Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

An Dùthaich Iongantach

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 787. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 483 corresponds to Litir 787.*

Ann am badeigin air a' Ghàidhealtachd tha dùthaich dhìomhair. *An Dùthaich Iongantach* a chanar rithe. Buinidh a h-uile duine a tha a' fuireach innte don aon chinneadh – A' Chlann Iongantach. Agus 's e fear dhiubh – Gòrach Mòr MacIongantach – a dh'fhàg an eachdraidh seo againn.

Tha sinn an dùil gur e Goiridh a bh' air mar ainm agus gur e Gòrach am frith-ainm a bh' air. Bha dithis bhràithrean air an robh an t-aon ainm-baistidh – rud nach robh annasach am measg nan Gàidheal. **Bha Gòrach Mòr trì bliadhna na bu shine na Gòrach Beag**. Thathar ag ràdh gur iad na gillean seo as coireach ris an t-seanfhacal *'S iongantach na nì na Gòraich, ach is gòrach na h-Iongantaich co-dhiù.*

'S e an rud a b' annasaiche a bh' ann mun Dùthaich Iongantaich gun robh na daoine dhen mheud àbhaisteach, ach gun robh a h-uile càil eile na bu mhotha na 'n àbhaist. Iongantach mòr.

Cha robh craobh sam bith san dùthaich. Is math nach robh oir bha na lusan is luibhean fhèin cho mòr ri craobhan. Nuair a bha am beàrnan-brìde fo bhlàth bha e mar gun robh thu a' coiseachd tro choille bhuidhe. Nuair a bha uisge mòr ann, bhiodh na daoine a' faighinn fasgadh fo dhuilleagan an rùbraib. Agus, airson bàta a dhèanamh, cha robh aca ach duilleag de Chuach Phàdraig a bhuain. Ach dh'fheumadh iad sàbh airson an gas a bhriseadh.

Bha na daoine measail air buinneagan Bruisealach. Ach bha na buinneagan fhèin cho àrd os cionn na talmhainn 's gun robh e doirbh am buain nuair a bha iad deiseil airson ithe. Gu fortanach, bha Gòrach Beag air a bhith anns na h-Innseachan far an do dh'ionnsaich e craobh pailm a shreap airson cnòthan-còco fhaighinn. Agus bhiodh e a' buain nam buinneagan Bruisealach anns an aon dòigh, a' giùlain sgian mhòr na bheul.

Ach, latha a bha seo, thuit buinneag air co-ogha dha. Bha an gille **gun mhothachadh** airson dà latha mus do chaochail e. Chun an latha an-diugh, ma tha gin de Chlann Iongantach ann an cunnart, bithear ag èigheachd 'buinneag shuas!' Agus 's e sin as coireach gur e buinneag a th' aig a' chinneadh mar shuaicheantas agus gur e 'clann nam buinneag' a chanas cinnidhean eile ris na h-Iongantaich.

Bha e furasta biadh gu leòr fhaighinn san dùthaich. Bha na buntàta cho mòr ri tairbh. Bha na bric cho mòr ri cearbain. Agus na fèidh – uill, am faca sibh riamh dealbh de bhrontosaurus?

Bha sin a' fàgail gun robh na h-ainmhidhean – eadhon an sprèidh fhèin – cunnartach. Agus bha samhla aig na daoine – 'cho cunnartach ri tòn mairt'. Tuigidh

sibh mar a dh'èirich an abairt sin. Thathar ag ràdh, latha a bha seo, gun tàinig buachair air cailleach bheag gun fhiosta dhi. Chaidh trì latha seachad mus deach a corp a lorg. Bha an crodh-bainne cho mòr 's gun robh na daoine air sguir am bleoghainn o chionn fhada. Ach bhiodh iad a' bleoghainn nan coineanach 's nan luchan – nuair a gheibheadh iad grèim orra.

Aidh, 's e Dùthaich Iongantach a bh' innte, gun teagamh. Agus aon rud eile a bha annasach. Bha e an aghaidh an lagh breug innse. Tha fios againn mar sin gur e an fhìrinn ghlan a thug Gòrach Mòr dhuinn. Cho glan ris an eabar.

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Faclan na Litreach: frìth-ainm: *nickname;* buinneagan Bruisealach: *Brussels sprouts;* shuaicheantas: *[clan] crest;* an fhìrinn ghlan: *the complete truth;* eabar: *mud.*

Abairtean na Litreach: Ann am badeigin air a' Ghàidhealtachd tha dùthaich dhìomhair: *somewhere in the Highlands there is a secret land;* buinidh a h-uile duine don aon chinneadh: *everybody belongs to the same clan;* a dh'fhàg an eachdraidh seo againn: *who left us this story;* bha dithis bhràithrean air an robh an t-aon ainm-baistidh: *there were two brothers with the same given [baptism] name;* gur iad na gillean seo as coireach ris an t-seanfhacal: *that these lads are responsible for the proverb;* gun robh na daoine dhen mheud àbhaisteach: *that the people were of [the] normal size;* gun robh a h-uile càil eile na bu mhotha na 'n àbhaist: *that everything else was bigger than normal;* nuair a bha am beàrnan-brìde fo bhlàth: *when the dandelion was in flower;* fasgadh fo dhuilleagan an rùbraib: *shelter under the leaves of the rhubarb;* cha robh aca ach duilleag de Chuach Phàdraig a bhuain: *they only had to pick a leaf of the Greater Plantain;* dh'fheumadh iad sàbh airson an gas a bhriseadh: *they would need a saw to break the stalk;* far an do dh'ionnsaich e craobh pailm a shreap airson cnòthan-còco fhaighinn: *where he learned to climb a palm tree to get coconuts;* a' giùlain sgian mhòr na bheul: *carrying a large knife in his mouth;* bha na bric cho mòr ri cearbain: *the trout were as big as basking sharks;* cho cunnartach ri tòn mairt: *as dangerous as a cow's backside;* gun tàinig buachair air cailleach bheag gun fhiosta dhi: *that dung came upon a little old woman without warning;* bhiodh iad a' bleoghainn nan coineanach 's nan luchan: *they would milk the rabbits and the mice;* bha e an aghaidh an lagh breug innse: *it was against the law to tell a lie.*

Puing-chànain na Litreach: **Bha Gòrach Mòr trì bliadhna na bu shine na Gòrach Beag**: *Big Gòrach was three years older than Wee Gòrach. The practice of giving two brothers (and occasionally sisters) the same name was once common, and is still to be found in the Gàidhealtachd. It is sometimes responsible for the descriptor* 'Mòr' *for the first-born of the brothers, and* 'Beag' *for the second eg* Dòmhnall Mòr *and* Dòmhnall Beag, *referring to relative size in childhood but not as adults.*

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: Bha an gille **gun mhothachadh** airson dà latha: *the lad was **unconscious** for two days.*

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