

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Na h-Amhaisgean

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.macleon@bbc.co.uk. This is Litir 641. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 337 corresponds to Litir 641.

Chan eil fhios a’ m a bheil sibh eòlach air an fhacal amhaisg – A-M-H-A-I-S-G. No - U-I-S-G anns na seann leabhraichean. Tha e air eadar-theangachadh mar as trice anns na seann teacsaichean mar “dwarf” no “pigmy” ach chan eil e a’ seasamh airson dìreach duine a tha beag no an treubh Afraganach ris an canar “pigmies”. Tha e a’ ciallachadh duine beag aig a bheil droch rùn. Bidh e a’ nochdadh ann am Beurla mar *awisk* – A-W-I-S-K. Co-dhiù, seo agaibh fìor sheann stòiridh à dualchas nan Gàidheal air a bheil *Na h-Amhaisgean* no *Na Trì Saighdearan*.

Uair a bh’ ann, bha trì saighdearan a theich bhon arm. Dh’fhàg iad am baile agus choisich iad a-muigh air an dùthaich airson dà latha. Am beagan bìdh a bh’ aca, bha e air a chaitheamh. Shuidh an triùir ri taobh cnoc, a’ leigeil dhiubh an sgìths. Cha robh iad fad’ an sin nuair a chunnaic iad **cù mòr ruadh** a’ tighinn far an robh iad. Thuirt iad ri chèile nach robh taigh fada bhuapa.

Dh’èirich fear dhiubh agus dh’fhalbh e an dèidh a’ choin. Cha deach e astar mòr nuair a chunnaic e caisteal brèagha. Ghabh e roimhe dha ionnsaigh. Ach cha robh doras ri fhaicinn air. Bha an saighdear a’ dol mun cuairt a’ chaisteil nuair a chunnaic e boireannach dreachmhor aig uinneag. Ghlaodh am boireannach ris a dhol a dh’ionnsaigh doras cùil. Rinn e sin agus chaidh e a-steach. Dh’fhàiltich am boireannach e agus thug i do sheòmar brèagha e.

Chaidh biadh a chur air a bheulaibh. Bha leth de mhulachag càise am measg a’ bhìdh. Bha ciaradh ann agus chaidh solas a lasadh. Nuair a shuidh an saighdear airson biadh a ghabhail, thog am boireannach an solas agus dh’fhàg i an saighdear ann an dorchadas. Chuimhnich esan air na caraidean acrach aige agus chuir e an leth-mhulachag na mhàileid airson a thoirt dhaibh.

An ceann greis, thill am boireannach leis an t-solas. “Bu neònach e gun tug thu an solas air falbh,” thuirt an saighdear rithe.

“Is neònach an duine nach amaiseadh air a bheul co-dhiù bhiodh e dorch no soilleir,” fhreagair i. “**Chan fhaod e a bhith** gun do dh’ith an coigreach beag a’ mhulachag mhòr.”

Dh’iarr i a’ mhulachag suas is sìos. Mu dheireadh, lorg i na mhàileid i. Bha i mì-thoilichte. Dh’iarr i gum biodh an saighdear air a thilgeil am measg nan con mòra. Cha d’ fhuair e ri ithe an sin ach cnàmhan.

Air an làrna-mhàireach, chunnaic an dithis shaighdearan eile an cù ruadh a-rithist. Chaidh fear dhiubh às a dhèidh. Cha deach e fada nuair a chunnaic e an caisteal. Bha e a’ dol timcheall a’ chaisteil nuair a chunnaic e am boireannach

dreachmhor aig an uinneig. Smèid i air a dhol don doras chùil. Dh'fhàiltich i a-steach e. Chaidh biadh a chur air a bheulaibh anns an t-seòmar bhrèagha. Am measg a' bhìdh bha ceathramh muilt.

Nuair a shuidh an saighdear a ghabhail a' bhìdh, thug am boireannach an solas air falbh. Bha an saighdear san dorchadas. Chuimhnich e air a' chompanach agus chuir e an ceathramh muilt na mhàileid. An ceann greis thill am boireannach leis an t-solas. Agus ... leanaidh an stòiridh an-ath-sheachdain.

* * * * *

Faclan na Litreach: amhaisg: *awisk*; dreachmhor: *of handsome appearance*; mulachag càise: *a large cheese, kebbock*; cnàmhan: *bones*; an làrna-mhàireach: *the next day*; smèid: *waved*; màileid: *bag, knapsack*.

Abairtean na Litreach: Tha e air eadar-theangachadh mar as trice anns na seann teacsaichean: *it is usually translated in the old texts*; duine beag aig a bheil droch rùn: *a wee guy of evil intentions*; fìor sheann stòiridh à dualchas nan Gàidheal: *a really old story from the tradition of the Gaels*; a theich bhon arm: *who fled from the army*; am beagan bìdh a bh' aca, bha e air a chaitheamh: *the little food they had, it was used up*; ri taobh cnoc, a' leigeil dhiubh an sgìths: *beside a hill, relieving their weariness*; nach robh taigh fada bhuapa: *that a house wasn't far from them*; dh'fhalbh e an dèidh a' choin: *he went after the dog*; ghabh e roimhe dha ionnsaigh: *he set out towards it*; ghlaodh am boireannach ris a dhol a dh'ionnsaigh doras cùil: *the woman called on him to go to a back door*; dh'fhàiltich am boireannach e: *the woman welcomed him*; air a bheulaibh: *in front of him*; bha ciaradh ann agus chaidh solas a lasadh: *it was getting dark and a light was lit*; dh'fhàg i an saighdear ann an dorchadas: *she left the soldier in darkness*; chuimhnich esan air na caraidean acrach aige: *he remembered his hungry friends*; bu neònach e gun tug thu an solas air falbh: *it was strange that you took the light away*; is neònach an duine nach amaiseadh air a bheul co-dhiù bhiodh e dorch no soilleir: *strange is the man who couldn't find his mouth whether it's dark or light*; am measg nan con mòra: *amongst the big dogs*; ceathramh muilt: *a quarter of mutton*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: **cù mòr ruadh:** *big red dog. You will note the word order here. Where a noun is followed by two adjectives, one of them an adjective of dimension (buadhair meudachd), the adjective of dimension normally comes before the other adjective. It would be less natural to say cù ruadh mòr. Other examples would be cat beag dubh, mathan mòr crosta, iasg mòr luath and fear beag ladarna. However if we were comparing two red dogs of different size, that would be different. We might then talk about an cù ruadh mòr agus an cù ruadh beag.*

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: **Chan fhaod e a bhith** gun do dh'ith an coigreach beag a' mhulachag mhòr: *it cannot be that the small stranger ate the big cheese.*

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