

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 845 (which corresponds to Litir 1,149). Ruairidh can be contacted at roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

Here is an old story from oral tradition. There were three soldiers. They were in India. They were not happy there. They fled from their camp. They reached a jungle but got lost in it. Their clothing was ripped by thorny plants.

Eventually, the soldiers saw an opening. They emerged and found a loch and beautiful castle. They went over to the castle. There was a big table there. There was no food or drink in the world that was not on the table. The soldiers found smart clothes and put them on.

Next morning, the soldiers left for the loch. What did they see there but three swans swimming. When the soldiers returned to the castle, there was still food and drink there. However, one of them said that it would be better if each of them had a wife there. Everything good disappeared. There was no food or drink on the table. The soldiers were wearing ragged clothes again.

That man noticed a horn (bugle). He blew (played) it. A storm arose with much rain. There was a danger that the castle would be under water. 'Look what you did,' said the other two. They

Seo agaibh seann sgeulachd à beul-aithris. Bha trìuir shaighdearan ann. Bha iad anns na h-Innsean. Cha robh iad toilichte ann. Theich iad bhon champa aca. Ràinig iad dlùth-choille ach chaidh iad air chall innte. Bha an cuid aodaich air a reubadh le lusan droighneach.

Mu dheireadh, chunnaic na saighdearan fosgladh. Chaidh iad a-mach agus lorg iad loch agus caisteal brèagha. Chaidh iad a-null don chaisteal. Bha bòrd mòr ann. Cha robh biadh no deoch air an t-saoghal nach robh air a' bhòrd. Lorg na saighdearan aodach spaideil agus chuir iad sin orra.

An ath mhadainn, dh'fhalbh na saighdearan chun an locha. Dè chunnaic iad ann ach trì ealachan a' snàmh. Nuair a thill na saighdearan don chaisteal, bha biadh is deoch gu leòr fhathast ann. Ge-tà, thuirtear fear dhiubh gun robh e air a bhith na b' fheàrr nam biodh bean aig gach duine aca ann. Dh'fhalbh a h-uile rud math. Cha robh biadh no deoch air a' bhòrd. Bha aodach robach air na saighdearan a-rithist.

Thug am fear sin an aire do dhùdach. Sheinn e i. Dh'èirich stoirm, le uisge trom. Bha cunnart ann gum biodh an caisteal fo uisge. 'Seall air na rinn thu,' thuirtear an dithis eile. Bha iad feargach. Bha

were angry. They were going to kill the man who blew the horn.

'I'll blow it again,' said the soldier.

'Don't,' said the two others.

But he blew it again. Thunder and lightning then started.

'I'll blow it again,' said the soldier.

'Don't,' said the two others. But he blew the horn again. The weather improved. But there was no food or drink on the table.

Next morning, they went to the loch. One of the soldiers raised his gun. He was going to kill a swan. But suddenly, the swans changed into beautiful women. They were the daughters of kings. They had been under a spell.

The one who blew the horn had broken the spell. When the soldiers returned to the castle, there was food and drink there again, and the soldiers married the women.

iad a' dol a mharbhadh an fhir a sheinn an dùdach.

'Seinnidh mi a-rithist i,' thuirt an saighdear.

'Cha sheinn,' ars an dithis eile.

Ach sheinn e a-rithist i. Thòisich tàirneanaich is dealanaich an uair sin.

'Seinnidh mi a-rithist i,' thuirt an saighdear.

'Cha sheinn,' ars an dithis eile. Ach sheinn e an dùdach a-rithist. Thàinig piseach air an aimsir. Ach cha robh biadh no deoch air a' bhòrd.

An ath mhadainn, chaidh iad chun an locha. Thog fear de na saighdearan a ghunna. Bha e a' dol a mharbhadh eala. Ach gu h-obann, dh'atharraich na healachan gu bhith nam boireannaich bhrèagha. Bha iad nan nigheanan aig rìghrean. Bha iad air a bhith fo gheasaibh.

Bha am fear a sheinn an dùdach air a' gheas a bhriseadh. Nuair a thill na saighdearan don chaisteal, bha biadh is deoch ann a-rithist, agus phòs na saighdearan na boireannaich.