

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Na Trì Lèintean Canaich (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.maclea@bbc.co.uk. This is Litir 1,005. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 701 corresponds to Litir 1,005.

A bheil sibh eòlach air an lus ris an canar *canach an t-slèibhe*? Bog cotton ann am Beurla. An robh fios agaibh gum biodh boireannaich anns an t-seann aimsir uaireannan a’ dèanamh aodach dheth? Uill, seo seann sgeulachd a tha a’ dearbhadh sin. ’S e an t-ainm a th’ oirre ‘Na Trì Lèintean Canaich’.

Bha uaireigin rìgh ann aig an robh trìùir mhac agus nighean. Chaochail a bhean agus **chaidh bliadhna no dhà seachad** mus do phòs e a-rithist. Bha iomagain air nach biodh a bhean ùr measail air a chuid chloinne. Mar sin, thog e taigh don chloinn air a’ bheinn-sheilg, air cùl na gaoithe is air aghaidh na grèine, far am faiceadh iad a h-uile duine ’s nach fhaiceadh duine iad. Cha robh fios aig a bhean ùir mu dheidhinn an taighe agus na cloinne.

Leis gum biodh an rìgh a’ sealg gu tric, bhiodh e gu tric a’ tadhal air a chloinn air a’ bheinn-sheilg. Gach eun a mharbh e, thug e seachad e do a chloinn.

Latha de na làithean, bha an rìgh air a’ bheinn-sheilg nuair a nochd an Iochdach Ùrlair, bana-bhuidseach a bha a’ fuireach faisg air an lùchairt. ‘Tha thu an sin, a chreutair ghòraich,’ thuir i ri bean an rìgh. ‘Tha thu dhen bheachd nach eil duine as docha leis an rìgh na thu, ach tha.’

‘Cò?’ dh’fhaighnich bean an rìgh.

‘A thriùir mhac agus nighean,’ ars an Iochlach Ùrlair. ‘Tha iad ann an grianan air a’ bheinn-sheilg, air cùl na gaoithe is air aghaidh na grèine, far am faic iad a h-uile duine ’s nach fhaic duine iad.’

‘O,’ thuir a’ bhanrigh. ‘Cha robh fios a’ m. Dè an dòigh air am faigh mi dhachaigh iad?’

‘Nuair a tha an rìgh a’ tighinn às a’ bheinn-sheilg,’ ars a’ bhana-bhuidseach, ‘lion do bheul le fion dearg. Nuair a thig e tron doras, spùt am fion a-mach. Can ris gu bheil thu a’ cur a-mach fuil do chridhe. Cha bhi leigheas ann air a shon ach nam biodh a thriùir mhac agus nighean air an toirt dhachaigh.’

Thàinig an rìgh dhachaigh. Spùt a bhean am fion dearg a-mach.

‘Dè tha a’ cur ort?’ dh’fhaighnich an rìgh.

‘Tha fuil mo chridhe a’ tighinn às mo bheul,’ fhreagair ise.

‘Dè nì leigheas ort?’

‘’S e do thriùir mhac agus nighean tighinn dhachaigh a dhèanadh leigheas orm,’ thuir i.

Cha robh an rìgh toilichte, ach chuir e searbhannt a-mach don ghrianan, le ceithir eich na chois. Thill a’ chlan dhachaigh. An ath latha, chaidh an rìgh a-mach a shealg. Chuir a

bhean fios don Iochlach Ùrlair. ‘Clann an rìgh – ciamar a gheibh mi cuidhteas iad?’ dh’fhaighnich i.

‘Ma gheibh mise pàigheadh,’ ars an Iochlach Ùrlair, ‘cuiridh mi às dhaibh.’

‘Dè am pàigheadh a bhios an sin?’ dh’fhaighnich a’ bhanrigh.

‘Uiread de chlàimh a lìonas mo dhà chluais, min a lìonas crogan dubh agus ìm a thanaicheas a’ mhin.’

‘Dè bhios an sin?’ dh’fhaighnich a’ bhanrigh.

‘De chlàimh – toradh seachd taighean-chaorach fad seachd bliadhna. Dè mhin – toradh seachd grainnsichean fad seachd bliadhna. Agus de dh’im – toradh seachd taighean-cruidh fad seachd bliadhna.’

‘Gheibh thu sin,’ ars a’ bhanrigh.

‘Uill, cuir a’ chlann a-nall thugam **aon is aon**,’ thuirt an Iochlach Ùrlair, ‘a dh’iarraidh na cìre mìne.’

‘Cuiridh, gu dearbh,’ dh’aontaich a’ bhanrigh.

Agus, an-ath-sheachdain, chì sinn dè thachair.

* * * * *

Faclan na Litreach: canach an t-slèibhe: *bog cotton*; Na Trì Lèintean Canaich: *The Three Bog Cotton Shirts*; chaochail: *died*; spùt: *spouted*; grainnsichean: *granaries*; taighean-cruidh: *cow-houses*.

Abairtean na Litreach: gum biodh boireannaich uaireannan a’ dèanamh aodach dheth: *that women would sometimes make clothes of it*; aig an robh trìùir mhac agus nighean: *who had three sons and a daughter*; nach biodh a bhean ùr measail air a chuid chloinne: *that his new wife would not like his children*; thog e taigh air a’ bheinn-sheilg: *he built a house on the hunting hill*; air cùl na gaoithe is air aghaidh na grèine: *behind the wind and in front of the sun*; far am faiceadh iad a h-uile duine ’s nach fhaiceadh duine iad: *where they could [would] see everybody and nobody could see them*; bana-bhuidseach a bha a’ fuireach faisg air an lùchairt: *a witch who was living near the palace*; a chreutair ghòraich: *foolish creature [vocative]*; nach eil duine as docha leis an rìgh na thu, ach tha: *that the king is not keener on anybody than he is on you, but he is*; lìon do bheul le fion dearg: *fill your mouth with red wine*; tha fuil mo chridhe a’ tighinn às mo bheul: *the blood of my heart is coming from my mouth*; dè nì leigheas ort?: *what will cure you?*; chuir e searbhant a-mach don ghrianan, le ceithir eich na chois: *he sent a servant out to the sun-house, accompanied by four horses*; ciamar a gheibh mi cuidhteas iad?: *how will I get rid of them?*; ma gheibh mise pàigheadh, cuiribh mi às dhaibh: *if I get paid, I’ll eliminate them*; uiread de chlàimh a lìonas mo dhà chluais: *enough wool to fill my two ears*; min a lìonas crogan dubh agus ìm a thanaicheas a’ mhin: *meal that fills a black jar and butter that thins the meal*; toradh seachd taighean-chaorach fad seachd bliadhna: *the produce of seven sheep houses over seven years*; a dh’iarraidh na cìre mìne: *to fetch the fine comb*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: cuir a’ chlann a-nall thugam **aon is aon**: *send the children over to me one by one*. There are other ways of saying ‘one by one’ eg *aon mu seach* but some terms are not gender neutral eg *fear mu seach*, *tè mu seach*. Using *aon*, rather than *fear* or *tè*, allows us to mean both males and females, as in the story.

Gnathas-cainnt na Litreach: chaidh bliadhna no dhà seachad: *one or two years elapsed*.

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