

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 891 (which corresponds to Litir 1,195). Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learngaelic.scot.

I am telling the story 'The Ship That Went to America'. The couple did not expect to have children. But a boy child was born to them. They called him 'Iain'.

Seven years had gone past since the man gave the promise to the old man. He said to his wife, 'I'm going in order to give the boy away. That's what I promised for the tablecloth.' You'll remember that the man got the magic tablecloth from the old man.

His wife started to weep. 'I must do it,' said the man. He and the boy left. After a while they reached the hut at the base of the mountain. The table was still there, with a bottle of wine and a loaf of bread on it.

The old man appeared. 'You came as you promised,' he said.

'Yes,' agreed the other man.

'What's the boy's given name?' asked the old man.

'Iain,' said his father.

'May he enjoy his name,' said the old man. 'Has he [had] an education?'

'I was educating him myself,' replied the other man.

Tha mi ag aithris na sgeulachd 'An Long a Chaidh a dh'Ameireagaidh'. Cha robh an cupall an dùil clann a bhith aca. Ach rugadh leanabh-gille dhaibh. Chuir iad 'Iain' air mar ainm.

Bha seachd bliadhna air a dhol seachad on a thug an duine an gealltanais don bhodach. Thuir e ri a bhean, 'Tha mi a' falbh a thoirt a' bhalaich seachad. 'S e sin a gheall mi airson na tubhailt.' Bidh cuimhne agaibh gun d' fhuair an duine tubhailt dhraoidheil bhon bhodach.

Thòisich a bhean air caoineadh. 'Feumaidh mi a dhèanamh,' thuir an duine. Dh'fhalbh e fhèin 's am balachan. An ceann ùine ràinig iad am bothan aig bonn na beinne. Bha am bòrd ann fhathast, le botal fiona agus lof arain air.

Nochd am bodach. 'Thàinig thu mar a gheall thu,' thuir e.

'Thàinig,' dh'aontaich am fear eile.

'Dè an t-ainm baistidh a tha air a' bhalachan?' dh'fhaighnich am bodach.

'Iain,' thuir athair.

'Gum meal e ainm,' ars am bodach. 'A bheil sgoil aige?'

'Bha mi fhìn a' toirt sgoil dha,' fhreagair am fear eile.

'I'll give him a good education,' said the old man. 'I'll make a lucky man of him.'

The boy grew into a fine big lad. He was more than twenty years with the old man. He got a good education from him. One day, the old man asked him to accompany him to the top of the mountain. The old man asked him to take a bridle, that was above the door, with him.

They reached the top of the mountain. 'Shake the bridle for [in front of] me. 'I'll turn into a horse. Jump on my back then.'

Iain did that. The horse left. They reached a loch. The horse said to Iain, 'Go up to a cave there. You'll find three giants lying down. They are dying of hunger. Look into my ear.'

Iain looked in his ear. He saw a bottle of wine and three loaves of bread. 'Give a loaf to each of the giants,' said the horse, 'and share the bottle out between them.'

Iain did that. The giants were pleased. 'We'll remember this,' they said. And the story will continue next week.

'Bheir mise deagh sgoil dha,' ars am bodach. 'Nì mi duine fortanach dheth.'

Dh'fhàs am balachan na ghille mòr, gasta. Bha e còrr is fichead bliadhna còmhla ris a' bhodach. Fhuair e deagh sgoil bhuaithe. Latha a bha seo, dh'iarr am bodach air a dhol còmhla ris gu mullach na beinne. Dh'iarr am bodach air srian, a bha os cionn an dorais, a thoirt leis.

Ràinig iad mullach na beinne. 'Crath an t-srian rium,' ars am bodach. 'Bidh mi a' tionndadh nam each. Leum air mo mhuin an uair sin.'

Rinn Iain sin. Dh'fhalbh an t-each. Ràinig iad loch. Thuirt an t-each ri Iain, 'Thalla suas gu uamh an sin. Gheibh thu trì famhairean nan sìneadh. Tha iad a' dol bàs leis an acras. Seall a-steach nam chluais.'

Thug Iain sùil na chluais. Chunnaic e botal fiona agus trì lofan arain. 'Thoir lof an duine do na famhairean,' ars an t-each, 'agus roinn am botal eatarra.'

Rinn Iain sin. Bha na famhairean toilichte. 'Bidh cuimhne againn air seo,' thuirt iad. Agus leanaidh an sgeul an-ath-sheachdain.