

# **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 609 (which corresponds to Litir 913). Ruairidh can be contacted at [rodny.macleam@bbc.co.uk](mailto:rodny.macleam@bbc.co.uk).*

*I was telling you about Nant Gwrtheyrn in Wales. The monks who came there made a curse. They said, 'the men from Nant Gwrtheyrn will not marry women from Nant Gwrtheyrn.'*

*The men would leave Nant Gwrtheyrn to find wives. There were only three farms left there. In one of them a guy called Rhys Mareddydd was living with his sister Angharad. They were orphans. There was also a woman called Meinir living in the glen. Rhys and Meinir fell in love with each other.*

*They would often sit together under a large oak tree. Rhys asked Meinir to marry him. She agreed. But Meinir's father didn't agree. 'Remember the curse,' he said. 'A man from Nant Gwrtheyrn cannot marry a woman from this place.'*

*However, Meinir was distraught and her father changed his mind. The wedding was going to be in a church a little way away.*

*The morning of the wedding came. Rhys walked over to Meinir's farm. There was a tradition that the bride would go into hiding. The bridegroom would have to find her. Thus, there was no sign of Meinir.*

*Rhys went to find her but there*

*Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mu Nant Gwrtheyrn sa Chuimrigh. Rinn na manaich a thàinig ann mallachd. Thuir iad – 'cha phòs fir à Nant Gwrtheyrn boireannaich à Nant Gwrtheyrn'.*

*Bhiodh na fir a' falbh a-mach à Nant Gwrtheyrn airson mnathan a lorg. Cha robh ach trì bailtean-fearainn air fhàgail ann. Ann am fear dhiubh bha fear Rhys Mareddydd a' fuireach cuide ri a phiuthar, Angharad. 'S e dilleachdan a bha annta. Bha tè Meinir cuideachd anns a' ghleann. Ghabh Rhys agus Meinir gràdh air a chèile.*

*Bhiodh iad gu tric nan suidhe còmhla fo chraobh-dharaich mhòr. Dh'iarr Rhys air Meinir a phòsadh. Dh'aontaich i. Ach cha do dh'aontaich athair Meinir. 'Cuimhnich a' mhallachd,' thuir e. 'Chan fhaod fear à Nant Gwrtheyrn boireannach às an àite seo a phòsadh.'*

*Ge-tà, bha Meinir muldach agus dh'atharraich a h-athair a bheachd. Bha a' bhanais gu bhith ann an eaglais pìos air falbh.*

*Thàinig madainn na bainnse. Choisich Rhys a-null gu baile-fearainn Meinir. Bha traidisean ann gum biodh bean na bainnse a' dol am falach. Bhiodh aig fear na bainnse ri a lorg. Mar sin, cha robh sgeul air Meinir.*

*Chaidh Rhys ga lorg ach cha robh*

*was no sign of her. 'Perhaps she has gone to the church,' said somebody.*

*Rhys walked to the church, but Meinir was not there. He returned to Nant Gwrtheyrn. The darkness of night came. But they did not find Meinir. The months went by, and Meinir wasn't seen. Her father died. Every evening, Rhys would sit under the oak tree, crying, 'Meinir, where are you?'*

*Thirty years went past. Nobody was left in Nant Gwrtheyrn except Rhys. One night, he was sitting under the oak tree. There was lightning. A bolt of lightning hit the tree, splitting it into two pieces. Inside the tree was a skeleton with a piece of wedding dress on it. Meinir had been hiding in the tree. She had fallen into a hole in it. But she didn't get out.*

*Rhys's body was found, with him holding Meinir's skeleton. Because of the curse, Nant Gwrtheyrn was again without a population.*

sgeul oirre. 'S dòcha gu bheil i air a dhol don eaglais,' thuirt cuideigin.

Choisich Rhys don eaglais ach cha robh Meinir ann. Thill e gu Nant Gwrtheyrn. Thàinig dorchadas na h-oidhche. Ach cha do lorg iad Meinir. Chaidh na mìosan seachad, agus chan fhacas Meinir. Chaochail a h-athair. Gach feasgar, bhiodh Rhys na shuidhe fon chraoibh-dharaich, ag èigheachd, 'A Mheinir, càit a bheil thu?'

Chaidh trithead bliadhna seachad. Cha robh duine air fhàgail ann an Nant Gwrtheyrn ach Rhys. Oidhche a bha seo, bha e na shuidhe fon chraoibh-dharaich. Bha dealanaich ann. Bhuail beithir dealanaich a' chraobh, ga sgàineadh ann an dà phìos. Am broinn na craoibhe bha cnàimhneach le pìos de dhreasa bainnse air. Bha Meinir air a bhith am falach anns a' chraoibh. Bha i air tuiteam a-steach gu toll innte. Agus cha d' fhuair i a-mach.

Chaidh corp Rhys a lorg, agus grèim aige air cnàimhneach Meinir. Air sgàth na mallachd, bha Nant Gwrtheyrn a-rithist gun sluagh.