

# **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 682 (which corresponds to Litir 986). Ruairidh can be contacted at [rodgy.maclean@bbc.co.uk](mailto:rodgy.maclean@bbc.co.uk).*

*Do you know the phrase o linn chogadh nan con? Since the time of the war of the dogs. O linn chogadh nan con. It means a very long time ago.*

*But what war was it? Which dogs were fighting? Well, I'm not sure. But I'd like to tell you about a battle between dogs in the legends of the Fianna. Is that the 'war' in the saying?*

*Fionn and his companions were on the hunting-hill. His dog, Bran, was with them. They lost their way. At dusk, they saw a light. There was a bothy. The Fianna got a night's lodging in the bothy.*

*After a while, there was a noise outside. Who was there but a son of the King of Senny with a hundred men. He was wanting a place to stay for the night. The second and third sons of the King of Senny came, each with a hundred men. They all got a place to stay. Who was going to refuse them? The bothy must have been bursting at the seams!*

*While they were all there together, the first son of the King of Senny asked Fionn to allow the dogs to fight. Bran was put against the*

*A bheil sibh eòlach air an abairt o linn chogadh nan con? Since the time of the war of the dogs. O linn chogadh nan con. Tha e a' ciallachadh o chionn fhad' an t-saoghail.*

*Ach dè an cogadh a bha ann? Cò na coin a bha a' sabaid? Uill, chan eil mi cinnteach. Ach bu mhath leam innse dhuibh mu bhatail eadar coin ann an sgeulachdan na Fèinne. An e sin an 'cogadh' anns an abairt?*

*Bha Fionn agus a chompanaich air a' bheinn-sheilg. Bha an cù aige, Bràn, còmhla riutha. Chaill iad an rathad. Aig ciaradh an fheasgair, chunnaic iad solas. Bha bothan ann. Fhuair na Fianna cuid na h-oidhche anns a' bhothan.*

*An ceann tìde, bha fuaim air an taobh a-muigh. Cò bha ann ach mac Rìgh Sheanaidh le ceud gille. Bha e ag iarraidh àite-fuirich airson na h-oidhche. Thàinig dàrna agus treas mac Rìgh Sheanaidh ann, le ceud gille aig gach duine aca. Fhuair iad uile cead fuirich. Cò bha a' dol gan diùltadh? Feumaidh gun robh am bothan loma-làn!*

*Fhad 's a bha iad uile ann còmhla, dh'iarr ciad mhac Rìgh Sheanaidh air Fionn leigeil leis na coin a bhith a' sabaid. Bha Bran air a chur an aghaidh a'*

*Black Dog of the king's son. The Black Dog was strong and wild. He had already killed fifty dogs.*

*Bran gave a bark and raised his hackles. The two dogs went head to head. They were moving quickly. But it was easy enough for people to recognise each dog. The Black Dog was solid but had a long neck. He was a bit plump. Bran had yellow paws, two black sides and a white belly. He had a green back and two erect crimson ears. There was no other dog like him!*

*Finally, the Black Dog fell dead. Bran had defeated him. The 'war' of the dogs was over. But we still remember it in our speech.*

Choin Duibh aig mac an Rìgh. Bha an Cù Dubh làidir is fiadhaich. Bha e air cur às do chaogad cù mu-thràth.

Rinn Bran tabhann agus thog e frioghan air. Chaidh an dà chù aghaidh ri aghaidh. Bha iad a' gluasad gu luath. Ach bha e furasta gu leòr do na daoine gach cù aithneachadh. Bha an Cù Dubh tapaidh ach bha amhaich fhada aige. Bha e car reamhar. Bha casan buidhe aig Bran, bha a dhà thaobh dubh agus bha a bhrù geal. Bha druim uaine air, agus dà chluais chorrach chrò-dhearg. Cha robh cù eile coltach ris!

Mu dheireadh, thuit an Cù Dubh marbh. Bha Bran air a chùis a dhèanamh air. Bha 'cogadh' nan con seachad. Ach bidh sinn ga chuimhneachadh fhathast nar cainnt.