

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

An Dreathan-donn

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 796. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 492 corresponds to Litir 796.

Is mòid i sin, is mòid i sin, mar a thuirt an dreathan-donn nuair a rinn e dileag sa mhuir mhòir. An cuala sibh an seanfhacal sin riamh? Tha mi a’ dèanamh dheth gu bheil e a-mach air daoine a tha a’ smaoinichadh gu bheil iad nas cudromaiche na tha iad ann an dha-rìreabh. *Is mòid i sin, is mòid i sin, mar a thuirt an dreathan-donn nuair a rinn e dileag sa mhuir mhòir.* Tha an t-eun seo car mòr às fhèin. Agus carson nach bitheadh? Nach e an dreathan-donn a chaidh na b’ àirde na eun sam bith eile, eadhon an iolair, oir chaidh e air muin na h-iolaire nuair a bha ‘rìgh nan eun’ air sgèith gu h-àrd.

Sheall an stòiridh sin, mun dreathan agus an iolair, cho seòlta ’s a tha an t-eun beag seo. Agus bidh sibh eòlach air an ainmhidh eile a thathar a’ tomhas mar seòlta – an sionnach no madadh-ruadh. Ach cò tha nas seòlta – am madadh no an dreathan? Cò dhèanadh a’ chùis ann am farpais?

Uill, a rèir beul-aithris, bha farpais ann eatarra uaireigin. Agus seo mar a thachair.

Latha a bha seo, tràth san Earrach, bha dreathan-donn a’ lorg stuth airson nead a thogail. Fhuair e grèim air stuth math ach bha e doirbh a tharraing a-mach le a ghob oir bha e an sàs ann an stuth eile. Cha robh an dreathan làidir gu leòr.

Cò thàinig seachad ach sionnach. Dh’inns an dreathan dha nach robh e comasach air an stuth-neadachaidh a thoirt a-mach. ‘Dè gheibh mi bhualt ma bheir mi taic dhut?’ thuirt an sionnach.

‘O, nuair a tha obair an arbhair seachad as t-fhoghar, bheir mi rudeigin dhut.’

‘Dè na bheir thu dhomh?’ dh’fhaighnich am madadh a-rithist.

Mhèdraich an t-eun airson greis. An uair sin thuirt e, ‘Peic is ceannan.’ ’S e sin a gheibh thu – peic is ceannan.’ Nise b’ e peic agus ceannan dà thomhas de ghràin a bhathar a’ cleachdadh anns an t-seann aimsir. *A peck and two pecks*, ann am Beurla.

Dh’aontaich an sionnach ris a’ bhargan, thug e taic don dreathan agus dh’fhalbh e.

Nuair a thàinig am foghar, chuimhnich an sionnach air a’ bhargan, agus chaidh e a thadhal air an dreathan-donn. Bha an t-eun trang anns an t-sabhal le a mhic. Anns a’ chiad dol a-mach, cha b’ urrainn don mhadadh-ruadh dèanamh dheth cò fear a bha na athair. Bha na h-eòin a’ coimhead coltach ri chèile.

Ach cha chan iad ‘cho seòlta ris an t-sionnach’ gun adhbhar. ‘Tha athair cho ealanta air an obair an coimeas ri a mhic,’ thuirt an sionnach.

‘Is math a thuirt thu,’ thuirt an seann dreathan gu pròiseil, agus thàinig e a dh’ionnsaigh an t-sionnach. **Chuir an sionnach na chuimhne** mar a rinn iad bargan as t-Earrach.

‘Tha cuimhne agam,’ thuirt an dreathan-donn. ‘Thuirt mi riut gun toirinn peic is ceannan dhut. Tha sin ceart, nach eil?’

‘Tha sin ceart,’ dh’aontaich am madadh-ruadh.

Dh’èigh an dreathan-donn, ‘Peic is Ceannan, Peic is Ceannan!’ gu h-àrd-ghuthach. Agus ruith dà chù mhòr a-mach. ’S iad na h-ainmean a bh’ orra Peic agus Ceannan! Theich an sionnach gu luath. Agus sin mar a thug an dreathan-donn an car às an t-sionnach oir ’s e a bu sheòlta dhen dithis aca.

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Faclan na Litreach: dreathan-donn: *wren*; sionnach, madadh-ruadh: *fox*; mheòraich: *contemplated*.

Abairtean na Litreach: a’ smaoinichadh gu bheil iad nas cudromaiche na tha iad ann an dha-rìreabh: *thinking that they are more important than they are in reality*; tha an t-eun seo car mòr às fhèin: *this bird has a high opinion of itself*; chaidh e air muin na h-iolaire: *it went on to the back of the eagle*; nuair a bha ‘rìgh nan eun’ air sgèith gu h-àrd: *when ‘the king of the birds’ was flying high*; cho seòlta ’s a tha an t-eun beag seo: *how cunning is this little bird*; a thathar a’ tomhas mar seòlta: *which is reckoned to be cunning*; cò dhèanadh a’ chùis ann am farpais?: *who would win in a competition?*; bha farpais ann eatarra uaireigin: *there was a competition between them at one time*; bha e doirbh a tharraing a-mach le e ghob: *it was difficult to pull it out with its beak*; nach robh e comasach air an stuth-neadachaidh a thoirt a-mach: *that it wasn’t capable of pulling out nesting material*; nuair a tha obair an arbhair seachad as t-fhoghar, bheir mi rudeigin dhut: *when the work of the corn is over in the autumn, I’ll give you something*; dè na bheir thu dhomh?: *what will you give me?*; b’ e peic agus ceannan dà thomhas de ghràin: *a peck and a ceannan are two measures of grain*; chaidh e a thadhal air: *he went to visit*; trang anns an t-sabhal le a mhic: *busy in the barn with his sons*; cha b’ urrainn don mhadadh-ruadh dèanamh dheth cò fear a bha na athair: *the fox couldn’t make out which one was the father*; cho ealanta air an obair an coimeas ri a mhic: *so skilled in the work compared with his sons*; gu h-àrd-ghuthach: *at the top of his voice*; ruith dà chù mhòr a-mach: *two large dogs ran out*; mar a thug an dreathan-donn an car às an t-sionnach oir ’s e a bu sheòlta dhen dithis aca: *how the wren tricked the fox because it was the more cunning of the two of them*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: **Chuir an sionnach na chuimhne:** *the fox reminded him*. Na here stands for ann + a (*the masculine third person singular possessive pronoun*). This possessive pronoun lenites the following noun, thus *cuimhne* becomes *chuimhne*.

Seanfhacal na Litreach: **Is mòid i sin, is mòid i sin, mar a thuirt an dreathan-donn nuair a rinn e dileag sa mhuir mhòir:** *it’s the bigger for that, it’s the bigger for that, as the wren said when he urinated in the great sea*.

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