

## **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 589 (which corresponds to Litir 893). Ruairidh can be contacted at [rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk](mailto:rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk).*

*I was telling the old story 'Ewen the son of the goat' from Loch Maree-side. Kenneth and Effie went to the mouth of the cave. The goat, Earba, appeared. She was protecting the cave. Kenneth put a rope around her horns. Earba was bleating. A young lad broke out of the cave, shouting, 'Mum, Mum!'*

*'God of grace,' said Kenneth, 'it's a fairy!'*

*'It's not a fairy,' said a beautiful young woman. She jumped out of the cave, saying, 'The lad belongs to me.'*

*'What are you doing here?' asked Effie. The woman explained to her that she and the lad had been in mortal danger. They fled and they found the cave. The goat assisted them.*

*'What is your name?' asked Effie.*

*'Flora,' replied the young woman.*

*'And the lad?'*

*'Ewan,' she said.*

*'And his clan?' asked Effie.*

*She wasn't willing to tell that. She wouldn't tell his clan nor his*

*Bha mi ag aithris na seann sgeulachd 'Eòghann Mac a' Ghobhair' à taobh Loch Ma-ruibhe. Chaidh Coinneach agus Oighrig gu beul na h-uamha. Nochd a' ghobhar, Earba. Bha i a' dìon na h-uamha. Chuir Coinneach ròp timcheall air a h-adharcan. Bha Earba a' mèilich. Bhri gille òg a-mach às an uaimh, ag èigheachd, 'Màm, Màm!'*

*'A Dhè ghràs-mhoir,' thuirt Coinneach, 's e sìthiche a tha ann!'*

*'Chan e no sìthiche,' thuirt boireannach òg brèagha. Leum i a-mach às an uaimh, ag ràdh, 'S ann leamsa a tha an gille.'*

*'Dè tha sibh a' dèanamh an seo?' dh'fhaighnich Oighrig. Mhìnich am boireannach dhi gun robh i fhèin agus an gille air a bhith ann an cunnart am beatha. Theich iad agus lorg iad an uamh. Rinn a' ghobhar cobhair orra.*

*'Dè an t-ainm a tha ort?' dh'fhaighnich Oighrig.*

*'Fionnghal,' fhreagair an tè òg.*

*'Agus an gille?'*

*'Eòghann,' thuirt i.*

*'Agus a chinneadh?' dh'fhaighnich Oighrig.*

*Cha robh i deònach sin innse. Chan innseadh i a chinneadh no a*

patronymic.

*'Well, then,' said Effie, 'we'll call him "Ewan son of the goat".'*

*They all lived in Effie's house. Kenneth was falling in love with Flora. 'Mother,' he said one day, 'do you think that Flora is Ewan's mother?'*

*'No,' replied Effie. 'She is a virgin.'*

*'I'd like to marry her,' said Kenneth.*

*'Quiet, lad,' she replied, 'she is the daughter of a king. She showed me scarlet apparel and a sword that were owned by the boy's father. She keeps them in order to prove that they belong to the gentry. She'll never marry you.' Those words saddened Kenneth.*

*The landlord, the Lord of [Eilean] Donan Castle, came to hunt in the neighbourhood. The lord himself appeared outside Effie's house. Kenneth came out in a hurry. He closed the door behind him with a bang.*

*'Now, Kenneth,' said the landlord, 'what are you hiding inside the house?'*

*Before Kenneth had the opportunity to say anything, the lord jumped from his horse. He entered the house. And I'll tell you more in the next Litir.*

shloinneadh.

*'Uill, ma-thà,' thuir Oighrig, 'canaidh sinn "Eòghann Mac a' Ghobhair" ris.*

*Dh'fhuirich iad uile ann an taigh Oighrig. Bha Coinneach a' tuiteam ann an gaol le Fionnghal. 'A mhàthair,' thuir e latha a bha seo, 'a bheil sibh a' smaoinneachadh gur i Fionnghal màthair Eòghainn?'*

*'Chan i,' fhreagair Oighrig. 'S e òigh a tha innte.'*

*'Bu mhath leam a pòsadh,' arsa Coinneach.*

*'Ist, 'ille,' fhreagair i, 's e nighean rìgh a tha innte. Sheall i dhomh trusgan sgàrlaid agus claidheamh a bha le athair a' ghille. Tha i gan cumail airson dearbhadh gur e uaislean a tha annta. Cha phòs i thu a-chaidh.' Chuir na faclan sin Coinneach fo bhròn.*

*Thàinig an t-uachdaran, Morair Caisteal Dhonnain, a shealg anns an nàbachd. Nochd am morair fhèin taobh a-muigh taigh Oighrig. Thàinig Coinneach a-mach ann an cabhaig. Dhùin e an doras às a dhèidh le brag.*

*'Nis', a Choinnich,' thuir an t-uachdaran, 'dè tha thu am falach am broinn an taighe?'*

*Mus d' fhuair Coinneach cothrom dad a ràdh, leum am morair far eich. Chaidh e a-steach don taigh. Agus innsidh mi tuilleadh anns an ath Litir.*