

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 326 (which corresponds to Litir 630). Ruairidh can be contacted at roddy.macleam@bbc.co.uk.

Here is a traditional story – “The Ox and the Donkey”. An ox and a donkey were living on the same farm. The ox had a poor life. He was working every day from dawn to dusk. But the donkey had a good life. He didn't do any work. He just rested.

One day, the ox said to the donkey, “I'm fed up of working all the time.”

“You do too much,” the donkey agreed. “You plough, you harrow and you pull a cart. I'll tell you what to do. Pretend you're not well. Then you won't have any work.”

Next morning, the ox pretended he was sick. When the farmer appeared, the ox started to complain. He lay down as if he were sick.

“The ox can't be well today,” the farmer said to himself. “I'll let him rest today. The donkey will do the work.”

The donkey was ploughing all day long. The ox was resting in the stable. Before nightfall, the donkey was utterly exhausted. He was unhappy. He didn't want another day like that.

Seo stòiridh traidiseanta – “An Damh agus an t-Asal”. Bha damh agus asal a' fuireach air an aon tuathanas. Bha saoghal bochd aig an damh. Bha e ag obair a h-uile latha o mhoch gu dubh. Ach bha saoghal math aig an asal. Cha robh esan a' dèanamh obair sam bith. Bha e dìreach a' gabhail fois.

Latha a bha seo, thuirt an damh ris an asal, “Tha mi sgèith de bhith ag obair fad na h-ùine.”

“Tha cus agad ri dhèanamh,” dh'aontaich an t-asal. “Bidh thu a' treabhadh, a' cliathadh is a' falbh le cairt. Innsidh mi dhut dè nì thu. Leig ort nach eil thu gu math. Cha bhi obair sam bith agad an uair sin.”

An ath mhadainn, leig an damh air gun robh e tinn. Nuair a nochd an tuathanach, thòisich an damh air gearan. Làigh e sìos mar gun robh e tinn.

“Feumaidh nach eil an damh gu math an-diugh,” thuirt an tuathanach ris fhèin, “Leigidh mi leis fois a ghabhail an-diugh. Nì an t-asal an obair.”

Bha an t-asal a' treabhadh fad an latha. Bha an damh a' gabhail fois anns an stàball. Mus tàinig beul na h-oidhche, bha an t-asal claidhte le sgèiths. Bha e mì-thoilichte. Cha robh e ag iarraidh latha eile mar sin.

<p><i>When the donkey returned to the stable, he went up to the ox. He said to the ox, "You're lucky, lad. I have sharp ears. I heard the farmer speaking to his wife about you."</i></p> <p><i>"What did he say?" the ox asked.</i></p> <p><i>"That you're useless when you're sick," replied the donkey. "If you don't get well quickly, he'll kill you."</i></p> <p><i>This frightened the ox. He thanked the donkey profusely. Next morning, when the farmer appeared, the ox was on his feet quickly. He went out to work without a complaint.</i></p> <p><i>The donkey smiled to himself. He was resting in the stable. The ox was back working. "Some creatures have to work hard," he said to himself, "and that's how it is!"</i></p>	<p>Nuair a thill an t-asal don stàball, chaidh e far an robh an damh. Thuir e ris an damh, "Tha thu fortanach, 'ille. Tha cluasan biorach ormsa. Chuala mi an tuathanach a' bruidhinn ri a bhean mu do dheidhinn."</p> <p>"Dè thuir e?" dh'fhaighnich an damh.</p> <p>"Gu bheil thu gun fheum nuair a tha thu tinn," fhreagair an t-asal. "Mura fàs thu nas fheàrr gu luath, cuiridh e às dhut."</p> <p>Chuir seo eagal air an damh. Thug e taing mhòr don asal. An ath mhadainn, nuair a nochd an tuathanach, bha an damh air a chasan gu sgiobalta. Chaidh e mach a dh'obair gun ghearan sam bith.</p> <p>Rinn an t-asal gàire bheag dha fhèin. Bha e a' gabhail fois anns an stàball. Bha an damh air ais ag obair. "Feumaidh cuid de chreutairean a bhith ag obair gu cruaidh," thuir e ris fhèin, "agus sin mar a tha!"</p>
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