

# **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 523 (which corresponds to Litir 827). Ruairidh can be contacted at [rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk](mailto:rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk).*

*Last week, I told a story from Uist about the will-o'-the-wisp and how it came into being. Now here is another story about the will-o'-the-wisp that was told by the Gaels in olden times.*

*A long time ago there was a blacksmith. He had a wife and family. Work was scarce. Thus, they did not have enough money. The blacksmith was worried that his children would die from a lack of food. He said to himself that he'd accept any help, even from the Devil.*

*The blacksmith was working in the smiddy when a stranger came in. The stranger told him that he understood how things were. 'What would you give to a man,' the stranger asked, 'who would give you plenty of gold and silver?'*

*'I'd give anything,' the blacksmith replied.*

*'Well,' said the stranger, 'Promise me that you'll leave with me a year from tomorrow. And I'll give you plenty of gold and silver. When you put your hand in your right pocket, it will be full of gold.'*

An t-seachdain sa chaidh, dh'inns mi stòiridh à Uibhist mun 'Teine Mhòr' no 'Teine Sionnachain' agus mar a thàinig e gu bith. A-nise seo sgeulachd eile mun Teine Mhòr a bha aig na Gàidheil o shean.

O chionn fhada, bha gobha ann. Bha bean is teaghlach aige. Bha obair gann. Mar sin, cha robh airgead gu leòr aca. Bha an t-eagal air a' ghobha gum biodh a chlann a' bàsachadh le cion a' bhìdh. Thuirt e ris fhèin gun gabhadh e cuideachadh sam bith, eadhon bhon Droch Fhear.

Bha an gobha ag obair sa cheàrdaich nuair a thàinig coigreach a-steach. Dh'inns an coigreach dha gun robh e a' tuigsinn mar a bha cùisean. 'Dè bhiodh tu a' toirt do dhuine,' dh'fhaighnich an coigreach, 'a bhiodh a' toirt dhut fhèin gu leòr de dh'òr 's de dh'airgead?'

'Bheirinn rud sam bith,' fhreagair an gobha.

'Uill,' thuirt an coigreach, 'Geall dhomh gum falbh thu còmhla rium bliadhna o màireach. Agus bheir mi dhut pailteas de dh'òr 's de dh'airgead. Nuair a chuireas tu do làmh nad phòcaid dheis, bidh i làn òir. Nuair a chuireas tu do

*When you put your hand in your left pocket, it will be full of silver. That will happen every time you put your hands in your pockets.'*

*The blacksmith wasn't sure about the bargain. 'Your offer is good,' he said. 'But at the end of a year and a day, it will be tough for me to leave my wife and children.'*

*'But think,' said the stranger. 'You can put aside a heap of gold and silver for your family. They will want for nothing.'*

*The blacksmith looked at the stranger's feet. They were like a pig's trotters. He was sure the stranger was the Devil. Despite that, he accepted the offer. 'When the day comes,' he said to himself, 'I'll put God between me and him.'*

*The stranger left. The blacksmith lifted his coat to go home. It was very heavy. The coat's pockets were stuffed full of gold and silver. I'll tell you next week what happened when the blacksmith told his wife about the bargain he [had] made with the Devil.*

lámh nad phòcaid chli, bidh i làn airgid. Tachraidh sin a h-uile uair a chuireas tu do lámhan nad phòcaidean.'

Cha robh an gobha cinnteach mun bhargan. 'Tha an tairgse agad math,' thuirt e. 'Ach an ceann latha is bliadhna, bidh e cruaidh leam dealachadh on bhean is on chloinn agam.'

'Ach smaoinich,' thuirt an coigreach. 'Faodaidh tu pailteas de dh'òr 's de dh'airgead a chur ma seach airson do theaghlaich. Cha bhi dith orra.'

Choimhead an gobha air casan a' choigrich. Bha iad coltach ri ladhran muice. Bha e cinnteach gum b' e an coigreach an Droch Fhear. A dh'aindeoin sin, ghabh e ris an tairgse. 'Nuair a thig an latha,' thuirt e ris fhèin, 'cuiridh mi Dia eadar mi 's e.'

Dh'fhalbh an coigreach. Thog an gobha a chòta airson falbh dhachaidh. Bha e gu math trom. Bha pòcaidean a' chòta loma-làn òir is airgid. Innsidh mi dhuibh an-ath-sheachdain mar a thachair nuair a dh'inns an gobha do bhean mun bhargan a rinn e leis an Droch Fhear.