

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Iain Garbh (1)

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.maclean@bbc.co.uk. This is Litir 716. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 412 corresponds to Litir 716.

Tha mi cinnteach gun cuala sibh iomradh air Iain Garbh – Iain Garbh Mac 'Ille Chalum à Ratharsair. Bha e beò anns an t-seachdamh linn deug. 'S iomadh stòiridh a th' ann mu dheidhinn. Seo agaibh fear dhiubh – stòiridh ris an canar *MacLeòid Dhùn Bheagain agus Iain Garbh Ratharsair*.

Bha Iain Garbh a' cumail Eilean Ratharsair dha fhèin. Bu chòir dha màl a phàigheadh do MhacLeòid Dhùn Bheagain air a shon. Ach cha tug Iain sgillinn ruadh don uachdaran. Bha e gu math làidir, agus cha robh an Leòdach deònach a dhol thuige airson an t-airgead iarraidh.

Latha a bha seo, thàinig fear borb a Chaisteal Dhùn Bheagain. 'S e burraidh a bh' ann. **Bha e a' dol a chur cìs air MacLeòid** mura faigheadh an ceann-cinnidh cuideigin a dhèanadh a' chùis air ann an sabaid.

'Uill,' arsa MacLeòid. 'Tha duine agam a nì a' chùis ort, ach chan eil e aig baile an-dràsta.'

'Am bi e fada mus tig e?' dh'fhaighnich am burraidh.

'Trì latha,' fhreagair am fear eile.

'Fanaidh mi gus an tig e, ma-thà,' thuirt am burraidh. Agus dh'fhan e sa chaisteal.

Chuir MacLeòid gille le litir a Ratharsair. Anns an litir, dh'iarr MacLeòid air Iain Garbh dèanamh air Dhùn Bheagain cho luath 's a b' urrainn dha, oir bha gnothach cudromach aige ris. Cha robh beachd aig Iain Garbh dè an gnothach a bhiodh ann, oir cha robh e fhèin is MacLeòid a' faighinn air adhart le chèile.

Dh'ith Iain a' chairteal chuid de dhamh. An uair sin, dh'fhalbh e ann am bàta don Eilean Sgitheanach agus air chois a Dhùn Bheagain. Nuair a ràinig e an caisteal mòr, bha MacLeòid a' feitheamh ris, agus chuir e fàilte chridheil air. Rug e air làimh air Iain, agus thuirt e gun robh e gu math toilichte gun tàinig e. 'Thig a-steach,' thuirt e.

'Mus tig mi a-steach,' thuirt Iain, 'carson a chuir sibh fios thugam?'

'Gheibh thu sin a-mach fhathast,' fhreagair MacLeòid.

Bha Iain amharasach gun robh droch rùn aig MacLeòid dha. Dhiùlt e a dhol a-steach don chaisteal mura h-innseadh an Leòdach dè an gnothach a bh' aige ris.

'Thig a-steach agus innsidh mi dhut an uair sin,' thuirt MacLeòid.

'Mura faigh mi fios a-muigh,' fhreagair Iain Garbh, 'tillidh mi dhachaigh.'

Thionndaidh Iain air a shàil agus thill MacLeòid a-steach don chaisteal. Bha am burraidh a' feitheamh ris.

'An tàinig e?' thuirt am burraidh.

'Cha tàinig,' fhreagair an ceann-cinnidh, 'ach tha bleigeard a-muigh sin air an rathad. Ma thèid thu às a dhèidh 's ma bheir thu deidhseag dha air a thòin, bheir mi còig nota dhut.'

'Bheir mi deidhseag mhath dha,' fhreagair am burraidh.

Chaidh am burraidh sìos an rathad. Nuair a ràinig e Iain Garbh, thog e am fèilleadh a bh' air agus **thug e deidhseag mhath dha air a thòin**.

Thionndaidh Iain Garbh le fearg. Dh'fhàisg e am fear eile le ghàirdeanan. Bhris e a h-uile cnàimh na bhodhaig. Thuit am burraidh marbh.

Cha do thuig Iain an toiseach cò bha anns a' bhurraidh no gu dè bh' air tachairt. 'S ann nuair a fhuair e dhachaigh a fhuair e a-mach gun robh MacLeòid Dhùn Bheagain air brath a ghabhail air. Bha an ceann-cinnidh air a bhith gu math seòlta. Nam biodh fios air a bhith aig Iain air cleas MhicLeòid, cha robh e air Ratharsair fhàgail!

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Faclan na Litreach: borb: *barbaric*; burraidh: *bully*; bleigeard: *blackguard, scoundrel*; seòlta: *cunning*; cleas: *trick*.

Abairtean na Litreach: gun cuala sibh iomradh air: *that you've heard of*; bu chòir dha màl a phàigheadh do MhacLeòid Dhùn Bheagain: *he should have paid rent to MacLeod of Dunvegan*; cha tug Iain sgillinn ruadh don uachdaran: *Iain didn't give the landlord a red penny*; cha robh an Leòdach deònach a dhol thuige: *MacLeod wasn't willing to go to him*; mura faigheadh an ceann-cinnidh cuideigin a dhèanadh a' chùis air ann an sabaid: *if the clan chief didn't get somebody that would defeat him in a fight*; a nì a' chùis ort: *who will defeat you*; chan eil e aig baile: *he's not at home*; fanaidh mi gus an tig e: *I'll wait until he comes*; dèanamh air Dùn Bheagain cho luath 's a b' urrainn dha: *to go to Dunvegan as quickly as he could*; bha gnothach cudromach aige ris: *he had important business with him*; a' faighinn air adhart le chèile: *getting along with each other*; a' chairteal chuid de dhamh: *a quarter of an ox*; rug e air làimh air Iain: *he shook Iain's hand*; amharasach gun robh droch rùn aig MacLeòid dha: *suspicious that MacLeod had evil intentions towards him*; thionndaidh Iain air a shàil: *Iain turned on his heel*; bheir mi còig nota dhut: *I'll give you £5*; thog e am fèilleadh a bh' air: *he lifted up his kilt*; dh'fhàisg e am fear eile le ghàirdeanan: *he squeezed the other man with his arms*; bhris e a h-uile cnàimh na bhodhaig: *he broke every bone in his body*; air brath a ghabhail air: *had deceived him*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: **Bha e a' dol a chur cìs air MacLeòid:** *He was going to levy a cess on MacLeod. MacBain gives the Latin census as the origin of the Gaelic word cìs 'tribute, tax'. The census in ancient Rome was a register of the citizenry and their properties for the purpose of assessing taxation; the Latin verb censere means 'to assess'. Thus, the Gaelic cìs and the English cess 'tax' are related, as cess is generally considered to be an abbreviation of 'assessment'. Historically, a cess might be imposed on the population in order to support soldiers being maintained on their territory. The 'bully' in this story imposes a cess on MacLeod, which can only be lifted if a representative of the clan chief can defeat the bully in single combat.*

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: **thug e deidhseag mhath dha air a thòin:** *he gave him a good slap on the buttocks.*

Tha "Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh" air a maoineachadh le MG ALBA