

# 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 378. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 74 corresponds to Litir 378.*

Thug Naois gràdh mòr do Dheirdre. Bha fios aige gum biodh Rìgh Uladh, Conachar, feargach. Chaidh Naois, a dhithis bhràithrean, Ailleán is Àrdan, agus Deirdre gu ruige Alba. Thog iad taigh ri taobh Loch Naois. Bha iad a' fuireach ann an tùr. Mharbhadh iad bradan a' bhoinne bhrais a-mach air an doras, agus fiadh a' bhearraidh bhric a-mach air an uinneig.

Ach thàinig an t-àm nuair a bha Conachar an dùil Deirdre a phòsadh. Chuir e roimhe a faighinn air ais bho Naois. Chuir e fios a-mach fad is farsaing gum biodh cuirm mhòr aige ann an Èirinn. Chuir e bràthair athar, Fearchar Mac Ro, air theachdaireachd a dh'ionnsaigh Alba. "Can ri Naois," thuir Conachar ri Fearchar, "nach bi fois latha no tàmh oidhche agam mura bi e fhèin, Ailleán is Àrdan, aig a' chuir." "

Ràinig Fearchar tùr Naois ann an Alba. Chuir Clann Uisne fàilte chridheil air. "Bidh Conachar, Rìgh Uladh, a' cumail cuirm mhòr," thuir Fearchar riutha, "agus cha bhi fois latha no tàmh oidhche aige mura bi sibh ann."

"Thèid sinn leat," arsa Naois

"Thèid," dh'aontaich a bhràithrean.

"Thèid," thuir Fearchar Mac Ro.

"Is fheàrr an tighearnas fhèin an Alba na an taigheadas an Èirinn," thuir Deirdre.

"Ge-tà," thuir Fearchar, "nach mì-thoilichte an duine nach fhaic a dhùthaich fhèin an àm èirigh sa mhadainn 's an àm laighe anmoch."

"Is mì-thoilichte," dh'aontaich Naois. "**Is annsa leam fhèin an dùthchas seach an dualchas.**"

Cha robh Deirdre a' cur earbsa ann am Fearchar. Cha robh i deònach falbh. Sheinn i òran binn brònach.

"Cha do ghèill mi riamh do bhùirean chon no do bhruadar bhan, a Naois," thuir Fearchar. Dh'aontaich Naois a-rithist nach dèanadh e cron sam bith dha dhol air ais a dh'Èirinn. Ach cha robh Deirdre deònach. Ghabh i òran binn tùrsach.

A dh'aindeoin an òrain, dh'aontaich Naois falbh. Agus fhuair e gealltanais bho Fhearchar. "Tha triùir mhac agam," thuir Fearchar. "Tha iad nan gaisgich. Bidh iad leibh is bidh mi fhìn còmhla riutha." Thug e gealltanais nan tigeadh cunnart an rathad Clann Uisne, nach fhàgadh esan 's a thriùir mhac ceann air colann beò ann an Èirinn, a dh'aindeoin claidheamh no clogaid, sleagh no sgiath.

Bha Deirdre mì-thoilichte ach dh'fhalbh i le Naois. **Bha i a' fras-shileadh nan deur,** agus sheinn i òran binn tùrsach.

Cho luath 's a chaidh Clann Uisne air tìr ann an Èirinn, thug Conachar cuireadh dhaibh dhol a dh'fhuireach ann am fear de na taighean aige. Dh'iarr e air a' mhuime dhol sìos don taigh

airson Deirdre fhaicinn. “Feuch a bheil i mar a bha i nuair a dh’fhàg i mi,” thuirt Conachar rithe. Cha robh dòigh aig a’ mhùime air Deirdre fhaicinn ach tro tholl na h-iuchrach. Thug i sùil tron toll agus thill i don lùchairt.

“Seadh, a mhùime, ciamar a tha i a’ coimhead? A bheil a dreach is a dealbh fhèin air Deirdre fhathast?” dh’fhaighnich Conachar.

“Chan eil,” fhreagair a’ mhùime.

“Tha dearbhadh a dhìth orm mus leig mi seachad i,” thuirt an Rìgh. Dh’iarr e air fear eile – a bha na mhac do Rìgh Lochlainn – dhol a choimhead air Deirdre. “Thoir brath thugam co-dhiù tha a dreach is a dealbh fhèin air Deirdre fhathast,” thuirt e.

Chaidh mac Rìgh Lochlainn don taigh agus sheall e a-staigh air toll na h-iuchrach. Ach chunnaic Naois a shùil anns an toll. Agus chì sinn dè rinn e an ath-sheachdain.

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**Faclan na Litreach:** Rìgh Uladh: *King of Ulster*; cuirm: *feast*; earbsa: *confidence*; tùrsach: *sorrowful*; gealltanais: *promise*; cuireadh: *invitation*; mùime: *foster-mother*.

**Abairtean na Litreach:** ri taobh Loch Naois: *next to Loch Naois. Some have claimed this [erroneously] to explain the origin of the name Loch Ness, with Naois’s tùr being on Dùn Dearduil near Inverfarigaig, although Loch Etive also has a strong claim to the story;* mharbhadh iad bradan a’ bhoinne bhrais: *they would kill the salmon of the rapid stream;* chuir e roimhe a faighinn air ais: *he determined to get her back;* air theachdaireachd: *on an errand [with a message];* nach bi fois latha no tàmh oidhche agam: *that I won’t have a day’s or night’s rest;* is fheàrr an tighearnas fhèin an Alba na an taigheadas an Èirinn: *better is one’s own lordship in Scotland than householding in Ireland;* nach fhaic a dhùthaich fhèin an àm èirigh’s an àm laighe: *who doesn’t see his own country at the time of rising and of going to bed;* òran binn brònach: *a sad, melodious song;* cha do ghèill mi riamh do bhùirean chon no do bhruadar bhan: *I have never yielded to the bellowing of dogs or the dreams of women;* nach dèanadh e cron sam bith: *that it would not do any harm;* nan tigeadh cunnart an rathad X: *if X were to be in danger;* ceann air colann beò: *a head on a living body;* claidheamh no clogaid, sleagh no sgiath: *sword or helmet, spear or shield;* feuch a bheil i mar a bha i: *try [to see] if she is as she was;* tro tholl na h-iuchrach: *through the keyhole;* a bheil a dreach is a dealbh fhèin air X fhathast?: *does X still have her beauty and form?;* tha dearbhadh a dhìth orm: *I need proof;* a bha na mhac do Rìgh Lochlainn: *who was a son of the King of Scandinavia;* thoir brath thugam: *come and tell me;* sheall e a-staigh air: *he looked through.*

**Puing-chànain na Litreach:** **Is annsa leam fhèin an dùthchas seach an dualchas:** *dearer to me is the land heredity than the kin heredity. The words dùthchas and dualchas are often confused with each other (both being translated as “heredity” or “heritage” eg Dualchas Nàdair na h-Alba – Scottish Natural Heritage). But Naois makes an older distinction between the two. Dùthchas is related to dùthaich and can mean “place of origin, homeland” as well as heredity. Dualchas is related to dual (“hereditary right”) and relates more strongly to family heredity. Dwelly gives “hereditary disposition or right” and “imitation of the ways of one’s ancestors” as alternative meanings of dualchas.*

**Gnàths-cainnt na Litreach:** **bha i a’ fras-shileadh nan deur:** *she was weeping uncontrollably [lit. she was showering the tears].*

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

