

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 771 (which corresponds to Litir 1,075). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.macleam@bbc.co.uk.

I was telling the story The Raven's Stone. Fair John's father told him about the stone's magic. They found a raven's nest. They stole the eggs. They made a fire with dry heather, and they boiled the eggs. They remained in view of the nest the whole time. The ravens returned. They knew that the eggs were damaged, and they left again.

After three days, the ravens returned. The cock bird had a small stone. He rubbed the stone on the eggs. When the birds were out of the nest again, John picked up the stone and he took it with him. He tried out the magic of the stone. He put it in his mouth, and he disappeared. He was invisible. When he put the stone in his pocket, he was visible once more.

'It would be good for a man to have the stone on a battlefield,' said John. 'He could destroy his enemies.'

'Be quiet,' said his father. 'You musn't use the stone with evil intent.'

John left for Dunachton. He put the Raven's Stone in his mouth. He was invisible. He went to an orchard beside the castle. Helen and her aunt, Lady Mackintosh, were there. They had two big dogs. The dogs were upset. They were

Bha mi ag aithris na sgeulachd *Clach an Fhithich*. Dh'inns athair Iain Bhàin dha mu dhraoidheachd na cloiche. Lorg iad nead fithich. Ghoid iad na h-uirgean. Rinn iad teine le fraoch tioram, agus ghoil iad na h-uirgean. Dh'fhuirich iad ann an sealladh an nid fad an t-siubhail. Thill na fithich. Bha fios aca gun robh na h-uirgean millte, agus dh'fhalbh iad a-rithist.

An dèidh trì latha, thill na fithich. Bha clach bheag aig a' choileach. Shuath e a' chlach ris na h-uirgean. Nuair a bha na h-eòin a-mach às an nead a-rithist, thog Iain a' chlach agus thug e leis i. Dh'fheuch e draoidheachd na cloiche. Chuir e na bheul i, agus chaidh e à fianais. Bha e do-fhaicsinneach. Nuair a chuir e a' chlach na phòcaid bha e faicsinneach a-rithist.

'Bhiodh e math a' chlach a bhith aig duine air blàr-catha,' thuirt Iain. 'Dh'fhaodadh e sgrios a dhèanamh air a nàimhdean.'

'Ist,' thuirt athair. 'Chan fhaod thu a' chlach a chur gu feum le droch rùn.'

Dh'fhalbh Iain a Dhùn Neachdain. Chuir e Clach an Fhithich na bheul. Bha e do-fhaicsinneach. Chaidh e a dh'ubhal-ghort ri taobh a' chaisteil. Bha Eilidh agus a h-antaidh, a' Bhean-uasal Nic an Tòisich, ann. Bha dà chù mhòr aca. Bha na coin a'

getting the smell of a stranger. But they didn't see John.

The Lady went inside with the dogs. John put the stone in his pocket. He stood out and Helen was surprised. 'John, darling!' she said. She was pleased to see her sweetheart.

However, Helen was unhappy in Dunachton. She agreed to flee with John. They crossed the river and reached Balnacraig.

People were upset that the blacksmith, Duncan of the Two Thumbs, had not returned home, after being in Dunachton.

'He was murdered,' said Helen. 'He was delivering me a letter from John.'

'The Lady will pay for that,' said John's father.

'It isn't my aunt that ordered his death,' said Helen, 'but the sentry. But it won't be wrong until my aunt appears at the head of a military force to take me home.'

And I'll bring the story to a conclusion next week.

gabhail dragh. Bha iad a' faighinn faileadh de shrainnsear. Ach chan fhac' iad Iain.

Dh'fhalbh a' Bhean-ualasal a-steach leis na coin. Chuir Iain a' chlach na phòcaid. Sheas e a-mach agus ghabh Eilidh iongnadh. 'Iain, a ghràidh!' thuirt i. Bha i toilichte a leannan fhaicinn.

Ge-tà, bha Eilidh mì-thoilichte ann an Dùn Neachdain. Dh'aontaich i teicheadh còmhla ri Iain. Chaidh iad tarsainn na h-aibhne agus ràinig iad Baile na Creige.

Bha dragh air daoine nach robh an gobha, Donnchadh na Dà Òrdaig, air tilleadh dhachaigh an dèidh dha a bhith ann an Dùn Neachdain.

'Chaidh a mhurt,' thuirt Eilidh. 'Bha e a' lìbhrigeadh litir dhomh bho Iain.'

'Pàighidh a' Bhean-ualasal airson sin,' ars athair Iain.

'Chan e m' antaidh a dh'òrdaich a bhàs,' thuirt Eilidh, 'ach am freiceadan. Ach chan fhada gus an nochd m' antaidh aig ceann feachd airson mo thoirt dhachaigh.'

Agus bheir mi an stòiridh gu crìch an-ath-sheachdain.