

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 702 (which corresponds to Litir 1,006). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodgy.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

I'm continuing with the story 'The Three Bog Cotton Shirts'. One of the sons of the king went to the witch's house. 'My stepmother wants the fine comb,' he said.

'There's the fine comb at the base of the bench,' said the witch.

The lad went over. He put his hand on the comb. But the witch struck him on his back with her magic wand. The lad changed into a grey dog and leaped out of the window.

The second son went over. 'My stepmother wants the fine comb,' he said.

'There it is at the base of the bench,' said the witch.

The lad put his hand on the comb. But the witch struck him on his back with her magic wand. The lad changed into a grey dog and leaped out of the window.

Now, the daughter saw [had seen] everything from her window. She went over. When the witch picked up her magic wand, the girl grabbed her hand. She pulled her hand from her arm. Then she left to look for her brothers.

Tha mi a' leantainn leis an sgeulachd 'Na Trì Lèintean Canaich'. Chaidh fear de mhic an rìgh gu taigh na bana-bhuidsich. 'Tha mo mhuime ag iarraidh na cìre mìne,' thuirt e.

'Siud a' chìr mhìn aig bonn na beingidh,' thuirt a' bhana-bhuidseach,

Chaidh an gille a-null. Chuir e a làmh air a' chìr. Ach thug a' bhana-bhuidseach slaic air a dhruim le a slacan draoidheil. Leum an gille na chù glas a-mach air an uinneig.

Chaidh an dàrna gille a-null. 'Tha mo mhuime ag iarraidh na cìre mìne,' thuirt e.

'Siud i aig bonn na beingidh,' ars a' bhana-bhuidseach.

Chuir an gille a làmh air a' chìr. Ach thug a' bhana-bhuidseach slaic air a dhruim le a slacan draoidheil. Leum an gille na chù glas a-mach air an uinneig. Thachair an aon rud don treas gille.

Nise, chunnaic an nighean a h-uile rud bhon uinneig aice. Chaidh i a-null. Nuair a thog a' bhana-bhuidseach an slacan draoidheil, ghabh an nighean grèim air a làimh. Spìon i a làmh on ghàirdean aice. An uair sin, dh'fhalbh i a lorg a bràithrean.

She found a house. There was nobody inside. After a while, the woman of the house returned. She was the Woman of the Green Gown. 'What's your news?' she asked.

'I don't have any,' the girl replied. 'Do you have any yourself?'

'I saw your brothers. They are in the form of grey dogs,' said the Woman of the Green Gown.

Next morning, the girl left to find her brothers. 'Take this shoe with you,' said the Woman of the Green Gown. 'It will keep you on the right road. When you reach the house of the big old man, the shoe will turn this way. It will return by itself.'

The girl reached the house of the big old man. She turned the shoe the way it had come. The shoe returned home by itself. The girl went inside.

'What news does the [woman] stranger have?' aske the old man.

'Nothing,' said she.

'I have news,' he said. 'Your brothers are living in yonder cave.'

'How will I reach them?' asked the girl.

'I have a fine hempen string,' he said. 'Take hold of it.'

We'll see next week how she found her brothers.

Lorg i taigh. Cha robh duine a-staigh. An dèidh greis, thill bean an taighe. B' ise Bean a' Chòta Chaoil Uaine. 'Dè do naidheachd?' dh'fhaighnich i.

'Chan eil naidheachd agam,' fhreagair an nighean. 'A bheil gin agad fhèin?'

'Chunnaic mi do bhràithrean. Tha iad nan coin ghlasa,' arsa Bean a' Chòta Chaoil Uaine.

An ath-mhadainn, dh'fhalbh an nighean a lorg a bràithrean. 'Thoir a' bhròg seo leat,' arsa Bean a' Chòta Chaoil Uaine. 'Cumaidh i air an rathad cheart thu. Nuair a ruigeas tu taigh seann duine mòr, tionndaidh a' bhròg an rathad seo. Tillidh i dhachaigh leatha fhèin.'

Ràinig an nighean taigh an t-seann duine mhòir. Thionndaidh i a' bhròg an taobh a thàinig i. Dh'fhalbh a' bhròg dhachaigh leatha fhèin. Chaidh an nighean a-steach.

'Dè an naidheachd a th' aig a' bhana-choigrich?' dh'fhaighnich an seann duine.

'Chan eil gin,' fhreagair ise.

'Tha naidheachd agamsa,' ars esan. 'Tha do bhràithrean a' fuireach anns an uaimh ud.'

'Ciamar a gheibh mi thuca?' dh'fhaighnich an nighean.

'Tha sreang chaol chainbe agam,' thuir esan. 'Gabh grèim oirre.'

Chì sinn an-ath-sheachdain mar a lorg i a bràithrean.