

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Dòmhnall Alasdair MacCoinnich (3)

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: 2:55pm on Sunday as part of BBC Radio nan Gàidheal's hour-long learning zone, following the Gaelic Learners' programme 'SpeakGaelic Extra', with a repeat at 10.30 pm on Wednesday. This is Litir 1,283. There is also a simpler version – An Litir Bheag – which is broadcast at 2:30pm each Sunday. Litir Bheag 979 corresponds to Litir 1,283. The Litir is also available at www.bbc.co.uk/litir and www.learnghaelic.scot/litir. Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learnghaelic.scot.

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mun Chaillich Bheura mar a tha i a' nochdadh anns an leabhar *Wonder Tales from Scottish Myth and Legend* le Dòmhnall Alasdair MacCoinnich. Anns an dàrna caibideil, tha MacCoinnich ag innse dhuinn mu Bhrìde.

Fad a' gheamhraidh, bha bana-phrionnsa òg aig a' Chaillich ann am bruid. B' ise Brìde. Bha farmad air a' Chaillich ri **bòidhchead Brìde** agus rinn i beatha na bana-phrionnsa doirbh.

Latha a bha seo, thug a' Chailleach rùsg-caorach donn do Bhrìde. 'Glan seo anns an allt,' thuir a' Chailleach, 'gus am bi e cho glan ris an òr agus cho geal ris an t-sneachd'.

Thug Brìde an rùsg a-bhàn don allt. Chuir i seachad an latha, feuch an rùsg donn a dhèanamh geal. Ach bha e do-dhèante. 'Chan eil feum sam bith annad,' thuir a' Chailleach. 'Chan eil e dad nas gile na bha e nuair a thòisich thu.'

Thill Brìde don aon obair an ath latha agus an latha an dèidh sin ach cha robh dòigh ann airson a' chlàimh dhonn a dhèanamh geal. Bha Brìde a' sìleadh nan deur shìos aig an allt nuair a thàinig bodach. '**Dè tha a' cur ort?**' dh'fhaighnich e. Mhìnich Brìde an suidheachadh dha.

'Is mise Bodach a' Gheamhraidh,' thuir e. 'Thoir dhomh an rùsg-caorach agus nì mi fhìn geal e.'

Thug Brìde an rùsg dha. Chrath e trì tursan e agus cha robh e donn tuilleadh. Bha e cho geal ris an t-sneachd. Nuair a thug am Bodach an rùsg air ais do Bhrìde, thug e cuideachd bad de ghealagan-làir – lus beag a dhearbhas gu bheil an geamhradh seachad. 'Ma nì a' Chailleach trod,' thuir e, 'inns dhi gun d' fhuair thu iad anns a' choille-ghiuthais. Inns dhi cuideachd gu bheil a' bhiolair a' fàs suas air bruaichean nan allt agus gu bheil feur ùr anns na pàircean.' Agus, le sin, dh'fhalbh am Bodach.

Thill Brìde gu daingneach na Caillich. Chuir i an rùsg-caorach air an làr. Ach cha robh a' Chailleach a' coimhead air. Bha a sùilean air na gealagan-làir. 'Càit an d' fhuair thu na flùraichean sin?' thuir i.

'Tha iad a' fàs anns a' choille-ghiuthais,' thuir Brìde. 'Chan e sin a-mhàin, ach tha a' bhiolair a' fàs suas air bruaichean nan allt agus tha feur ùr sna pàircean.'

'Is uabhasach an naidheachd agad!' thuir a' Chailleach. 'Teich às mo shealladh!' Bha a' Chailleach feargach oir bha fios aice gun robh an geamhradh a' tighinn gu ceann.

Thug i còmhla an t-ochdnar shearbhantan aice – cailleachan eile. Dh'iarra i orra stoirm is reothadh a thoirt leotha don a h-uile h-àite. Cha robh i airson 's gum biodh dad a' fàs ann an àite sam bith.

Dh'fhalbh na cailleachan air muin-ghobhar agus sgaoil iad stoirm is reothadh. Bhuail a' Chailleach Bheura fhèin a h-uile càil leis an òrd shònraichte aice gus nach biodh dad a' fàs.

Bha mic aig a' Chaillich. Bha a' chuid a bu mhotha dhiubh nan trustaran. Ach bha aon duine aca laghach is onarach. B' e sin Aonghas Òg. Bha Aonghas air gaol a ghabhail air Brìde mar a chluinneas sinn an-ath-sheachdain.

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Faclan na Litreach: Dòmhnall Alasdair MacCoinnich: *Donald Alexander Mackenzie*; dàrna: *second*; rùsg-caorach donn: *a brown sheep's fleece*; do-dhèante: *impossible*; Bodach a' Gheamhraidh: *Father Winter*; trod: *scolding*; coille-ghiuthais: *pine forest*; daingneach: *stronghold*; stoirm is reothadh: *storm and frost*.

Abairtean na Litreach: Fad a' gheamhraidh, bha bana-phrionnsa òg aig a' Chaillich ann am bruid: *all winter long, the Cailleach held a young princess in custody*; gus am bi e cho glan ris an òr agus cho geal ris an t-sneachd: *until it was as clean as the gold and as white as the snow*; chuir i seachad an latha, feuch an rùsg donn a dhèanamh geal: *she spent the day trying to make the brown fleece white*; chan eil feum sam bith annad: *you are useless*; chan eil e dad nas gile na bha e nuair a thòisich thu: *it's no whiter than it was when you started*; cha robh dòigh ann airson a' chlàimh dhonn a dhèanamh geal: *there was no way of making the brown wool white*; a' sileadh nan deur: *weeping*; bad de ghealagan-làir: *a bunch of snowdrops*; lus beag a dhearbhas gu bheil an geamhradh seachad: *a wee plant that shows the winter is over*; gu bheil a' bhiolair a' fàs suas air bruaichean nan allt: *that the watercress is growing up on the stream banks*; gu bheil feur ùr anns na pàircean: *that there is new grass in the pastures*; is uabhasach an naidheachd agad!: *what appalling news!*; teich às mo shealladh: *get out of my sight*; thug i còmhla an t-ochdnar shearbhantan aice: *she brought together her eight servants*; air muin-ghobhar: *mounted on goats*; bha a' chuid a bu mhotha dhiubh nan trustaran: *most of them were rascals*; bha Aonghas air gaol a ghabhail air Brìde: *Angus had fallen in love with Bride*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: Bha farmad air a' Chaillich ri **bòidhchead Brìde**: *the Cailleach was envious of **Bride's beauty**. I have here chosen not to lenite Bride's name in the genitive case. In fact, you will find both models in the language community – bòidhchead Brìde and bòidhchead Bhrìde. Centuries ago, names of both genders were not lenited in their genitive form (thus we say Fèill Brìde and Fèill Pàdraig for their feast days) but in more recent times, lenition has become standard with masculine given names, although less so with feminine names.*

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: *Dè tha a' cur ort?: what is upsetting you?*

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