

# Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

*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 [roddy.macleon@bbc.co.uk](mailto:roddy.macleon@bbc.co.uk). This is Litir 377. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 73 corresponds to Litir 377.*

Leig Deirdre an sealgair a-steach don bhothan. Nuair a chunnaic an sealgair Deirdre, agus i cho bòidheach, cha robh an t-acras air tuilleadh. Cha robh muime Deirdre toilichte. "Cùm do bheul dùinte agus do theanga balbh," thuirt i ris.

"Uill," ars' an sealgair ris a' mhuime, "faodaidh mi sin a dhèanamh. Ach nam faiceadh cuid eile de shluagh an t-saoghail a' bhoinne fala a th' agad falaichte an seo, chan fhada a bhiodh i agad."

"Agus cò na daoine sin?" dh'fhaighnich Deirdre.

"Innsidh mi sin dhut," ars' an sealgair. "Is iad Naois mac Uisne, agus Ailleán is Àrdan, a dhithis bhràithrean."

"Agus dè an coltas a th' orra?" dh'fhaighnich Deirdre.

"Tha lì an fhithich air am falt is tha an gruaidhean mar fhuil an laoi bhric dheirg," thuirt an sealgair. "Tha an lùth agus an leum mar bhradan a' bhoinne-bhrais agus mar fhiadh a' bhearraidh bhric."

Dh'fhalbh an sealgair. Smaoinich e ris fhèin mu Chonachar, Rìgh Uladh, a bha gun bhean. Chaidh e gu lùchairt an Rìgh. Bhruidhinn e ris an Rìgh. "Chunnaic mi a' bhoinne fala as bòidheche ann an Èirinn," thuirt e.

"Cò i, agus càite a bheil i?" dh'fhaighnich an Rìgh. Dh'aontaich an sealgair an rathad don bhothan a shealltainn don Rìgh air an làrna-mhàireach.

Nuair a ràinig iad am bothan, ghnoig an Rìgh an doras. Thuirt am boireannach nach fhaigheadh duine a-steach.

"Fosgail an doras," dh'èigh an Rìgh.

"Bhithinn nur comain," thuirt am boireannach, "nan innseadh sibh dhomh cò sibh."

"Is mise Conachar, Rìgh Uladh," fhreagair am fear eile. Agus nuair a chual' i sin, leum am boireannach chun an dorais agus dh'fhosgail i e.

Nuair a chunnaic an Rìgh Deirdre, shaoil e nach fhac' e riamh ann an cùrsa an latha no ann an aisling na h-oidhche boinne fala cho bòidheach rithe. Cha robh dad air aire ach Deirdre a thoirt air falbh leis, co-dhiù bhiodh i deònach gus nach bitheadh. Agus 's e sin a thachair. Thug an Rìgh Deirdre agus a muime air falbh don lùchairt aige.

Bha an Rìgh ag iarraidh Deirdre a phòsadh **an làrach nam bonn**. Ach bha dragh air Deirdre nach robh fios aice dè na bhiodh aice ri dhèanamh mar bhean. Bha i aineolach mu ghnothaichean saoghal nan daoine. Thuirt i ris an Rìgh gum biodh i **fada na chomain** nan toireadh e dhi latha agus bliadhna. Dh'aontaich an Rìgh ri sin cho fad 's a ghealladh Deirdre gum pòsadh i e aig deireadh na bliadhna. Gheall i sin.

Fhuair Conachar bean-ionnsachaidh do Dheirdre. Agus fhuair e maighdeannan grinn, modhail, mìn a bhiodh a' còmhradh is a' cluich leatha. Latha a bha seo bha Deirdre is na mnathan sin a-muigh air cnoc, a' gabhail sealladh is ag òl na grèine. Cò chunnaic iad ach triùir fhear. Nuair a dhlùthaich na fir riutha, chuimhnich Deirdre faclan an t-sealgair. Thuirt i rithe fhèin gum b' iad seo triùir mhac Uisne. Agus gum b' e sin Naois. Cha do choimhead na fir air na mnathan, ach ghabh Deirdre gràdh air Naois. Cha b' urrainn dhi fuireach. Dh'fhalbh i às a dhèidh.

Bha Ailleán is Àrdan air cluinntinn mun bhoireannach a bh' aig Conachar, Rìgh Uladh. Smaoinich iad, nam faiceadh Naois i, gum biodh esan ga h-iarraidh, oir cha robh i pòsta aig an Rìgh. Chunnaic iad am boireannach òg a' tighinn gan ionnsaigh agus dh'iarr iad air cach a chèile coiseachd na bu luaithe. Chì sinn mar a thachair an uair sin anns an ath Litir.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Faclan na Litreach:** muime: *foster-mother*; lùchairt: *palace*; ghnoig: *knocked*; Rìgh Uladh: *King of Ulster*; aineolach: *ignorant*.

**Abairtean na Litreach:** cùm do bheul dùinte agus do theanga balbh: *keep your mouth closed and your tongue speechless*; faodaidh mi sin a dhèanamh: *I might do that*; nam faiceadh cuid eile a' bhoinne fala a th' agad falaichte: *if some others were to see the blood-drop [beautiful woman] you have [here] hidden*; chan fhada a bhiodh i agad: *you wouldn't have her long*; a dhithis bhràithrean: *his two brothers*; li an fhithich: *the colour of the raven*; fuil an laoigh bhric dheirg: *the blood of the red speckled fawn*; tha an lùth agus an leum: *their vigour and spring (leap)*; bradan a' bhoinne-bhrais: *the salmon of the rapid stream*; fiadh a' bhearraidh bhric: *the deer of the speckled slope*; an rathad a shealltainn air an làrna-mhàireach: *to show the road the next day*; nach fhaigheadh duine a-steach: *nobody would get in*; nan innseadh sibh dhomh cò sibh: *if you would tell me who you are*; ann an cùrsa an latha no ann an aisling na h-oidhche: *in the course of a day or in a dream of the night*; co-dhiù bhiodh i deònach gus nach bitheadh: *whether she were willing or not*; dè na bhiodh aice ri dhèanamh: *what she would have to do*; cho fad 's a ghealladh X gum pòsadh i e: *as long as X promised she would marry him*; maighdeannan grinn, modhail, mìn: *elegant, polite, gentle maidens*; a' gabhail sealladh is ag òl na grèine: *looking at the view and drinking [enjoying] the sun[shine]*; ghabh X gràdh air Y: *X fell in love with Y*; às a dhèidh: *after him*; nam faiceadh X i: *if X saw her*; dh'iarr iad air cach a chèile coiseachd na bu luaithe: *they urged each other to walk more quickly*.

**Puing-chànain na Litreach:** Thuirt i ris an Rìgh gum biodh i **fada na chomain** nan toireadh e dhi latha agus bliadhna: *she said to the King that she would be much obliged to him if he gave her a year and a day*. Comain means obligation or debt and it is used in this idiom as follows, tha mi fada nad chomain (*I am much obliged to you [sing]*), fada na comain (*to her*), fada nar comain (*to us*), fada nur comain (*to you [pl]*), fada nan comain (*to them*). Fada is not obligatory here – it strengthens the phrase but you might say tha mi nad chomain (*I'm obliged to you*). Or you might replace it with another strengthener eg tha mi gu mòr nad chomain. If a noun is included, it is used as follows: tha mi an comain a mhàthar (*I'm obliged to his mother*), tha mi an comain Dhòmhnail (*I'm obliged to Donald*). It's a nice phrase and very polite – try to use it as soon as you can.

**Gnàths-cainnt na Litreach:** an làrach nam bonn: *immediately, on the spot*.

\* Tha "Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh" air a maoineachadh le Seirbheis nam Meadhanan Gàidhlig.