

# Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

## Màiri Challaird (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.maclea@bbc.co.uk](mailto:rodny.maclea@bbc.co.uk). This is Litir 937. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 633 corresponds to Litir 937.*

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mu Mhàiri Challaird, tè de Chamshronaich Challaird ann an Loch Abar. Cha robh tè anns an dùthaich a bha na bu shnoige ann an coltas no nàdar. Bha i gu math fialaidh. Bha gràdh aig a h-uile duine oirre. Uill, a h-uile duine ach a h-athair. Airson adhbhar air choreigin, bha esan gu math cruaidh oirre.

Latha a bha seo, chuir a h-athair a-mach às an taigh i. Cha robh fios aice dè dhèanadh i. Bha slighe-mhonaidh ann eadar Callaird, far an robh i a’ fuireach, agus Lunn Dà Bhrà far an robh a h-uncail a’ fuireach. Rinn i air taigh a h-uncail. Nuair a bha i gu h-àrd sa mhonadh, thachair i ri seann bhoireannach a bha air chrith leis an fhuachd. Thug Màiri **leth a breacain** don bhoireannach, ged a bha i fhèin fuar cuideachd.

Nuair a chunnaic muinntir na sgìre a breacan air a’ bhoireannach, dh’aithnich iad i. ‘Carson a tha breacan Màiri oirbh?’ dh’fhaighnich iad. Mhìnich am boireannach a’ chùis dhaibh. Bha tàmailt orra mun dòigh san do dhèilig an ceann-cinnidh **ri a nighinn**.

Goirid an dèidh sin, thàinig long. Bha iad a’ reic clò, agus stuth-dathaidh airson clò, agus cheannaich bean a’ chinn-chinnidh stuth bhuapa. Ge-tà, bha an clò air a thruailleadh leis a’ phlàigh agus dh’fhàs a h-uile duine ann an Taigh Challaird tinn. Thàinig Màiri dhachaigh airson cobhair a dhèanamh air càch. Ach chaochail iad uile. A h-uile duine ach Màiri fhèin.

A rèir beul-aithris na sgìre, b’ e a’ phlàigh am fiabhras ballach no, mar a chanas iad ann an Loch Abar fhèin, am fiabhras dubh. Ann am Beurla, ’s e sin *typhus*.

B’ fheudar do Mhàiri an uair sin fuireach anns an taigh leatha fhèin. Cha tigeadh duine faisg oirre. Bha an t-eagal orra gum faigheadh iad am fiabhras bhuaipe. Cha leigeadh iad a-mach i agus cha leigeadh iad duine eile a-steach don taigh.

Ge-tà, bha leannan aig Màiri – fear Pàdraig Caimbeul à Inbhir Atha. Chanadh daoine ‘Oighre Mhic Dhonnchaidh Inbhir Atha’ ris. Nuair a chuala e mu Mhàiri chuir e roimhe a sàbhaladh. Chaidh e fhèin is feadhainn eile ann air an oidhche, ag iomradh bàta gu sàmhach. Thug iad a-mach i tron t-similear. Thug Pàdraig oirre a cuid aodaich gu lèir a thilgeil don mhuir agus i fhèin a bhogadh sa mhuir gus am biodh i glan bhon fhiabhras.

Thug e dhachaigh i agus thug e aodach dhi a bhuineadh do a pheathraichean. Phòs iad cha mhòr sa bhad agus thog esan taigh dhi anns a’ choille. Bha iad leotha fhèin airson trì mìosan airson a bhith cinnteach nach robh an tinneas oirre. Ach, gu mì-

fhortanach, cha robh iad pòsta fada oir thuit Pàdraig aig Blàr Inbhir Lòchaidh an aghaidh Montròs. Bha sin ann an sia ceud deug, ceathrad 's a còig (1645).

Dh'fhuiling Màiri cridhe briste air sgàth bàs a cèile. Rinn i òran dha. Anns an òran tha i ag ràdh gun deach Pàdraig a thiodhlacadh air cùl an taighe aca. Thathar a' smaoineachadh gun robh e air a leòn aig Inbhir Lòchaidh agus gun do rinn e a shlighe dhachaigh far an do chaochail e. An uair sin, tha eachdraidh Màiri a' fàs nas tiamhaidhe buileach, mar a chluinneas sibh an-ath-sheachdain.

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**Faclan na Litreach:** Màiri Challaird: *Mary of Callert*; Camshronaich: *Camerons*; Loch Abar: *Lochaber*; slighe-mhonaidh: *hill route*; Lunn Dà Bhrà: *Lundavra*; dh'aithnich: *recognised*; long: *ship*; chaochail: *died*; Inbhir Atha: *Inverawe*.

**Abairtean na Litreach:** na bu shnoige ann an coltas no nàdar: *nicer in appearance or nature*; bha gràdh aig a h-uile duine oirre: *everybody loved her*; a h-uile duine ach a h-athair: *everybody except her father*; airson adhbhar air choreigin bha esan cruaidh oirre: *for some reason or other, he was hard on her*; cha robh fios aice dè dhèanadh i: *she didn't know what she would do*; rinn i air taigh a h-uncail: *she made for her uncle's house*; air chrith leis an fhuachd: *shivering with the cold*; bha an clò air a thruailleadh leis a' phlàigh: *the cloth was polluted with the plague*; airson cobhair a dhèanamh air càch: *to help the others*; b' e a' phlàigh am fiabhras ballach no, mar a chanas iad ann an Loch Abar fhèin, am fiabhras dubh: *the plague was the spotted fever or, as they say in Lochaber itself, the black fever*; cha leigeadh iad a-mach i: *they wouldn't let her out*; cha leigeadh iad duine eile a-steach: *they wouldn't let anyone else in*; chuir e roimhe a sàbhaladh: *he decided to save her*; ag iomradh bàta gu sàmhach: *rowing a boat quietly*; thug iad a-mach i tron t-simlear: *they took it out through the chimney*; thug Pàdraig oirre a cuid aodaich gu lèir a thilgeil don mhuir: *Patrick made her throw all her clothes in the sea*; i fhèin a bhogadh: *to immerse herself*; phòs iad cha mhòr sa bhad: *they married almost immediately*; cha robh iad pòsta fada: *they weren't married long*; thuit Pàdraig aig Blàr Inbhir Lòchaidh an aghaidh Montròs: *Patrick fell at the Battle of Inverlochy against Montrose*; dh'fhuiling Màiri cridhe briste air sgàth bàs a cèile: *Mary suffered a broken heart on account of her spouse's death*; tha eachdraidh Màiri a' fàs nas tiamhaidhe buileach: *Mary's story gets even more poignant*.

**Puing-chànain na Litreach:** Bha tàmailt orra mun dòigh san do dhèilig an ceann-cinnidh **ri a nighinn**: *they were indignant about the way in which the clan chief dealt with his daughter*. Nighean is slenderised to nighinn because it is a feminine noun with the article in the dative singular case (following the preposition ri). The article is in the form of a possessive article 'a' (meaning 'his') but it works grammatically like the definite article.

**Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach:** Thug Màiri leth a breacain don bhoireannach: *Mary gave half of her plaid to the woman*.

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