

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Loch a' Ghartain (1)

Each week the West Highland Free Press publishes the text for Ruairidh 's "Letter to Gaelic Learners" on BBC Radio nan Gàidheal (103.5-105 FM). Broadcasts are as follows: 10.00 pm on Sunday, following the Gaelic Learners' programme 'Beag air Bheag', with a repeat at 10.30 pm on Wednesday. This is Litir 1,043. There is also a simpler version – An Litir Bheag – which is broadcast at 4.03 pm each Sunday. Litir Bheag 739 corresponds to Litir 1,043. The Litir is also available at www.bbc.co.uk/litir and www.learnghaelic.scot/litir.

An robh sibh riamh aig Loch a' Ghartain ann an Srath Spè? Tha e faisg air Coit Ghartain, far am biodh daoine a' dol a-null is a-nall thar Uisge Spè ann an coit – bàta beag – anns an t-seann aimsir. Tha Loch a' Ghartain ainmeil an-diugh oir 's e fear de na h-àiteachan as fheàrr ann an Alba airson an iolair-uisge fhaicinn. Tha e cuideachd gu math brèagha, le coille-ghiuthais ceithir-timcheall air. Tha cothrom an sin an capall-coille fhaicinn.

Bhathar ag ràdh aig aon àm gun robh creutair os-nàdarrach a' fuireach anns na coilltean timcheall Loch a' Ghartain. 'S e am Bodach a chanadh muinntir an àite ris. Chan eil fhios a'm am faiceadh daoine càil, ach chluinneadh iad am Bodach a' glaudhaich is a' caoidh. Bha iad ag ràdh gun robh e ag innse gum biodh bàs ann.

Bha fear Dòmhnall Mac a' Phearsain às an Tulach am measg na feadhainn a thug cunntas air a' Bhodach. Bhiodh e a' coinneachadh ri caraidean air an Tulach a h-uile seachdain airson cairtean a chluich, agus drama no dhà a ghabhail.

Oidhche a bha seo, goirid ro mheadhan-oidhche, bha iad a' cluich chairtean, ach cha robh uisge-beatha air fhàgail aca. B' e Dòmhnall Mac a' Phearsain am fear a b' òige dhen chuideachd. Chaidh iarraidh air falbh gu bothan far am faigheadh e tuilleadh uisge-bheatha. Chaidh Dòmhnall ann, thog e na botail agus thill e don taigh far an robh a charaidean.

Bha an oidhche ciùin agus bha an iarmailt làn rionnagan. Cha robh lòchran aig Dòmhnall, ach bha e furasta gu leòr dha a shlighe fhaicinn. Ràinig e glac far an robh preasan aitinn a' fàs. Chuala e fuaim coltach ri each a bha a' feuchainn ri èirigh gu a chasan. An uair sin, chuala e nàdar de sgread mar gun robh an t-eagal air an each.

Thug Dòmhnall sùil mun chuairt ach cha robh sgeul air each no càil eile. Bha e dhen bheachd gun robh a charaidean ri cleas. Dh'èigh e nach robh dragh sam bith air. Ach cha robh duine eile ann. Thàinig an t-eagal air an duine òg agus lean e air gu sgiobalta. Ràinig e bad chraobhan-beithe leth-cheud slat bhon taigh far an robh a charaidean. An sin, chuala e sgreuch os a chionn anns na geugan. Bha e an dùil gun tigeadh a charaidean a-mach às an taigh nuair a chuala iad an sgreuch. Ach cha do nochd duine.

Chaidh Dòmhnall a-steach agus bha e follaiseach nach robh a charaidean air càil a chluinntinn. Cha do dh'inns e dad dhaibh.

Aig trì uairean sa mhadainn, thàinig an cèilidh gu ceann. Bha dachaigh Dhòmhnail air rathad eadar-dhealaichte bho chàch. Bha e a' coiseachd leis fhèin – mu

chòig ceud slat air rathad a' bhaile-fearainn agus trì cheud slat air an rathad phoblach. Gu h-obann, nochd rudeigin geal, solasach air a bheulaibh. Bha e coltach ri siota geal.

Cha robh Dòmhnall airson leantainn air a shlighe, ach cha robh e airson tilleadh don àite às an tàinig e **na bu mhotha**. Mar sin, dh'fhàg e an rathad agus choisich e dhachaigh thar an fhraoich. Agus chuala e an aon sgreuch eagallach a chuala e nuair a bha a' faighinn an uisge-bheatha. A-nise, **bha eagal a bheatha air**. Ach dè rinn e? Innsidh mi dhuibh anns an ath Litir.

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Faclan na Litreach: Loch a' Ghartain: *Loch Garten*; Srath Spè: *Strathspey*; iolair-uisge: *osprey*; capall-coille: *capercaillie*; lòchran: *lantern*.

Abairtean na Litreach: Coit Ghartain, far am biodh daoine a' dol a-null is a-nall thar Uisge Spè ann an coit: *Boat of Garten, where people would go over and back across the River Spey in a small boat*; le coille-ghiuthais ceithir-timcheall air: *being surrounded by pine forest*; bhathar ag ràdh aig aon àm gun robh creutair os-nàdarrach a' fuireach: *it was said at one time that there was a supernatural creature living*; chluinneadh iad am Bodach a' glaothaich is a' caoidh: *they would hear the Bodach calling and wailing*; Dòmhnall Mac a' Phearsain às an Tulach: *Donald MacPherson from Tulloch*; agus drama no dhà a ghabhail: *and to take a dram or two*; oidhche a bha seo, goirid ro mheadhan-oidhche: *one night, a little before midnight*; b' e Dòmhnall Mac a' Phearsain am fear a b' òige dhen chuideachd: *X was the youngest of the company*; bothan far am faigheadh e tuilleadh uisge-bheatha: *a bothy where he would get more whisky*; bha an iarmailt làn rionnagan: *the heavens were full of stars*; glac far an robh preasan aitinn a' fàs: *a hollow where juniper bushes were growing*; fuaim coltach ri each a bha a' feuchainn ri èirigh gu a chasan: *a noise like a horse that was trying to get to its feet*; gun robh a charaidean ri cleas: *that his friends were playing a trick [on him]*; bad chraobhan-beithe leth-cheud slat bhon taigh: *a clump of birch trees fifty yards from the house*; thàinig an cèilidh gu ceann: *the gathering came to an end*; air rathad eadar-dhealaichte bho chàch: *on a different way from the others*; còig ceud slat air rathad a' bhaile-fearainn: *five hundred yards on the farm road*; nochd rudeigin geal, solasach air a bheulaibh: *something white and luminous appeared in front of him*; thar an fhraoich: *across the heather (moor)*; an aon sgreuch eagallach: *the same frightening scream*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: cha robh e airson tilleadh don àite às an tàinig e **na bu mhotha**: *he didn't want to return to the place he had come from either. This is the past tense form of nas motha which idiomatically stands for 'either' in this structure (only following a negative verb)*. Chan eil mise cinnteach nas motha 'I'm not sure either'. Sometimes nas motha is also used in the past tense.

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: **bha eagal a bheatha air**: *he was frightened out of his wits*.

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