

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 299 (which corresponds to Litir 603). Ruairidh can be contacted at roddy.macleam@bbc.co.uk.

Here's an old Gaelic story called Great Gulp. A king had a daughter. She was exceptionally beautiful. Many men wanted to marry her. But she was only going to marry a man who would build a ship that would sail on sea and on land.

There was a poor widow there. She had three sons. The eldest one said to her, "Get up and make me a bannock, mother. I'll leave and I'll try to build a ship that will sail on sea and on land."

His mother arose. She made two bannocks, a little one and a big one. She said to her son, "Which do you prefer – the big bannock with my curse or the little bannock with my blessing?"

"Blessing or curse – give me the big bannock," he replied. He left with the big one.

He started to build the ship. An old grey-haired man came. "You're busy, lad," he said.

"I am that," he said.

"If you give me part of the bannock, I'll help you," the grey-haired man said.

But the lad refused. "There won't be enough for me," he said.

Seo seann sgeulachd Ghàidhlig air a bheil *Balgam Mòr*. Bha nighean aig Rìgh. Bha i anabarrach brèagha. Bha mòran fhear ag iarraidh a pòsadh. Ach bha i dìreach a' dol a phòsadh fear a dhèanadh long a bhiodh a' seòladh air muir agus tìr.

Bha bantrach bho chd ann. Bha triùir mhac aice. Thuir am fear a bu shine rithe, "Èirich is deasaich dhomh bonnach, a mhàthair. Falbhaidh mi agus feuchaidh mi ri long a dhèanamh a bhios a' seòladh air muir agus tìr."

Dh'èirich a mhàthair. Rinn i dà bhonnach, fear beag is fear mòr. Thuir i ri a mac, "Cò as fheàrr leat – am bonnach mòr le mo mhallachd no am bonnach beag le mo bheannachd?"

"Beannachd no mallachd – thoir dhomh am bonnach mòr," fhreagair e. Dh'fhalbh e leis an fhear mhòr.

Thòisich e air an long a thogail. Thàinig seann duine liath. "Tha thu trang, 'ille," thuir e.

"Tha mi sin," thuir esan.

"Ma bheir thu dhòmh pàirt dhen bhonnach, bheir mi taic dhut," thuir am fear liath.

Ach dhiùlt an gille. "Cha bhi gu leòr ann dhomh fhìn," thuir e.

Ach cha do thog e an long. Cha

<p><i>But he didn't build the ship. The bannock didn't last long enough. He didn't have enough food. He went home.</i></p> <p><i>The same thing happened to the widow's second son. But, one day, the youngest son asked his mother to prepare him a bannock. His mother made two bannocks. "Which do you prefer," she said, "the big bannock with my curse or the little bannock with my blessing?"</i></p> <p><i>"Give me your blessing, mother," he said. "And whether the bannock be small or great, I'll be happy." He got a small bannock and a blessing with it. He left. He reached the place where he was going to build a ship.</i></p> <p><i>He started the work. The old grey-haired man came. "You're busy, lad," he said.</i></p> <p><i>"I am that," he said.</i></p> <p><i>"If you give me part of the bannock, I'll help you," the grey-haired man said.</i></p> <p><i>The lad gave him part of the bannock.</i></p> <p><i>They did the work together. They were finished quickly. And we'll see what happened next week.</i></p>	<p>do mhair am bonnach fada gu leòr. Cha robh biadh gu leòr aige. Chaidh e dhachaigh.</p> <p>Thachair an dearbh rud don dàrna mac aig a' bhantraich. Ach, latha de na làithean, iarr am mac a b' òige air a mhàthair bonnach a dheasachadh dhà. Rinn a mhàthair dà bhonnach. "Cò as fheàrr leat," ars ise, "am fear mòr le mo mhallachd no am fear beag le mo bheannachd?"</p> <p>"Thoiribh dhomh ur beannachd, a mhàthair," ars esan. "Agus beag no mòr am bonnach, bidh mise toilichte." Fhuair e bonnach beag agus beannachd leis. Dh'fhalbh e. Ràinig e an t-àite far an robh e a' dol a thogail long.</p> <p>Thòisich e air an obair. Thàinig an seann duine liath. "Tha thu trang, 'ille," thuirt e.</p> <p>"Tha mi sin," ars esan.</p> <p>"Ma bheir thu dhòmh pàirt dhen bhonnach, bheir mi taic dhut," thuirt am fear liath.</p> <p>Thug an gille pàirt dhen bhonnach dha.</p> <p>Rinn iad an obair còmhla. Bha iad deiseil gu sgiobalta. Agus chì sinn dè thachair an-ath-sheachdain.</p>
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