

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 615 (which corresponds to Litir 919). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodgy.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

I'm going to tell you how Fionn MacCumhail got his dog, Bran. He had the looker, and the listener. He had the gripper and the thief, the climber and the archer. They reached the King's palace.

The King was sad. 'What's upsetting you?' asked Fionn.

'We expect that the Queen will give birth tonight,' explained the King. 'But our two other boys were stolen. We fear that the new baby will be stolen.'

Fionn asked the looker and the gripper to keep an eye on the Queen. The baby was born. Shortly after that, a large hand came through the roof. The looker saw it. The gripper took hold of it. He pulled and the hand fell to the floor. But the gripper fell flat on his back. Another hand came through the roof. The new hand stole the baby.

Fionn and his companions left in a birlinn. They reached a fortress with a high wall. The wall was covered with eel skins. It was as slippery as a bottle.

Fionn asked the climber to climb the wall. He found a giant with just one hand on the far side. He had a baby in

Tha mi a' dol a dh'innse dhuibh mar a fhuair Fionn MacCumhail a chù, Bran. Bha am fear-amhairc aige, agus am fear-èistidh. Bha an greimiche aige agus am mèirleach, an sreapadair agus am boghadair. Ràinig iad lùchairt aig Rìgh.

Bha an Rìgh brònach. 'Dè tha a' cur oirbh?' dh'fhaighnich Fionn.

'Tha sinn an dùil gun tèid leanabh ùr a bhreith don Bhanrigh a-nochd,' mhinich an Rìgh. 'Ach chaidh an dithis bhalach eile againn a ghoid. Tha an t-eagal orm gum bi an leanabh ùr air a ghoid.'

Dh'iarr Fionn air an fhear-amhairc agus air a' ghreimiche sùil a chumail air a' Bhanrigh. Rugadh an leanabh. Goirid an dèidh sin, thàinig làmh mhòr tron mhullach. Chunnaic am fear-amhairc i. Ghabh an greimiche grèim oirre. Tharraing e agus thuit an làmh don ùrlar. Ach thuit an greimiche air a dhruim dìreach. Thàinig làmh eile tron mhullach. Ghoid an làmh ùr an leanabh.

Dh'fhalbh Fionn is a chompanaich ann am birlinn. Ràinig iad daingneach le balla àrd. Bha am balla còmhdachte le craiceannan easgannan. Bha e cho sleamhainn ri botal.

Dh'iarr Fionn air an t-sreapadair am balla a dhìreadh. Lorg e famhair le dìreach aon làmh air an taobh thall. Bha leanabh

his hand. Two other young lads were playing in the room.

'Jump on the climber's shoulder,' said Fionn to the thief. 'Steal the children and bring them here.'

The thief stole the baby and the boys. There were two puppies in the room. He stole the puppies also.

Everybody went aboard. There was a large bitch swimming after them. She was the mother of the puppies. She was wild. Fionn dropped one of the puppies into the sea. The bitch stopped and she took the puppy to land.

Then the giant was swimming towards them. He had just one eye in his forehead.

'Put an arrow through his eye,' said Fionn to the archer. The archer did that.

Fionn and his companions continued. They gave the children to the King. Fionn kept the puppy for himself and he named it Bran. That's how Fionn MacCumhail got Bran. Cheerio.

aige na làimh. Bha dithis bhalach òg eile a' cluich anns an t-seòmar.'

'Leum air gualann an t-sreapadair,' thuirt Fionn ris a' mhèirleach. 'Goid a' chlann agus thoir an seo iad.'

Ghoid am mèirleach an leanabh agus na balaich. Bha dà chuilean anns an t-seòmar. Ghoid e na cuileanan cuideachd.

Chaidh a h-uile duine air bòrd. Bha galla mhòr a' snàmh às an dèidh. B' ise màthair nan cuileanan. Bha i fiadhaich. Leig Fionn fear de na cuileanan don mhuir. Stad a' ghalla agus thug i an cuilean gu tìr.

An uair sin, bha am famhair a' snàmh gan ionnsaigh. Bha dìreach aon sùil aige na bhathais.

'Cuir saighead tron t-sùil aige,' thuirt Fionn ris a' bhoghadair. Rinn am boghadair sin.

Lean Fionn agus a chompanaich orra. Thug iad a' chlann don Rìgh. Chùm Fionn an cuilean dha fhèin agus chuir e ainm air – Bran. 'S ann mar sin a fhuair Fionn MacCumhail Bran. Mar sin leibh.