

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 1,117 (which corresponds to Litir 1,421). Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learngaelic.scot.

I was telling you the story from Caithness – 'The Dairymaid and the Hunter'. The Gille Garbh went to the shieling bothy. Miss Calder was there. She was from a farm in Dunbeath Strath. She belonged to a large family. She had twelve brothers.

She and the Gille Garbh fell in love with each other. But her father was not happy. He asked her not to go near him. Despite that, she and the Gille Garbh would meet each other secretly.

Miss Calder's father had a herdsman. His name was Magnus Gunn. Magnus was dishonest. The Gille Garbh and Miss Calder spoke to him. They made an agreement. During the night, the three of them left. They took some of the Calders' cattle with them.

They reached a remote place near Kildonan in the upland of eastern Sutherland. They built a bothy there. The Calders were furious. Miss Calder's brothers said they would exact revenge on the Gille Garbh.

Magnus was married. He had left his wife at home in Dunbeath Strath. From time to time, he would go to visit her at night. One night, he was walking across the hills on his way to Dunbeath

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh an sgeul à Gallaibh – 'A' Bhanarach agus an Sealgair'. Chaidh an Gille Garbh don bhothan-àirigh. Bha Miss Calder ann. Bha ise à baile-fearainn ann an Srath Dhùn Bheathadh. Bhuineadh i do theaghlach mòr. Bha dusan bràthair aice.

Ghabh i fhèin agus an Gille Garbh gaol air a chèile. Ach cha robh a h-athair toilichte. Dh'iarr e oirre gun a dhol faisg air. A dh'aindeoin sin, bhiodh i fhèin agus an Gille Garbh a' coinneachadh ri chèile gu dìomhair.

Bha buachaille aig athair Miss Calder. 'S e Mànas Gunnach an t-ainm a bha air. Bha Mànas eas-onarach. Bhruidhinn An Gille Garbh agus Miss Calder ris. Rinn iad aonta. Air an oidhche, dh'fhalbh an triùir. Thug iad cuid de chrodh nan Calders leotha.

Ràinig iad àite uaigneach faisg air Cill Donnain ann am Bràigh Chat. Thog iad bothan ann. Bha na Calders fiadhaich. Thuirt bràithrean Miss Calder gun dèanadh iad dìoghaltas air a' Ghille Gharbh.

Bha Mànas pòsta. Bha e air a bhean fhàgail aig an taigh ann an Srath Dhùn Bheathadh. Bho àm gu àm, bhiodh e a' dol a chèilidh oirre air an oidhche. Ach, oidhche a bha seo, bha e a' coiseachd

<i>Strath. One of Miss Calder's brothers arose from the heather in front of him. 'How would you like to be wealthy, Magnus?' he said to him.</i> <i>'I'll never be wealthy,' said Magnus.</i> <i>'If you help me and my brothers,' said the other, 'you can be among the wealthiest people in Dunbeath Strath.'</i> <i>'How?' asked Magnus.</i> <i>'If you betray the Gille Garbh, you can have two-thirds of his cattle for yourself.'</i> <i>As I already said, Magnus was dishonest. And he concocted a plan to betray the Gille Garbh.</i> <i>He agreed – on such and such a night, when the Gille Garbh was asleep – to cut the string of his bow. Likewise, he would cut every other string in the house. And I'll tell you what happened in the next Litir.</i>	tarsainn a' mhonaidh air a shlighe gu Srath Dhùn Bheathadh. Dh'èirich fear de bhràithrean Miss Calder às an fhraoch air a bheulaibh. 'Ciamar a bu toigh leat a bhith beartach, a Mhànais?' thuirt e ris. 'Cha bhi mise beartach a-chaidh,' arsa Mànas. 'Ma bheir thu taic dhomh fhìn 's do mo bhràithrean,' thuirt am fear eile, 'faodaidh tus' a bhith am measg nan daoine as beartaiche ann an Srath Dhùn Bheathadh.' 'Ciamar?' dh'fhaighnich Mànas. 'Ma bhios tu a' brathadh a' Ghille Ghairbh, faodadh tusa dà-thrian dhen chrodh aige fhaighinn dhut fhèin.' Mar a thuirt mi cheana, bha Mànas eas-onarach. Agus rinn e plana airson an Gille Garbh a bhrathadh. Dh'aontaich e – air a leithid seo a dh'oidhche, nuair a bha an Gille Garbh na chadal – sreang a bhogha a ghearradh. Mar an ceudna ghearradh e gach sreang eile anns an taigh. Agus innsidh mi dhuibh mar a thachair anns an ath Litir.
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