

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 504 (which corresponds to Litir 808). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

*I'm going to finish the old story –
The Golden Fish.*

The fisherman went home. There was a mansion there, with a golden carriage in front of it. The fisherman tried to walk in through the front door. But a servant prevented him. 'The lady says that your type must come in through the back door,' he said.

'Excuse me,' said the fisherman, 'but I own this house.'

The servant went to speak to the lady. 'O, him,' the woman said. 'That man is off his head. Give him work of some sort. He can live in the bothy out there.' She had become conceited. She wasn't admitting to anybody that she was married to a poor fisherman.

The old man was furious. But he went to the back of the house. He made himself a bed in the bothy.

That afternoon, his wife went to the bothy. Her husband was still angry. But he kept that hidden. 'Are you happy?' he asked.

'No,' she replied.

'What will make you happy?'

Tha mi a' dol a chur crìoch air an t-seann stòiridh An t-Iasg Òir.

Dh'fhalbh an t-iasgair dhachaigh. Bha taigh mòr mòr ann, le carbad òir air a bheulaibh. Dh'fheuch an t-iasgair ri coiseachd a-steach air an doras mhòr. Ach chuir searbhant stad air. 'Tha a' bhean-ualas ag ràdh gu feum do leithid thighinn a-steach air an doras chùil,' thuirt e.

'Gabh mo leisgeul,' ars an t-iasgair, 'ach 's ann leamsa a tha an taigh seo.'

Dh'fhalbh an searbhant a bhruidhinn ris a' bhean-ualas. 'O, esan,' thuirt a' bhean. 'Tha am fear sin às a rian. Thoir obair air choreigin dha. Faodaidh e fuireach anns a' bhothan a-muigh siud.' Bha i air a dhol leòmach. Cha robh i ag aideachadh do dhuine gun robh i pòst' aig iasgair bochd.

Bha am bodach fiadhaich. Ach chaidh e gu cùl an taighe. Rinn e leabaidh dha fhèin anns a' bhothan.

Air an fheasgar sin, chaidh a bhean don bhothan. Bha an duine aice fhathast feargach. Ach chùm e sin am falach. 'A bheil thu sona?' dh'fhaighnich e.

'Chan eil,' fhreagair i.

'Dè nì sona thu?' thuirt e.

he said.

'I want to be a queen,' she said.

'A queen?'

'Yes. Go back to the shore and ask the golden fish to make me into a queen.'

The old man left. 'Wee golden fish!' he cried loudly. A head appeared in the sea.

'Hi, friend, what do you want?' said the fish.

'I'm scunnered by that woman,' said the fisherman. 'Will you put everything back as it was to begin with.'

'I will,' said the fish.

The fisherman bade farewell to the fish and he returned home. His wife was waiting for him at the front door of the thatched house. She had ragged clothes on her. But she had a smile on her face.

'Oh,' she said, 'I had a terrible dream. I had become gentrified and conceited. But I was very unhappy. Thank goodness it was only a dream.'

And, from then on, she and her husband were as happy as the day was long, although they were neither wealthy nor well-dressed.

'Tha mi ag iarraidh a bhith nam bhanrigh,' thuir i.

'Nad bhanrigh?'

'Seadh. Thalla air ais don chladach agus iarr air an iasg òir mo dhèanamh nam bhanrigh.'

Dh'fhalbh am bodach. 'Èisg bhig òir!' dh'èigh e gu h-àrd. Nochd ceann sa mhuir.

'Seadh, a charaid, dè tha bhuat?' thuir an t-iasg.

'Tha mi air mo lèireadh leis a' bhoireannach ud,' ars an t-iasgair. 'An cuir thu a h-uile rud air ais mar a bha iad aig an toiseach.'

'Cuiridh,' thuir an t-iasg.

Leig an t-iasgair soraidh leis an iasg agus thill e dhachaigh. Bha a bhean a' feitheamh ris aig doras mòr an taigh-tughaidh. Bha piullagan oirre. Ach bha gàire air a h-aodann.

'O,' ars ise, 'bha aisling uabhasach agam. Bha mi air a dhol uasal agus leòmach. Ach bha mi gu math mì-thoilichte. Taing do Shealbh nach robh ann ach aisling.'

Agus, bho sin a-mach, bha i fhèin agus an duine aice cho sona 's a bha an latha fada, ged nach robh iad beartach no spaideil.