

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 729 (which corresponds to Litir 1,033). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

I'm going to tell you 'The Six Wee Bannocks'.

There was once a widow's son. He left to seek his fortune. He came to a giant's house. The giant took him on as a helper. When the lad rose in the morning, he asked the lad to muck out his seven byres. But whatever the lad would put out of the first door, it would come in through the other door.

When night came, the giant's daughter came. 'You're distressed,' she said.

'Yes,' agreed the lad.

'If you promise,' she said, 'that you will never have another wife but me, I'll do the job for you.'

'Well, I'll promise,' said the lad.

'Gather, spade!' said she. 'Put out, fork!' Within a few minutes, there was nothing left in the byres.

The giant came home. He saw that the byres were empty.

Next day, the giant was leaving for the hunting mountain. He asked

Tha mi a' dol a dh'innse dhuibh 'Na Sia Bonnaich Bheaga'.

Bha mac bantraich ann uaireigin. Dh'fhalbh e a dh'iarraidh fhortain. Thàinig e gu taigh famhair. Dh'aontaich am famhair gabhail ris mar sgalach. Nuair a dh'èirich an gille sa mhadainn, dh'iarr am famhair air na seachd bàthaichean aige a chartadh. Ach na chuireadh an gille a-mach air an dàrna doras, thigeadh e a-staigh air an doras eile.

Nuair a thàinig an oidhche, thàinig nighean an fhamhair. 'Tha thu air do shàrachadh,' thuirt i.

'Tha,' dh'aontaich an gille.

'Ma gheallas tu,' ars ise, 'nach bi bean-phòsta agad gu bràth ach mise, nì mise an gnothach dhut.'

'Uill, geallaidh,' thuirt an gille.

'Cruinnich, a shluasaid!' ars ise. 'Cuir a-mach, a ghràpa!' An ceann beagan mhionaidean, cha robh càil air fhàgail anns na bàthaichean.

Thàinig am famhair dhachaigh. Chunnaic e gun robh na bàthaichean falamh.

An làrna-mhàireach, bha am famhair a' falbh don bheinn-sheilg. Dh'iarr e air a' ghille na seachd

the lad to thatch the seven byres with the down of [the] birds.

The lad was hunting all day. He only saw one seagull.

The giant's daughter said to him, 'You are distressed.'

'I am,' said he.

'If you promise me,' said she, 'that you will have never have a wife but me, I'll do the job for you.'

'I'll promise,' said the lad.

The daughter took three grains of barley from her pocket. She threw them on the roofs of the byres. Flocks of birds gathered on the roofs. Within a few minutes, they were thatched with down.

The giant came home. He saw that the byres were thatched.

Next day, the giant asked the lad to catch a horse. But the lad failed to do that.

The giant's daughter came. They had the same conversation again. She brought out a small bridle. She shook it at the horse. The horse put its head in it.

The giant came home. He took his food and went to bed.

The giant's daughter said to the lad, 'Although you did everything, my father is going to kill us anyway.' They decided to flee. But the daughter made six wee bannocks. We'll see why next week.

bàthaichean a thughadh le clòimhteach nan eun.

Bha an gille a' sealg fad an latha. Chan fhac' e ach aon fhaoileag.

Thuir nighean an fhamhair ris, 'Tha thu air do shàrachadh.'

'Tha,' ars esan.

'Ma gheallas tu,' ars ise, 'nach bi bean-phòsta agad gu bràth ach mise, nì mise an gnothach dhut.'

'Geallaidh,' thuir an gille.

Thug an nighean trì gràinneanan eòrna a-mach à poca. Thilg i air mullaichean nam bàthaichean iad. Chruinnich eunlaith air na mullaichean. Taobh a-staigh beagan mhionaidean, bha iad tugte le clòimhteach.

Thàinig am famhair dhachaigh. Chunnaic e gun robh na bàthaichean tugte.

An làrna-mhàireach, dh'iarr am famhair air a' ghille each a ghlacadh. Ach dh'fhailnich air a' ghille a ghlacadh.

Thàinig nighean an fhamhair. Bha an aon chòmhradh aca a-rithist. Thug i srian bheag a-mach. Chrath i ris an each i. Chuir an t-each a cheann innte.

Thàinig am famhair dhachaigh. Ghabh e a bhiadh, agus chaidh e a laighe.

Thuir nighean an fhamhair ris a' ghille, 'Ged a rinn thu a h-uile rud, tha m' athair a' dol gar marbhadh co-dhiù.' Chuir iad romhpa teicheadh. Ach rinn an nighean sia bonnaich bheaga. Chì sinn carson an-ath-sheachdain.