

# 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.macleon@bbc.co.uk](mailto:rodny.macleon@bbc.co.uk). This is Litir 555. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 251 corresponds to Litir 555.*

Faisg air Both Mhoireil – far a bheil caisteal aig a’ Bhanrigh – tha cnoc air a bheil **Creag nam Ban**. Tha e ann an suidheachadh brèagha faisg air Uisge Dè agus os cionn Caisteal Obar Gheallaidh. Tha Creag nam Ban a’ ciallachadh *the rocky hill of the women*. Thathar ag ràdh gun d’ fhuair e ainm leis gun robh bana-bhuidseachan air an losgadh gu bàs ann. Agus thathar ag innse stòiridh anns an sgìre fhathast mun tè a b’ ainmeile dhiubh – Ciotaidh NicFhraing.

A rèir an sgeòil cha b’ e bana-bhuidseach a bh’ ann an Ciotaidh idir. Thogadh i ann am Miagra – baile-fearainn beag air taobh thall Uisge Dè bhon chaisteal. Bha beatha dhoirbh aice. Chaochail a h-athair nuair a bha i òg. Chaill a màthair a comas-intinn agus bhiodh i a’ cur seachad a làithean na laighe san leabaidh. Chaochail ise agus bha Ciotaidh an uair sin na h-aonar.

Ach mus do chaill i a rian thug màthair Ciotaidh tòrr eòlais mu nàdar do a nighinn. Bha Ciotaidh comasach air leigheasan nàdarrach a dhèanamh. Ach cha b’ e sin a-mhàin. Bha an dà-shealladh aig a màthair agus bha dùil aig a h-uile duine gum biodh an aon bhuadh aig Ciotaidh fhèin.

Bha i a’ fuireach is ag obair anns a’ chaisteal. Bha a’ bhean-ualas aig an taigh, ach bha an duine aice – an t-uachdaran – air falbh thall thairis. Latha a bha seo, dh’iarr a’ bhean-ualas air Ciotaidh dhol don t-seòmair aice.

“Tha mi a’ cluinntinn,” ars ise, “gu bheil an dà-shealladh agad, a Chiotaidh. Innis dhomh naidheachd mun duine agam agus mar a tha cùisean a’ dol dha.” Bu chòir do Chiotaidh an t-iarrrtas a dhiùltadh. Ach bha i toilichte, mar chreutair bochd, **gun robh a beachd a’ cunntadh** am measg nan uaislean. Agus dh’aontaich i faighinn a-mach na bha a’ dol leis an uachdaran.

Fhuair Ciotaidh mias de dh’uisge. Choimhead i anns an uisge. Dè chunnaic i ach cèile na mnà-uaisle a’ sùgradh ri boireannaich eile. Chaidh i don bhean-ualas agus dh’innis i dhi na chunnaic i.

“Chan eil sin a’ cur iongnadh orm,” thuirt a’ bhean-ualas. “Bha mi amharasach gum b’ e sin an dòigh aige, is tha fios agam a-nise.” Bha i feargach. Dh’iarr i air Ciotaidh na cumhachdan sònraichte aice a chur gu feum airson stoirm mhòr a thòiseachadh air slighe tillidh an duine aice. Uill, cha b’ urrainn do Chiotaidh sin a dhèanamh. Cha robh cumhachdan mar sin aice.

Ach, mar a thachair e, dh'èirich stoirm le tuiteamas fhad 's a bha an t-uachdaran aig muir. Chaidh a long fodha agus chaidh a h-uile duine air bòrd a bhàthadh. Nuair a chuala a' bhean-ualas an naidheachd chuir i às leth Ciotaidh bhoichd gur e bana-bhuidseach a bh' innte agus gun do dh'adhbharaich i bàs an duine aice. Bha a' bhean-ualas cumhachdach agus cha do sheas duine na rathad. Bha Ciotaidh air a losgadh gu bàs air mullach Creag nam Ban.

Chan eil Creag nam Ban uabhasach àrd. Tha i dìreach beagan is còig ceud meatair. Ach a' ghaoth a shèideas air a mullach, tha i garbh is làidir – agus fuaimneach. Tha cuid ag ràdh nach e a' ghaoth a thathar a' cluinntinn, ge-tà, ach an sgreuchail aig Ciotaidh NicFhraing, agus a taibhs fhathast a' cuairteachadh a' mhullaich.

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**Faclan na Litreach:** Both Mhoireil: *Balmoral*; Uisge Dè: *The River Dee*; Caisteal Obar Gheallaidh: *Abergeldie Castle*; Ciotaidh NicFhraing: *Kitty Rankine*; Miagra: *Micras*; na h-aonar: *by herself*; dà-shealladh: *second-sight*; bean-ualas: *lady, gentlewoman*; mias: *basin*; fuaimneach: *noisy*; sgreuchail: *screaming*; taibhs: *ghost*.

**Abairtean na Litreach:** thathar ag ràdh: *it's said*; leis gun robh bana-bhuidseachan air an losgadh gu bàs ann: *because witches were burned to death there*; mun tè a b' ainmeile dhiubh: *about the most famous of them*; chaill a màthair a comas-inntinn: *her mother lost her intellectual capacities*; mus do chaill i a rian: *before she lost her reason*; thug X tòrr eòlais mu nàdar do a nighinn: *X passed on a lot of knowledge about nature to her daughter*; cha b' e sin a-mhàin: *not only that*; gum biodh an aon bhuadh aig X: *that X would have the same attribute*; bha an t-uachdaran air falbh thall thairis: *the laird was away overseas*; mar a tha cùisean a' dol dha: *how he's getting on*; bu chòir do X an t-iarrtas a dhiùltadh: *X should have refused the request*; cèile na mnà-uaisle a' sùgradh ri boireannaich eile: *the lady's husband sporting with other women*; dh'innis i dhi na chunnaic i: *she told her what she saw*; chan eil sin a' cur iongnadh orm: *that doesn't surprise me*; na cumhachdan sònraichte aice a chur gu feum: *to use her special powers*; airson stoirm a thòiseachadh air slighe tillidh an duine aice: *to raise a storm on her husband's return route*; dh'èirich stoirm le tuiteamas: *a storm arose by chance*; chaidh a h-uile duine air bòrd a bhàthadh: *everybody on board was drowned*; chuir i às leth Ciotaidh bhoichd gur e bana-bhuidseach a bh' innte: *she accused poor Kitty of being a witch*; cha do sheas duine na rathad: *nobody stood in her way*; fhathast a' cuairteachadh a' mhullaich: *still circumnambulating the summit*.

**Puing-chànain na Litreach:** **Creag nam Ban:** *the rocky hill of the women. There are places all over Gaelic Scotland called "... nam Ban" (the first word being àirigh, uamh, beinn, clach, loch, ruigh or sgeir – among others, doubtless). Why don't you look at a map of your local (or favourite) area and see if you have any. And then see if you can find out who the women were. Were they witches, nuns, village women or something else? I'd love to hear from you. Indeed it would be a great project to collate all the landscape features named after women and look at their likely origins and the folklore associated with them.*

**Gnathas-cainnt na Litreach:** **gun robh a beachd a' cunntadh** am measg nan uaislean: *that her opinion counted among the gentry (it's originally an English idiom).*

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