

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 rodgy.macleane@bbc.co.uk. This is Litir 462. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 158 corresponds to Litir 462.

Thòisich mi an t-seachdain sa chaidh air an sgeulachd thraidiseanta *An Nighean an Reiceadh*. Bha an nighean air mionnachadh air fàinne a’ choigrich nach fhaiceadh e tuilleadh i. Agus airson sin, cha mharbhadh esan i. Thilg e am fàinne air a’ mhuir.

Dh’fhàg iad beannachd aig a chèile. Mu shia uairean feasgar, thàinig an nighean gu taigh duine-uasail. Dh’fhasdaich an duine-uasal i. Bha i air mhuinntireas aige fad trì bliadhna. Chòrd i ris gu math. An ceann nan trì bliadhna cò chunnaic i tighinn ach an duine a bh’ air a ceannach.

Bha iad ag iasgach bhodach ruadha an oidhche roimhe sin. ’S e bodach ruadh trosg beag. Bha ise a’ sgoltadh nam bodach, is i na còcaire, agus dè leum a-mach à fear dhiubh ach fàinne! Sheall i air, agus bha ainm-san air. B’ e sin fàinne an duine a cheannaich i! Chuir i mu a meur e.

An làrna-mhàireach thàinig esan còmhla ris an duine-uasal gu dinnear. Dh’aithnich ise esan glè mhath ach cha do leig i dad oirre. An dèidh na dinnearach, nuair a bha e a’ falbh, **dh’fhàg e beannachd** aig an duine-uasal eile.

“**Trobhad an seo, a nighean,**” thuirt e.

Chaidh i far an robh e aig ceann an taighe.

“Seadh,” ars esan, “nach do mhionnaich thusa dhòmhsa o chionn a leithid seo de bliadhnaichean nach fhaicinn thu gus am faicinn am fàinne a thilg mi a-mach air a’ mhuir?”

“Mhionnaich,” ars ise.

“Dè tha thu ag iarraidh a dhèanamh ort fhèin a-nis?” dh’fhaighnich e.

“A bheil thu a’ faicinn an fhàinne a thilg thu a-mach?” thuirt a’ chaileag. Thug i am fàinne far a meòir.

“Dè mar a fhuair thu am fàinne?” ars esan. “Chan urrainn dhòmhsa cur às dhut, tha sin fìor, ged a dh’fheuch mi. Thèid thu a-staigh is gheibh thu do phàigheadh on duine-uasal. Cha bhì thu nas fhaide aige. Pòsaidh mi thu. Sgrìobhaidh mi litir agus cuiridh mi a Dhùn Èideann thu a chum ’s gum faigh thu ionnsachadh sgoile.”

Chaidh an nighean a-staigh agus dh’iarr i a tuarastal. Sgrìobh an coigreach litir gu a bhràthair ann an Dùn Èideann.

“Falbhaidh thu a-nis,” ars esan, “gu ruige Dùn Èideann. Tha mo bhràthair ann. Bidh thu latha is bliadhna ann an sgoil còmhla ris na nigheanan aige fhèin. An ceann bliadhna, ruigidh mise thu agus pòsaidh mi thu.”

Thug e dhi an litir. Dh’fhalbh i leatha. Bha i air an rathad, taobh a-muigh Ghlaschu, nuair a thàinig an oidhche oirre. Chaidh i gu taigh tuathanaich.

“Cò às a thàinig a’ chaileag nach eil mi ag aithneachadh?” thuirt an tuathanach.

“’S e caileag Ghàidhealach a th’ annamsa,” ars ise.

An dèidh greis, thuirt an tuathanach, “Dè an naidheachd as fheàrr a th’ aig a’ chaileig Ghàidhealaich dhuinn a-nochd? Dè dh’èirich dhut a dh’innseas tu dhuinn?”

“Tha naidheachdan gu leòr agam orm fhìn,” thuirt i, agus dh’innis i mar a dh’èirich dhi, o thoiseach gu deireadh.

“Agus ’s e e fhèin a chuir an litir leat an-dràsta?” ars an tuathanach.

“’S e,” fhreagair i.

“Nam biodh tu cho math is a leigeil dhomh a faicinn,” thuirt an tuathanach. Sheall i an litir dha. Dh’ iarr e oirre an litir fhosgladh. Agus leugh e i.

Bha ise deimhinne gun robh an coigreach laghach dhi a-nise. Ach an robh? Dè bha anns an litir? Gheibh sinn a-mach anns an ath Litir againne.

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Faclan na Litreach: bodach ruadh: *small cod [if you’ve ever caught codling which live among the seaweed off the west coast, you’ll realise what a wonderful name this is!]*; Dùn Èideann: *Edinburgh*; tuathanach: *farmer*.

Abairtean na Litreach: An Nighean an Reiceadh: *The Lass who was Sold*; air mionnachadh air fàinne a’ choigrich: *had sworn on the stranger’s ring*; nach fhaiceadh e tuilleadh i: *that he’d never see her again*; cha mharbhadh esan i: *he wouldn’t kill her*; dh’fhasdaich an duine-uasal i: *the gentleman hired her*; air mhuinntireas aige: *in domestic service for him*; an oidhche roimhe: *the previous night*; a’ sgoltadh X, is i na còcaire: *splitting X open, she being the cook*; fàinne an duine a cheannaich i: *the ring of the man who [had] bought her*; mu a meur: *around her finger*; dh’aithnich ise esan ach cha do leig i dad oirre: *she recognised him but she didn’t reveal that*; nach do mhionnaich thusa dhòmhsa o chionn a leithid seo de bliadhnaichean?: *didn’t you swear to me such and such number of years ago?*; nach fhaicinn thu gus am faicinn am fàinne: *that I’d not see you until I saw the ring*; dè tha thu ag iarraidh a dhèanamh ort fhèin?: *what do you want to have done to you?*; far a mèir: *from her finger*; chan urrainn dhòmhsa cur às dhut: *I am unable to kill you*; gheibh thu do phàigheadh: *get your wages*; pòsaidh mi thu: *I’ll marry you*; a chum ’s gum faigh thu ionnsachadh: *so that you’ll get an education*; nuair a thàinig an oidhche oirre: *when night came upon her*; dè dh’èirich dhut a dh’innseas tu dhuinn?: *what has happened to you that you might tell us?*; o thoiseach gu deireadh: *from start to finish*; nam biodh tu cho math is a leigeil dhomh a faicinn: *if you’d be so good as to permit me to see it [fem]*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: **Trobhad an seo, a nighean:** *come here, lass. Are you familiar with the fact that the initial “n” in nighean (vocative singular case) is lenited? We don’t show lenited n’s in writing although, had the system been invented differently, it might have been written “a nhighan”. If you forget this, think of caileag. We say “a chaileag” addressing the girl. Because it is a feminine noun we lenite it but do not slenderise it cf masculine nouns which are lenited and slenderised in the vocative singular (“A Dhòmhnail!; a bhalaich!) But how are you going to lenite the “n” in speech? Here’s a guide: think of the “n” in the English “new” as being like the unlenited Gaelic “n”, whereas the “n” in English “no” is like the lenited Gaelic “n”. It’s one of the finer points of the language and I’d advise you to ask your teacher or a fluent, particularly native, speaker to help you.*

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: Dh’fhàg iad beannachd aig a chèile: *they farewelled each other.*

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