

# 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 415. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 111 corresponds to Litir 415.*

Tha mi a’ dol a chur crìoch air an stòiridh “Diarmaid agus Gràinne” an-diugh. Bha Diarmaid air cur às don torc nimhe air Beinn Ghulbain ann an Gleann Sìdh. Ach bha fios aig Fionn, ged as e gaisgeach làidir a bh’ ann an Diarmaid, gun robh aon laigse aige. Bha ball-dòbhrain aige air bonn a chois. Nam faigheadh calg aig torc a-steach ann, bhiodh sin ag adhbharachadh a bhàis.

Dh’iarr Fionn air Diarmaid dhol air ais gu far an robh closach an tuirc.

“A Dhiarmaid,” thuir e, “tomhais an torc. Cia mheud troigh bho shoc da shàil?” A bheil sibh a’ tuigsinn nam faclan sin? *From its snout to its heel.* Bho shoc da shàil.

Bha Fionn ag iarraidh gum biodh Diarmaid a’ tomhas fad an tuirc le chasan, agus e casruisgte. Rinn e sin bho shoc da shàil. Ach bha sin leis an fhionnadh. Tha sin a’ ciallachadh *with the lie of the hair or bristles.* Leis an fhionnadh.

“Tha e sia troighean deug,” thuir Diarmaid. ’S e torc air leth mòr a bh’ ann!

“Tomhais an torc a-rithist,” thuir Fionn. “An turas seo an aghaidh an fhionnadh.” Tha sin a’ ciallachadh *against the lie of the bristles.* An aghaidh an fhionnadh.

Rinn Diarmaid sin ach, an turas seo bhris bior cuilg am ball-dòbhrain air bonn a chois. Thuit e. Shaoileadh tu gum biodh Fionn toilichte. Ach ghabh e aithreachas mu na rinn e. “Dè dhèanadh na b’ fheàrr thu, a Dhiarmaid,” thuir e.

“Nam faighinn deoch uisge à bas Fhinn, bhithinn na b’ fheàrr,” fhreagair Diarmaid.

Dh’fhalbh Fionn a dh’iarraidh uisge. Cha robh fad’ aige ri dhol. Thog e an t-uisge na làmhnan. Ach nuair a **smaoinicheadh** e air Gràinne, bhiodh e a’ dòrtadh an uisge. Nuair a bhiodh e a’ **smaoineachadh** air Diarmaid, agus an gaisgeach sin ann an èiginn, gheibheadh e tuilleadh uisge. An uair sin bhiodh e a’ smaoineachadh air Gràinne a-rithist agus dhòirteadh e an t-uisge. Cha robh fios aige dè dhèanadh e. **Bha e eadar long is laimrig.**

Chuir an dàil às do Dhiarmaid. Mus do thill Fionn dha ionnsaigh le uisge, bha e marbh. Thill Fionn is a chompanaich don allt far an do choinnich iad ri Diarmaid anns a’ chiad dol a-mach. Choisich iad suas ri taobh an uillt.

Ràinig iad an taigh far an robh Gràinne. Chaidh iad a-steach. Chunnaic iad gun robh dà leabaidh ann. Thuig iad gun robh leapannan air leth aig an dithis. Thuig iad gun robh Diarmaid neo-chiontach. Bha iad anabarrach duilich mu na thachair.

Tha cuid ag ràdh gun do ghabh Gràinne làmh na beatha fhèin. Tha cuid eile a’ dèanamh dheth gun robh Fionn is a chompanaich cho feargach le Gràinne ’s gun do thog iad teine de ghlas-darach agus gun do loisg iad Gràinne gu bàs anns an teine.

Mu choinneimh Beinn Ghulbain tha tom air a bheil Bad an Lòin. Agus air pìos dheth sin tha, air na mapaichean chun an latha an-diugh, àite air a bheil *The Tomb* – an tuam. A rèir beul-

aithris, 's e seo làrach na h-uaghach aig Diarmaid. Chaidh ceithir tursachan a chur suas ann. Agus ma thèid thu gu ceann an ear nan tursachan, is ma choimheadas tu sìos an loidhne a tha iad a' dèanamh, uill, tha e coltach gu bheil iad a' comharrachadh an àite far an do mharbh Diarmaid torc nimhe Beinn Ghulbain o chionn ceudan mòra bhliadhnaichean.

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**Faclan na Litreach:** laigse: *weakness*; calg: *bristle*; closach: *carcase*; tomhais: *measure*; dàil: *delay*; sliseagan: *shavings (of wood)*; neo-chiontach: *innocent*.

**Abairtean na Litreach:** bha X air cur às don torc nimhe air Beinn Ghulbain ann an Gleann Sìdh: *X had killed the wild boar on Ben Gulabin in Glenshee*; ged as e gaisgeach làidir a bh' ann an X: *although X was a strong hero*; bha ball-dòbhrain aige air bonn a chois: *he had a mole on the sole of his foot*; le chasan, agus e casruisgte: *with his feet, he being bare-footed*; bhris bior cuilg X: *the point of a bristle broke X*; shaoileadh tu: *you'd think*; ghabh e aithreachas: *he regretted*; dè dhèanadh na b' fheàrr thu?: *what would make you better?*; nam faighinn deoch uisge à bas Fhinn: *if I were to get a drink of water from Fionn's palm*; a dh'iarraidh uisge: *to get water*; bhiodh e a' dòrtadh an uisge: *he would pour the water away*; ann an èiginn: *in an emergency situation*; cha robh fios aige dè dhèanadh e: *he didn't know what to do [lit. what he would do]*; anns a' chiad dol a-mach: *in the first instance*; ri taobh an uillt: *beside the burn*; gun robh leapannan air leth aig an dithis: *that the two had separate beds*; anabarrach duilich: *extremely sorry*; gun do ghabh X làmh na beatha fhèin: *that X committed suicide*; 's gun do thog iad teine de ghlas-darach: *that they built a fire of peeled oak*; 's e seo làrach na h-uaghach: *this is the site of the grave*; chaidh ceithir tursachan a chur suas: *four standing stones were erected*; ceann an ear: *the eastern end*; ma choimheadas tu sìos an loidhne: *if you look along [down] the line*; gu bheil iad a' comharrachadh an àite: *that they point to the spot*; o chionn ceudan mòra bhliadhnaichean: *many hundreds of years ago*.

**Puing-chànain na Litreach:** nuair a smaoinich e air Gràinne/nuair a bhiodh e a' smaoinichadh air Diarmaid: *when he thought [would think] of Gràinne/when he would be thinking of Diarmaid. Can you tell the different grammatical status of smaoinichadh and smaoinichadh and how to spell them? The second is the verbal noun ("thinking") and is used in a construction with the verb "to be" eg bha mi a' smaoinichadh [lit. "I was at thinking"]. You will find this in a dictionary (although in some places the verbal noun is smaointinn or smuaineachdainn). The first, however, is the conditional form of the verb. It is created by taking the root of the verb which is equivalent to the second person singular imperative ie an order given to a child – smaoinich! (think!) Then you add the suffix – eadh. That explains the different spelling and how to tell them apart.*

**Gnàths-cainnt na Litreach:** Bha e eadar long is laimrig: *he was undecided [lit. he was between ship and landing-place].*

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