

# **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 704 (which corresponds to Litir 1,008). Ruairidh can be contacted at [rodgy.maclean@bbc.co.uk](mailto:rodgy.maclean@bbc.co.uk).*

*I'm going to finish 'The Three Bog Cotton Shirts'. The queen was pregnant again. But she continued to spin and weave the three bog cotton shirts. That was to free her brothers from a spell.*

*The queen gave birth to a baby boy – the second one. The midwife determined not to fall asleep. But, after a week, she was too tired. She fell asleep.*

*A big hand came in through the window. It stole the baby. When the midwife woke, she killed a kitten. She wiped the kitten's blood on the mouth of the queen. She went to the king. 'That woman is evil,' she said. 'She ate her own baby.'*

*'Oh, she is just foolish,' said the king.*

*The same thing happened once more. The midwife killed a puppy. She wiped the puppy's blood on the queen's mouth. She went to the king. 'That woman is evil,' she said. 'She ate her own baby.'*

*This time, the king had a different opinion. 'We'll hang her tomorrow,' he said.*

*The three bog cotton shirts were now ready. The news was spread about*

*Tha mi a' dol a chur crìoch air 'Na Trì Lèintean Canaich'. Bha a' bhanrigh trom a-rithist. Ach lean i oirre le bhith a' snìomh agus a' fighe nan trì lèintean canaich. Bha sin airson a bràithrean a shaoradh bho gheas.*

*Rug a' bhanrigh leanabh-gille – an dàrna fear. Chuir a' bhean-ghlùine roimhe gun cadal fhaighinn. Ach, an dèidh seachdain, bha i ro sgìth. Thàinig an cadal oirre.*

*Thàinig làmh mhòr a-steach air an uinneig. Ghoid i an leanabh. Nuair a dhùisg a' bhean-ghlùine, mharbh i piseag. Shuath ri fuil na piseig ri beul na banrigh. Chaidh i far an robh an rìgh. 'Tha am boireannach sin olc,' thuirt i. 'Dh'ith i a leanabh fhèin.'*

*'Hut, chan eil i ach gòrach,' thuirt an rìgh.*

*Thachair an aon rud turas eile. Mharbh a' bhean-ghlùine cuilean. Shuath i fuil a' chuilein air beul na banrigh. Chaidh i far an robh an rìgh. 'Tha am boireannach sin olc,' thuirt i. 'Dh'ith i a leanabh fhèin.'*

*An turas seo, bha beachd eadar-dhealaichte aig an rìgh. 'Crochaidh sinn a-màireach i,' thuirt e.*

*Bha na trì lèintean canaich a-nise deiseil. Chaidh fios a-mach mu*

*the the hanging of the queen. The three grey dogs came. But they were in the form of three young men. Each had with him a young boy.*

*The queen asked her eldest brother to remove his clothes. She put a bog cotton shirt on him. '[I hope] that your will enjoy your shirt, brother,' she said.*

*Then she asked her second brother to remove his clothes. She put a shirt on him. '[I hope] that your will enjoy your shirt, brother,' she said.*

*She asked the youngest one to remove his clothes. She put a shirt on him, with the same wish.*

*The brothers admitted that it was them that stole the babies. 'We were scared that you were going to speak to them, and that we would be under spells forever.' And they gave her her sons.*

*The king was pleased. He heard his wife's voice for the first time. He, the queen and their three sons returned to the palace, where they were happy together.*

chrochadh na banrigh. Thàinig na trì coin ghlasa. Ach bha iad nan trì gillean òga. Bha balachan beag leis a h-uile fear aca.

Dh'iarr a' bhanrigh air a bràthair a bu shine a chuid aodaich a chur dheth. Chuir i lèine chanaich air. 'Gun còrd do lèine riut, a bhràthair,' ars ise.

Dh'iarr i an uair sin air a dàrna bràthair a chuid aodaich a chur dheth. Chuir i lèine air. 'Gun còrd do lèine riut, a bhràthair,' thuirt i.

Dh'iarr i air an fhear a b' òige a chuid aodaich a chur dheth. Chuir i lèine air, leis an aon bheannachd.

Dh'aidich na bràithrean gur iadsan a ghoid na leanaban. 'Bha an t-eagal oirnn gun robh thu a' dol a bhruidhinn riutha, agus gum biomaid fo gheasaibh gu sìorraidh.' Agus thug iad a mic dhi.

Bha an rìgh toilichte. Chuala e guth a mhnà airson a' chiad turais. Thill e fhèin, a' bhanrigh agus an triùir mhac don lùchairt, far an robh iad sona còmhla.