

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 499. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 195 corresponds to Litir 499.

Bu mhath leam seann stòiridh innse dhuibh an t-seachdain seo. Chan eil mi buileach cinnteach cò às a tha e. Siorrachd Pheairt 's dòcha. 'S e an t-ainm a th' air Cù Fhearchair Bhàin.

Bha cù math aig Fearchar Bàn. 'S e cù-chaorach a bh' ann, agus 's e Fraoch an t-ainm a bh' air. Bha a h-uile cìobair eile anns a' ghleann farmadach. Cha robh na coin acasan cho math ri Fraoch. Chan e a-mhàin gun robh Fraoch a' coimhead math, le casan làidir agus earball fada snasail, ach gu robh e fìor mhath leis na caoraich.

Abair an dòigh 's a bhiodh e a' cruinneachadh nan caorach gu h-àrd anns na coireachan ceòthach no air na creagan casa. Bha e anabarrach sgileil. Leanadh e fead a mhaighstir gu cùramach. Ach, uaireannan, bhiodh e a' trusadh nan caorach leis fhèin, ro fhad' air falbh airson fead Fhearchair a chluinntinn.

Ach **'s ann aigesan a bha am fradharc**. Mura robh e cinnteach dè dhèanadh e, rachadh e gu creag far am faiceadh Fearchar e. Thogadh Fearchar am bat' aige ann an dòigh àraidh. Bha sin a' ciallachadh rudeigin don chù. Uaireannan chuireadh an cìobair a bhonaid ghorm air ceann a bhata. Bhiodh sin a' ciallachadh rudeigin eile do Fhraoch.

Agus mar a bhiodh dùil, 's e cù Gàidhealach a bh' ann. Cha do thuig e a' Bheurla idir. Cha bhruidhneadh Fearchar ris ach ann an Gàidhlig. Gu dearbh, chan eil mi buileach cinnteach an robh Beurla aig Fearchar fhèin. Co-dhiù, bha fear Gallta a' fuireach anns a' ghleann, fear ris an canadh iad “Jock”. Latha a bha seo, a rèir aithris, thuir e ri fear eile, “Mon, that's a gran' dog o' Farquhar's. I'd gie eicht punds for him masel' if he kent braid Scotch.” Eadhon nan tuigeadh Fearchar am bargan, cha reiceadh e Fraoch ri duine.

Ge-tà, cha robh Fraoch uile-gu-lèir foirfe. Uill, cò nar measg aig nach eil laigse air choreigin? Agus 's ann mar sin a bha e don chù seo oir, nuair a thigeadh àm an rùsgaidh, nuair a bhiodh cìobairean is coin cruinn còmhla, dh'fhalbhadh Fraoch air an oidhche airson ... uill ... beagan spòrs. Cha robh Fearchar ro thoilichte mu dheidhinn agus bhiodh e a' càineadh Fhraoich, agus a' toirt iomradh air buadhan a mhàthar nach robh buileach modhail.

Oidhche a bha seo aig àm an rùsgaidh bha fear Iain Ruadh agus a bhean a' coiseachd anns a' ghleann faisg air taigh Fhearchair. Bha iad air an rathad dhachaigh bhon Ghalltachd. Aig àite ris an canar Glac nam Bodach, chuala iad fuaim annasach.

“Dè am fuaim a tha sin, Iain?” thuir a' bhean.

“Na fèidh am measg nan clach,” fhreagair Iain.

“**Chan e, no fèidh,**” thuir a bhean. “Tha uisge-beatha nad cheann fhathast.”

“Caoraich am measg nan clach, ma-thà,” thuirt an duine aice.

“Chan e, no caoraich,” fhreagair a bhean. “Tha uisge-beatha nad cheann fhathast.”
Thàinig fuaim às ùr a-mach às an dorchadas. Mar ghliongadh meatailt.

“A Dhia, bi mun cuairt dhuinn,” dh’èigh a’ bhean, “ ’s e am Fear as Miosa fhèin a th’ ann!”

Bha Iain a’ fàs sòbarra gu luath. “Tha am fuaim gu dearbh coltach gi gliongadh shlabhraidhean!” thuirt e. Tuigidh sibh gun robh iad dhen bheachd gun robh an Sàtan fhèin a’ dèanamh orra!

Theich Iain Ruadh ’s a’ bhean aige don taigh a b’ fhaisge. B’ e sin taigh Fhearchair. Bha Fearchar a-staigh. Ach càite an robh Fraoch? Uill, innsidh mi sin dhuibh an ath sheachdain.

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Faclan na Litreach: Siorrachd Pheairt: *Perthshire*; Cù Fhearchair Bhàin: *Farquhar Ban’s dog*; cù-chaorach: *sheepdog*; cìobair: *shepherd*; farmadach: *envious*; anabarrach sgileil: *exceptionally skilful*; bonaid: *bonnet*; sòbarra: *sober*; gliongadh shlabhraidhean: *clinking of chains*.

Abairtean na Litreach: chan e a-mhàin gun robh Fraoch a’ coimhead math: *not only did Fraoch look good*; earball fada snasail: *a long elegant tail*; abair an dòigh ’s a bhiodh e a’ cruinneachadh nan caorach: *what a magnificent way in which he’d gather the sheep*; anns na coireachan ceòthach no air na creagan casa: *in the misty corries or on the steep crags*; leanadh e fead a mhaighstir gu cùramach: *he’d diligently obey his master’s whistle*; bhiodh e a’ trusadh nan caorach leis fhèin: *he’d gather the sheep on his own*; rachadh e gu creag: *he’d go to a crag*; thogadh Fearchar am bat’ aige ann an dòigh àraidh: *Farquhar would lift his stick in a particular way*; cha bhruidhneadh X ris ach ann an Gàidhlig: *X would only speak to him in Gaelic*; uile-gu-lèir foirfe: *entirely perfect*; cò nar measg aig nach eil laigse air choreigin?: *who among us does not have some weakness or other?*; àm an rùsgaidh: *shearing time*; cruinn còmhlà: *together*; bhiodh e a’ càineadh Fhraoich: *he would criticize Fraoch*; a’ toirt iomradh air buadhan a mhàthar nach robh buileach modhail: *casting aspersions on his mother which were not entirely polite*; tha uisge-beatha nad cheann: *you’re under the influence [lit. there is whisky in your head]*; ’s e am Fear as Miosa fhèin a th’ ann: *it’s the Evil One himself*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: Chan e, no fèidh: *literally, “it’s not, or deer”, idiomatically “it’s not deer at all”. I want to make the point about the use of “Chan e” here. She is answering her husband’s statement “Na fèidh am measg nan clach” (the deer among the stones). This is a phrase without a verb. We always say “answer with the verb in the question or statement” but there is no verb. In this situation, the assertive verb is understood, although not expressed. In other words he is saying “Is e na fèidh...” That’s why his wife answered, “Chan e”. Here is another example. Person A: “Latha math a th’ ann an-diugh”. There is no verb at the beginning of the sentence but “Is e latha math ...” is understood. Person B therefore replies, “Is e. Latha math dha-rìribh...”*

Gnathas-cainnt na Litreach: ’s ann aigesan a bha am fradharc: *he had fantastic eyesight [lit. it’s at him that the eyesight was]*.

* Tha “Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh” air a maoineachadh le MG ALBA