

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 616 (which corresponds to Litir 920). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

I was telling you how Fionn MacCumhail got his dog, Bran. Bran was loyal and strong. One time, they were visiting a King. A marine monster was harassing the people. Fionn said he would eliminate the monster.

Fionn and Bran went to the shore. The monster appeared. 'Who are you, midget?' it said. 'And who is the terrier beside you?'

'I am Fionn, the King of the Fingalians,' said Fionn. 'This is my friend, Bran.'

'Flee,' said the monster, 'or you and your pup will be dead.' He jumped on Fionn. He was getting the upper hand on Fionn.

'Bran,' shouted Fionn, 'save me!' Bran leaped on the monster and ripped its heart out. The monster fell dead.

Bran licked his master's wounds and they healed. The King was pleased that the monster was dead. He said to Fionn that he would give him half of his kingdom.

'I don't want it,' said Fionn. 'My reward is seeing Bran's face when he saved me.'

Do you remember when Fionn got Bran that there was another puppy

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mar a fhuair Fionn MacCumhail an cù aige, Bran. Bha Bran dìleas agus làidir. Turas a bha seo, bha iad a' tadhal air Rìgh. Bha uilebheist mara a' sàrachadh nan daoine. Thuir Fionn gun cuireadh e às don uilebheist.

Chaidh Fionn agus Bran don chladach. Nochd an t-uilebheist. 'Cò thus', a throich?' thuir e. 'Agus cò an abhag ri do thaobh?'

'Is mise Fionn, Rìgh na Fèinne,' fhreagair Fionn. 'Seo mo charaid Bran.'

'Teich,' thuir an t-uilebheist, 'no bidh thu fhèin is do chuilean marbh.' Leum e air Fionn. Bha e a' faighinn làmh-an-uachdair air Fionn.

'A Bhran,' dh'èigh Fionn, 'sàbhail mi!' Leum Bran air an uilebheist agus reub e a chridhe a-mach. Thuit an t-uilebheist marbh.

Dh'imlich Bran lotan a mhaighstir agus shlànaich iad. Bha an Rìgh toilichte gun robh an t-uilebheist marbh. Thuir e ri Fionn gun toireadh e leth a rìoghachd dha.

'Chan eil mi ga iarraidh,' arsa Fionn. 'S e mo dhuais aodann Bhrain fhaicinn nuair a shàbhail e mi.'

A bheil cuimhne agaibh nuair a fhuair Fionn Bran gun robh cuilean eile

there – his brother? He was Sgeolan, or the Grey Dog. Years later, the two dogs came together. Here's how it happened.

Fionn and his companions were on the hunting hill. A Big Lad came. 'I'm a lad that came from the east and the west,' he said. 'I'm looking for a good master.'

'Well,' replied Fionn, 'what reward would you want after a year and a day?'

'Oh,' said the Big Lad, 'I want you to come with me to the palace of the King of Scandinavia. You'll be by yourself, without a dog or weapon.'

The Big Lad was loyal to Fionn for a year and a day. On his final day, he said to Fionn, 'I'm leaving, and I want my reward.'

Fionn went to speak to the Fingalians. 'I'm leaving for Scandinavia,' he said. 'If I don't return within a year and a day, come to avenge me, for I shall be dead.' And the story will continue in the next Litir.

ann – a bhràthair? B' esan Sgeolan, no an Cù Glas. Bliadhnaichean an dèidh làimhe, thàinig an dà chù còmhla. Seo mar a thachair e.

Bha Fionn agus a chompanaich air a' bheinn-sheilg. Thàinig Gille Mòr. 'S e gille a th' annam a thàinig bhon ear agus bhon iar,' thuirt e. 'Tha mi a' lorg maighstir math.'

'Uill,' fhreagair Fionn, 'dè an duais a dh'iarradh tu an dèidh latha is bliadhna?'

'O,' ars an Gille Mòr, 'tha mi ag iarraidh gun tig sibh còmhla rium gu lùchairt Rìgh Lochlainn. Bidh sibh leibh fhèin, gun chù no ball-airm.'

Bha an Gille Mòr dìleas do Fhionn fad latha is bliadhna. Air an latha mu dheireadh aige, thuirt e ri Fionn, 'Tha mi a' falbh agus tha mi ag iarraidh mo dhuais.'

Chaidh Fionn a bhruidhinn ris an Fhèinn. 'Tha mi a' falbh a Lochlann,' thuirt e. 'Mura till mi taobh a-staigh latha is bliadhna, thigibh airson dìoghaltas fhaighinn, oir bidh mi marbh.' Agus leanaidh an sgeulachd anns an ath Litir.