

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Màiri Challaird (2)

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. This is Litir 938. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 634 corresponds to Litir 938.

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mu Mhàiri Challaird, am boireannach brèagha a bhuineadh do Chamshronaich Challaird ann an Lobh Abar. Chaill i an duine aice, Pàdraig Mac Dhonnchaidh Inbhir Atha. 'S e Caimbeulach a bh' annsan agus chaidh a leòn aig Blàr Inbhir Lòchaidh ann an sia ceud deug, ceathrad 's a còig (1645). Fhuair e dhachaigh an dèidh a' bhlàir, ach chaochail e an sin, agus chaidh a thiodhlacadh air cùl an taighe. Ciamar a tha fios againn air sin? Uill, sgrìobh Màiri mu dheidhinn ann an òran.

Bha cridhe briste aig Màiri air sgàth bàs an duine aice. Ach an ceann greis, dh'iarr àrd-mhanach Àird Chatain oirre a phòsadh. Cha robh Màiri toigheach air an duine agus cha robh i ag iarraidh a phòsadh. Ach chaidh ìmpidh a chur oirre agus mu dheireadh, dh'aontaich i.

Air feasgar na bainnse, ghabh Màiri òran do na boireannaich a bha a' toirt taic dhi. 'S e òran tiamhaidh a bh' ann. Bha Màiri troimhe-chèile. Bha i ag ionndrainn Phàdraig agus cha robh i ag iarraidh duine eile a phòsadh.

Bheir mi dhuibh trì rannan dhen òran anns a bheil Màiri a' dèanamh cunntas air eachdraidh a' ghnòthaich. Tha i ag innse mar a bha i ann an taigh na plàigh ann an Callaird mus deach a sàbhaladh le Pàdraig. Tha i ag innse mar a thog Pàdraig taigh dhi anns a' choille agus mar a bha a fìor leannan – esan – na laighe fon fhòid air cùl an taighe.

Seo a' chiad rann: ***Fheudail a dh'fhearaibh na dàlach, Thug thu mach à taigh na plàigh mi, Far an robh m' athair 's mo mhàthair, Mo phiuthar ghaoil 's mo chòignear bhràithrean.***

Agus an dàrna rann: ***Fheudail a dh'fhearaibh na grèine, Thog thu taigh dhomh 'n coill' nan geugan, Bu shunndach ann mo laighe is m' èirigh, Cha b' iongnadh siud, b' ùr mo chèilidh.***

Agus rann eile: ***Rìgh, gur mis' a th' air mo sgaradh, Bhith dol le fear eile 'laighe, Is m' fhear fhèin air cùl an taighe, Sealgair nan damh donn 's nan aighean.***

Èistibh a-rithist ris an rann mu dheireadh: ***Rìgh, gur mis' a th' air mo sgaradh, Bhith dol le fear eile 'laighe, Is m' fhear fhèin air cùl an taighe, Sealgair nan damh donn 's nan aighean.***

Thuirt na boireannaich a chuala an t-òran gun do dh'fhalbh anam Màiri air an oidhche sin fhèin agus gun do chaochail i mus deach am pòsadh ùr aice a choileanadh.

Mus fhàg sinn Callaird, ge-tà – a bheil cuimhne agaibh air Aonghas, am mac dìolain aig uachdaran Lunn Dà Bhrà? 'S e a mhuirt a dhithis leth-bhràithrean. Ach cha deach a pheanasachadh. Dh'fhuirich e airson a' chòrr de a bheatha air oighreachd Lunn Dà Bhrà.

Bha na daoine ag ràdh, leis nach deach ceartas a dhèanamh, gun tigeadh peanas orra uile. B' e am peanas a' phlàigh – am fiabhras dubh. Agus, ged as e Camshronach a bh' ann an Aonghas, cha do ghabh e ainm a' chinnidh sin air. 'S e Clann Aonghais a chanadh daoine ri sliochd Aonghais. *Innes* ann am Beurla. Tha daoine leis an ainm sin fhathast a' fuireach timcheall a' Ghearasdain ach chan urrainn dhomh a ràdh a bheil iad ann an sliochd Aonghais Lunn Dà Bhrà no nach eil.

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Faclan na Litreach: Màiri Challaird: *Mary of Callert*; Camshronaich: *Camerons*; Loch Abar: *Lochaber*; Pàdraig Mac Dhonnchaidh Inbhir Atha: *Patrick son of Duncan of Inverawe*; chaochail: *died*; toigheach air: *fond of*; tiamhaidh: *poignant, sad*; troimhe-chèile: *bereft, troubled*; ag ionndrainn: *missing*; fon fhòid: *under the ground*; na dàlach: *of the dell*; muladach: *very sad*; mac dìolain: *illegitimate son*.

Abairtean na Litreach: 'S e Caimbeulach a bh' annsan agus chaidh a leòn aig Blàr Inbhir Lòchaidh: *he was a Campbell and he was wounded at the Battle of Inverlochy*; chaidh a thiodhlacadh air cùl an taighe: *he was buried behind the house*; dh'iarr àrd-mhanach Àird Chatain oirre a phòsadh: *the prior of Ardchattan asked her to marry him*; chaidh ìmpidh a chur oirre: *she was entreated*; thug thu mach à taigh na plàigh mi: *you took me out of the house of the plague*; mo phiuthar ghaoil 's mo chòignear bhràithrean: *my beloved sister and my five brothers*; bu shunndach ann mo laighe is m' èirigh: *my sleeping and rising there were happy*; cha b' iongnadh siud, b' ùr mo chèilidh: *that was no surprise, my visit was fresh and new*; gur mis' a th' air mo sgaradh: *it is me that is bereft*; bhith dol le fear eile 'laighe: *to go and lie with another man*; gun do dh'fhalbh anam Màiri air an oidhche sin fhèin: *that Mary's soul left [her] that very night*; mus deach am pòsadh ùr aice a choileanadh: *before her new marriage had been consummated*; i fhèin a bhogadh: *to immerse herself*; cha deach a pheanasachadh: *he wasn't punished*; gun tigeadh peanas orra uile: *that they would all be punished*; cha do ghabh e ainm a' chinnidh sin air: *he didn't take the name of that clan*; timcheall a' Ghearasdain: *around Fort William*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: *Fheudail a dh'fhearaibh*: *treasure among [of] men*. 'A' here is a reduced form of the preposition 'de' which, of course, puts fear in the dative (plural) case. Fearaibh is the old dative plural form – we would say fir today. Feudail means 'treasure' or 'booty' and originally meant cattle stolen in a raid (something of high value!). As the 'f' is silenced by lenition it sounds the same as eudail and 'my darling' is often written m' eudail rather than m' feudail. It's a common and current expression – and a good one to address your children with.

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: *Sealgair nan damh donn 's nan aighean*: *hunter of the brown stags [ie red deer] and the hinds*.

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