

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 524 (which corresponds to Litir 828). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

The poor blacksmith made a pact with the Devil. He had plenty of money. But he had to leave with the Devil at the end of a year and a day. How was he going to explain that to his wife?

'I was working in the smiddy,' he said to her, 'when a tall man came in. We were discussing poverty. The stranger told me that there was plenty of gold and silver under the smiddy floor. 'Dig under the anvil,' he said, 'and you'll get it.'

The blacksmith took gold and silver out of his pockets and he gave it to his wife. His wife thanked providence.

The blacksmith was naturally generous. One day he was coming home. An old grey-haired man met him. The blacksmith welcomed the old man. He asked him to go to the house with him. The old man stayed the night.

Next day, when the old man was leaving, he said, 'For your kindness, I'll give you any three things you ask for.'

'My first request,' said the blacksmith, 'is that the hands of any

Rinn an gobha bochd bargan leis an Droch Fhear. Bha tòrr airgid aige. Ach bha aige ri falbh còmhla ris an Droch Fhear an ceann latha is bliadhna. Ciamar a bha e a' dol a mhìneachadh sin do a bhean?

'Bha mi ag obair anns a' cheàrdaich,' thuir e rithe, 'nuair a thàinig duine àrd a-steach. Bha sinn a' còmhradh mu bhochdainn. Dh'inns an coigreach dhomh gun robh pailteas òir is airgid fo ùrlar na ceàrdaich. 'Cladhaich fon innean,' thuir e, 'agus gheibh thu e.'

Thug an gobha òr 's airgead às a phòcaidean, agus thug e do a bhean e. Thug a bhean taing don fhreastal.

Bha an gobha gu nàdarra fialaidh. Latha a bha seo, bha e a' tighinn dhachaigh. Thachair seann duine liath ris. Chuir an gobha fàilte air an t-seann duine. Dh'iarr e air a dhol chun an taighe maille ris. Dh'fhuirich an seann duine an oidhche.

An làrna-mhàireach, nuair a bha an seann duine a' falbh, thuir e, 'Airson cho coibhneil 's a bha thu, bheir mi dhut trì nithean sam bith a dh'iarras tu.'

'S e mo chiad iarrtas,' ars an gobha, 'gun lean làmhan fir sam bith a

man who picks up the sledgehammer will stick to the hammer's handle, that the hammer will stick to the anvil and that the anvil will stick to the floor. My second request is that any man who sits in the chair in the [sitting]room will stick to the chair, and that the chair will stick to the floor. And my third request is that any coin I put in my pocket will only ever come out if I take it out with my own hand.'

'Oh dear,' said the old man, 'it's a pretty difficult request. Why didn't you ask for heaven?' The old man continued on his journey and the blacksmith returned home.

When the year and a day were past, the Devil came. The blacksmith was in the smiddy.

'Right, then,' said the Devil, 'get ready to leave with me.' And we'll see what the blacksmith did next week.

bheireas air an òrd mhòr ri cas an ùird, gun lean an t-òrd ris an innean agus gun lean an t-innean ris an ùrlar. 'S e mo dhàrna iarrrtas gun lean fear sam bith a shuidheas air a' chathair anns an t-seòmair ris a' chathair, agus gun lean a' chathair ris an ùrlar. Agus 's e mo threas iarrrtas, bonn airgid sam bith a chuireas mi dham sporan, nach tig e às gu bràth gus an toir mi fhèin às le mo làimh fhèin e.'

'Ud, ud,' ars an seann duine, 'is bochd mar a dh'iarr thu. Carson nach do dh'iarr thu nèamh?' Lean an seann duine air a thuras agus thill an gobha dhachaigh.

Nuair a bha an latha is bliadhna seachad, thàinig an Droch Fhear. Bha an gobha anns a' cheàrdaich.

'Ceart, ma-thà,' ars an Droch Fhear, 'dèan deiseil 's falbh còmhla rium.' Agus chì sinn dè rinn an gobha an-ath-sheachdain.