

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 913 (which corresponds to Litir 1,217). Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learngaelic.scot.

I want to tell you a story from the Gairloch area in Wester Ross. It is called 'big Hugh and the big yellow goat'.

Big Hugh lived in Diabaig. He was a brave man. Nothing scared him.

There was a hill road between Diabaig and Gairloch. It was going over high country called 'the yellow knoll'. But there was a big wild goat living there. It was shape-shifting. It was attacking travellers. But Big Hugh wasn't scared!

One day, Hugh left Gairloch at dusk. He was going to Diabaig. He came to a house. A weaver was living there.

'Where are you going?' asked the weaver.

'I'm going,' said Hugh, 'to the yellow knoll.'

'Be quiet,' said the weaver. 'Aren't you scared of the yellow goat?'

'No,' replied Hugh. 'I have a sword.'

'What if the sword doesn't come out of its scabbard?' said the weaver.

Tha mi airson sgeulachd innse dhuibh à sgìre Gheàrrloch ann an Ros an Iar. 'S e an t-ainm a tha oirre 'Ùisdean Mòr agus a' Ghobhar Mhòr Bhuidhe'.

Bha Ùisdean Mòr a' fuireach ann an Diabaig. 'S e duine treun a bha ann. Cha robh càil ann a bha a' cur eagal air.

Bha frith-rathad eadar Diabaig agus Geàrrloch. Bha e a' dol thairis air monadh air an robh 'An Tom Buidhe' mar ainm. Ach bha gobhar mhòr fhiadhaich a' fuireach ann. Bha i a' dol ann an iomadh riochd. Bha i a' toirt ionnsaigh air luchd-siubhail. Ach cha robh eagal air Ùisdean Mòr!

Latha a bha seo, dh'fhàg Ùisdean Geàrrloch aig ciaradh an fheasgair. Bha e a' dol a Dhiabaig. Thàinig e gu taigh. Bha breabadair a' fuireach ann.

'Càit a bheil thu a' dol?' dh'fhaighnich am breabadair.

'Tha mi a' dol,' ars Ùisdean, 'dhan Tom Bhuidhe.'

'Ist,' thuirt am breabadair. 'Nach eil eagal ort ron Ghobhair Bhuidhe?'

'Chan eil,' fhreagair Ùisdean. 'Tha claidheamh agam.'

'Dè mura tig an claidheamh às a thruaill?' ars am breabadair.

<p><i>'If it doesn't,' replied Hugh, 'I'll try the gun on it.'</i></p> <p><i>What happens if the gun doesn't fire?' said the weaver.</i></p> <p><i>'If it doesn't,' said Hugh, 'I'll try Catrìona, my grandmother's sister.'</i></p> <p><i>Hugh kept going and he reached the yellow knoll. The goat attacked him. Hugh drew his sword but it didn't come out of its scabbard. Hugh fired his gun but not a spark came from it!</i></p> <p><i>'Big Hugh,' said the goat, 'where is Catrìona, your grandmother's sister?'</i></p> <p><i>'Thanks,' said Hugh, 'for reminding me of her!' 'Catrìona' was the name of his dirk that he had hidden. He drew it, and he stabbed it into the belly of the goat. The goat disappeared.</i></p> <p><i>Hugh returned to the weaver's house. The weaver was lying under his loom, bleeding.</i></p> <p><i>Hugh recognised the wound in the weaver's belly. The weaver was the evil goat in another form. Hugh gave him a death-thrust with his dirk. And not a single person has been killed by a goat or spectre on the yellow knoll since then.</i></p>	<p><i>'Mura tig,' fhreagair Ùisdean, 'feuchaidh mi an gunna oirre.'</i></p> <p><i>'Dè thachras mura loisg an gunna?' thuirt am breabadair.</i></p> <p><i>'Mura loisg,' ars Ùisdean, 'feuchaidh mi Catrìona, piuthar mo sheanmhar'.</i></p> <p><i>Chùm Ùisdean a dol agus ràinig e an Tom Buidhe. Thug a' ghobhar ionnsaigh air. Tharraing Ùisdean air a chlaidheamh ach cha tàinig e às a thruaill. Loisg Ùisdean a ghumna ach cha tàinig sradag às!</i></p> <p><i>'Ùisdein Mhòir,' ars a' ghobhar, 'càit a bheil Catrìona, piuthar do sheanmhar?'</i></p> <p><i>'Tapadh leat,' ars Ùisdean, 'airson a cur nam chuimhne!' B' e 'Catrìona' ainm a bhiodaig a bha aige am falach. Tharraing e i, agus shàth e a-steach i a bhrù na goibhre. Chaidh a' ghobhar à fianais.</i></p> <p><i>Thill Ùisdean gu taigh a' bhreabadair. Bha am breabadair na laighe fon bheairt aige, a' sileadh na fala.</i></p> <p><i>Dh'aithnich Ùisdean an lot ann am brù a' bhreabadair. B' e am breabadair a' ghobhar olc ann an riochd eile. Thug Ùisdean sàthadh bàis dha le e bhiodaig. Agus cha deach aon duine a mharbhadh le gobhar no fuath air an Tom Bhuidhe bhon uair sin.</i></p>
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