

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 377 (which corresponds to Litir 681). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.macleon@bbc.co.uk.

Red-haired Donald saw a skull in the wood. He kicked the skull. "What brought you here?" said Donald. The skull replied, "Speaking – that's what brought me here."

Donald went to the King. "I found a skull and it spoke to me," he said.

"It spoke?" said the King. "What did it say?"

"I asked it, 'what brought you here?' and it said, 'it's speaking that brought me here.'"

"I don't believe you," said the King. "I'll send guards with you to the wood. If the skull speaks, fine. If it doesn't, you'll lose your head for telling lies."

Donald and the guards left. Donald kicked the skull. "What brought you here?" he asked. The skull said nothing. He asked the question again. The skull was silent. The guards took Donald back to the King.

"You were telling lies," said the King, "but I'll give you another opportunity. In three days' time, I'll ask you three questions. If you don't have the correct answers, you'll lose your head."

Chunnaic Dòmhnall Ruadh claigeann anns a' choille. Bhreab e an claigeann. "Dè thug an seo thu?" thuir Dòmhnall. Fhreagair an claigeann, "Bruidhinn – 's e sin a thug an seo mi."

Chaidh Dòmhnall don Rìgh. "Lorg mi claigeann agus bhruidhinn e rium," thuir e.

"Bhruidhinn e?" ars an Rìgh. "Dè thuir e?"

"Dh'fhaighnich mi dheth, 'Dè thug an seo thu?' agus thuir e, 's e bruidhinn a thug an seo mi.'"

"Chan eil mi gad chreidsinn," thuir an Rìgh. "Cuiridh mi freiceadain còmhla riut don choille. Ma bhruidhneas an claigeann, ceart gu leòr. Mura bruidhinn, caillidh thu do cheann airson a bhith ag innse bhreugan."

Dh'fhalbh Dòmhnall agus na freiceadain. Bhreab Dòmhnall an claigeann. "Dè thug an seo thu?" dh'fhaighnich e. Cha tuir an claigeann smid. Chuir e a' cheist a-rithist. Bha an claigeann balbh. Thug na freiceadain Dòmhnall air ais don Rìgh.

"Bha thu ag innse bhreugan," thuir an Rìgh, "ach bheir mi cothrom eile dhut. An ceann trì latha, cuiridh mi trì ceistean ort. Mura h-eil na freagairtean ceart agad, caillidh thu do cheann."

On the way home, Donald met Gilleasbaig Aotrom. He explained the situation to Gilleasbaig.

“Give me your clothes,” said Gilleasbaig. “I’ll go in your place. I’ll answer the questions.”

Gilleasbaig went there. The King didn’t recognise him. “Here’s the first question,” said the King. “How long will it take me to go around the world?”

“The sun takes twenty-four hours,” replied Gilleasbaig. “You wouldn’t be as fast.”

“Okay,” said the King. “Now, the second question – what am I worth?”

“We sold our Saviour for thirty pieces,” replied Gilleasbaig. “You’re not worth as much as that.”

“Okay,” said the King. “And the third question – what I am thinking about just now?”

“You’re thinking that I’m Red-haired Donald,” said Gilleasbaig. “But you’re wrong. I’m Gilleasbaig Aotrom.”

And Donald got off. But Donald was angry with the skull. He went to the wood. He kicked the skull. “What brought you here,” he said, “upsetting me?”

“It’s speaking that brought me here,” replied the skull!

And that’s the story of *Red-haired Donald and the Skull*.

Air an rathad dhachaigh thachair Dòmhnall ri Gilleasbaig Aotrom. Mhìnich e a’ chùis do Ghilleasbaig.

“Thoir dhomh do chuid aodaich,” thuirt Gilleasbaig. “Thèid mise ann nad àite. Freagraidh mise na ceistean.”

Chaidh Gilleasbaig ann. Cha do dh’aithnich an Rìgh e. “Seo a’ chiad cheist,” thuirt an Rìgh. “Dè cho fada ’s a bheir e dhomh a dhol timcheall an t-saoghail?”

“Tha a’ ghrian a’ toirt ceithir uairean fichead,” fhreagair Gilleasbaig. “Cha bhiodh sibhse cho luath sin.”

“Glè mhath,” ars an Rìgh. “Nise, an dàrna ceist – dè luach a tha orm?”

“Reic sinn ar Slànaighear airson trithead bonn,” fhreagair Gilleasbaig. “Chan eil sibhse cho luachmhor sin.”

“Glè mhath,” thuirt an Rìgh. “Agus an treas ceist – cò air a tha mi a’ smaoin eachadh an-dràsta?”

“Tha sibh a’ smaoin eachadh gur mise Dòmhnall Ruadh,” thuirt Gilleasbaig. “Ach tha sibh ceàrr. Is mise Gilleasbaig Aotrom.”

Agus fhuair Dòmhnall dheth. Bha Dòmhnall feargach leis a’ chlaigeann, gè-tà. Chaidh e don choille. Bhreab e an claigeann. “Dè thug ort thighinn an seo,” thuirt e, “a’ cur dragh mòr orm?”

“S e bruidhinn a thug an seo mi,” fhreagair an claigeann!

Agus ’s e sin an stòiridh – *Dòmhnall Ruadh agus an Claigeann*.