

# Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

## An Triùir Shaighdearan

*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](mailto:rodny.macleon@bbc.co.uk). This is Litir 1,149. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 845 corresponds to Litir 1,149.*

**Is fìor thoigh leam** an làrach-lìn *Tobar an Dualchais*. Seo agaibh sgeulachd a chuala mi air an làrach o chionn ghoirid. Gabhaidh mise ‘An Triùir Shaighdearan’ oirre. Ach, ma tha sibh fhèin ga lorg, ’s e an tìotal a th’ oirre ‘Phòs triùir shaighdearan anns na h-Innsean triùir bhoireannach’. Chaidh an sgeulachd a chruinneachadh anns na caogadan le Calum Iain MacGill-Eain bho fhear à Àrasaig, Uilleam Dòmhnallach.

Bha triùir shaighdearan ann. Bha iad thall anns na h-Innsean ach cha robh iad toilichte ann. Theich iad bhon champa aca. Ràinig iad dlùth-choille mhòr ach chaidh iad air chall innte. Bha na saighdearan a’ gearradh slighe tron choille len claidhmhnean. Ach bha iad fhèin is an cuid aodaich air an sracadh is air an reubadh le lus droighneach.

Mu dheireadh, chunnaic iad fosgladh beag. Chaidh iad a-mach agus lorg iad loch agus caisteal brèagha. Chaidh iad a-null don chaisteal. Ann am fear de na seòmraichean, bha bòrd mòr ann a bha cho brèagha ri bòrd a chunnacas riamh. Cha robh biadh no deoch air an t-saoghal nach robh air a’ bhòrd.

Chuir na saighdearan an deiseachan dhiubh oir bha iad air an sracadh ’s air an reubadh anns a’ choille. Lorg iad aodach spaideil agus chuir iad sin orra. Bha trì leapannan cofhurtail ann dhaibh.

An ath mhadainn, dh’fhalbh na saighdearan chun an locha. Dè chunnaic iad ann ach trì ealachan a’ snàmh. Bha tè de na h-ealachan na bu mhotha na na dhà eile.

Nuair a thill na saighdearan don chaisteal, bha biadh is deoch gu leòr a’ feitheamh riutha. Ge-tà, thuirt fear dhiubh gun robh e air a bhith na b’ fheàrr nam biodh bean aig gach duine aca ann. Sa mhionaid, dh’fhalbh a h-uile rud math. Cha robh biadh no deoch air a’ bhòrd tuilleadh. Bha a-nise aodach robach air na saighdearan a-rithist.

Thug am fear sin an aire do dhùdach anns an t-seòmar. Sheinn e an dùdach. Dh’èirich stoirm mhòr, le uisge trom. Bha an t-eagal air na saighdearan nach fhada gum biodh an caisteal fo uisge. ‘Seall air na rinn thu,’ thuirt an dithis eile. Bha iad feargach. Bha iad a’ dol a mharbhadh an fhìr eile.

‘**Seinnidh mi fhathast i,**’ thuirt an saighdear.

‘Cha sheinn, cha sheinn,’ ars an dithis eile.

‘Seinnidh,’ thuirt a’ chiad fhear.

‘Cha sheinn,’ thuirt na saighdearan eile. Mu dheireadh, sheinn e a-rithist i.

Thòisich tàirneanaich is dealanaich an uair sin.

‘Seinnidh mi fhathast i,’ thuirt an saighdear.

‘Cha sheinn,’ ars an dithis eile. Bha iad a’ dol ga mharbhadh. Ach sheinn e an dùdach a-rithist. Thàinig piseach air an aimsir an uair sin, ach cha robh biadh no deoch air a’ bhòrd.

An ath mhadainn, chaidh iad chun an locha. Bha iad am beachd eala a mharbhadh. Thog fear de na saighdearan a ghunna. Bha e a’ dol a mharbhadh na h-eala a bu mhotha. Ach an uair sin, dh’atharraich na h-ealachan gu bhith nam boireannaich bhrèagha. B’ i an tè a bu mhotha dhiubh nighean ìmpire. Bha an dithis eile nan nigheanan aig rìghrean. Bha iad air a bhith fo gheasaibh le bana-bhuidsichean.

Bha am fear a sheinn an dùdach air a’ gheas a bhriseadh. Nach bu mhath sin! Nuair a thill na saighdearan don chaisteal, bha biadh is deoch air a’ bhòrd a-rithist, agus phòs na saighdearan na boireannaich. Agus sin agaibh an sgeul.

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**Faclan na Litreach:** fosgladh: *opening*; biadh: *food*; deoch: *drink*; spaideil: *smart*; cha sheinn: *no [you won’t blow]*; tàirneanaich is dealanaich: *thunder and lightning*.  
**Abairtean na Litreach:** ma tha sibh fhèin ga lorg, ’s e an tìotal a th’ oirre: *if you’re looking for it yourself, its title is*; phòs triùir shaighdearan anns na h-Innsean triùir bhoireannach: *three soldiers in India married three women*; chaidh an sgeulachd a chruinneachadh anns na caogadan: *the story was collected in the fifties*; ràinig iad dlùth-choille mhòr ach chaidh iad air chall innte: *they reached a large jungle and they got lost in it*; gun robh ìomhaighean ùra a’ dol an-àirde: *that new statues were going up*; a’ gearradh slighe tron choille len claidhmhnean: *cutting a route through the forest with their swords*; bha iad fhèin is an cuid aodaich air an sracadh is air an reubadh le lusan droighneach: *they and their clothes were torn and ripped by spiny plants*; chaidh iad a-null don chaisteal: *they went over to the castle*; bha bòrd mòr ann a bha cho brèagha ri bòrd a chunnacas riamh: *there was a great table there that was as magnificent as any table ever seen*; chuir na saighdearan an deiseachan dhiubh: *the soldiers took their uniforms off*; bha trì leapannan cofhurtail ann dhaibh: *there were three comfortable beds for them*; bha tè de na h-ealachan na bu mhotha na na dhà eile: *one of the swans was bigger than the other two*; na b’ fheàrr nam biodh bean aig gach duine aca ann: *better if each of them had a wife there*; cha robh biadh no deoch air a’ bhòrd tuilleadh: *there was no longer food or drink on the table*; thug X an aire do dhùdach: *X noticed a horn (bugle)*; nach fhada gum biodh an caisteal fo uisge: *that it wouldn’t be long until the castle were under water*; thàinig piseach air an aimsir: *the weather improved*; bha iad am beachd eala a mharbhadh: *they were intending to kill a swan*; fo gheasaibh le bana-bhuidsichean: *under spells by witches*; bha X air a’ gheas a bhriseadh: *X had broken the spell*; nach bu mhath sin: *wasn’t that good*.

**Puing-chànain na Litreach Seinnidh mi fhathast i:** *I’ll blow/play it again. Traditionally the verb seinn is used for playing musical instruments. But what I want to highlight here is the dialectal use of fhathast to mean ‘again’ rather than its standard translation as ‘still’. It really means he intends to continue blowing the horn. The storyteller, William MacDonald, was from Arisaig.*

**Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach:** **Is fìor thoigh leam** an làrach-lìn: *I really like the website.*

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