

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

An Long a Chaidh a dh'Ameireagaidh (5)

Each week the West Highland Free Press publishes the text for Ruairidh's "Letter to Gaelic Learners" on BBC Radio nan Gàidheal (103.5-105 FM). Broadcasts are as follows: 2:55pm on Sunday as part of BBC Radio nan Gàidheal's hour-long learning zone, following the Gaelic Learners' programme 'SpeakGaelic Extra', with a repeat at 10.30 pm on Wednesday. This is Litir 1,198. There is also a simpler version – An Litir Bheag – which is broadcast at 2:30pm each Sunday. Litir Bheag 894 corresponds to Litir 1,198. The Litir is also available at www.bbc.co.uk/litir and www.learnghaelic.scot/litir. Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learnghaelic.scot.

Tha an sgeulachd *An Long a Chaidh a dh'Ameireagaidh* a' tighinn gu ceann an-diugh. Thill na fithich le còig botail de dh'uisge à Tobar nam Buadh. 'Leig ar dithis bhràithrean mu sgaoil,' thuirt iad.

'Cha leig,' ars Iain, 'gus am bi fios agam le cinnt gur e an t-uisge ceart a th' agaibh.' Mus do mharbh Iain an t-each, thug an t-each (oir 's e am bodach liath a bh' ann) rabhadh dha mu dhòigh gus dèanamh cinnteach gur e an t-uisge ceart a bh' ann. Lean Iain òrdugh a' bhodaich agus thilg e deur dhen uisge air an each mharbh. Cha do charaich an t-each. Cha b' ann à Tobar nam Buadh a bha an t-uisge.

Mhaoidh Iain air na fithich gun toireadh e na cinn far na dithis a bh' aige ann am bruid mura faigheadh iad an t-uisge ceart dha. Dh'fhalbh na fithich a-rithist. Thill iad le còig botail de dh'uisge.

Thilg Iain steall dheth air an each. An turas seo, thàinig an t-each beò. Dh'fhalbh iad còmhla don chaisteal. Thug Iain trì de na botail seachad don Rìgh agus ghlèidh e na dhà eile.

Ghabh a' bhaintighearna na trì botail. Chaidh i don t-seòmar aice agus dh'òrdaich i coire mòr làn uisge a chur air agus a ghoil. Nìgh i i fhèin leis an uisge o na trì botail **o bhonn a coise gu mullach a cinn**. Bha Iain ga coimhead tron toll-iuchrach anns an doras aice. Leum a' bhaintighearna don choire agus thuirt i nach pòsadh i ach fear a sheasadh cho fada rithe anns a' choire uisge. Chuala an Rìgh sin. Chaidh e don t-seòmar aice. Leum e don choire agus chaidh a losgadh gu bàs.

Smaoinich Iain air a' bhodach liath agus thàinig am bodach. Mhìnich Iain na bh' air tachairt – mar a leum an Rìgh a-steach don choire agus mar a chaidh a losgadh gu bàs. Mhìnich e cuideachd mar a dhìon a' bhaintighearna i fhèin ro-làimh leis an uisge à Tobar nam Buadh.

'Thalla thus', thuirt am bodach, 'agus nìgh thu fhèin leis an uisge bhon dà bhotal eile. Bidh sin **cho math 's ged a bhiodh trì agad**. Thalla a-steach far a bheil a' bhaintighearna. Can rithe – ma phòsas i thu, gun seas thu cho fada rithe fhèin anns a' choire.'

Nìgh Iain e fhèin o bhonn a coise gu mullach a chinn leis an uisge à Tobar nam Buadh. Chaidh e far an robh i fhèin agus thuirt e rithe, 'Ma phòsas tu mise, leumaidh mi don choire còmhla riut.'

‘Pòsaidh, gu dearbh,’ ars ise. Thug e leum a-steach don choire agus chuir e a dhà làimh mu a timcheall. Thòisich e air a pògadh. ‘’S tus’ an duine agamsa a-nise,’ thuirt i.

Thàinig iad a-mach às a’ choire agus chuir iad aodach orra fhèin. Goirid an dèidh sin, phòs iad agus fhuair esan a bhith na rìgh an àite an t-seann rìgh a bha a-nise marbh.

Dh’fhàg am bodach beannachd aig Iain agus thuirt e ris, ‘Rinn mi dhut an rud a gheall mi dhut. Rinn mi duine fortanach dhìot.’

Bha sin fìor, agus mura shiubhail iad uaithe sin, tha Rìgh Iain agus a bhean beò san lùchairt fhathast.

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Faclan na Litreach: steall: *splash*; ghlèidh e: *he retained*; toll-iuchrach: *keyhole*; liath: *grey (haired)*; thalla thus’: *you go (imperative)*.

Abairtean na Litreach: Thill na fithich le còig botail de dh’uisge à Tobar nam Buadh: *the ravens returned with five bottles of water from ‘the well of the virtues’*; leig ar dithis bhràithrean mu sgaoil: *release our two brothers*; thilg e deur dhen uisge air an each mharbh: *he threw a drop of water on the dead horse*; cha do charaich X: *X didn’t move*; gun toireadh e na cinn far na dithis a bh’ aige ann am bruid mura faigheadh iad an t-uisge ceart dha: *that he would take the heads off the two that he held in captivity if they didn’t get him the correct water*; ’s math a rinn thu: *you did well*; fear a sheasadh cho fada rithe anns a’ choire uisge: *a man who would stand as long as her in the cauldron of water*; chaidh a losgadh gu bàs: *he was burned to death*; thalla a-steach far a bheil a’ bhaintighearna: *go into where the lady is*; ma phòsas tu mise: *if you marry me*; thòisich e air a pògadh: *he started to kiss her*; chuir iad aodach orra fhèin: *they dressed*; dh’fhàg am bodach beannachd aig Iain: *the old man farewelled John*; rinn mi duine fortanach dhìot: *I made you a lucky man*; mura shiubhail iad uaithe sin, tha X beò san lùchairt fhathast: *if they didn’t move from there, X is still living in the palace*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: Nigh i i fhèin leis an uisge o na trì botail **o bhonn a coise gu mullach a cinn**: *she washed herself with the water from the three bottles from the sole of her foot to the top of her head*. Bonn is lenited after the preposition ‘o’ (a short form of ‘bho’) and cas is in its genitive singular form coise. Mullach is not lenited because it follows ‘gu’ and ceann is in its genitive singular form cinn. Neither coise or cinn is lenited because they are commanded by the third person singular feminine possessive pronoun. If it had referred to a male person, I would have said o bhonn a chois gu mullach a chinn, with lenition. There is a gender-neutral alternative (not found in traditional stories), using the third person plural. This would be o bhonn an coise gu mullach an cinn.

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: Bidh sin cho math ’s ged a bhiodh trì agad: *that will be as good as if you had three*.

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