

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 rodny.macleam@bbc.co.uk. This is Litir 500. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 196 corresponds to Litir 500.

Fàilte oirbh a chàirdean. Ruairidh MacIlleathain an seo le Litir eile. Mus lean mi leis an stòiridh a thòisich mi an t-seachdain sa chaidh, bu mhath leam taing mhòr a thoirt don a h-uile duine a th’ air sgrìobhadh thugam no a th’ air bruidhinn rium, is taic a thoirt dhomh, thairis air na bliadhnaichean, a thaobh Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh. Thòisich an Litir o chionn faisg air deich bliadhna agus tha i air nàdar de chlach-mhìle a ruigsinn an-diugh oir ’s e seo an còig ceudamh tè. Tha e fìor laghach a bhith a’ cluinntinn bho dhaoine air feadh Alba, agus air feadh an t-saoghail, a tha ag èisteachd ris na Litrichean. Tha e gu sònraichte laghach nuair a chluinneas mi bho dhaoine nach robh fileanta nuair a thòisich iad air èisteachd riutha, agus a tha a-nise a’ sgrìobhadh is a’ labhairt na Gàidhlig gu siùbhlach. Mo bheannachd oirbh.

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh an t-seachdain sa chaidh mun chù-chaorach Fraoch agus a mhaighstir, Fearchar Bàn. Bha Iain Ruadh agus a bhean a-muigh ann am Glac nam Bodach air an oidhche nuair a dh’fhairich iad fuaim eagallach. Ruith iad don taigh a b’ fhaisge – taigh Fhearchair Bhàin. Bha Fearchar a-staigh, ach cha robh Fraoch.

Bha Fearchar ag èisteachd ri bean Iain, agus i ag aithris mun fhuaim a **dh’fhairich** iad, nuair a rinn cù sgiùgan aig an doras. Dh’fhosgail e an doras agus cò bh’ ann ach Fraoch.

Ruith an cù mar an dealanaich seachad air Fearchar. Chaidh e don àite aige fon leabaidh far an d’ rachadh e nuair a gheibheadh e trod. Bha e follaiseach gun robh rudeigin ceàrr air. Dh’iarr Fearchar air thighinn a-mach agus mu dheireadh thall, thàinig e. Bhiodh earball air a bhith eadar a chasan deiridh nam biodh gu leòr dheth ann. Bha mòran de dh’earball Fhraoich a dhìth.

“Bha e ann an làmhan an Fhir as Miosa,” thuirt am boireannach.

“Nam biodh a’ bhrùid bhochd air a bhith na làmhan-san, bhiodh fàileadh dàthte dheth,” fhreagair Fearchar. Thug e sùil air a’ chù. Cha robh fàileadh no coltas de dhàthadh no losgadh air. Bha an gnothach annasach.

Air an làrna-mhàireach, dh’fhalbh Iain is a bhean dhachaigh. Bha Fraoch a-muigh ach bha clobhd dearg air a cheangal ri earball – no na bh’ air fhàgail de earball. Às dèidh dha tòrr ceasnachaidh a dhèanamh, fhuair Fearchar a-mach dè dìreach a thachair.

Bha Fraoch a-muigh an oidhche a bha sin. Bha cìobairean agus an coin ann còmhla agus nochd Fraoch nam measg. Thòisich Fraoch air sabaid le cù eile. Dh’èirich sabaid mhòr eadar na coin gu lèir. Bha fear de na cìobairean gu math mì-thoilichte le

Fraoch. Mar pheanas, cheangail e coire ri earball Fhraoich. Bhreab e an cù agus dh'iarr e air falbh dhachaigh.

Bha Fraoch air an rathad dhachaigh, a' ruith tro fhraoch garbh anns an dorchadas, nuair a dh'fhairich Iain 's a bhean e. Bha e a' dèanamh fuaim leis a' choire ceangailte ri earball. Fuaim a bha eagallach. Mu dheireadh, fhuair e an coire an sàs eadar dà chloich. Cha b' urrainn dha ghluasad. Rinn e spàirn mhòr. Thàinig pìos de earball dheth, a' fàgail a' choire fhathast ceangailte ris. Agus 's ann le leth-earbail a nochd e aig taigh a' mhaighstir.

Uill, a bheil fios agaibh air seo. Chun an latha mu dheireadh de a bheatha, bha Fearchar feargach mu dheidhinn mar a thachair don chù aige. Agus am fear a cheangail an coire ri earball Fhraoich...? Dh'fhalbh e agus cha do thill e don ghleann a-chaidh tuilleadh.

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Faclan na Litreach: cù-chaorach: *sheepdog*; taigh Fhearchair Bhàin: *Farquhar Ban's house*; sgiùgan: *whimpering*; dàthadh: *singing*; losgadh: *burning*; clobhd: *cloth*; ciobairean: *shepherds*; bhreab: *kicked*; feargach: *angry*.

Abairtean na Litreach: mus lean mi: *before I continue*; a h-uile duine a th' air sgrìobhadh thugam: *everybody who's written to me*; tha i air nàdar de chlach-mhìle a ruigsinn: *it's reached a sort of a milestone*; seo an còig ceudamh tè: *this is the 500th one*; nuair a dh'fhairich iad fuaim eagallach: *when they heard a frightful noise*; ruith an cù mar an dealanaich seachad air: *the dog ran like lightning past*; far an d' rachadh e nuair a gheibheadh e trod: *where he'd go when he was being scolded*; bhiodh earball air a bhith eadar a chasan deiridh: *his tail would have been between his hind legs*; nam biodh gu leòr dheth ann: *if there had been enough of it left [there]*; bha mòran de dh'earball Fhraoich a dhìth: *much of Fraoch's tail was missing*; nam biodh a' bhrùid bhochd air a bhith na làmhan-san: *if the poor brute had been in his hands*; bhiodh fàileadh dàthte dheth: *he would have a singed smell*; às dèidh dha tòrr ceasnachaidh a dhèanamh: *after doing much questioning*; dh'èirich sabaid mhòr eadar na coin gu lèir: *great fighting broke out among all the dogs*; mar pheanas, cheangail e coire ri earball Fhraoich: *as punishment, he tied a kettle to Fraoch's tail*; an sàs eadar dà chloich: *stuck between two stones*; cha b' urrainn dha ghluasad: *he couldn't move*; rinn e spàirn mhòr: *he made a great effort*; 's ann le leth-earbail a nochd e: *it's with half a tail he appeared*; cha do thill e don ghleann a-chaidh tuilleadh: *he never returned to the glen*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: agus i ag aithris mun fhuaim a dh'fhairich iad: *while she was reporting on the noise they heard [see also Litir 100 from April 2001]. You will rarely see the verb fairich (a' faireachadh, a' faireachdainn) translated as "hear" in the dictionaries. More commonly it is given as "sense, feel". But, in reality, it might commonly be translated as "hear" – when a noise is heard unexpectedly. You're not listening for it but suddenly there's the sound, hitting your eardrums. You might say "dh'fhairich mi fuaim" rather than "chuala mi fuaim". The English translation would most likely be "I heard a noise".*

Gnathas-cainnt na Litreach: Bha e ann an làmhan an Fhir as Miosa: *he was in the hands of the Evil One [lit. "the worst one" ie the Devil].*

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