. Thug e sùil mun cuairt agus chunnaic e iolaire mhòr a’ dol a thilgeil ugh air. Thog Oscar a sgiath eadar e fhèin is an t-ugh, ach **chuir am buille air a leth-ghlùn e** làimh ris a’ choire. Rinn an iolaire air. Thog Oscar an coire. Thaom e air ceann an eòin e. Thug an iolaire sgreuch fuathasach aiste, chaidh i tron bhalla agus cha robh an ath shealladh aig Oscar dhith. An uair sin, dh’fhalbh Oscar is Laoghaire le biadh airson Fionn is a chompanaich.

Aig dol fodha na grèine bha Oscar is Laoghaire a’ feitheamh aig beul-atha na h-abhainn. Chunnaic iad sluagh mòr a’ tighinn. Nuair a thàinig iad am fagas, ghlaodh iad, “**Cò an dà luidealach mhòr mhì-sgiamhach a tha an siud** nan seasamh anns an anmoch? Cò air bith iad, tha an t-àm dhaibh a bhith a’ gabhail an eagail.”

“Dà thrian d’ ur n-eagal a bhith oirbh fhèin, ach trian bheag dheth a bhith oirnn,” thuirt Oscar. Thug Oscar is Laoghaire ionnsaigh orra is cha do dh’fhàg iad aon duine beò. Thill iad agus dh’innis iad do Fhionn nach tàinig clann an Rìgh fhathast. Dh’iarr Fionn orra tilleadh gu beul-atha na h-abhainn a-rithist an ath oidhche. Ach roimhe sin, bha an t-acras air Fionn is a chompanaich. “Faigh biadh dhuinn,” arsa Fionn.

Chaidh Oscar air thoiseach don Taigh Mhòr. Bha e a’ gleidheadh a shùil gu math biorach, feuch cò bhiodh ann an taigh na còcaireachd an latha seo. Nuair a fhuair e sealladh air, chunnaic e duine eireachdail, calma air an robh dà cheann agus ceithir làmhan, a’ togail na feòla às a’ choire. Ach nuair a chaidh e a-staigh, cha robh duine ri fhaicinn. Na àite bha Beithir Mhòr Sgiathach, agus dà cheann nathrach oirre, na seasamh air an ùrlar.

Chagair Oscar ri Laoghaire, “Dèan thus’ air a’ bhiadh is nì mis’ air a’ Bheithir.” Thog e a sgiath agus tharraing e a shleagh. Le aon sàthadh chuir e an t-sleagh tro aon cheann, agus

pìos dhith tron cheann eile aig a' Bheithir. Nuair a tharraing Oscar an t-sleagh a-mach às a' Bheithir, chaidh i à sealladh.

Chaidh Oscar is Laoghaire air ais gu Taigh a' Bhlàir Bhuidhe leis a' bhiadh do Fhionn is a dhaoine. Nuair a thàinig ciaradh an fheasgair, thuirt Fionn ri Oscar, "Biodh d' amalan agus do chupaichean leat a-nochd." Ach am bitheadh ann an dha-rìribh? Dèanaibh cinnteach gum bi sibh san èisteachd an ath-sheachdain nuair a thig an sgeulachd gu ceann.

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Faclan na Litreach: ghlaodh: *shouted*; sàthadh: *thrust*.

Abairtean na Litreach: cha robh nì air bith a dh' fhuasgladh iad ach fuil triùir chloinne Rìgh Innis Tìle: *nothing would free them but the blood of the three children of the King of Iceland*; tro amalan airgid ann an cupaichean òir: *through silver rings into gold cups*; thug X ionnsaigh orra: *X attacked them*; faigh biadh dhuinn an-dràsta: *get food for us just now*; sealladh air taigh na còcaireachd: *a view of the cooking house*; duine fuathasach mòr, agus ceithir làmhan air: *an enormous man with four hands*; a' togail na feòla às a' choire: *lifting the meat out of the cauldron*; chunnaic e iolaire mhòr a' dol a thilgeil ugh air: *he saw a large eagle going to throw an egg at him*; thog e a sgiath: *he lifted his shield [sgiaith can also mean "wing"]*; thaom e air ceann an eòin e: *he poured it on the bird's head*; thug an iolaire sgreuch fuathasach aiste: *the eagle gave a terrible shriek*; dol fodha na grèine: *sunset*; am fagas: *close*; nan seasamh anns an anmoch: *standing in the evening*; cò air bith iad: *whoever they are*; tha an t-àm dhaibh a bhith a' gabhail an eagail: *it's time for them to get scared*; dà thrìan d' ur n-eagal a bhith oirbh fhèin: *two thirds of your fear be on yourselves*; bha e a' gleidheadh a shùil gu math biorach: *he was keeping a sharp eye out*; chunnaic e duine eireachdail, calma air an robh dà cheann: *he saw a handsome, brave man who had two heads*; Beithir Mhòr Sgiathach: *a large winged dragon*; dà cheann nathrach: *two snake heads*; dèan thus' air a' bhiadh: *you make for the food*; tharraing e a shleagh: *he drew his spear*; ciaradh an fheasgair: *dusk*; biodh d' amalan agus do chupaichean leat a-nochd: *may you have your rings and cups tonight*; am bitheadh ann an dha-rìribh?: *but would it really ie would they get their rings and cups?*; nuair a thig an sgeulachd gu ceann: *when the story comes to an end*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: **chuir am buille air a leth-ghlùn e:** *the blow put him on one knee. Notice the use of leth- here – when referring to a pair of items, particularly body parts, it means "one" (ie one half of the pair). For "one-eyed" we say leth-shùileach, not aon-shùileach. Other examples are leth-làmhach (one-handed or one-armed), leth-chasach (one-legged) and leth-thaobhach (one-sided).*

Gnàths-cainnt na Litreach: **Cò an dà luidealach mhòr mhì-sgiamhach a tha an siud?:** *who are the two big uncomely slob over there? Readers of the Litir sometimes ask me to introduce them to swear words and terms of abuse in Gaelic, which I stubbornly resist (being ignorant of the best ones anyway!) But, to satisfy such desires a little, here is an example. 'S e luidealach a th' annad! You're a slob!*

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