

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 583 (which corresponds to Litir 887). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodgy.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

I was telling you the old story about Big Kate of the Nose. She belonged to Abergeldie in Mar. She and Sharp Donald were good at dancing together. That angered the men of Mar. They reckoned that they were better at dancing than the people of Atholl.

Donald and Kate were dancing at a feast after a wedding. A big man from Mar and Donald were dancing a reel. Donald was thrown into the fire.

Donald leaped into the set again as if nothing had happened. When the big man and Donald had linked arms again, Donald threw the other man with all his strength. He dislocated his shoulder.

The man from Mar was screaming in pain. He drew his dirk. He was going to kill Donald. But Big Kate leaped between them. Her nose was cut off. There was uproar.

Everybody went around Big Kate. They were showing her pity for losing her nose. She was in a terrible state. She was saying that she would never catch a husband because she had lost her beauty.

But that wasn't Donald's opinion. 'You'll be even better as a

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh na seann eachdraidh mu Cheit Mhòr na Sròine. Bhuineadh i do dh'Obar Gheallaidh ann am Màrr. Bha i fhèin is Dòmhnall Biorach à Athall math air dannsadh còmhla. Chuir sin fearg air fir Mhàrr. Bha iadsan dhen bheachd gun robh iadsan na b' fheàrr air dannsadh na muinntir Athall.

Bha Dòmhnall is Ceit a' dannsadh aig cuirm an dèidh banais. Bha fear mòr à Màrr agus Dòmhnall a' dannsadh ruidhle. Chaidh Dòmhnall a thilgeil don teine.

Leum Dòmhnall a-steach don t-seat a-rithist mar nach robh dad air tachairt. Nuair a bha am fear mòr agus Dòmhnall an gàirdeanan a chèile a-rithist, thilg Dòmhnall am fear eile le uile neart. Chuir e a ghualann a-mach.

Bha am fear à Màrr a' sgreuchail le pian. Tharraing e a bhiodag. Bha e a' dol a mharbhadh Dhòmhnail. Ach leum Ceit Mhòr na Sròine eatarra. Chaidh an t-sròn aice a ghearradh dheth. Bha ùpraid ann.

Chaidh a h-uile duine timcheall air Ceit Mhòr. Bha iad a' sealltainn truas dhi airson a sròn a chall. Bha i fhèin troimhe-chèile. Bha i ag ràdh nach fhaigheadh i duine cèile oir bha i air a bòidhchead a chall.

Ach cha b' e sin beachd Dhòmhnail. 'Bidh thu eadhon nas fheàrr

dancer now,' he said. 'You'll be lighter.' Strangely, Kate wasn't displeased with that opinion.

Donald went to speak to the Gordon. He was wanting to marry Kate. The clan chief agreed. The priest returned.

There was a second wedding that night. The dance afterwards was excellent. But I expect that poor Kate was too sore to do much dancing!

Donald and Kate had a happy marriage. But it lasted only nine years. In 1513, Donald went with the Scottish army to the Battle of Flodden in England. Donald was killed there, along with his clan chief, the Earl of Atholl. And poor Kate was left a widow.

mar dhannsair a-nise,' thuirt e. 'Bidh thu nas aotruime.' Gu h-annasach, cha robh Ceit mì-thoilichte leis a' bheachd sin.

Chaidh Dòmhnall a bhruidhinn ris a' Ghòrdanach. Bha e ag iarraidh Ceit a phòsadh. Dh'aontaich an ceann-cinnidh. Thill an sagart.

Bha dàrna banais ann air an oidhche sin. Bha an danns an dèidh làimhe air leth math. Ach tha mi an dùil gun robh Ceit bhoichd ro ghoirt airson mòran dannsaidh a dhèanamh!

Bha pòsadh toilichte eadar Dòmhnall agus Ceit. Ach mhair e dìreach naoi bliadhna. Ann an còig ceud deug is trì-deug (1513), chaidh Dòmhnall le arm na h-Alba gu ruige Blàr Flodden ann an Sasainn. Chaidh Dòmhnall a mharbhadh ann, cuide ri a cheann-cinnidh, Iarla Athall. Agus bha Ceit bhoichd air a fàgail na bantrach.