

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 470. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 166 corresponds to Litir 470.

Bu mhath leam stòiridh innse dhuibh an t-seachdain seo. 'S e seann stòiridh a th' ann agus 's e an t-ainm a th' air “Na Trì Coin Uaine”. Chaidh a chruinneachadh ann an Eilean Eige o chionn fhada.

Bha ann uaireigin prionnsa agus a phiuthar. Chaochail an athair agus am màthair. Bha am prionnsa agus a phiuthar a' fuireach còmhla. Gach latha bhiodh am prionnsa a' falbh don mhonadh às dèidh nan caorach. Mus fhalbhadh e, bhiodh e ag iarraidh air a phiuthair gun a falt a chìreadh no an uinneag thuath fhosgladh gus an tigeadh e dhachaigh.

Latha a bha seo, thachair am prionnsa ri duine sa mhonadh. Bha trì coin uaine aig an duine.

“An ceannaich thu na coin seo bhuam?” ars an duine.

“Chan eil dad agam a bheirinn dhut air an son,” fhreagair am prionnsa.

“**An toireadh tu** molt dhomh air an son?” thuirt am fear eile.

“**Bheireadh,**” thuirt am prionnsa.

“**Thèid mise an urras** nach gabh thu aithreachas airson sin,” ars an duine. “Is iad ainmean nan con – Fios, Luaths agus Trom. Nuair a thèid thu don bheinn-sheilg cha bhi agad fhèin ach suidhe air cnoc agus na coin a chur air falbh. Bidh fios aig Fios far am bi na fèidh. **Beiridh** Luaths orra. Agus **bheir** Trom dhachaigh iad.”

Sin mar a bha. Fhuair an duine am molt agus fhuair am prionnsa na coin. An ath mhadainn, dh'fhalbh am prionnsa don bheinn-sheilg. Ach bha uiread toileachais air 's gun do dhìochuimhnich e innse do phiuthar gun a falt a chìreadh no an uinneag thuath fhosgladh gus an tigeadh e dhachaigh.

Shuidh am prionnsa air cnoc. Chuir e na coin air falbh. Bha fios aig Fios far an robh na fèidh. **Rug** Luaths orra. Thug Trom dhachaigh iad.

Nuair a bha iad air an rathad dhachaigh thug Fios naidheachd don phrionnsa. Dh'innis e dha gun robh trì famhairean air a dhol a choimhead a pheathar. Rinn na famhairean uamh fon taigh. Rinn iad toll tron ùrlar. Air an toll chuir iad sguiteal (trapdoor). Air an sguiteal chuir iad cathair. Rinn iad fhèin agus a' phiuthar suas eatarra gun iarradh ise air a bràthair suidhe air a' chathair. Bhiodh e a' tuiteam don uaimh agus dh'itheadh na famhairean e.

“Gabh thusa mo chomhairle,” thuirt Fios ris a' phrionnsa. “Na suidh air a' chathair idir. Nuair a bheir thu am brochan againn dhen teine, cuir air an sguiteal e. Thèid mi fhìn agus an dà chù eile am bad a chèile. Cuiridh sinn car dhen phoit, agus dhen sguiteal. Tuitidh am brochan mu chinn nam famhairean agus thèid an losgadh.”

Sin mar a bha. Nuair a thàinig am prionnsa dhachaigh thòisich a phiuthar air a ghràdhachadh. Dh'iarr i air suidhe air a' chathair.

“Cha shuidh,” ars esan. “Suidhidh mi far an togair mi fhìn.”

Thug e am brochan dhen teine. Chuir e air an sguiteal e. Thòisich na coin air sabaid. Chuireadh car dhen phoit agus dhen sguiteal. Thuit am brochan mu chinn nam famhairean agus a-mach air an doras a ghabh iad.

A-mach às an dèidh ghabh am prionnsa agus na coin. Dhall iad air na famhairean. Chaidh na famhairean a-steach air doras na h-uamha. Thill am prionnsa agus na coin dhachaigh agus ghabh iad fois.

An ath mhadainn thill am prionnsa agus na coin don bheinn-sheilg. Agus dè bha a’ dol a thachairt air an latha sin? Faodar a bhith cinnteach nach robh droch obair nam famhairean seachad fhathast.

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Faclan na Litreach: molt: *wedder*; beinn-sheilg: *hunting mountain*; uamh: *a cave*; sguiteal: *trapdoor [from English scuttle]*.

Abairtean na Litreach: Na Trì Coin Uaine: *The Three Green Dogs*; chaidh a chruinneachadh ann an Eilean Eige o chionn fhada: *it was collected on the Isle of Eigg a long time ago*; bha ann uaireigin prionnsa agus a phiuthar: *there was at one time a prince and his sister*; chaochail an athair agus am màthair: *their father and mother died*; bhiodh X a’ falbh don mhonadh às dèidh nan caorach: *X would leave for the hill after the sheep*; mus fhalbhadh e: *before he would leave*; gun a falt a chìreadh no an uinneag thuath fhosgladh: *not to comb her hair or to open the north window*; an ceannaich thu na coin seo bhuam?: *will you buy these dogs from me?*; chan eil dad agam a bheirinn dhut air an son: *I have nothing I would [could] give you for them*; Fios, Luaths agus Trom: *Knowledge, Swiftmess and Heaviness*; cha bhi agad fhèin ach suidhe air cnoc: *you’ll only have to sit on a hill*; na coin a chur air falbh: *to send the dogs away*; bha uiread toileachais air ’s gun do dhìochuimhnich e: *he was so excited he forgot*; gun robh trì famhairean air a dhol a choimhead a pheathar: *that three giants had gone to visit his sister*; rinn iad toll tron ùrlar: *they made a hole through the floor*; gun iarradh ise air a bràthair suidhe air a’ chathair: *that she would ask her brother to sit on the chair*; dh’itheadh na famhairean e: *the giants would eat him*; nuair a bheir thu am brochan againn dhen teine: *when you take our porridge off the fire*; thèid mi fhìn agus an dà chù eile am bad a chèile: *myself and the other two dogs will get stuck into each other*; cuiridh sinn car de: *we will upset, turn over*; thèid an losgadh: *they will be burned*; thòisich a phiuthar air a ghràdhachadh: *his sister started to caress him*; far an togair mi fhìn: *where I want to*; agus a-mach air an doras a ghabh iad: *out the door they went*; dhall iad air: *they laid into*; ghabh iad fois: *they took a rest*; faodar a bhith cinnteach: *it can be certain*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: *I hope you didn’t get confused by the two irregular verbs beir (bear, catch) and thoir (give, take) which appear in the Litir. Some of their forms can be confusingly similar, although beir often employs the preposition air. “An toireadh tu molt dhomh?” means “would you give me a wedder?” and employs thoir (in a conditional form). The equivalent in beir would be “am beireadh tu?” (“would you bear, catch?”). The reply to an toireadh is bheireadh – and here both verbs are identical. Beiridh Luaths orra is a future active form and means “Luaths will catch them”. Bheir Trom dhachaigh iad is also the future active, but this time of thoir and means “Trom will take them home”. The past tenses of each are rug (Rug Luaths orra) and thug (Thug Trom dhachaigh iad).*

Gnathas-cainnt na Litreach: **Thèid mise an urras** nach gabh thu aithreachas airson sin: **I’ll bear witness** that you’ll not regret that.

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