

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 339 (which corresponds to Litir 643). Ruairidh can be contacted at roddy.macleam@bbc.co.uk.

I'm telling the story The Awisks or The Three Soldiers. The woman got out of the castle, away from the awisks. She went home to her father, the King, in the Kingdom of Coldness. She was going to return to marry the soldier.

The soldier left the castle. He went to a house that was close. The house was owned by a fairy woman. The soldier went to a well for water. The fairy woman came behind him. She put a magic pin in the back of his head.

The King came. The soldier was sleeping. The King tried to waken him. He wouldn't waken. And the King went home.

The fairy woman plucked out the magic pin. The soldier awoke. He went to the castle. He found the other two soldiers.

"Are you coming with me to the Kingdom of Coldness?" he said.

"No," they said.

And he left them there. He found three curry [horse] combs. He took the combs with him and left. He eventually stopped at a bothy. There was a grey-haired

Tha mi ag innse na seann sgeulachd *Na h-Amhaisgean* no *Na Trì Saighdearan*. Fhuair am boireannach a-mach às a' chaisteal, air falbh bho na h-amhaisgean. Chaidh i dhachaigh do a h-athair, an Rìgh, ann an Rìoghachd na Fuarachd. Bha i a' dol a thilleadh airson an saighdear a phòsadh.

Dh'fhàg an saighdear an caisteal. Chaidh e gu taigh a bha faisg. 'S ann le bean-shìth a bha an taigh. Chaidh an saighdear gu tobar airson uisge. Thàinig a' bhean-shìth air a chùlaibh. Chuir i prìne draoidheachd ann an cùl a chinn.

Thàinig an Rìgh. Bha an saighdear na chadal. Dh'fheuch an Rìgh ri a dhùsgadh. Cha dhùisgeadh e. Agus dh'fhalbh an Rìgh dhachaigh.

Spìon a' bhean-shìth am prìne draoidheachd. Dhùisg an saighdear. Chaidh e don chaisteal. Lorg e an dithis shaighdearan eile.

"A bheil sibh a' tighinn còmhla rium a Rìoghachd na Fuarachd?" thuirt e.

"Chan eil," ars iadsan.

Agus leig e an sin iad. Lorg e trì cìrean-eich. Thug e na cìrean leis agus dh'fhalbh e. Stad e mu dheireadh aig bothan. Bha bodach liath ann. Bha e a' cìreadh fheusaig le badan fraoich.

man there. He was combing his beard with a clump of heather.

“What a rough comb you have!” said the soldier.

“I have none smoother,” the old man replied.

“I have better,” the soldier said. And he gave a curry comb to the old man.

“I know where you’re going,” said the old man. “To your sweetheart in the Kingdom of Coldness. Stay the night here. You can leave in the morning.”

Next day, he was making ready to leave. The grey-haired old man said to him, “My brother will put you on the right road. He is a distance of a year and a day from here. But I’ll give you a pair of shoes. The shoes will take you there in one day.”

The soldier left. At the end of the day, he saw a bothy. There was a grey-haired old man sitting at a fire. He was combing his beard with a clump of pine.

“What a rough comb you have!” said the soldier.

“I have none smoother,” the old man replied.

And I’ll finish the story next week.

“Nach garbh a’ chìr a tha agad!”
thuirt an saighdear.

“Chan eil nas mìne agam,”
fhreagair am bodach.

“Tha nas fheàrr agamsa,” thuirt
an saighdear. Agus thug e cìr-eich don
bhodach.

“Tha fios agam cà’l thu a’ dol,”
thuirt am bodach. “Dha do leannan ann
an Rìoghachd na Fuarachd. Fuirich an
oidhche an seo. Faodaidh tu falbh anns
a’ mhadainn.”

An làrna-mhàireach, bha e a’
dèanamh deiseil airson falbh. Thuirt am
bodach liath ris, “Cuiridh mo bhràthair
air an rathad cheart thu. Tha e aig astar
latha is bliadhna às a seo. Ach bheir
mise dhut paidhir bhrògan. Bheir na
brògan ann thu ann an aon latha.”

Dh’fhalbh an saighdear. Aig
deireadh an latha, chunnaic e bothan.
Bha bodach liath ann na shuidhe aig
teine. Bha e a’ cìreadh fheusaig le
badan giuthais.

“Nach garbh a’ chìr a tha agad!”
thuirt an saighdear.

“Chan eil nas mìne agam,”
fhreagair am bodach.

Agus cuiridh mi crìoch air an
stòiridh an-ath-sheachdain.