

# 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 [rodny.macleam@bbc.co.uk](mailto:rodny.macleam@bbc.co.uk). This is Litir 523. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 219 corresponds to Litir 523.*

Bha Iain Dubh Leòdhasach, an Seòladair na cheannard air na robairean. Dh’iarr e air na robairean falbh a-mach. Dh’fhuirich e fhèin aig an taigh, ge-tà. Lorg e iuchraichean. Chaidh e timcheall an taighe agus dh’fhosgail e a h-uile doras-seòmair leis na h-iuchraichean, ach aonan. Dhiùlt am boireannach, a bha a’ fuireach san taigh, an iuchair sin a thoirt dha. Ach thuirt Iain rithe gum b’ esan an ceannard agus gu feumadh i an iuchair a thoirt dha. Rinn i sin.

Dh’fhosgail Iain **doras an t-seòmair uaignich**. Chunnaic e roimhe boireannach cho bòidheach ’s a choinnich ri sùil fir riamh. Ach bha i crochte air a falt ri croman air mullach an t-seòmair. Bha bàrr a h-òrdagan a’ beantainn air èiginn don ùrlar. Leum Iain dha h-ionnsaigh agus leig e sìos i. Bha coltas oirre gun robh i marbh.

Bha i greis ann an neul, ach thàinig i thuige. Dh’innis i dha mar a thachair dhi. B’ i nighean Rìgh na Spàinne. Chaidh dithis de na robairean a ghlacadh aig Caisteal an Rìgh. Chuir an Rìgh gu bàs iad. B’ e an dìoghaltas a rinn càch a bhith a’ glacadh nighean an Rìgh. Ghlac iad i, agus leig iad crochte i mar a fhuair Iain Dubh i.

A dhèanamh a’ chuid seo dhen sgeul goirid, theich Iain agus an nighean à taigh nan robairean. Thug iad leotha rudan luachmhor mar òr. Ghabh iad **gach rathad a b’ uaigniche na chèile** gus an tàinig an ciaradh. Chunnaic iad bothan-àirigh agus rinn iad air.

Bha iad am broinn a’ bhothain airson greis nuair a chuala iad guthan fann air an taobh a-muigh. Dh’fhosgail Iain an doras agus thug an sealladh clisgeadh air. Bha trì colainnean nan seasamh air a bheulaibh, len cinn eadar an làmhan. “A dhaoine còire,” ars Iain, “dè tha sibh ag iarraidh?”

“Is sinne,” fhreagair iad, “athair agus a dhithis mhac a chaidh a mharbhadh anns a’ bhothan seo le robairean. Thiodhlaic iad sinn air cùl a’ bhothain. Ach cha do chuir iad gach ceann maille ri cholainn fhèin. Mar sin, chan eil fois againn. Ma chuireas tusa ar cinn far am bu chòir dhaibh a bhith, **theagamh** gun dèan sinn uidhir air do shon fhathast.”

Rinn Iain na dh’iarr an triùir. Nuair a bha gach nì seachad, chaidh an triùir às an t-sealladh.

An ath latha, dh’fhàg Iain agus nighean an Rìgh am bothan. Cha do stad iad gus an do ràinig iad am baile-puirt a b’ fhaisge orra. Phòs iad an sin agus cheannaich iad taigh-òsta leis an òr a thug iad bho thaigh nan robairean. Bha iad sona agus soirbheachail.

Latha a bha seo, thàinig long a-staigh don acarsaid. Air bòrd bha àrd-cheannard cabhlach na Spàinne. Bha e a' sireadh nighean an Rìgh gus gum faigheadh e fhèin i mar bhean, agus leth na rìoghachd a bharrachd. B' e sin an duais a gheall an Rìgh don duine a bheireadh a nighean dhachaigh sàbhailte.

Thàinig an t-àrd-cheannard air tìr còmhla ri oifigeach eile, agus càite an do thadhail iad ach ann an taigh Iain Duibh. Chuir iad eòlas air Iain agus a bhean. Dh'aithnich iad gum b' ise nighean Rìgh na Spàinne. Ach cha do ghabh iad sin orra. Mus do dh'fhalbh iad, thug iad cuireadh càirdeil do dh'Iain is a bhean a dhol a-mach an ath latha, agus an long fhaicinn.

Dè bha a' dol a thachairt do dh'Iain Dubh? Chì sinn an ath-sheachdain nuair a chuireas mi crìoch air an stòiridh seo.

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**Faclan na Litreach:** dhiùlt: *refused*; bothan-àirigh: *shieling bothy*; fann: *weak*; baile-puirt: *harbour town*; taigh-òsta: *hotel*; acarsaid: *anchorage*; dh'aithnich: *recognised*.

**Abairtean na Litreach:** gu feumadh i an iuchair a thoirt dha: *that she had to give him the key*; cho bòidheach 's a choinnich ri sùil fir riamh: *as beautiful as ever met a man's eye*; crochte air a falt ri croman: *hung by her hair on a crook*; bha bàrr a h-òrdagan a' beantainn air èiginn don ùrlar: *the end of her toes were almost touching the floor*; ann an neul: *in a swoon*; b' e an dìoghaltas a rinn càch a bhith a' glacadh nighean an Rìgh: *the others' revenge was to capture the King's daughter*; a dhèanamh a' chuid seo dhen sgeul goirid: *to shorten this part of the story*; thug an sealladh clisgeadh air: *the view startled him*; trì colainnean len cinn eadar an làmhan: *three bodies with their heads between their hands*; a dhaoine còire: *gentlemen*; athair agus a dhithis mhac: *a father and his two sons*; gach ceann maille ri cholainn fhèin: *each head with its own body*; chan eil fois againn: *we have no peace*; chaidh an triùir às an t-sealladh: *the three men disappeared*; àrd-cheannard cabhlach na Spàinne: *the head of the Spanish navy*; leth na rìoghachd a bharrachd: *half of the kingdom in addition*; cha do ghabh iad sin orra: *they didn't let that be known*.

**Puing-chànain na Litreach:** Ghabh iad **gach rathad a b' uaigniche na chèile** gus an tàinig an ciaradh: *they followed the most unfrequented paths until dusk arrived. I can't emphasise enough how wonderful some of the language is in our old stories – if you want to speak good, rich idiomatic Gaelic, then immersing yourself in old stories can only be of benefit. Here is an attractive idiom which means literally “they took each road which was remoter than the others” ie they were getting more and more remote. Why not, as a learning exercise, pick a phrase out of an old story and use it as the base for writing your own short story, employing that phrase several times? Then try your story out on your teacher, a fluent speaker or a friend who is also learning Gaelic. If you can commit it to memory, all the better. Uaigneach is also used for “secret” in the Litir, in doras an t-seòmair uaignich (the door of the secret room).*

**Gnathas-cainnt na Litreach:** **theagamh** gun dèan sinn uidhir air do shon fhathast: *perhaps we'll do a lot for you yet.*

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