

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 747 (which corresponds to Litir 1,051). Ruairidh can be contacted at roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

<p><i>Here is a short story from Cape Breton [Island, Nova Scotia] – ‘the night it rained porridge’.</i></p> <p><i>There was a widow. She had a son. He was a half-wit. He went to market with a cow.</i></p> <p><i>He met a man. ‘What do you want for the cow?’ said the man.</i></p> <p><i>‘Oh,’ said the lad, ‘I want something.’</i></p> <p><i>‘Open your hand, then,’ said the other man. He spat in his hand. ‘Here’s something,’ he said.</i></p> <p><i>‘And here is the cow,’ replied the half-wit. He kept his fist closed because that’s where the ‘something’ was.</i></p> <p><i>On the way home, he was going across a burn. He slipped. He opened his hand and the spit disappeared. He started to search around to see if he could find it. A pack-merchant, or as they would say in English a ‘peddler’, came.</i></p> <p><i>‘What are you doing?’ said the peddler.</i></p> <p><i>‘I’m looking for something,’ said the lad.</i></p> <p><i>The peddler slipped on the stones as well. ‘Oh, there’s something,’ he said lightly.</i></p> <p><i>‘You’ve found my something?’ said the lad.</i></p> <p><i>‘No,’ replied the peddler.</i></p>	<p>Seo agaibh naidheachd à Ceap Breatainn – ‘An Oidhche a bha i a’ Sileadh na Lite’.</p> <p>Bha bantrach ann. Bha mac aice. ’S e leth-ghloic a bha ann. Chaidh e gu margaidh le mart.</p> <p>Thachair e ri fear. ‘Dè tha thu ag iarraidh air a’ mhart?’ thuirt am fear.</p> <p>‘O,’ ars an gille, ‘tha mi ag iarraidh rudeigin.’</p> <p>‘Fosgail do làmh, ma-thà,’ ars am fear eile. Thilg e smugaid na làimh. ‘Seo rudeigin,’ thuirt e.</p> <p>‘Agus seo am mart,’ fhreagair an leth-ghloic. Chùm e a dhòrn dùinte oir ’s ann an sin a bha an ‘rudeigin’.</p> <p>Air an rathad dhachaigh, bha e a’ dol tarsainn allt. Shleamhnaich e. Dh’fhosgail e a làmh agus dh’fhalbh an smugaid. Thòisich e air rùrach, feuch am faigheadh e i. Thàinig ceannaiche-paca, no mar a chanadh iad ann am Beurla, <i>peddler</i>.</p> <p>‘Dè tha thu a’ dèanamh?’ thuirt am <i>peddler</i>.</p> <p>‘Tha mi a’ coimhead airson rudeigin,’ ars an gille.</p> <p>Shleamhnaich am <i>peddler</i> air na clachan cuideachd. ‘O, seo rudeigin,’ thuirt e gu h-aotrom.</p> <p>‘Lorg thu mo rudeigin?’ thuirt an gille.</p> <p>‘Cha do lorg,’ fhreagair am <i>peddler</i>.</p>
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The lad was certain that the peddler had found his 'something'. The lad killed the peddler. He buried his body. He returned home.

His mother found out what had happened. She asked her son to take a nap. She made porridge and she shook it [around] outside the house.

The lad rose. 'It's raining porridge,' he said.

'Never mind,' said the mother.

Now, she had a ram. Its name was 'Peddler'. She took the ram to the pit where the peddler's body was. She killed the ram. She put its carcass in the pit. She moved the man's body to another place.

Two policemen came to the house. They asked the lad if he had seen a peddler.

'Oh,' said the half-wit, 'I killed him.'

'When was that?' they asked.

'The night it rained porridge,' the lad replied.

The police reckoned he was a fool. And, when they examined the burial place, they found a ram rather than a man!

Bha an gille deimhinne gun do lorg am peddler an 'rudeigin' aige. Mharbh an gille am peddler. Thiodhlaic e a chorp. Thill e dhachaigh.

Fhuair a mhàthair a-mach dè bha air tachairt. Dh'iarr i air a mac norrag a ghabhail. Rinn i lite agus chrath i i taobh a-muigh an taighe.

Dh'èirich an gille. 'Tha i a' sileadh lite,' thuirt e.

'O coma leat,' ars a mhàthair.

Nise, bha reithe aice. 'S e 'Peddler' an t-ainm a bha air. Thug i an reithe don t-sloc far an robh corp a' cheannaiche. Mharbh i an reithe. Chuir i a chlosach anns an t-sloc. Ghluais i corp an duine gu àite eile.

Thàinig dithis phoileas don taigh. Dh'fhaighnich iad dhen ghille am fac' e 'peddler'.

'O,' ars an leth-ghloic, 'mharbh mi e.'

'Cuin a bha sin?' dh'fhaighnich iad.

'An oidhche a bha i a' sileadh na lite,' fhreagair an gille.

Bha na poilis dhen bheachd gur e gloic a bh' ann. Agus, nuair a thug iad sùil air an àite-thiodhlacaidh, lorg iad reithe seach duine!