

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 461 (which corresponds to Litir 765). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

March had horse ears. He kept them hidden with long hair. It was the youngest lad in the castle who was giving him a haircut. Afterwards, there would be no sign of the lad.

The head cook, Derfel, was speaking to the youngest lad, Islwyn. March walked in. He asked Islwyn to cut his hair on Saturday morning. There was going to be a big feast Saturday night.

On Friday afternoon musicians came. There was a piper called Merfyn. He was playing a small rush pipe.

'My pipe is broken,' said Merfyn. 'Where can I get rushes to make a new one?'

'In the bog down the road,' said Derfel.

After a period, Merfyn returned. 'I made a pipe,' he said. 'But, when I played it, no tune came from it. Instead of that, there was a voice. It was saying, 'March has horse's ears, March has horse's ears.'

He played the pipe. 'March has horse's ears, March has horse's ears,' said the voice.

'Now I know why March has long hair,' said Derfel. 'He is

Bha cluasan eich aig March. Chùm e am falach iad le falt fada. 'S e an gille a b' òige anns a' chaisteal a bha a' dèanamh cliop dha. Às dèidh làimhe, cha bhiodh sgeul air a' ghille.

Bha an t-àrd-chòcaire, Derfel, a' bruidhinn ris a' ghille a b' òige, Islwyn. Choisich March a-steach. Dh'iarr e air Islwyn fhalt a ghearradh madainn Disathairne. Bha cuirm mhòr gu bhith ann oidhche Shathairne.

Feasgar Dihaoine thàinig luchd-ciùil. Bha pìobaire ann air an robh Merfyn. Bha e a' cluich pìob bheag de chuile.

'Tha mo phìob briste,' thuirt Merfyn. 'Càit am faigh mi cuilc airson tè ùr a dhèanamh?'

'Anns a' bhoglaich shìos an rathad,' thuirt Derfel.

An dèidh greis, thill Merfyn. 'Rinn mi pìob,' thuirt e. 'Ach, nuair a sheinn mi i, cha tàinig port aiste. An àite sin, bha guth. Bha e ag ràdh, 'Tha cluasan eich aig March, tha cluasan eich aig March!''

Sheinn e a' phìob. 'Tha cluasan eich aig March, tha cluasan eich aig March,' thuirt an guth.

'Tha fios agam a-nise carson a tha falt fada aig March,' thuirt Derfel.

ashamed of his ears.'

'You are correct,' said a voice. They turned. It was March. 'I was afraid that people would mock me,' he said.

'But how the did the pipe know?' asked Islwyn.

[on the occasion of] My first haircut,' said March, 'I asked my soldiers to take the lad away. But they put him to death and put his body in the bog. Since then, I gave the order that no lad would die. They all get a bag full of gold to leave this place and to keep the secret.'

'And it was the ghost of the lad who was speaking in the pipe,' said Islwyn.

'Yes,' replied March.

'And what happens to me tomorrow?' asked Islwyn.

'You can stay here,' replied March. 'I'm going to show my ears to everybody. Why would I be ashamed of something that is natural?' And Islwyn lived on in the castle for many years.

'Tha nàire air mu a chluasan.'

'Tha thu ceart,' thuir guth. Thionndaidh iad. 'S e March a bha ann. 'Bha an t-eagal orm gum biodh daoine a' magadh orm,' thuir e.

'Ach ciamar a bha fios aig a' phìob-chiùil?' dh'fhaighnich Islwyn.

'A' chiad chliop agam,' thuir March, 'dh'iarr mi air mo shaighdearan an gille a thoirt air falbh. Ach chuir iad gu bàs e agus chuir iad a chorp anns a' bhoglaich. Bhon uair sin, thug mi òrdugh seachad nach bitheadh gille a' faighinn bàs. Tha iad uile a' faighinn poca làn òir airson an sgìre seo fhàgail agus an dìomhaireachd a chumail.'

'Agus 's e taibhs a' ghille a tha a' bruidhinn anns a' phìob,' thuir Islwyn.

'S e,' fhreagair March.

'Agus dè thachras dhòmhsa a-màireach?' dh'fhaighnich Islwyn.

'Faodaidh tusa fuireach an seo,' fhreagair March. 'Tha mi a' dol a shealltainn mo chluasan don a h-uile duine. Carson a bhiodh nàire orm mu rudeigin a tha nàdarrach?' Agus bha Islwyn beò anns a' chaisteal airson iomadach bliadhna.