

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.maclean@bbc.co.uk. This is Litir 461. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 157 corresponds to Litir 461.

Halò a-rithist. An cuala sibh a-riamh an sgeulachd thraidiseanta “An Nighean a **Reiceadh**”? *The Lass that was Sold*. An Nighean a Reiceadh. Cha cuala? Uill, nach suidh sibh gu cofhurtail?!

Bha duine bochd ann agus bha seachdnar cloinne aige. Thàinig duine-uasal na rathad agus thuir e ris **gur ann aigesan a bha a’ chlann**. Fhregair an duine bochd gun robh na leòir aige, agus droch chothrom aige air an togail.

“An **creic** thu aon dhiubh?” ars an duine-uasal.

“Creicidh,” fhregair am fear bochd. “Tha gu leòr agam dhiubh.”

“Cha chreic,” thuir a bhean.

“Creicidh,” thuir an duine aice.

Thairg an duine-uasal fichead punnd Sasannach air an nighinn a b’ òige. Leanabh a bh’ innte. Cha robh a màthair deònach a creic, ach bha a h-athair. Fhuair e an t-airgead is fhuair an duine-uasal am pàiste. Chuir e fleanainn timcheall oirre. Bha e a’ dol seachad air linne muilleir annoch san oidhche, agus thilg e san linne i.

Nuair a bha am muillear a’ leigeil uisge air a’ mhuileann, chunnaic e pìos fleanainn air cùl na còmhlà. Dè lorg e ann ach leanabh a bha a’ deoghal an fhleanainn.

Chaidh e dhachaigh leatha. Thug e dha bhean i agus thuir e ris a h-uile duine gun robh leanabh nighinn air a bhith aig a bhean.

Chaidh dusan bliadhna seachad agus thàinig coigreach. Thuir e ris a’ mhuillear, “Nach brèagha an nighean agad.”

“Tha i glè bhrèagha,” ars am muillear.

“Dè an aois a tha i?” dh’fhaighnich an coigreach.

“Tha i,” ars esan, “dusan bliadhna.”

“Is leamsa an nighean sin,” ars an coigreach.

“Cha leat fhathast i co-dhiù,” ars am muillear.

“Tha mis’ ag ràdh riut gur leamsa i,” thuir an coigreach, “agus air a leithid seo de latha gun do cheannaich mis’ i o dhuine na leithid seo de dh’àite airson fichead punnd Sasannach. Chaith mi don uisge agad i agus fhuair thusa san uisge i agus bha thu a’ cur a-mach gum bu leat fhèin i.”

Nuair a dh’fhalbh an coigreach, thug e an nighean leis air a chùl air muin an eich. Bha am muillear agus a bhean a’ rànaich às an dèidh. Ghabh an coigreach rathad olc os cionn na mara. Cha robh an t-each deònach an rathad a ghabhail. Ach thug am fear air an each cumail a dol.

“Carson a tha thu a’ gabhail an rathaid seo leis an each?” ars a’ chaileag.

“Theirig thusa far muin an eich,” thuir e rithe, “agus cuiridh mi sìos leis a’ chreig seo thu agus nach fhaic mi tuilleadh thu.”

“Dè am math a nì e dhut mise a chur leis a’ chreig seo?” thuirt i. “Chan fhàg sin nas fheàrr thu.”

“Is toileachadh leam fhìn, thusa a chur leis a’ chreig,” thuirt an coigreach.

“Tha mi ag iarraidh mar aon fhàbhar ort,” ars a’ chaileag, “gun mo mharbhadh. Dèan rud sam bith, ach na marbh mi.”

“An dèan thu mar seo rium?” thuirt esan.

“Dè rud?” dh’fhaighnich a’ chaileag.

Thug e fàinne òir far a mheòir. “A bheil thu a’ faicinn an fhàinne seo?” thuirt e.

“Tha,” ars ise.

“Tha m’ ainm air an fhàinne,” ars esan. “Mionnaich air an fhàinne nach fhaic mise tuilleadh thu. Tha mi a’ dol ga thilgeil a-mach air a’ mhuir.”

Mhionnaich an nighean air an fhàinne nach fhaiceadh e ise tuilleadh gus am faiceadh e am fàinne sin a bha e a’ dol a chaitheamh don mhuir. Chaith e am fàinne cho fada a-mach ’s a b’ urrainn dha air an fhairge. Agus innsidh mi tuilleadh an ath-sheachdain.

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Faclan na Litreach: na leòir: *plenty*; creicidh: *I shall [sell]*; fleanainn: *flannel*; coigreach: *stranger*; a’ rànaich: *crying*; chaith: *threw*.

Abairtean na Litreach: nach suidh sibh gu cofhurtail?: *won’t you sit comfortably*; thàinig duine-uasal na rathad: *a gentleman came his way*; droch chothrom aige air an togail: *a poor chance of bringing them up*; thairg X fichead punnd Sasannach air an nighinn a b’ òige: *X offered £20 sterling [old-fashioned way of saying it] for [on] the youngest daughter*; linne muilleir: *a miller’s pond [ie mill-pond]*; nuair a bha X a’ leigeil uisge air a’ mhuileann: *when X was letting water into the mill*; air cùl na còmhlà: *behind the sluice-gate*; leanabh a bha a’ deoghal an fhleanainn: *a baby that was suckling the flannel*; gun robh leanabh nighinn air a bhith aig a bhean: *that his wife had had a baby daughter*; nach brèagha an nighean agad: *isn’t your daughter beautiful*; is leamsa X: *X is mine*; tha mis’ ag ràdh riut gur leamsa i: *I’m telling you she is mine*; air a leithid seo de latha: *on such and such a day*; na leithid seo de dh’àite: *in such and such a place*; chaith mi don uisge agad i: *I threw her into your water*; a’ cur a-mach gum bu leat fhèin i: *putting it about that she was yours*; air a chùl air muin an eich: *behind him on the back of the horse*; rathad olc os cionn na mara: *a bad road above the sea*; theirig thusa far muin an eich: *get off the horse*; cuiridh mi sìos leis a’ chreig seo thu: *I’ll throw you down this rock*; gun mo mharbhadh: *not to kill me*; thug e fàinne òir far a mheòir: *he took a gold ring off his finger*; mionnaich air X: *swear on X*; nach fhaiceadh e ise tuilleadh: *that he’d never see her again*; air an fhairge: *into the sea*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: An Nighean a Reiceadh: *The Lass who was Sold*. Reiceadh is the past passive form of the verb reic (“sell”). But, interestingly, the reciter of the story, from whom it was recorded in the 19th Century, used an alternative form of the verb, creic eg an **creic** thu aon dhiubh? – “will you sell one of them?” You will hear this form quite commonly in speech although the dictionaries tend to regard it as “non-standard”. Both are found in the Gaelic of Gairloch and the late Roy Wentworth in his excellent Gaelic Words and Phrases from Wester Ross/Faclan is Abairtean à Ros an Iar wrote “there seems to be little if any difference in meaning between ‘reic’ and ‘creic’.”

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: gur ann aigesan a bha a’ chlann: *that he had many children [lit. that it was at him that the children were]*.

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