

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 220 (which corresponds to Litir 524). Ruairidh can be contacted at roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

The story of Black-haired John of Lewis, the Sailor is going to come to an end today. Up to now – Black-haired John saved the life of the King of Spain's daughter. They fled from the robbers' house. They got married. On the way John helped three men at a shieling bothy. The robbers murdered the three. But their heads weren't with the correct bodies. John put their heads in the correct place. The dead men now had peace. They promised to give John a reward.

John and his wife lived in a port town. The commander of the Spanish navy appeared. He wanted to give the King's daughter to her father. And he wanted to marry her. The commander gave John and his wife an invitation to go out to the ship. But when they were on board, the ship sailed out. When they were far away from land, they left Black-haired John at sea. He was by himself in a small boat. He didn't have oars [an oar] or a sail.

John was sad. But he noticed a strange thing. The boat was heading in the one direction. She was like that for three days. John saw land. The boat was going to the land. How? Well, the

Tha an stòiridh Iain Dubh Leòdhasach, an Seòladair, a' tighinn gu crìch an-diugh. Thuige seo – shàbhail Iain Dubh beatha nighean Rìgh na Spàinne. Theich iad bho thaigh nan robairean. Phòs iad. Air an rathad chuidich Iain trìuir fhear aig bothan-àirigh. Mhuirt na robairean an trìuir. Ach cha robh an cinn leis na colainnean ceart. Chuir Iain an cinn san àite cheart. Bha a-nise fois aig na daoine marbh. Gheall iad duais a thoirt do dh'Iain.

Bha Iain 's a bhean a' fuireach ann am baile-puirt. Nochd ceannard cabhlach na Spàinne. Bha esan ag iarraidh nighean an Rìgh a thoirt do a h-athair. Agus bha e ag iarraidh a pòsadh. Thug an ceannard cuireadh do dh'Iain 's a bhean dhol a-mach don luing. Ach nuair a bha iad air bòrd, sheòl an long a-mach. Nuair a bha i fad air falbh bho thìr, dh'fhàg iad Iain Dubh aig muir. Bha e leis fhèin ann am bàta beag. Cha robh ràmh no seòl aige.

Bha Iain brònach. Ach mhothaich e do rud neònach. Bha am bàta a' gluasad anns an aon àird. Bha i mar sin airson trì latha.

painter [bow rope] was out in front of her. It was being pulled [there was pull on it]. But who was pulling the rope? It was strange.

The boat reached the shore. Three men went out of the water. They were pulling the painter. They were the dead men at the shieling. This was Black-haired John's reward. When John was on land, they disappeared.

The King's daughter was in her father's castle. She wasn't wanting to marry the commander of the Spanish navy. She was wanting every soldier and sailor in the kingdom to go past under the window of her room. Every man went past. There was no sign of Black-haired John. Every man had gone past. The daughter was sad.

But, at the last minute, John reached the castle. The King's daughter recognised him. They married again. And, if they're still alive, I reckon they're happy.

Chunnaic Iain tìr. Bha am bàta a' dol don tìr. Ciamar? Uill, bha an ròpa toisich a-mach roimhpe. Bha tarraing air. Ach cò bha a' tarraing an ròpa? Bha e neònach.

Ràinig am bàta an cladach. Chaidh triùir fhear a-mach às an uisge. Bha iad a' tarraing an ròpa toisich. B' iad sin na daoine marbh aig a' bhothan-àirigh. B' e seo an duais aig Iain Dubh. Nuair a bha Iain air tìr, chaidh iad às an t-sealladh.

Bha nighean an Rìgh ann an caisteal a h-athar. Cha robh i ag iarraidh ceannard cabhlach na Spàinne a phòsadh. Bha i ag iarraidh air gach saighdear is seòladair san rìoghachd a dhol seachad fo uinneag a seòmair. Chaidh gach fear seachad. Cha robh sgeul air Iain Dubh. Bha a h-uile fear air a dhol seachad. Bha an nighean brònach.

Ach, aig a' mhionaid mu dheireadh, ràinig Iain an caisteal. Dh'aithnich nighean an Rìgh e. Bha i toilichte. Phòs iad a-rithist. Agus, ma tha iad fhathast beò, tha mi an dùil gu bheil iad sona.