

## **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 549 (which corresponds to Litir 853). Ruairidh can be contacted at [rodgy.maclean@bbc.co.uk](mailto:rodgy.maclean@bbc.co.uk).

*I was telling the story 'The Captain of the Black Ship'. The captain was sailing to Scandinavia when he fell into the sea. He swam to an island. 'Get up,' said a voice.*

*'Never,' replied the captain. He was exhausted.*

*'I have a small boat,' said the other man.*

*The skipper came to. He saw the small boat. He left in it with the other man. The other man was rowing quickly. They reached the coast of Scandinavia.*

*'Many thanks,' said the captain. 'What do I owe you?'*

*'Only this,' replied the other man. 'That you'll give me your first son.'*

*'I don't expect that I'll ever have a son,' said the captain. 'But if I do, I'll give him to you.'*

*The captain went to a house. An old woman welcomed him. She told him that the princess was going to marry a general. They would be going past the house in a large carriage.*

*The captain picked up a harp. That was a harp that he and the girl had played on the Black Ship.*

Bha mi ag aithris na sgeulachd 'Sgiobair an t-Soithich Dhuibh'. Bha an sgiobair a' seòladh a Lochlann nuair a thuit e don mhuir. Shnàmh e gu eilean. 'Èirich,' thuir guth.

'Chan èirich gu bràth,' fhreagair an sgiobair. Bha e claidhte.

'Tha geòla agam,' thuir am fear eile.

Thàinig an sgiobair thuige. Chunnaic e an geòla. Dh'fhalbh e innte leis an fhear eile. Bha am fear eile ag iomradh gu luath. Ràinig iad cladach Lochlainn.

'Taing mhòr,' thuir an sgiobair. 'Dè tha agad orm?'

'Direach seo,' fhreagair am fear eile, 'Gun toir thu do chiad mhac dhomh.'

'Chan eil mi an dùil gum bi mac agam a-chaidh,' ars an sgiobair. 'Ach ma bhitheas, bheir mi dhuts' e.'

Chaidh an sgiobair gu taigh. Chuir cailleach fàilte air. D'inns i dha gun robh a' bhana-phrionnsa a' dol a phòsadh seanailear. Bhiodh iad a' dol seachad air an taigh ann an carbad mòr.

Thog an sgiobair clàrsach. B' e sin clàrsach a bha e fhèin agus an nighean a' cluich air an t-Soitheach

*'Leave that,' said the old woman. 'It belongs to the princess.'*

*The carriage came. The skipper began to play the harp. The king's daughter heard it. 'Stop!' she shouted. She ran in and said that she was going to marry the captain.*

*They married and they had a baby boy. They were walking with the baby in a pram. A handsome man came up to them. 'Now,' he said to the captain, 'are you going to give me your son?'*

*'Why,' said his wife, 'does he want our son?'*

*The captain explained that this was the man who saved his life. That was his reward.*

*'You'll have him, then,' said his wife.*

*'Because you are willing to give me the lad,' said the other man, 'I won't take him at all. The help I gave, it was as a reward for burying me on the beach in Turkey. I'm leaving and you won't see me again.'*

*The captain had been speaking to a ghost. From that point on, he and his family had a long and peaceful life.*

Dhubh. 'Fàg sin,' thuirt a' chailleach. 'S ann leis a' bhana-phrionnsa a tha i.'

Thàinig an carbad. Thòisich an sgiobair air a' chlarsach a chluich. Chuala nighean an rìgh e. 'Stad!' dh'èigh i. Ruith i a-steach agus thuirt i gun robh i ag iarraidh an sgiobair a phòsadh.

Phòs iad agus bha leanabh-gille aca. Bha iad a' coiseachd leis an leanabh ann am pram. Thàinig fear eireachdail thuca. 'A-nise,' thuirt e ris an sgiobair, 'a bheil thu a' dol a thoirt do mhic dhomh?'

'Carson,' thuirt a bhean, 'a bheil e ag iarraidh ar mic?'

Mhìnich an sgiobair gum b' e seo an duine a shàbhail a bheatha. B' e sin an duais aige.

'Bidh e agad, ma-thà,' ars a bhean.

'Leis gu bheil sibh deònach an gille a thoirt dhomh,' thuirt am fear eile, 'cha toir mi idir e. A' chobhair a rinn mi, bha i mar dhuais airson mo thiodhlacadh air an tràigh anns an Tuirc. Tha mi a' falbh agus chan fhaic sibh tuilleadh mi.'

Bha an sgiobair air a bhith a' bruidhinn ri taibhs. Bho sin a-mach bha beatha fhada shìtheil aige fhèin's aig a theaghlach.