

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.maclean@bbc.co.uk. This is Litir 604. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 300 corresponds to Litir 604.

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh na seann sgeulachd *Balgam Mòr*. Chuir am mac a b’ òige aig a’ bhantraich crìoch air an t-soitheach a sheòladh air muir agus tìr. Bha e an dòchas nighean Rìgh Eilean nam Ban a phòsadh.

Bha an soitheach math air seòladh, co-dhiù bha i air muir no tìr. Bha Mac na Bantraich na **sgìobair** oirr’. Chaidh e a choimhead airson **sgìoba**. Bha e a’ seòladh ri taobh coille nuair a ruith fiadh a-mach aiste **na dheann**. Cha deach am fiadh fada nuair a thàinig fear na dhèidh. Rug e air an fhiadh.

“Is math a ruitheas tu,” thuirt an sgìobair ris.

“Seadh,” ars am fear eile.

“Dè an t-ainm a th’ ort?” dh’fhaighnich an sgìobair.

“Is mise Lurga Luath,” thuirt am fear eile.

“An tig thu leam san t-soitheach seo?” dh’fhaighnich an sgìobair. Chaidh Lurga Luath air bòrd.

Cha deach iad fada nuair a chunnaic iad fear eile. Bha aghaidh ris an talamh mar gun robh e ag èisteachd ri rudeigin. Dh’fhaighnich an sgìobair dheth gu dè bha e a’ dèanamh.

“Tha mi ag èisteachd an fheadir a’ tighinn tron talamh,” thuirt e.

“Is fheàrr dhut tighinn leam fhèin san t-soitheach seo,” ars an sgìobair.

“Nì mi sin,” fhreagair an duine eile.

“Dè an t-ainm a th’ ort?” dh’fhaighnich an sgìobair.

“Is mise Claisneachd Mhath,” fhreagair am fear aig an robh claisneachd mhath.

Cha deach iad fada nuair a chunnaic iad fear eile. Bha esan a’ sgealbadh na creige le a thòin. Dh’fhaighnich an sgìobair dheth gu dè bha e a’ dèanamh.

“Tha mi a’ cur seachad an latha mar seo,” fhreagair e.

“Is fheàrr dhut tighinn leam fhèin san t-soitheach seo,” ars an sgìobair.

“Nì mi sin,” ars am fear eile.

“Dè an t-ainm a th’ ort?” dh’fhaighnich an sgìobair.

“Is mise Tòn Chruaidh,” fhreagair am fear aig an robh tòn chruaidh.

Cha deach iad fada nuair a chunnaic iad fear eile, agus gunna ri a shùil. Dh’fhaighnich iad dheth gu dè bha e a’ dèanamh.

“Tha mi a’ dèanamh cuimse air eun thall ann an Èirinn,” thuirt e. Tuigidh sibh gun robh seo a’ tachairt ann an Alba!

“Is fheàrr dhut tighinn leam fhèin san t-soitheach seo,” ars an sgìobair.

“Nì mi sin,” thuirt am fear eile

“Dè an t-ainm a th’ ort?” dh’fhaighnich an sgiobair.

“Is mise Cuimse Dhìreach,” fhreagair am fear aig an robh cuimse dhìreach.

An dèidh seo, chunnaic iad fear eile. Bha esan a’ srùbadh lochan is a’ spùtadh an uisge a-mach a-rithist. “Is fheàrr dhut do chuid spùtaidh a leigeil dhìot, agus tighinn leam fhèin san t-soitheach seo,” thuirt an sgiobair.

“Nì mi sin,” ars am fear eile.

“Dè an t-ainm a th’ ort?” dh’fhaighnich an sgiobair.

“ ‘Balgam Mòr’ a chanas iad rium,” thuirt am fear eile.

Bha an sgioba a-nise làn. Chùm iad orra gus an do ràinig iad taigh an Rìgh. Ach chunnaic an Rìgh an soitheach a’ tighinn. Agus cha robh e uabhasach deònach a nighean a thoirt do Mhac na Banntraich. Mar sin, dh’iarr e air uaislean a’ bhaile mhòir gu lèir thighinn cruinn còmhla. Bha e ag iarraidh comhairle nan uaislean. Bha a’ chuid a bu mhotha de na h-uaislean dhen bheachd gun robh còir aig Mac na Banntraich air nighean an Rìgh. Ach chì sinn dè thachair an-ath-sheachdain.

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Faclan na Litreach: seadh: *aye*; Lurga Luath: *Nimble Shanks*; Claisneachd Mhath: *Good Hearing*; Tòn Chruaidh: *Hard Haunches*; Cuimse Dhìreach: *Straight Aim*; Balgam Mòr: *Great Gulp*.

Abairtean na Litreach: chuir am mac a b’ òige aig a’ bhantraich crìoch air an t-soitheach: *the widow’s youngest son finished the vessel*; a sheòladh air muir agus tìr: *that would sail on sea and land*; bha e an dòchas X a phòsadh: *he hoped to marry X*; co-dhiù bha i air muir no tìr: *whether she was on sea or land*; ri taobh coille: *beside a wood*; rug e air an fhiadh: *he caught the deer*; is math a ruitheas tu: *you run well*; an tig thu leam san t-soitheach seo?: *will you come with me in this vessel?*; bha aghaidh ris an talamh mar gun robh e ag èisteachd ri rudeigin: *his face was to the ground as if he were listening to something*; ag èisteachd an fheadh a’ tighinn tron talamh: *listening to the grass coming through the ground*; nì mi sin: *I’ll do that*; a’ sgealbadh na creige le a thòin: *splintering the rock[s] with his haunches*; tha mi a’ cur seachad an latha mar seo: *I’m passing the day in this manner*; agus gunna ri a shùil: *with a gun to his eye*; a’ dèanamh cuimse air eun thall ann an Èirinn: *aiming at a bird over yonder in Ireland*; gun robh seo a’ tachairt ann an Alba: *that this was happening in Scotland*; a’ srùbadh lochan is a’ spùtadh an uisge a-mach a-rithist: *sucking up a small loch and spouting the water out again*; is fheàrr dhut do chuid spùtaidh a leigeil dhìot: *you’d better give up your spouting*; comhairle nan uaislean: *the advice of the nobles*; gun robh còir aig X air Y: *that X had a right to Y*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: Bha Mac na Banntraich na **sgìobair** oirr’. Chaidh e a choimhead airson **sgìoba**: *the widow’s son was the skipper on her. He went to look for a crew. The apparent similarity between sgiobair and sgioba betrays a common origin in Germanic forms (many words starting with sg- are loanwords from Germanic languages, particularly Old Norse, eg sgeir, sgillinn, sgòd, sgreabh). The origin of sgiobair might be the Scots skippare or English skipper but the Old Norse skipari meant a seaman or mariner, being derived from skip, a ship. Sgioba also derives from skip and originally meant a ship’s crew or complement. Nowadays, the meaning of sgioba has extended to include any band of workers or a team involved in a business, competitive or sporting pursuit.*

Gnathas-cainnt na Litreach: nuair a ruith fiadh a-mach aiste **na dheann**: *when the deer ran out of it [fem] at full speed.*

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