

## 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 446 (which corresponds to Litir 750). Ruairidh can be contacted at [rodny.macleane@bbc.co.uk](mailto:rodny.macleane@bbc.co.uk).

*Here's another story from Shawbost in the west of Lewis. It's called 'Hugh/Ewan of the Sea'.*

*Hugh was living near the shore. One day, he went to the bottom of a geo (an inlet with steep sides). He saw a woman. Her back was to him. She had long hair. By her side, on the top of a stone, there was sort of clothing. The clothing had a fish tail and fish fins. Hugh understood that this was a mermaid.*

*The mermaid heard the man's footstep. She tried to pick up her clothes. But Hugh was too quick. He picked up the clothes. He looked at the mermaid. 'Who are you and what business do you have here?' he asked.*

*'I am the queen of the deep,' she said. 'Give me my clothes.'*

*'Queen,' said Hugh, 'I want to find out – did you come here as a warning to us?'*

*'Humans think that my like comes as a warning of destruction,' said the mermaid. 'But it's the king of the deep that does the destruction. A mermaid can only warn humans that destruction is on the way. We do that because we love humans.' Hugh said that he would never again say*

Seo agaibh sgeulachd eile à Siabost ann an taobh siar Leòdhais. 'S e an t-ainm a tha oirre Eòghann na Mara.

Bha Eòghann a' fuireach faisg air a' chladach. Latha a bha seo, chaidh e gu bonn geodha. Chunnaic e boireannach. Bha a cùl ris. Bha falt fada aice. Ri a taobh, air clach, bha seòrsa de dh'aodach. Bha earball-èisg agus itean-èisg air an aodach Thuig Eòghann gum b' e seo maighdeann-mhara.

Chuala a' mhaighdeann cas-cheum an duine. Dh'fheuch i ri a h-aodach a thogail. Ach bha Eòghann ro luath. Thog esan an t-aodach. Choimhead e air a' mhaighdinn. 'Cò thu agus dè an gnothach a tha agad an seo?' dh'fhaighnich e.

'Is mise banrigh an aiginn,' thuir i. 'Thoir dhomh m' aodach.'

'A bhanrigh,' thuir Eòghann, 'tha mi airson faighinn a-mach – an tàinig sibh an seo mar rabhadh dhuinn?'

'Tha mac-an-duine dhen bheachd gun tig mo leithid mar rabhadh gun tig sgrios,' thuir a' mhaighdeann-mhara. 'Ach 's e rìgh an aiginn a nì an sgrios. Chan urrainn do mhaighdeann-mhara ach rabhadh a thoirt do mhac-an-duine gu bheil sgrios a' tighinn. Tha sinn a' dèanamh sin oir tha gràdh

*that the mermaids were bad creatures.*

*'I'm pleased to hear that,' said the mermaid, 'And I'll give you a reward. At the new moon every month, early in the morning, come to the top of this cliff. You'll get a lot of fish. That will keep your family in food. But you mustn't tell this to anybody until you are over eighty years of age.'*

*With that, she put on her clothes. She returned to the sea. And, as she promised, so it happened. Hugh was famous as a 'fisherman'. Until he was eighty years old, his family was never short of fish.*

*When he was eighty, Hugh told his family about the mermaid. At the next new moon, there was no fish at the top of the cliff. And Hugh died three months later.*

againn do mhac-an-duine.' Thuirt Eòghann nach canadh e a-rithist gur e droch chreutairean a bha sna maighdeannan-mara.

'Tha mi toilichte sin a chluinntinn,' thuirt a' mhaighdeann-mhara. 'Agus bheir mi duais dhut. Aig a' ghealaich ùir gach mìos, tràth sa mhadainn, thig gu mullach a' bhearraidh seo. Gheibh thu iasg mòr. Cumaidh sin biadh ri do theaghlach. Ach chan fhaod thu seo innse do dhuine sam bith gus am bi thu seachad air ochdad bliadhna a dh'aois.'

Leis a sin, chuir i a h-aodach oirre. Thill i don mhuir. Agus mar a gheall i, 's ann a thachair e. Bha Eòghann ainmeil mar 'iasgair'. Gus an robh e ochdad bliadhna a dh'aois, cha robh a theaghlach riamh gann de dh'iasg.

Nuair a bha e ochdad, dh'inns Eòghann do a theaghlach mun mhaighdinn-mhara. Aig an ath ghealaich ùir, cha robh iasg sam bith aig mullach a' bhearraidh. Agus chaochail Eòghann trì mìosan às dèidh sin.