

# Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

## **Eòghann na Mara**

*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 750. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 446 corresponds to Litir 750.*

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mu Àirigh na h-Aon Oidhche faisg air Siabost ann an taobh an iar Leòdhais. Uill, seo agaibh sgeulachd eile às an aon sgìre. Chan ann mun mhòintich a tha i, ach mun chladach. 'S e an t-ainm a th' oirre *Eòghann na Mara*.

Bha Eòghann a' fuireach faisg air a' chladach. Bhiodh e gu tric a' falbh don chladach aig muir-tràigh, feuch fiodh no rudan eile a lorg. Latha a bha seo, chaidh e sìos gu bonn geodha. Bha e cas cas agus cunnartach faighinn ann 's faighinn às.

Ràinig Eòghann am bonn. Chunnaic e boireannach, agus a cùl ris. Bha falt fada aice. Ri a taobh, **air muin cloiche**, bha seòrsa de dh'aodach, le earball-èisg agus itean-èisg air. Thuig Eòghann gum b' e seo maighdeann-mhara. B' e a craiceann a bh' air a' chloich.

Chuala a' mhaighdeann cas-cheum an duine. Thionndaidh i gu grad. Dh'fheuch i ri a cuid aodaich a thogail. Ach bha Eòghann ro luath dhi. Thog esan an t-aodach. Choimhead e air a' mhaighdinn. 'Cò thu agus dè an gnothach a th' agad an seo?' dh'fhaighnich Eòghann.

'Is mise banrigh an aiginn,' thuir i. '**Thoir dhomh mo chuid aodaich.**'

'A bhanrigh,' thuir Eòghann, 'na bithibh feargach leam. Tha mi airson faighinn a-mach a bheil e na rabhadh dhuinn – gun tèid ar coimhearsnachd a sgrios – gu bheil sibh an seo?'

'Tha mi a' tuigsinn,' thuir a' mhaighdeann-mhara, 'gu bheil mac-an-duine dhen bheachd gu bheil mo leithid na rabhadh gun tig sgrios, agus mar sin gu bheil sinn olc. Ach 's e rìgh an aiginn a nì an sgrios. Chan urrainn do mhaighdeann-mhara ach rabhadh a thoirt do mhac-an-duine gu bheil sgrios a' tighinn. Tha sinn a' dèanamh sin oir tha gràdh againn do mhac-an-duine.'

Dh'inns a' mhaighdeann-mhara do dh'Eòghann nach robh droch naidheachd aice an turas seo. Thug Eòghann taing dhi airson sin, agus thuir e rithe gun robh i air a bheatha atharrachadh. Cha chanadh e tuilleadh gur e droch chreutairean a bha sna maighdeannan-mara. Bha e a' dol a dh'innse don a h-uile duine gur e creutairean math' a bh' annta.

'A dhuine,' thuir a' mhaighdeann-mhara, 'tha mi toilichte sin a chluinntinn. Bheir mi duais dhut. Aig a' ghealaich ùir gach mìos, beagan ron chamhanaich, ma thig thu gu mullach a' bhearraidh seo, os cionn a' gheodha, gheibh thu iasg mòr a chumas biadh ri do theaghlach. Ach tha cùmhnant air – chan fhaod thu seo innse do dhuine sam bith gus am bi thu seachad air ochdad bliadhna a dh'aois.'

Leis a sin, thog i a cuid aodaich bho Eòghann, chuir i oirre e agus thill i don fhairge. Agus mar a gheall i, 's ann a thachair e. Cha do thuig a theaghlach dè bha air cùl soirbheas Eòghainn mar iasgair. Ach bha e ainmeil airson a bhith na iasgair math. Chuir daoine 'Eòghann na Mara' air mar ainm. Gus an robh e ochdad bliadhna a dh'aois, cha robh a theaghlach riamh gann de dh'iasg.

Air an ochdadamh ceann-bliadhna aige, dh'inns Eòghann do a theaghlach mun mhaighdinn-mhara. Aig an ath ghealaich ùir, cha robh iasg sam bith aig mullach a' gheodha. Agus chaochail Eòghann dìreach trì mìosan às dèidh sin.

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**Faclan na Litreach:** Siabost: *Shawbost*; Eòghann na Mara: *'Hugh/Ewan of the sea'*; muir-tràigh: *low tide*; maighdeann-mhara: *mermaid*.

**Abairtean na Litreach:** Chan ann mun mhòintich a tha i, ach mun chladach: *it's not about the moor but about the shore*; chaidh e sìos gu bonn geodha: *he went down to the bottom of a geo (an inlet of the sea with steep sides)*; bha e cunnartach faighinn ann 's faighinn às: *it was dangerous to get into and to get out of*; agus a cùl ris: *with her back to him*; le earball-èisg agus itean-èisg air: *with a fish tail and fish fins on it*; cas-cheum an duine: *the man's footsteps*; thionndaidh i gu grad: *she turned suddenly*; cò thu agus dè an gnothach a th' agad an seo?: *who are you and what are you doing here?*; banrigh an aiginn: *the queen of the deep*; a bheil e na rabhadh dhuinn gu bheil sibh an seo?: *is it [as] a warning that you are here?*; gu bheil mac-an-duine dhen bheachd gu bheil mo leithid na rabhadh gun tig sgrios: *that humans think that my like is a warning that destruction will come*; thuirt e rithe gun robh i air a bheatha atharrachadh: *he told her that she had changed his life*; cha chanadh e tuilleadh gur e droch chreutairean a bha sna maighdeannan-mara: *he'd never again say that the mermaids were bad creatures*; gheibh thu iasg mòr a chumas biadh ri do theaghlach: *you'll get a lot of fish that will keep your family fed*; thill i don fhairge: *she returned to the ocean*; mar a gheall i, 's ann a thachair e: *as she promised, so it happened*; cha do thuig a theaghlach dè bha air cùl soirbheas X mar iasgair: *X's family didn't understand what was behind his success as a fisherman*; air an ochdadamh ceann-bliadhna aige: *on his eightieth birthday*.

**Puing-chànain na Litreach:** **air muin cloiche:** *on the top of a stone*. Air muin, being a compound preposition, takes the genitive. In many instances in modern Gaelic, the genitive form of the noun is avoided in the absence of the article. But, in the case of air muin, it feels right to maintain the traditional mode of genitivising even without the article (thus air muin cloiche rather than air muin clach). This is perhaps due to the common usage of air muin eich 'on horseback' where each is always given in its genitive (singular) form eich.

**Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach:** **Thoir dhomh mo chuid aodaich:** *give me my clothes*.

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