

# Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

## An Long a Chaidh a dh'Ameireagaidh (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 [fios@learngaelic.scot](mailto:fios@learngaelic.scot). This is Litir 1,195. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 891 corresponds to Litir 1,195.*

Tha mi ag aithris na sgeulachd 'An Long a Chaidh a dh'Ameireagaidh'. Cha robh an cupall an dùil clann a bhith aca. Ach rugadh leanabh-gille dhaibh. Chuir iad 'Iain' air mar ainm. Bha iad fhathast a' fuireach leotha fhèin air cùl a' chladaich. Thug iad fhèin sgoil don ghille.

Bha seachd bliadhna air a dhol seachad on a thug an duine an gealltanais don bhodach. Thuirt e ri a bhean, 'Tha mi a' falbh an-diugh a thoirt a' bhalaich seachad a chionn 's gur e sin a gheall mi airson na tubhailt.' Bidh cuimhne agaibh gun d' fhuair an duine tubhailt dhraoidheil bhon bhodach. Mar sin, bha biadh an-còmhnaidh aca.

Thòisich a bhean air caoineadh. 'Chan eil cothrom air,' thuirt an duine aice. 'Feumaidh mi a dhèanamh.' Dh'fhalbh an duine 's am balachan agus an ceann ùine ràinig iad am bothan aig bonn na beinne. Cha robh sgeul air an t-seann duine liath ach bha am bòrd ann mar a bha roimhe, le botal fiona agus lof arain air. Ghabh an duine agus an gille balgam às a' bhotal agus crioman às an lof.

Aig a' mhionaid sin, cò thàinig a-steach ach am bodach. 'Thàinig thu mar a gheall thu,' thuirt e.

'Thàinig,' dh'aontaich am fear eile.

'Dè an t-ainm baistidh air a' bhalachan?'

'Iain,' thuirt athair.

'**Gum meal e ainm,**' ars am bodach. 'A bheil sgoil aige?'

'Bha mi fhìn a' toirt beagan sgoile dha,' fhreagair am fear eile.

'Bheir mise deagh sgoil dha,' ars am bodach. '**Nì mi mar gum bu mhac dhomh fhìn e.** Nì mi duine fortanach dheth fhathast.'

Dh'fhan athair an oidhche sin aig bonn na beinne. An làrna-mhàireach, dh'fhàg e beannachd aig a' bhalachan agus thill e dhachaigh. Bha a bhean brònach, muldach mu chall a mic.

Air ais aig bonn na beinne, dh'fhàs am balachan na ghille mòr, gasta. Bha e còrr is fichead bliadhna còmhla ris a' bhodach agus fhuair e deagh sgoil bhuaithe. Latha a bha seo, dh'iarr am bodach air a dhol còmhla ris gu mullach na beinne. Thuirt e gun robh srian eich os cionn an dorais agus dh'iarr e air a toirt leis.

Ràinig iad mullach na beinne. Thuirt an seann duine ri Iain, 'Crath an t-srian rium. Bidh mis' a' tionndadh nam each. Leum air mo mhuin an uair sin.'

Rinn Iain sin. Thionndaidh am bodach na each agus leum Iain air a mhuin. Dh'fhalbh an t-each aig astar. Chùm e a dol fad an latha agus an do ràinig e leathad uabhasach cas – ri taobh loch. 'Thig far mo mhuin, Iain,' thuirt an t-each ris.

Thàinig Iain far an eich, agus thuir an t-each ris, ‘Thalla suas gu uamh an sin. Gheibh thu trì famhairean nan sìneadh. Tha iad a’ dol bàs leis an acras. Seall a-steach nam chluais.’

Thug Iain sùil na chluais agus chunnaic e botal fiona agus trì lofan arain. ‘Thoir lof an duine do na famhairean,’ ars an t-each, ‘agus roinn am botal eatarra.’

Rinn Iain sin agus bha na famhairean air leth toilichte. ‘Bidh cuimhne againn air seo,’ thuir iad.

Thill Iain don t-seann duine a bha fhathast ann an riochd eich. Agus leanaidh an sgeul an-ath-sheachdain.

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**Faclan na Litreach:** draoidheil: *magic*; an-còmhnaidh: *always*; caoineadh: *weeping*; balachan: *wee boy*; brònach, muladach: *sad, grief-stricken*; uamh: *cave*.

**Abairtean na Litreach:** An Long a Chaidh a dh’Ameireagaidh: *The Ship that Went to America*; cha robh an cupall an dùil clann a bhith aca: *the couple were not expecting to have children*; rugadh leanabh-gille dhaibh: *a baby son was born to them*; thug iad fhèin sgoil don ghille: *they educated the lad themselves*; bha seachd bliadhna air a dhol seachad on a thug an duine an gealltanais: *seven years had elapsed since the man gave the promise*; a chionn ’s gur e sin a gheall mi airson na tubhailt: *because that’s what I promised for the tablecloth*; chan eil cothrom air: *it can’t be helped*; balgam às a’ bhotal agus crioman às an lof: *a gulp from the bottle and a bite from the loaf*; thàinig thu mar a gheall thu: *you came as you promised*; bheir mise deagh sgoil dha: *I’ll give him a good education*; nì mi duine fortanach dheth: *I shall make a fortunate man of him*; dh’fhan athair an oidhche: *his father stayed the night*; an làrna-mhàireach, dh’fhàg e beannachd aig a’ bhalachan: *next day, he farewelled the boy*; thuir e gun robh srian eich os cionn an dorais: *he said that there was a horse’s bridle above the door*; dh’iarr e air a toirt leis: *he asked him to bring it with him*; crath an t-srian rium: *shake the bridle to [in front of] me*; bidh mis’ a’ tionndadh nam each: *I shall turn into a horse*; leum air mo mhuin: *jump on my back*; trì famhairean nan sìneadh: *three giants stretched out*; tha iad a’ dol bàs leis an acras: *they are dying of hunger*; seall a-steach nam chluais: *look into my ear*; thoir lof an duine do: *give a loaf to each man*; ann an riochd eich: *in the form of a horse*.

**Puing-chànain na Litreach:** Nì mi mar gum bu mhac dhomh fhìn e: *I’ll make him like he was [born] my own son. This is rather old-fashioned, but elegant, Gaelic. It uses bu, the past tense of the assertive verb is. Is mac dhomh fhìn e ‘he is my own son’; bu mhac dhomh fhìn e ‘he was my own son’. Notice the lenition of mac following bu. Note also that dialectally fhìn is used instead of fhèin with the first person singular – dhomh fhìn but dhut fhèin, dha fhèin.*

**Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach:** Gum meal e ainm: *may he enjoy his name.*

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