

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 880 (which corresponds to Litir 1,184). Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learngaelic.scot.

I am going to finish the story from Mull – ‘Lochbuie and his two herdsmen’. The herdsman took the body to the house of the other herdsman, his friend. He dropped the body on the ground in the garden. It was pitch black. The man knocked on the door. The other herdsman’s wife came to the door.

‘How did you get on?’ she asked. Did you get the ox?’

‘Don’t speak about the ox,’ he replied. ‘Your husband was hanged.’

The wife began to weep. ‘Be quiet,’ said the herdsman. ‘Keep silent. Don’t say a word to anybody. Otherwise both of us will also be hanged. We’ll bury the body in the garden. Nobody else will know what happened.’

The two of them buried the body. The herdsman went to his own house.

The other herdsman was still in Lochbuie’s estate house. He left and made for his own house. The door was locked. ‘Let me in,’ he shouted.

Tha mi a’ dol a chur crìoch air an sgeulachd à Muile – ‘Locha Buidhe’s a Dhà Bhuachaille’. Thug am buachaille an corp gu taigh a’ bhuachaille eile, a charaid. Leig e an corp dhan talamh anns a’ ghàrradh. Bha e dubh dorch. Ghnog an duine air an doras. Thàinig bean a’ bhuachaille eile chun an dorais.

‘Ciamar a chaidh dhuibh?’ dh’fhaighnich i. ‘An d’ fhuair sibh an damh?’

‘Na bruidhinn mun damh,’ fhreagair e. ‘Chaidh an duine agad a chrochadh.’

Thòisich a’ bhean air caoineadh. ‘Ist,’ thuirt am buachaille. ‘Cùm sàmhach. Na can guth ri duine. Air neo thèid an dithis againne a chrochadh cuideachd. Tiodhlaicidh sinn a chorp anns a’ ghàrradh. Cha bhi fios aig duine eile dè thachair.’

Thiodhlaic an dithis aca an corp. Dh’fhalbh am buachaille don taigh aige fhèin.

Bha am buachaille eile fhathast ann an taigh mòr Locha Buidhe. Dh’fhalbh e agus rinn e air an taigh aige fhèin. Bha an doras glaiste. ‘Leig a-steach mi,’ dh’èigh e.

'No,' said his wife. 'You were hanged and we buried you in the garden.'

'What do you mean?' said the herdsman. 'I wasn't hanged!'

'I don't care what you say,' she said.

The herdsman went to the house of the other herdsman. He knocked on the front door. 'Let me in,' he shouted.

'No way,' replied the other man. 'I had enough taking you home on my back.'

There was a big window at the far end of the house. The man on the outside went there. 'Get a light,' he said, 'and you'll see perfectly that I wasn't hanged.'

The man on the inside saw that the other was telling the truth. He admitted his friend. They conversed for a while. They agreed to go and speak to Lochbuie. They were going to admit everything to him.

Lochbuie listened to their story. The herdsman were not punished. Indeed, they received a benefit in the end. Every year after that, Lochbuie was giving them an ox ... and a boll of meal in addition.

'Cha leig,' ars a bhean. 'Chaidh do chrochadh agus thiodhlaic sinn thu anns a' ghàrradh.'

'Dè tha thu a' ciallachadh?' thuirte am buachaille. 'Cha deach mo chrochadh!'

'Tha mi coma dè chanas tu,' ars ise.

Chaidh am buachaille gu taigh a' bhuachaille eile. Ghnog e air an doras mhòr. 'Leig a-steach mi,' dh'èigh e.

'Is mi nach leig,' fhreagair am fear eile. 'Fhuair mise gu leòr gad thoirt dhachaigh air mo mhuin.'

Bha uinneag mhòr aig ceann thall an taighe. Chaidh am fear air an taobh a-muigh ann. 'Faigh solas,' thuirte e, 'agus chì thu glan nach deach mo chrochadh.'

Chunnaic am fear air an taobh a-staigh gun robh an fhirinn aig an fhear eile. Leig e a charaid a-steach. Bha seachas aca airson greis. Dh'aontaich iad a dhol a bhruidhinn ri Locha Buidhe. Bha iad a' dol a dh'aideachadh a h-uile rud dha.

Dh'èist Locha Buidhe ris an sgeul aca. Cha deach na buachaillean a pheanasachadh. Gu dearbh, thàinig buannachd thuca aig a' cheann thall. A h-uile bliadhna bho sin a-mach, bha Locha Buidhe a' toirt dhaibh damh ... agus bolla mine a-bharrachd.