

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.maclea@bbc.co.uk. This is Litir 606. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 302 corresponds to Litir 606.

Tha mi a’ dol a chur crìoch air an sgeulachd *Balgam Mòr*. Bidh sibh a’ cuimhneachadh ’s dòcha gun robh treas Mac na Banntraich ag iarraidh nighean an Rìgh a phòsadh. Thog e long a bha comasach air seòladh air muir agus tìr. Fhuair e sgioba de dhaoine annasach – Lurga Luath, Claisneachd Mhath, Tòn Chruaidh agus Balgam Mòr. Agus bha e feumach air a chompanaich oir bha an Earchlais-Ùrlair nàimhdeil dha. Bha i a’ feuchainn ri stad a chur air a’ phòsadh.

Aig deireadh Litir na seachdain sa chaidh, thuir an Earchlais-Ùrlair gu feumadh Mac na Banntraich torc nimhe a bha sa choille ubhal, a mharcahadh beò, slàn gu doras Lùchairt an Rìgh. Dh’fhalbh Lurga Luath agus Tòn Chruaidh còmhla gu ruige a’ choille ubhal. Fhuair iad grèim air an torc. Thug iad an torc air ais beò, slàn gu doras na Lùchairt.

Dh’iarr Mac na Banntraich an uair sin air an Rìgh a nighean a thoirt dha. Ach a-rithist, cha robh e soirbheachail. Bha plana eile aig an Earchlais-Ùrlair. “Thoiribh cuireadh dha do dhinnear an-diugh,” thuir i ris an Rìgh ann an còmhradh dìomhair. “Dèanaibh cinnteach gun suidh e air a’ chathair mhòir anns a bheil am bior nimhe. Cuiridh am bior nimhe às dha.” Ach chuala Claisneachd Mhath an còmhradh. Agus chaidh Tòn Chruaidh don dinnear **mar ghille do** Mhac na Banntraich.

Chuir an Rìgh fàilte is furan air Mac na Banntraich. Sheall e dha a’ chathair mhòr anns an robh am bior nimhe. Ach mus do shuidh Mac na Banntraich oirre, thuir Tòn Chruaidh gun robh e na chleachdadh dha suidhe anns gach cathair air an robh a mhaighstir gu bhith a’ suidhe. Shuidh Tòn Chruaidh anns a’ chathair. Bhris e gach bior na phronnagan.

Bha dùil an uair sin aig Mac na Banntraich gum faigheadh e nighean an Rìgh mar bhean. Ach thuir an Earchlais-Ùrlair nach fhaodadh sin tachairt. Bha plana eile aice. Bhruidhinn i ris an Rìgh ann an dìomhaireachd. Dh’inns i a plana ùr dha. Airson nighean an Rìgh fhaighinn, dh’fheumadh Mac na Banntraich an lochan uisge, a bha air mullach na beinne seilge, a thoirt gu lagan bòidheach a bha fa chomhair doras mòr na Lùchairt. Dh’aontaich an Rìgh ris a’ phlana.

“Tha mi a’ cluinntinn rudeigin,” thuir Claisneachd Mhath.

“Dè tha thu a’ cluinntinn?” thuir Mac na Banntraich. Agus mhìnich Claisneachd Mhath mun lochan air mullach na beinne seilge.

“Nì mise a’ chùis orra,” thuir Balgam Mòr. “Ma tha iad feumach air uisgeachadh, ma dh’fhaodte **gum faigh iad an sàth.**”

Thug Balgam Mòr am monadh air. Bhiodh esan a' srùbadh lochain is gan spùtadh a-mach a-rithist. Thòisich e air uisge a shrùbadh is a spùtadh. Bha gach nì mun chaisteal a-nise a' snàmh ann an uisge. Mura stadadh an t-uisge, bhiodh gach nì mun Lùchairt air a mhilleadh gu tur.

Dh'iarr an Rìgh air Mac na Bantraich òrdugh a thoirt do Bhalgam Mòr gun tuilleadh uisge a dhòrtadh. Gheall e gum faigheadh e fhèin a nighean gu pòsadh air an oidhche sin fhèin.

Chaidh an Earchlais-Ùrlair a chur gu bàs leis gur i a bu chiontach ris an uisge a bha a' milleadh gach nì. Phòs nighean an Rìgh agus Mac na Bantraich. Rinn an Rìgh banais mhòr dhaibh. Agus tha mi cinnteach gun robh an cupall sona còmhla airson iomadach bliadhna.

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Faclan na Litreach: Balgam Mòr: *Great Gulp*; Lurga Luath: *Nimble Shanks*; Claisneachd Mhath: *Good Hearing*; Tòn Chruaidh: *Hard Haunches*; an Earchlais-Ùrlair: *the Floor-Mischief*; nàimhdeil: *hostile*; soirbheachail: *successful*; banais: *wedding*.

Abairtean na Litreach: gu feumadh e torc nimhe a mharcaidh beò, slàn gu doras Lùchairt an Rìgh: *that he would have to ride a wild boar alive and uninjured to the door of the King's Palace*; gu ruige a' choille ubhal: *to the apple wood*; cuireadh do dhinnear: *an invitation to dinner*; còmhradh dìomhair: *secret conversation*; air a' chathair mhòir anns a bheil am bior nimhe: *in the big chair in which there is the deadly spike*; cuiridh X às dha: *X will kill him*; chuir an Rìgh fàilte is furan air Mac na Bantraich: *the King warmly welcomed the Widow's Son*; mus do shuidh X oirre: *before X sat on it [fem]*; gun robh e na chleachdadh dha: *that it was his custom*; bhris e gach bior na phronnagan: *he broke every spike into tiny pieces*; dh'fheumadh X an lochan uisge, a bha air mullach na beinne seilge, a thoirt gu lagan bòidheach: *X would have to bring the freshwater lochan, that was at the summit of the hunting mountain, to a beautiful dell*; fa chomhair doras mòr na Lùchairt: *facing the front door of the Palace*; feumach air uisgeachadh: *in need of being watered*; thug X am monadh air: *X departed for the hill*; a' srùbadh lochain is gan spùtadh a-mach a-rithist: *sucking up lochans and spouting them out again*; air a mhilleadh gu tur: *completely destroyed*; gun tuilleadh uisge a dhòrtadh: *not to pour more water*; gur i a bu chiontach: *that she was to blame*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: **mar ghille do** Mhac na Bantraich: *as a servant to the Widow's Son. Gille can be used for "lad" or "son" but it also has the meaning of servant and, in that guise, it entered the English language as ghillie. Gille on its own can mean any sort of [man]servant or retainer but it is often combined with other elements to describe very specific functions. Here are some examples: gille-cas-fliuch (a servant who carried a clan chief over burns so that he could keep his feet dry), gille-coise (footman), gille-each (groom), gille-ruithe (runner eg in military campaigns), gille-truis-àirneis (an attendant who carried a chief's baggage or wallet) and gille-pìobaire, a piper's servant who carried the pipes for his master (a long time ago!) Of a less servile nature are gille-cruidh (cowboy), gille-frithealaidh (waiter cf French garçon), gille-pinn (clerk), gille-mùchain (chimney sweep) and gille-shalm, an old term for a precentor of psalms in the Presbyterian churches.*

Gnathas-cainnt na Litreach: ma dh'fhaodte **gum faigh iad an sàth:** *perhaps they will get enough to satisfy them.*

Tha "Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh" air a maoineachadh le MG ALBA