

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 246 (which corresponds to Litir 550). Ruairidh can be contacted at roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

I'm going to finish the story The Black Bodach of Morven. It's from Braemore in Caithness. The men were in pursuit of the Bodach. That was on the seventh of July. The Bodach disappeared into an opening on the mountainside. He was shouting strange things in Gaelic. He was trying to bring down the mist. But, on the seventh day of the seventh month, he didn't have that capability.

The millstone was over the opening. The Bodach was firing arrows through the hole. Eventually, the Bodach threw aside the stone. He jumped out and ran away.

The men went inside. The cave was full of treasure. The men stuck an arrow in the ground. That was to mark the opening. They ran after the Bodach. The Bodach fell. The men captured him.

The Bodach asked them not to kill him. "Take my treasure but don't take life," he said. "If you kill me, you'll never get my treasure."

"Foolishness!" said the men.

Tha mi a' dol a chur crìoch air an sgeulachd *Bodach Dubh na Mòr-bheinne*. Tha i às a' Bhràigh Mhòr ann an Gallaibh. Bha na fir an tòir air a' Bhodach. Bha sin air an t-seachdamh latha dhen Iuchar. Chaidh am bodach à sealladh tro fhosgladh air cliathaich na beinne. Bha e ag èigheachd rudan neònach ann an Gàidhlig. Bha e a' feuchainn ris an ceò a thoirt a-nuas. Ach, air an t-seachdamh latha dhen t-seachdamh mìos, cha robh an comas sin aige.

Bha clach a' mhuilinn thairis air an fhosgladh. Bha am Bodach a' losgadh saighdean tron toll. Mu dheireadh, thilg am Bodach a' chlach don taobh. Leum e a-mach agus ruith e air falbh.

Chaidh na fir a-steach. Bha an uamh làn ionmhais. Chuir na fir saighead anns an talamh. Bha sin airson am fosgladh a chomharrachadh. Ruith iad às dèidh a' Bhodaich. Thuit am Bodach. Chuir na fir an grèim e.

Dh'iarr am Bodach orra gun a mharbhadh. "Thoir m' ionmhas ach na toir mo bheatha," thuirt e. "Ma mharbhas sibh mi, chan fhaigh sibh m' ionmhas gu bràth."

“How will he take the treasure from us when he is dead?”

“I took cattle, food and treasure from you,” the Bodach said, “but I did not kill a man. The man who takes a man’s life, he’ll never be rich.”

The men weren’t listening to him. They made a big fire. They threw the Bodach into the fire.

They returned to the cave. But there was no sign of the arrow or the stone. There were hundreds of arrows. They were right across the mountain. And they never found the treasure.

Since that time, some people who were walking on the mountain saw the millstone. They took locals there to see it. But there was no sign of it. And, when there is thunder on Morven, you’ll understand that that is the Bodach’s voice. He wants people not to go near the treasure – which still belongs to him and to the mountain.

“Amaideas!” thuir na fir. “Ciamar a bheir e an t-ionmhas bhuainn nuair a tha e marbh?”

“Thug mi crodh, biadh is ionmhas bhuaibh,” thuir am Bodach, “ach cha do mharbh mi duine. Am fear a bheir beatha duine air falbh, cha bhi e beartach a-chaidh.”

Cha robh na fir ag èisteachd ris. Rinn iad teine mòr. Thilg iad am Bodach don teine.

Thill iad don uaimh. Ach cha robh sgeul air an t-saighead no air a’ chloich. Bha na ceudan saighdean ann. Bha iad air feadh na beinne. Cha do lorg na daoine an uamh. Agus cha do lorg iad an t-ionmhas.

Bhon uair sin, chunnaic feadhainn a bha a’ coiseachd air a’ bheinn a’ chlach mhuilinn. Thug iad muinntir an àite ann airson a faicinn. Ach cha robh sgeul oirre. Agus, nuair a tha tàirneanaich air a’ Mhòr-bheinn, tuigidh sibh gur e sin guth a’ Bhodaich. Tha e ag iarraidh air daoine gun a dhol faisg air an ionmhas – a bhuineas fhathast dha fhèin agus don bheinn.