

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Na Trì Lèintean Canaich (3)

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 1,007. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 703 corresponds to Litir 1,007.

Tha mi ag innse dhuibh na sgeulachd ‘Na Trì Lèintean Canaich’. Bha nighean an rìgh aig taigh an t-seann duine mhòir. Dh’inns e dhi gun robh a triùir bhràithrean a’ fuireach ann an uamh. ‘Tha sreang chaol chainbe agam,’ thuirt e. ‘Gabh grèim oirre. Ma thèid thu air an rathad chearr, **bheir mise draghadh air an t-sreing.**’ ’S ann air an dòigh sin a lorg an nighean an uamh anns an robh a bràithrean.

Bha bòrd na broinn, le trì cupannan air – fear mòr, fear beag agus fear meadhanach. Bha iad uile làn fiona. Bha aig an nighinn, mu a meur, fàinne a bh’ air a bhith le a màthair nach maireann. Chuir i am fàinne sa chupa a bu lugha. An uair sin chaidh i am falach fo mheall de dh’itean eòin.

Thàinig a bràithrean a-steach nan coin ghlasa. Thilg iad dhiubh na cochail a bh’ orra. Bha iad nan daoine a-rithist. Thog iad an cupannan agus dh’òl iad am fion. Nuair a dh’òl am fear a b’ òige **a’ chuid mu dheireadh dhen** fhion, rinn am fàinne gliong air na fiaclan aige. Thog an gille e. Dh’aithnich e e. ‘Seo fàinne mo mhàthar,’ thuirt e. Rannsaich na gille an uamh agus lorg iad am piuthar. Bha iad air leth toilichte.

Dh’fhaighnich an nighean dhiubh an robh dòigh ann airson an saoradh bho na geasan a bh’ orra. Bha, thuirt iad. Nan dèanadh i lèine de chanach an t-slèibhe airson gach duine aca, agus nan cumadh i balbh sàmhach gus an robh i fhèin air na lèintean a chur umpa, bhiodh iad saor bho na geasan.

Dh’fhalbh i le trì pocannan gu sliabh agus lìon i iad le canach an t-slèibhe. Chunnaic i marcaiche a’ tighinn dha h-ionnsaigh. ’S e rìgh a bh’ ann, agus cha robh e pòsta.

Ghabh e gaol air an nighinn ach cha chanadh i facal ris. Bha esan a’ smaoinichadh gun robh i bodhar is balbh. Le comharraidhean làimhe, rinn e soilleir dhi gun robh e airson a pòsadh. Dh’aontaich i agus chaidh i don rìoghachd aige far an do phòs iad. Bha i a-nise na banrigh.

Gach latha, bhiodh i a’ leantainn le a cuid obrach ann an sàmhchair, a’ snìomh agus a’ fighe a’ chanaich. An ceann greis, rugadh leanabh-gille dhi. Airson seachdain rinn a’ bhean-ghlùine caithris air, gun a bhith a’ faighinn norrag. Ach, an dèidh seachdain, bha uiread de sgìths oirre ’s gun do chuir i an leanabh ann an creathall. Thuit i fhèin na cadal. Thàinig làmh mhòr a-steach air an uinneig agus thug i leatha an leanabh. Ach cha tuirt a’ bhanrigh càil oir bha i airson a bràithrean a shaoradh bho na geasan.

Nuair a dhùisg a' bhean-ghlùine, cha robh fios aice dè dhèanadh i. Bha coileach beag ann. Mharbh i an coileach, chuir i fuil bhuaithe ann an cupan, agus shuath i an fhuil air beul na banrigh. An uair sin chaidh i far an robh an rìgh. 'Nach olc am boireannach siud,' thuirt i ris. 'Dh'ith i a leanabh fhèin.'

'An do rinn i sin?' thuirt an rìgh.

'Rinn,' fhreagair a' bhean-ghlùine.

'Ud, chan eil i ach gòrach,' ars an rìgh. 'Leigidh sinn leatha.' Agus lean a' bhanrigh gu sàmhach le a cuid snìomh agus fighe. Bheir mi an stòiridh gu ceann an-ath-sheachdain.

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Faclan na Litreach: Na Trì Lèintean Canaich: *The Three Bog Cotton Shirts*; sreang chaol chainbe: *fine hempen string*; làn fiona: *full of wine*; gliong: *clink (sound)*; dh'aithnich: *recognised*; marcaiche: *[horse] rider*; bodhar is balbh: *deaf and unable to speak*; comharraidhean làimhe: *hand signs*; gòrach: *foolish*.

Abairtean na Litreach: gun robh a trìuir bhràithrean a' fuireach ann an uamh: *that her three brothers were living in a cave*; bha aig an nighinn, mu a meur, fàinne a bh' air a bhith le a màthair nach maireann: *the girl had, around her finger, a ring that had been owned by her late mother*; chaidh i am falach fo mheall de dh'itean eòin: *she hid under a pile of bird feathers*; thàinig a bràithrean a-steach nan coin ghlasa: *her brothers entered in the form of grey dogs*; thilg iad dhiubh na cochail a bh' orra: *they threw off the coverings that were on them*; rannsaich na gillean an uamh agus lorg iad am piuthar: *the lads closely searched the cave and they found their sister*; an robh dòigh ann airson an saoradh bho na geasan: *was there a way to free them from the spells*; nan dèanadh i lèine de chanach an t-slèibhe airson gach duine aca: *if she made a shirt of bog cotton for each one of them*; nan cumadh i balbh sàmhach gus an robh i fhèin air na lèintean a chur umpa: *if she kept silent until she herself had put the shirts on [around] them*; ghabh e gaol air an nighinn: *he fell in love with the girl*; a' snìomh agus a' fighe: *spinning and weaving*; rugadh leanabh-gille dhi: *she gave birth to a son*; rinn a' bhean-ghlùine caithris air, gun a bhith a' faighinn norrag: *the midwife kept a vigil watch on him, without sleeping*; bha uiread de sgìths oirre 's gun do chuir i an leanabh ann an creathall: *she was so tired that she put the baby in a cradle*; mharbh i an coileach, chuir i fuil bhuaithe ann an cupan, agus shuath i an fhuil air beul na banrigh: *she killed a cockerel, she put blood from it in a cup, and she rubbed the blood on the queen's mouth*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: bheir mise draghadh air an t-sreing: *I'll pull on the string*. Sreang is a feminine noun and, traditionally, such nouns slenderize in the dative (prepositional) singular following an article. Thus an t-sreang (nominative) becomes air an t-sreing (dative). The pronunciation of the vowel also slenderizes.

Gnathas-cainnt na Litreach: a' chuid mu dheireadh dhen fhìon: *the last bit of the wine*.

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