

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Cath Gabhra agus Bàs Oisair

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 987. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 683 corresponds to Litir 987.

An cuala sibh riamh mu Chath Gabhra? *The Battle of Gavra*. Airson nan ceudan, bhiodh Gàidheil na h-Alba agus Gàidheil na h-Èireann ag innse stòiridhean mu dheidhinn oir 's ann aig Cath Gabhra a chaidh Oscar a mharbhadh. **Oscar mac Oisein ogha Fhinn**. Fear de shàr-ghaisgich na Fèinne. Thathar a' smaoinichadh gun robh Gabhra ann an ceann a tuath na h-Èireann, faisg air cladaich na mara. Ach chan eil fios aig duine air sin le cinnt.

Bha Fionn air falbh. Mar sin bha ceannas aig Oscar air na Fianna. Bha nàimhdeas eadar Oscar agus Cairbhi. Cha robh Cairbhi idir na 'charbhaidh' do dh'Oscar! Trì latha ro Chath Gabhra, thug Cairbhi cuireadh gu Oscar dhol gu fleadh anns an lùchairt aige. Thug Oscar trì cheud duine leis.

Air an rathad, thachair e ri bean-shithe a bha a' nighe aodach ann an allt. 'Dè ur beachd, a chailleach,' thuirt e. 'Cò thuiteas anns a' chath a tha romhainn?'

'O,' ars ise, 'bidh sibhse a' mharbhadh còig mìle duine, agus an Rìgh fhèin.'

'Agus cò thuiteas air an taobh againne?' dh'fhaighnich Oscar.

'A, uill,' ars a' bhean-shithe. 'Bidh am fear as luachmhoire agaibhse a' tuiteam cuideachd. Tha a shaoghal a' sìor thighinn gu ceann.'

'O,' thuirt Oscar. 'S e droch naidheachd a bha sin. Bha fios aig Oscar gun robh a' bhean-sithe a' bruidhinn airsan. Ach lean e air agus ghabh e biadh is deoch gu leòr aig an fhleadh ann an lùchairt Chairbhi.

Air an treas latha dhen chuir, bha an deoch air an dithis aca, agus thuirt Cairbhi ri Oscar gun robh e ag iarraidh gun dèanadh iad iomlaid de na sleaghan aca. Ach dhiùlt Oscar an t-iartras.

Air latha a' chatha, thàinig an dà armailt mu choinneimh a chèile air bealach cumhang ann an caol-ghleann. Mharbh sluagh Oisair **còig fichead boghadair** aig Cairbhi. Mharbh iad trì cheud duine eile a bharrachd, a' gabhail a-steach ceud duine ruadh a bha a' coimhead coltach ri Cairbhi, oir bha falt ruadh aige.

Bha a-nise Oscar agus Cairbhi a' tighinn faisg air a chèile. Thilg Cairbhi a shleagh agus chaidh i tro Oscar. Thuit Oscar do a ghlùin dheis agus thilg esan a shleagh-san. Bhuail i Cairbhi na cheann, far an robh fheusag agus fhalt a' tighinn còmhlà.

Dh'èirich mac Chairbhi, Art, agus thog e a chladheamh. Ach thilg Oscar sleagh eile agus mharbh e Art. Ged a chaill iad an dà cheannard aca, cha robh muinntir Chairbhi a' gèilleadh. Chuir iad clogaid-chatha air ceap mar chomharra

nach robh iad a' gèilleadh. Ach thog Oscar leacag thana chruaidh far na talmhainn. B' e a ghnìomh mu dheireadh a chlogaid a bhriseadh le beum na leacaig.

Thàinig na Fianna cruinn còmhla agus thug iad Oscar air falbh. Mus do chaochail an gaisgeach, chual' iad fuaim bhon tràigh. 'Luingeas do sheanar a th' ann,' thuirt iad. 'Thàinig Fionn airson cobhair a dhèanamh oirnn.'

Cuiridh mi crìoch air mo chunntas le dà rann à Laoidh Oisair. 'S e a sheanair, Fionn Mac Cumhail, a tha a' bruidhinn.

Ach donnalaich nan con rim thaobh, 'S bùireadh nan seann laoch, 'S gul a' bhannail mu seach, siud an rud a chràidh mo chridhe.

Laogh mo laoigh thu, laogh mo laoigh, Leanaibh mo leanuibh, ghil, chaoil, Mo chridhe leumadh mar lon, 'S mo chreach lèir nach èirich Oscar.

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Faclan na Litreach: dhiùlt: *refused*; a' gèilleadh: *surrendered*; beum: *a blow*; donnalaich: *howling*.

Abairtean na Litreach: bha ceannas aig Oscar air na Fianna: *Oscar had leadership of the Fianna*; cha robh Cairbhi idir na 'charbhaidh' do dh'Oscar: *Cairbhi was not at all a 'sweetheart' to Oscar*; thug X cuireadh gu Y dhol gu fleadh anns an lùchairt aige (mar a bhitheadh!): *X invited Y to go to a feast in his palace (as you would!)*; thachair e ri bean-shìthe a bha a' nighe aodach ann an allt: *he met a fairy woman who was cleaning clothes in a burn*; cò thuiteas anns a' chath a tha romhainn?: *who will fall in the battle ahead of us?*; bidh am fear as luachmhoire agaibhse a' tuiteam: *your most valuable man will fall*; tha a shaoghal a' sìor thighinn gu ceann: *his life is quickly coming to an end*; gun dèanadh iad iomlaid de na sleaghan aca: *that they would swap their spears*; thàinig an dà armailt mu choinneimh a chèile air bealach cumhang ann an caol-ghleann: *the two armies confronted each other in a narrow pass in a gorge*; thuit X do a ghlùin dheis: *X fell to his right knee*; far an robh fheusag agus fhalt a' tighinn còmhla: *where his beard and hair met*; chuir iad clogaid-chatha air ceap mar chomharra nach robh iad a' gèilleadh: *they put a war-helmet on a block to show they were not surrendering*; thog X leacag thana chruaidh far na talmhainn: *X picked up a hard, thin slab from the ground*; luingeas do sheanar a th' ann: *it's your grandfather's fleet*; airson cobhair a dhèanamh oirnn: *to help us*; bùireadh nan seann laoch: *the wail of the old heroes*; gul a' bhannail mu seach: *the weeping of the crowd of women by turn*; a chràidh mo chridhe: *that pained my heart*; laogh mo laoigh thu: *you are the calf of my calf [my grandson]*; leanuibh mo leanuibh, ghil, chaoil: *the child of my white slender child*; leumadh mar lon: *jumping like a deer*; mo chreach lèir nach èirich Oscar: *I am devastated that Oscar will not rise*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: Oscar mac Oisein ogha Fhinn: *Oscar son of Oisean, grandson of Fionn. In Irish usage, ogha is contracted to O and is used in many surnames, whereas it never made through into modern usage in a formal manner in Scotland.*

Gnathas-cainnt na Litreach: còig fichead boghadair: a hundred archers. *Còig fichead is another way of saying ceud in the vigesimal counting system.*

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