

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 957 (which corresponds to Litir 1,261). Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learngaelic.scot.

I'm going to tell a story that was told by the storyteller, the late Ailidh Dall. It's in Gaelic on the Tobar an Dualchais website. There is a written form in English in the book 'Scottish Traditional Tales'.

It's called 'How a Wren got the better of a fox and a farmer'. Or in English – The Wren.

It was a cold winter's night. A wren saw a sheep. 'Oh,' he said to her, 'will you let me into your wool until morning?'

'No!' said the sheep.

He came to another wee sheep. 'Will you let me into your wool until morning?' he said.

'Come here, my poor thing,' she said. 'It won't harm me.'

The wren was warm and comfortable. However, in the morning, the wee sheep's throat was [had been] cut. The wren said to itself, 'I must find the fox that killed her.'

He went to the farmer. He said that if the farmer found the fox, that the wren would give him a barrel of wine that came in on the sea.

The farmer took a horse and sledge to the shore where the

Tha mi a' dol a dh'aithris sgeulachd a bha aig an sgeulaiche Ailidh Dall nach maireann. Tha i ann an Gàidhlig air làrach-lìn Thobar an Dualchais. Tha dreach sgrìobhte Beurla anns an leabhar 'Scottish Traditional Tales'.

'S e an t-ainm a th' oirre 'Mar a Fhuair Dreathan-donn Làmh-an-uachdair air Madadh-ruadh agus air Tuathanach'. No ann am Beurla – *The Wren*.

Bha oidhche fhuar gheamhraidh ann. Chunnaic dreathan-donn caora. 'O,' thuirt e rithe, 'an leig thu a-steach mi dha do chlàimh gu madainn?'

'Cha leig!' thuirt a' chaora.

Thàinig e gu caorag bheag eile. 'An leig thu a-steach mi dha do chlàimh gu madainn?' thuirt e.

'Trohad, a bhròinein,' ars ise. 'Cha dèan e cron orm.'

Bha an dreathan-donn blàth is cofhurtail. Ge-tà, anns a' mhadainn, bha sgòrnan na caoraig air a ghearradh. Thuirt an dreathan ris fhèin, 'feumaidh mis' am madadh fhaighinn a mharbh i.'

Chaidh e dhan tuathanach. Thuirt e nan lorgadh an tuathanach am madadh, gun toireadh an dreathan-donn dha baraille-fìon a thàinig a-steach air a' mhuir.

Thug an tuathanach each agus càrn don chladach far an robh am baraille.

barrel was. 'Now,' said the wren, 'I hope you will find the fox that killed the wee sheep.' But the farmer refused.

The bird said it would empty the wine barrel. He started to peck it. The farmer picked up an axe. He attempted to hit the wren. But he hit the barrel and broke it!

'I'll do worse than that to you,' said the wren. 'I'll kill your horse.'

He started to peck the horse under its forelocks. The farmer picked up the axe. But he hit the horse's head. He killed the horse.

I'll do worse than that to you,' said the wren. 'I'll break your sledge.' He was pecking it. The farmer was attempting to hit the bird with the axe. The farmer broke the whole sledge.

I'll do worse than that to you,' said the wren. 'I'll break your shank.' He started to peck the farmer's shank. The farmer tried to hit the wren with his axe. But he broke his own shank. And we'll see next week what happened in the end.

'Nise,' thuirt an dreathan-donn, 'tha mi an dòchas gun lorg thu am madadh a mharbh a' chaorag.' Ach dhiùlt an tuathanach.

Thuirt an t-eun gun dòirteadh e am baraille-fion. Thòisich e air dobaigeadh air. Thog an tuathanach tuagh. Dh'fheuch e air an dreathan-donn. Ach bhuail e am baraille agus bhris e e!

'Nì mi nas miosa na sin ort,' ars an dreathan-donn. 'Marbhaidh mi an t-each agad.'

Thòisich e air an each a dhobaigeadh fo a dhosan. Thog an tuathanach an tuagh. Ach bhuail e ceann an eich. Mharbh e an t-each.

'Nì mi nas miosa na sin ort,' ars an dreathan-donn. 'Brisidh mi an càrn agad.' Bha e a' dobaigeadh air. Bha an tuathanach a' feuchainn air an eun leis an tuagh. Bhris an tuathanach an càrn gu lèir.

'Nì mi nas miosa na sin ort,' ars an dreathan-donn. 'Brisidh mi do lurgainn.' Thòisich e air dobaigeadh air lurgainn an tuathanaich. Dh'fheuch an tuathanach air an dreathan-donn le a thuagh. Ach bhris e a lurgainn fhèin. Agus chì sinn an-ath-sheachdain mar a thachair aig a' cheann thall.