

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Coire Bhreacain (4)

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 925. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 621 corresponds to Litir 925.

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mu mar a fhuair an cuairt-shruth ainmeil, Coire Bhreacain, ainm. Ach ciamar a chaidh a chruthachadh? Uill, tha cuid a’ cumail a-mach gur i a’ Chailleach – seann ban-dia a’ gheamhraidh – a chruthaich e. Bha i ag iarraidh àite far am biodh i a’ nighe a h-aodaich.

Ach, o chionn ghoirid, thàinig mi tarsainn air sgeulachd eile mu dheidhinn Choire Bhreacain agus mar a chaidh a chruthachadh. ’S e Rìgh nan Iasg a chruthaich e le earball. Bha e a’ fàs fiadhaich mun chrùbaig a bha a’ gearan fad na h-ùine. Chan eil an sgeulachd ach goirid – agus seo i.

O chionn fhad an t-saoghail, bha a’ chrùbag cianail fhèin mòr. Aig an àm sin, bha a slige cruinn. Cha robh i rèidh mar a tha i an-diugh. Bha a’ chrùbag làidir agus misneachail. Thuir i gum biodh i deònach an cruinne a thoirt timcheall air a druim. Bha na creutairean eile toilichte mu dheidhinn sin. Ach, mo chreach, bha an cruinne fada na bu mhotha ’s na bu thruime na bhathar an dùil. Chaidh a’ chrùbag fhàsgadh le **cuideam na cruinne** agus dh’fhàs a slige rèidh is leathann mar a tha i an-diugh.

A bharrachd air sin, mus do dh’fhàs a slige rèidh, bhiodh an cruinne a’ **tuiteam dhith** agus ’s e sin a thug air a’ chrùbaig a bhith a’ fiaradh nuair a tha i a’ coiseachd. Dh’fhàs a’ chrùbag seachd searbh sgìth dhen ghnòthach, agus chaidh i a dh’iarraidh taic aig Rìgh nan Iasg.

‘Dè tha a’ cur ort?’ dh’fhaighnich Rìgh nan Iasg.

‘Bidh an cruinne a’ sleamhnadh far mo shlige fad na h-ùine,’ thuir a’ chrùbag. ‘Tha mi sgìth dheth.’

‘Uill, ’s tu fhèin a bha ag iarraidh an cruinne a ghiùlan,’ thuir Rìgh nan Iasg. ‘Ach, co-dhiù, bheir mi taic dhut.’

Aig an àm sin, bhiodh na sgreigeagan a’ snàmh gu saor sa mhuir. Cha robh iad mar a tha iad an-diugh. Mhìnich Rìgh nan Iasg an suidheachadh dhaibh, agus dh’iarr e orra gun a bhith a’ snàmh tuilleadh. Bha iad gu bhith air an acrachadh – cuid dhiubh ris na creagan, cuid dhiubh ris a’ chrùbaig.

Chuir na sgreigeagan air slige na crùbaig stad air a’ chruinne bho bhith a’ sleamhnadh dhith. Cha robh a’ chrùbag toilichte, ge-tà. Bha an cruinne ro throm dhi. Chaidh i gu Rìgh nan Iasg a-rithist agus rinn i gearain.

‘Dè tha a’ cur ort an turas seo?’ arsa Rìgh nan Iasg.

‘Tha an cruinne ro throm dhomh,’ thuir a’ chrùbag.

Bha Rìgh nan Iasg a’ fàs sgìth de ghearan na crùbaig agus bhuail e grunn na mara le earball. ‘Ceart gu leòr,’ thuir e. ‘Gheibh sinn cuidhteas an cruinne uile-gu-

lèir.' Thilg e an cruinne suas chun na h-iarmailt gus nach biodh e a' gabhail gnothach ris tuilleadh. Ach dhòchuimhnich e mu staid nan sgreigeagan. Chaidh am fàgail mar a bha iad – agus 's e sin as coireach nach bi iad a' snàmh an-diugh, ach gu bheil iad ceangailte ris na creagan.

Chaidh a' chrùbag an lughad oir cha robh i airidh air meudachd mhòr. Agus, nuair a bhuail Rìgh nan Iasg grunn na mara le earball, agus e sgìth de ghearan na crùbaig, 's ann a chaidh Coire Bhreacain a chruthachadh. Agus 's ann linntean an dèidh sin a chaidh prionnsa Lochlannach a bhàthadh ann.

* * * * *

Faclan na Litreach: Coire Bhreacain: *Corryvreckan*; Rìgh nan Iasg: *The King of the Fish*; rèidh: *flat*; misneachail: *confident*.

Abairtean na Litreach: ciamar a chaidh a chruthachadh?: *how was it formed?*; seann ban-dia a' gheamhraidh: *the old winter goddess*; àite far am biodh i a' nighe a h-aodaich: *a place where she would be washing her clothes*; a' fàs fiadhaich mun chrùbaig a bha a' gearan fad na h-ùine: *becoming angry about the crab that was complaining all the time*; o chionn fhad an t-saoghail, bha a' chrùbag cianail fhèin mòr: *in ancient times, the crab was extremely large*; bha a slige cruinn: *its carapace was round*; deònach an cruinne a thoirt timcheall air a druim: *willing to carry the globe around on her back*; fada na bu mhotha 's na bu thruime na bhathar an dùil: *much bigger and heavier than was [had been] expected*; 's e sin a thug air a' chrùbaig a bhith a' fiaradh: *that's what caused the crab to walk sideways*; chaidh i a dh'iarraidh taic: *she went to seek help*; dè tha a' cur ort?: *what's the problem?*; a' sleamhnadh far mo shlige fad na h-ùine: *sliding off my carapace all the time*; bheir mi taic dhut: *I'll help you*; bhiodh na sgreigeagan a' snàmh gu saor: *the acorn barnacles would be swimming freely*; dh'iarr e orra gun a bhith a' snàmh tuilleadh: *he asked them to cease swimming*; air an acrachadh – cuid dhiubh ris na creagan: *anchored – some of them on the rocks*; bhuail e grunn na mara le earball: *he beat the seabed with his tail*; gheibh sinn cuidhteas an cruinne uile-gu-lèir: *we'll get rid of the globe entirely*; chaidh a' chrùbag an lughad oir cha robh i airidh air meudachd mhòr: *the crab diminished in size because she wasn't worthy of a large size*; 's ann linntean an dèidh sin a chaidh prionnsa Lochlannach a bhàthadh ann: *it's centuries afterwards that a Scandinavian prince was drowned there*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: Chaidh a' chrùbag fhàsgadh le **cuideam na cruinne**: *the crab was compressed by the weight of the globe*. Cruinne is an unusual word as it changes gender depending on case. In the nominative case it is masculine [an cruinne] but in the genitive it becomes feminine [na cruinne]. This is highly unusual – very few words demonstrate this behaviour (talamh is another example).

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: bhiodh an cruinne a' **tuiteam dhith**: *the globe would be falling off* (the feminine form is used because slige is feminine).

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