

An Litir Bheag

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

An Litir Bheag is a shortened and simplified version of Ruairidh's Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh (also available on the BBC website), designed for those who are at an earlier stage of learning Gaelic. The topic each week is the same as Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh so that, once the Litir Bheag is mastered, a student of the language might wish to try the full Litir. This is Litir Bheag 6 (which corresponds to Litir 310). Ruairidh would welcome feedback on An Litir Bheag from listeners/readers. He can be contacted at roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

Ann an Litir mu dheireadh, bha mi ag innse dhuibh mun leabhar ùr aig Ragnall MacIlleDhuibh – *The Gaelic Otherworld*. Tha an leabhar stèidhichte air dà sheann leabhar le Iain MacGriogair Caimbeul. Tha beul-aithris ann air iomadach rud. Am measg sin tha *an droch-shùil*. 'S e sin an "evil eye". An droch-shùil.

Seo mar a thachair e ann an dachaigh air a' Ghàidhealtachd. Nuair a bha pàiste tinn, gun fhios carson, bha cailleach a' tighinn don taigh. Bha bobhla aig a' chaillich. Chuir i uisge glan anns a' bhobhla. An uair sin chuir i bonn-airgid anns a' bhobhla. Chuir i am bobhla bun-os-cionn. Nan robh am bonn-airgid a' steigeadh ri bonn a' bhobhla, bha droch naidheachd ann. Bha an droch-shùil air am pàiste a chronachadh.

An uair sin dè thachradh? Uill, seo mar a mhìnich fear à Tiriodh e. "Nuair a bha mi nam bhalach," thuirt e, "chaidh mi gu taigh nàbaidh... Bha pàiste anns an taigh. Bha am pàiste tinn... Bha bobhla aig cailleach. Bha uisge anns a' bhobhla. Chuir a' chailleach am bobhla air a' glùin. Bha i a' bruidhinn os cionn a' bhobhla... An dèidh greis, thòisich a' chailleach air mèaranaich. Chan fhaca mi mèaranaich mar sin a-riamh. Bha mi a' smaoinichadh gu robh i a' dol a bhàsachadh. Chuir i spògan a' chait anns a' bhobhla. Chuir i snàithlean dearg anns a' bhobhla. Agus chuir i an snàithlean timcheall amhaich a' phàiste."

Sgrìobh an Caimbeulach rudeigin mu dheidhinn an uisge a bha anns a' bhobhla. Sgrìobh e gur e "uisge casan an t-sealgair" a bha iad ag iarraidh. Uisge casan an t-sealgair. Gu tric, 's e cat an aon sealgair a bhiodh aca anns an taigh. Mar sin, chuir a' chailleach spògan a' chait san uisge.

'S e am "bruidhinn" a chuala am balach a' gheas. Bha a' chailleach a' cur an uisge fo gheas. Ach carson a bha i a' mèaranaich? Uill, bha sin a' tachairt nuair a bha an tinneas a' fàgail a' phàiste. Bha an tinneas a' dol thairis don chaillich. Is bha an tinneas a' toirt air a' chaillich a bhith a' mèaranaich.

A bheil sibh fhèin a' mèaranaich an-dràsta? Tha mi an dòchas nach eil! Tha an t-àm agam falbh. Beannachd leibh.

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Faclan is abairtean: bha mi ag innse dhuibh: *I was telling you*; Ragnall MacIlleDhuibh: *Ronald Black*; dà sheann leabhar le Iain MacGriogair

Caimbeul: *two old books by John Gregorson Campbell*; tha beul-aithris ann air iomadach rud: *there is oral tradition in it on many things [subjects]*; an droch-shùil: *the evil eye*; seo mar a thachair e ann an dachaigh: *this is how it happened in a home*; nuair a bha pàiste tinn, gun fhios carson: *when a child was sick, without knowing why*; bha bobhla aig a' chaillich: *the old woman had a bowl*; bonn-airgid: *a silver coin*; bun-os-cionn: *upside-down*; nan robh X a' steigeadh ri bonn a' bhobhla: *if X stuck [was sticking] to the bottom of the bowl*; bha an droch-shùil air am pàiste a chronachadh: *the evil eye had harmed the child*; an uair sin dè thachradh?: *then what would happen?*; mar a mhìnich fear à Tiriodh: *as a man from Tiree explained it*; nuair a bha mi nam bhalach: *when I was a boy*; nàbaidh: *neighbour*; air a glùin: *on her knee*; thòisich a' chailleach air mèaranaich: *the old woman started to yawn*; chan fhaca mi mèaranaich mar sin a-riamh: *I never saw yawning like that*; gu robh i a' dol a bhàsachadh: *that she was going to die*; spògan a' chait: *the cat's paws (still attached to the cat!)*; chuir i an snàithlean timcheall amhaich a' phàiste: *she put the thread around the child's neck*; sgrìobh an Caimbeulach rudeigin: *Campbell wrote something*; uisge casan an t-sealgair: *water of the hunter's feet*; 's e cat an aon sealgair a bhiodh aca: *a cat was the one hunter they would have*; 's e am "bruidhinn" a chuala am balach a' gheas: *the "talking" the boy heard was the spell/charm*; nuair a bha an tinneas a' fàgail a' phàiste: *when the disease was leaving the child*; bha an tinneas a' dol thairis don chaillich: *the disease was transferring to the old woman*; bha X a' toirt air a' chaillich a bhith a' mèaranaich: *X was forcing the old woman to yawn*; a bheil sibh fhèin a' mèaranaich an-dràsta?: *are you yourself yawning just now?*; tha mi an dòchas nach eil: *I hope [you are] not*; tha an t-àm agam falbh: *the time is at me [has come for me] to go*.

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