

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Iain Beag MacAnndra (2)

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 1,342. There is also a simpler version – An Litir Bheag – which is broadcast at 2:30pm each Sunday. Litir Bheag 1,038 corresponds to Litir 1,342. The Litir is also available at www.bbc.co.uk/litir and www.learn Gaelic.scot/litir. Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learn Gaelic.scot.

Bha Iain Beag MacAnndra mar phàirt de bhuidheann ann an Coileachaidh ann an Srath Èireann a chuir stad air Abraich a bh' air creach a thogail. Mharbh Iain ceannard nan Abrach le a bhogha. Dh'èigh uachdaran Choileachaidh, 'Tapadh leat, Iain Bhig MhicAnndra à Dail na h-Aitnich, 's e do làmh fhèin a rinn sin!'

Bha uachdaran Choileachaidh – Mac an Tòisich a bh' ann – ag iarraidh gun dèanadh na h-Abraich dìoghaltas air Iain Beag, seach air muinntir Choileachaidh. Thuig Iain fhèin sin. Nuair a chuala e faclan an uachdarain, dh'èigh e, '**Mile mallachd** air do theangaidh, a Mhic an Tòisich!'

Chuala gille, a bha na bheachdair do na creachadairean, a h-uile càil agus thill e dhachaigh. Bha e air a bhith a' coimhead a' ghnòthaich bho phìos air falbh. B' esan an aon Abrach a fhuair dhachaigh beò.

Fhuair na h-Abraich a-mach cà' robh Dail na h-Aitnich. Chuir iad air dòigh sgioba de sheachdnar a rachadh ann airson Iain Beag a mharbhadh. Gu mì-fhortanach dhaibh, cha robh fios aig duine aca dè an coltas a bh' air Iain.

Bha Iain deiseil air an son. Chuir e bogha agus stòras de shaighdean gu h-àrd ann an craobh-ghiuthais mhòr faisg air an taigh aige. Bha iad falaichte an sin.

Thàinig na h-Abraich. Chunnaic Iain iad agus chaidh e a choinneachadh riutha. 'Càit a bheil taigh Iain Bhig MhicAnndra?' thuirt iad ris.

'Seallaidh mi sin dhuibh,' fhreagair Iain. Agus thug e don taigh aige fhèin iad. Bha a bhean a-staigh agus thuig i sa mhionaid gun robh na coigrich ann le droch rùn. Thug i sgleog air cluas Iain agus thuirt i ris, 'Thalla is faigh do mhaighstir. Tha e sa mhonadh leis a' chrodh. Agus bi sgiobalta!'

Dh'fhalbh Iain a-mach ach tuigidh sibh nach deach e chun a' mhonaidh. Shreap e suas gu mullach na craoibhe-giuthais far an robh a bhogha is saighdean. Thug a bhean biadh is deoch do na h-Abraich. Cha tuirt duine aca carson a bha iad ag iarraidh bruidhinn ri Iain. Ach bha fios aice fhèin! Thug i sùil a-mach air an uinneig. 'Tha an duine agam ann a-nise,' thuirt i.

Cha do thuig na h-Abraich gun robh iad ann an cunnart sam bith. Dh'fhalbh iad a-mach, **fear mu seach**, agus loisg Iain Beag orra bhon àite fhalaichte aige air a' chraoibh.

A rèir beul-aithris, leig Iain le aon duine maireachdainn beò airson 's gun rachadh e dhachaigh a dh'innse dè thachair. Agus chan eil cunntas sam bith ann gun do dh'fheuch duine sam bith eile ri Iain Beag a mharbhadh.

Ach mòran bhliadhnaichean an dèidh làimhe, chaidh seachd uaighean aithneachadh faisg air Dail na h-Aitnich – a' ciallachadh gun deach an seachdnar gu lèir a mharbhadh. Airson a bhith cinnteach gur e uaighean a bh' annta, chaidh a dhà dhiubh a chladhach agus chaidh claignean agus cnàmhan coise aig daoine a lorg annta.

Tha dreachan eile air an sgeul ach tha e a' coimhead coltach gu bheil iad stèidhichte air fìor thachartasan agus air fìor dhuine. Chaidh carragh-chuimhne do dh'Iain a thogail air taobh thall na h-aibhne bho Dhail na h-Aitnich. Tha i ann fhathast.

* * * * *

Faclan na Litreach: Coileachaidh: *Kyllachy*; Srath Èireann: *Strathdearn*; dh'èigh: *shouted*; brathadh: *betrayal*; thuig: *understood*; Mac an Tòisich: *Mackintosh*; falaichte: *hidden*; uaighean: *graves*; carragh-chuimhne: *memorial, monument*.

Abairtean na Litreach: Mharbh Iain ceannard nan Abrach le a bhogha: *Iain killed the leader of the Lochaber men with his bow*; ag iarraidh gun dèanadh na h-Abraich dìoghaltas air Iain Beag, seach air muinntir Choileachaidh: *wanting the Lochaber people to wreak vengeance on Iain Beag, rather than on the people of Kyllachy*; a bha na bheachdair do na creachadairean: *who was a scout for the plunderers*; bha e air a bhith a' coimhead a' ghnòthaich bho phìos air falbh: *he had been watching the matter from a distance*; chuir iad air dòigh sgioba de sheachdnar a rachadh ann airson Iain Beag a mharbhadh: *they set up a team of seven who would go there to kill Iain Beag*; cha robh fios aig duine aca dè an coltas a bh' air X: *none of them knew what X looked like*; chuir e bogha agus stòras de shaighdean gu h-àrd ann an craobh-ghiuthais: *he put a bow and store of arrows high in a pine tree*; chaidh e a choinneachadh riutha: *he went to meet them*; thuig i sa mhionaid gun robh na coigrich ann le droch rùn: *she immediately understood that the strangers were there with evil intent*; thug i sgleog air cluas Iain: *she boxed Iain's ear*; bi sgiobalta: *be quick [about it]*; thug i sùil a-mach air an uinneig: *she looked out of the window*; leig X le aon duine maireachdainn beò: *X allowed one man to remain alive*; airson 's gun rachadh e dhachaigh a dh'innse dè thachair: *so that he would go home to tell what happened*; chaidh claignean agus cnàmhan coise a lorg annta: *skulls and leg bones were found in them*; air taobh thall na h-aibhne: *on the far side of the river*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: **Mìle mallachd** air do theangaidh, a Mhic an Tòisich: *a thousand curses on your tongue, Mackintosh! Remember that, regardless of 'thousand' requiring a plural noun in English, mìle in Gaelic takes the singular, as do ceud, fichead and dusan. Mìle marbhphaisg air! is a very strong imprecation, which we might translate idiomatically as 'to the fires of hell with him!' but actually means 'a thousand death-shrouds on him!' Note that marbhphaisg is in the singular; the plural would be marbhphaisgean 'death shrouds'*.

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: fear mu seach: *one after the other*.

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