

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 359 (which corresponds to Litir 663). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

Here is the traditional story The Old Woman of the Nuts and the Tailor of the Boards. An evil Cailleach was living in the Highlands. She got her nickname, 'The Cailleach of the Nuts' because she would always have a bag full of nuts.

The Cailleach grew old. She was wanting a bag full of nuts to be buried with her. That's what happened. She died. She was buried. And a bag of nuts was put in the grave.

But there was a young man who didn't believe in the Cailleach's powers. He was wanting the nuts. On a dark night, he went to the cemetery with a spade.

On the way to the cemetery, he met a sheep rustler. "Where are you going?" asked the rustler.

"I'm going to dig up the Cailleach's nuts," replied the young man.

They made a bargain. The young man would get half a wether. The rustler would get half of the nuts. The rustler left to steal a wether.

The Tailor of the Boards lived in the village. He had a disability. He had wooden boards on each of his palms and knees. He was moving on the

Seo an stòiridh tràidiseanta *Cailleach nan Cnò agus Tàillear nan Clàr*. Bha cailleach olc a' fuireach air a' Ghàidhealtachd. Fhuair i a far-ainm, Cailleach nan Cnò, leis gum biodh an-còmhnaidh poca làn chnothan aice.

Dh'fhàs a' Chailleach sean. Bha i ag iarraidh poca làn chnothan a bhith air a thiodhlacadh còmhla rithe. Sin mar a thachair. Chaochail i. Chaidh a thiodhlacadh. Agus chaidh poca chnothan a chur don uaigh.

Ach bha gille ann nach robh a' creidsinn ann an cumhachd na Caillich. Bha esan ag iarraidh nan cnò. Air oidhche dhorch, dh'fhalbh e don chladh le spaid.

Air an rathad don chladh, thachair e ri mèirleach chaorach. "Cà'l thus' a' dol?" dh'fhaighnich am mèirleach.

"Tha mis' a' dol a chladhach suas cnothan na Caillich," fhreagair an gille.

Rinn iad bargan. Gheibheadh an gille leth de mholt. Gheibheadh am mèirleach leth de na cnothan. Dh'fhalbh am mèirleach airson molt a ghoid.

Bha Tàillear nan Clàr a' fuireach sa bhaile. Bha ciorram air. Bha clàran fiodha air gach bois agus air gach glùn aige. Bha e a' gluasad air na clàran. Ach

boards. But the Tailor was cocky and conceited. People weren't keen on him.

There was no water in the house. A young lad went to the well. He heard the cracking of nuts from the cemetery. He ran back to the house, without filling the water pail. He said that Cailleach nan Cnò had arisen from the dead!

"Give me the water pail," said the black-haired, crop-haired lad. But the same thing happened to him. He returned without water. He said that the Cailleach was cracking nuts in the cemetery.

"You're cowardly," said the Tailor of the Boards. "If I could walk, I'd get water myself."

"Well," said the red-haired lad, "I'll take you there on my back."

"Very good, then," replied the Tailor.

When they were close to the cemetery, they heard the cracking of nuts. "Upon my word, it's her," said the Tailor.

The young man in the cemetery saw the Gille Ruadh and Tàillear nan Clàr in the darkness. He was thinking it was the rustler, with a wether on his back. He shouted, "Is he [it] fat?"

"Fat or thin, you can have him," said the Gille Ruadh. He threw Tàillear nan Clàr into the cemetery. And the Tailor wasn't so cocky when he returned home.

bha an Tàillear bragail agus mòr às fhèin. Cha robh daoine measail air.

Cha robh uisge anns an taigh. Dh'fhalbh fear òg don tobar. Chuala e cnacadh chnothan bhon chladh. Ruith e air ais don taigh, gun a' chuinneag a lìonadh. Thuirt e gun robh Cailleach nan Cnò air èiridh bho na mairbh!

"Thoir dhòmhs' a' chuinneag," ars an Gille Maol Dubh. Ach thachair an aon rud dhàsan. Thill e gun uisge. Thuirt e gun robh a' Chailleach a' cnacadh chnothan anns a' chladh.

"Tha sibh lag-chridheach," arsa Tàillear nan Clàr. "Nam biodh comas coiseachd agamsa, gheibhinn fhèin uisge."

"Uill," thuirt an Gille Ruadh, "bheir mise ann sibh air mo dhruim."

"Glè mhath, ma-thà," fhreagair an Tàillear.

Nuair a bha iad faisg air a' chladh, chuala iad cnacadh chnothan. "Air m' onair, 's i a th' ann," thuirt an Tàillear.

Chunnaic an gille sa chladh an Gille Ruadh agus Tàillear nan Clàr anns an dorchadas. Bha e a' smaoinichadh gur e am mèirleach a bha ann, le molt air a dhruim. Dh'èigh e, "A bheil e reamhar?"

"Reamhar no caol, faodaidh tu fhaighinn," ars an Gille Ruadh. Thilg e Tàillear nan Clàr don chladh. Agus cha robh an Tàillear cho bragail nuair a thill e dhachaigh.