

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 599 (which corresponds to Litir 903). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodgy.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

A goat had seven kids. One day, their mother said to the young ones, 'I'm off to the forest. Make sure that the wolf doesn't trick you. You will recognise it from its black feet and its rough voice.'

A knocking came to the door. 'Open the door, children,' a voice said. 'Here is your mother.' But the children said, 'No we won't. You're not our mother. You have a rough voice. You're the wolf.'

The wolf ate white chalk. That softened its voice. It came to the door again. But the young goats saw its feet. They said, 'You're not our mother. You have black feet. You're the wolf.'

The wolf put flour on its feet. It returned to the goats' house. 'Open up, children,' he said. The young ones saw pale feet. They opened the door.

The wolf ate them all, except for the smallest one. It was hiding. When its mother returned, it told her what had happened.

The goats found the wolf. It was asleep under a tree. Things were moving inside it. The young goats

Bha seachd gobhair òga aig gobhar. Latha a bha seo, thuir am màthair ris an fheadhainn òga, 'Tha mi a' falbh don choille. Dèanaibh cinnteach nach toir am madadh-allaidh an car asaibh. Bidh sibh ga aithneachadh air a chasan dubha agus air a ghuth gharbh.'

Thàinig gnogadh air an doras. 'Fosglaibh an doras, a chloinn,' thuir guth. 'Seo ur màthair.' Ach thuir a' chlann, 'Chan fhosgail. Cha tu ar màthair. Tha guth garbh agad. Is tu am madadh-allaidh.'

Dh'ith am madadh cailc gheal. Rinn sin a ghuth binn. Thàinig e chun an dorais a-rithist. Ach chunnaic na gobhair òga a chasan. Thuir iad, 'Cha tu ar màthair. Tha casan dubh' agad. Is tu am madadh-allaidh.'

Chuir am madadh min-fhlùir air a chasan. Thill e gu taigh nan gobhar. 'Fosglaibh, a chloinn,' thuir e. Chunnaic an fheadhainn òga casan bàna. Dh'fhosgail iad an doras.

Dh'ith am madadh iad uile, ach a-mhàin an tè a bu lugha. Bha ise am falach. Nuair a thill a màthair, dh'inns i dhi mar a thachair.

Lorg na gobhair am madadh. Bha e na chadal fo chraobh. Bha rudan a' gluasad na bhroinn. Bha na gobhair òga fhathast

were still alive! The old goat sent the young goat home to get a knife, needle and thread.

With the knife, her mother cut open the wolf's belly. Every one of the wee ones came out alive. Their mother asked them to get stones. She put the stones inside the wolf. She sewed the opening closed again. She was so quick that the wolf felt nothing.

The wolf awakened. He was thirsty. He went to a well. But the weight of the stones caused him to fall into the water. He was drowned.

That's a German story but it appeared in Gaelic in the periodical Mac-Talla in 1894. It came to my attention recently in 'An Rubha'. That's the magazine of Baile nan Gàidheal on Cape Breton Island. My good wishes to those who display the heritage of the Gaels in that beautiful place.

beò! Chuir an t-seann ghobhar a' ghobhar òg dhachaigh airson sgian, snàth fhaighinn.

Leis an sgithinn, gheàrr a màthair brù a' mhadaidh. Thàinig a h-uile gin dhen fheadhainn bheaga a-mach beò. Dh'iarr am màthair orra clachan fhaighinn. Chuir i na clachan am broinn a' mhadaidh. Dh'fhuaigheil i am fosgladh dùinte a-rithist. Bha i cho sgiobalta 's nach d'fhairich am madadh-allaidh càil.

Dhùisg am madadh. Bha am pathadh air. Chaidh e gu fuaran. Ach thug tromadas nan clach air tuiteam don uisge. Chaidh a bhàthadh.

'S e sgeul Gearmailteach a tha sin ach nochd e ann an Gàidhlig anns an iris Mac-Talla ann an ochd ceud deug, naochad 's a ceithir (1894). Thàinig e gu m' aire oir bha e o chionn ghoirid anns 'An Rubha'. 'S e sin an iris aig Baile nan Gàidheal ann an Ceap Breatainn. Mo bheannachd air an fheadhainn a tha a' taisbeanadh dualchas nan Gàidheal anns an àite bhrèagha sin.