

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 143 (which corresponds to Litir 447). Ruairidh can be contacted at roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

Seo agaibh seanfhacal Gàidhlig: *Mol an latha mu oidhche. Praise the day around nightfall.* Mol an latha mu oidhche. Tha e a' ciallachadh – mol rud nuair a tha e an ìre mhath seachad. Bidh fios agad an uair sin an robh e math no nach robh. Mol an latha mu oidhche.

Bha mi a' leughadh o chionn ghoirid mu dhaoine a bha a' sealg nam mucan-mara. Bha sin anns a' Chuan Sèimh anns an naoidheamh linn deug. Bha iad a' sealg nam mucan mòra *sperm*. Sin an seòrsa a rinn Herman Melville ainmeil anns an nobhail aige *Moby Dick*.

Bha an soitheach, an *Ann Alexander*, fo chommand a' Chaiptein John DeBlois. Chunnaic iad muc-mhara mhòr. Chuir iad dà bhàta bheag gu muir. Bha mòr-ghath, no *harpoon*, anns gach bàta. Ach thug a' mhuc-mhara ionnsaigh air a' chiad bhàta. Chaidh am bàta fodha. Chaidh cobhair a dhèanamh air na daoine. Bha na sealgairean deiseil anns an dàrna bàta. Ach thill a' mhuc-mhara. Chuir i an dàrna bàta fodha.

An uair sin thug a' mhuc-mhara ionnsaigh air an luing fhèin. Bhuail i an long gu cruaidh le a ceann. Rinn i a-rithist e. Bhris i toll mòr anns an *Ann Alexander*. Bha an t-uisge a' dòrtadh a-steach. Bha an long a' dol fodha. Theich na daoine do na bàtaichean aca. Gu fortanach bha dà bhàta aca fhathast.

An ath mhadainn cha robh dòchas mòr aig na daoine. Cha robh biadh no uisge gu leòr aca airson faighinn gu tìr. Chaidh iad gu tuath. Bha iad an dòchas long eile a lorg. Ach, leis an fhìrinn innse, cha robh dòchas mòr aca. Cha robh duine a' dol a mholadh an latha sin! Bha iad leotha fhèin ann am meadhan a' Chuain Sèimh. 'S e droch latha a bha ann.

Bha dusan duine ann an aon bhàta. Bha trì duine deug anns a' bhàta eile. Aig ciaradh an fheasgair, chunnaic DeBlois rudeigin. Seòl! Bha soitheach seòlaidh faisg orra! An ceann greis, bha iad air bòrd soitheach eile. Bha iad slàn sàbhailte. Mol an latha mu oidhche.

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Faclan is abairtean: seanfhacal: *proverb*; mol an latha mu oidhche (proverb): *praise the day around nightfall (ie don't be too hasty in making an assessment of something)*; nuair a tha e an ìre mhath seachad: *when it is almost over*; an robh e

math no nach robh: *whether it was good or not*; a bha a' sealg nam mucan-mara: *who were hunting [the] whales*; anns a' Chuan Sèimh anns an naoidheamh linn deug: *in the Pacific Ocean in the nineteenth century*; fo chommand a' Chaiptein X: *under the command of Captain X*; chuir iad dà bhàta bheag gu muir: *they launched two small boats (for harpooning)*; mòr-ghath: *harpoon*; thug a' mhuc-mhara ionnsaigh air a' chiad bhàta: *the whale attacked the first boat*; chaidh am bàta fodha: *the boat sank*; chaidh cobhair a dhèanamh air na daoine: *the men were rescued*; thill: *returned*; thug a' mhuc-mhara ionnsaigh air an luing fhèin: *the whale attacked the ship itself*; bhuail i an long gu cruaidh le a ceann: *she hit the ship hard with her head*; toll mòr: *a big hole*; a' dòrtadh a-steach: *pouring in*; theich na daoine: *the men fled*; an ath mhadainn cha robh dòchas mòr aig na daoine: *the next morning the men didn't have much hope*; cha robh biadh no uisge gu leòr aca airson faighinn gu tìr: *they didn't have enough food or water to get to land*; gu tuath: *to the north*; an dòchas long eile a lorg: *hoping to find another ship*; leis an fhìrinn innse, cha robh dòchas mòr aca: *to tell the truth, they didn't have much hope*; leotha fhèin ann am meadhan a' Chuain Sèimh: *by themselves in the middle of the Pacific Ocean*; dusan duine: *twelve [a dozen] men*; trì duine deug: *thirteen men*; aig ciaradh an fheasgair: *at dusk [lit. the darkening of the afternoon]*; seòl: *a sail*; bha soitheach seòlaidh faisg orra: *there was a sailing vessel close to them*; an ceann greis, bha iad air bòrd soitheach eile: *after a short while, they were on board another vessel*; slàn sàbhailte: *safe and well*.

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