

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Uilebheist Ratharsair (1)

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 980. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 676 corresponds to Litir 980.

An cuala sibh riamh an sgeulachd ‘MacMhuirich Ratharsair’? Bha MacMhuirich beò o chionn fhada ann an Ratharsair far an robh e ainmeil mar shealgair. Latha a bha seo, bha e a’ sealg faisg air Dùn Cana, a’ bheinn as àirde anns an eilean. Mharbh e fiadh, ghreallaich e e agus chuir e air a dhruim e. Bha e a’ coiseachd ri taobh Loch na Mèilich nuair a chuala e fuaim – mèilich, gu dearbh.

Bha e a’ tighinn às an fhraoch, ach bha fios aig MacMhuirich nach e caora no gobhar a bha ga dhèanamh. Chuir e am fiadh far a ghuailne agus rannsaich e anns an fhraoch. Lorg e creutair annasach. Bha e molach, bha spògan mòr’ aige agus bha a shùilean mòra a’ sealltainn gun robh eagal a bheatha air ron t-sealgair. Gu follaiseach, bha e gu math òg.

Chuir MacMhuirich an creutair **am broinn a chòta** airson a chumail blàth, thog e am fiadh agus chaidh e dhachaigh. Bha a dhinnear a’ feitheamh ris nuair a ràinig e an taigh, agus shuidh e aig a’ bhòrd, ga gabhail. Bha e a’ meòrachadh air a’ chreutair annasach a lorg e nuair a dh’fhàs an seòmar dorch. Choimhead MacMhuirich suas agus chunnaic e ceann mòr grànda aig an uinneig. B’ e sin a bha a’ dorchachadh an t-seòmair.

Bha fios aig MacMhuirich dè bh’ ann – Uilebheist Ratharsair. ‘Thoir dhomh mo leanabh air ais,’ thuir an t-Uilebheist. ‘Tha fios agam gun do thog thu e às an fhraoch.’

‘Tha e a’ tighinn **air èirig**,’ fhreagair MacMhuirich. ‘S e duine cruaidh a bh’ ann am MacMhuirich.

‘Thoir air ais e gun chron sam bith air a dhèanamh air, no millidh mi an taigh agad agus gach rud a tha na bhroinn,’ fhreagair an t-Uilebheist.

‘Tha an leanabh agad na bhroinn,’ arsa MacMhuirich. Lean e air a ghabhail a dhinneir mar nach robh càil a’ cur dragh air.

‘Dè an èirig?’ dh’fhaighnich an t-Uilebheist.

‘Feumaidh tu cabhsair a thogail tarsainn Loch Storab,’ thuir MacMhuirich.

‘Feumaidh e a bhith math gu leòr gus an toir mi mo chuid mònach dhachaigh air agus gun gabh e mo chuid cruaidh, each is ghobhar.’ Tha Loch Storab anns a’ mhonadh letheach-slighe eadar Loch na Mèilich agus an Clachan, air cladach an iar Ratharsair.

‘S e obair dhoirbh a tha sin,’ thuir an t-Uilebheist. ‘Ach ma thogas mi an cabhsair, an toir thu gealltanais dhomh gum faigh mi an leanabh agam air ais gun chron sam bith air a dhèanamh air?’

‘Bheir,’ arsa MacMhuirich agus lean e air le a dhinnear mar nach robh dragh sam bith air.

Dh’fhalbh an t-Uilebheist. Thill e mu mheadhan-oidhche. ‘Rinn mi an obair,’ thuir e. ‘Tha an cabhsair dèante.’

‘Tha e air èirig fhathast,’ arsa MacMhuirich. Nach tuir mi gur e duine cruaidh a bh’ ann?!

‘Phàigh mi an èirig!’ Bha an t-Uilebheist a’ fàs feargach.

‘Uh-uh,’ thuirt MacMhuirich. ‘Feumaidh tu gach fàd mònach a th’ agam aig a’ pholl-mhònach a thoirt dhachaigh, agus cruach a dhèanamh dhiubh aig ceann an taigh agam.’

Dh’èigh an t-Uilebheist gur e bleigeard gun chogais a bh’ ann am MacMhuirich, ach dh’fhalbh e airson a’ mhòine a thoirt dhachaigh. Nuair a bha an obair dèante, thill e gu taigh MhicMhuirich. ‘Tha a’ chruach-mhònach togte,’ thuirt e. ‘Nise, thoir dhomh mo leanabh.’ Agus innsidh mi dhuibh dè thachair an-ath-sheachdain.

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Faclan na Litreach: MacMhuirich Ratharsair: *MacVurich of Raasay*; ghreallaich: *gralloched (guttled)*; mèilich: *bleating*; creutair annasach: *an unusual creature*; molach: *hairy, shaggy*; gu follaiseach: *obviously*; a’ meòrachadh: *contemplating*; Uilebheist Ratharsair: *the monster of Raasay*; letheach-slighe: *halfway*.

Abairtean na Litreach: far an robh e ainmeil mar shealgair: *where he was famous as a hunter*; a’ bheinn as àirde anns an eilean: *the highest hill on the island*; nach e caora no gobhar a bha ga dhèanamh: *that it wasn’t a sheep or goat that was making it*; chuir e am fiadh far a ghuailne: *he took the deer off his shoulder*; rannsaich e anns an fhraoch: *he searched in the heather*; bha spògan mòr’ aige agus bha a shùilean mòra a’ sealltainn gun robh eagal a bheatha air ron t-sealgair: *it had big paws and its large eyes were showing that it was petrified of the hunter*; bha a dhinnear a’ feitheamh ris: *his dinner was awaiting him*; ceann mòr grànda aig an uinneig: *a large ugly head appeared at the window*; b’ e sin a bha a’ dorchachadh an t-seòmair: *that was what was darkening the room*; duine cruaidh: *a hard man*; tha an leanabh agad na bhroinn: *your baby is inside it*; feumaidh tu cabhsair a thogail tarsainn X: *you have to build a causeway across X*; math gu leòr gus an toir mi mo chuid mònach dhachaigh air: *good enough for me to take my peats home on it*; gun gabh e mo chuid cruaidh, each is ghobhar: *that it will take my cattle, horses and goats*; an toir thu gealltanais dhomh gum faigh mi an leanabh agam air ais: *will you promise me that I’ll get my baby back?*; gun chron sam bith air a dhèanamh air: *without him suffering in any way*; phàigh mi an èirig: *I paid the ransom*; feumaidh tu gach fàd mònach a th’ agam aig a’ pholl-mhònach a thoirt dhachaigh, agus cruach a dhèanamh dhiubh: *you must bring home all the cut peats I have at my peat-bank, and make a stack of them*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: am broinn a chòta: *inside his coat*. Am broinn is a compound preposition commanding a noun (with the article) in the genitive case. The article here is the possessive third person singular masculine ‘a’ ie ‘his’ and còta is in the genitive. We know it is the possessive article rather than the definite article because of the absence of the apostrophe after the ‘a’.

Gnathas-cainnt na Litreach: Tha e a’ tighinn air èirig: *it comes with a ransom*.

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