

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 683 (which corresponds to Litir 987). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

Have you ever heard of the Battle of Gavra? The battle of Gavra. It was at the Battle of Gavra that Oscar was killed. Oscar son of Oisean, grandson of Fionn.

Fionn was away. Thus Oscar had leadership of the Fianna. Oscar was a real hero. There was enmity between Oscar and Cairbhi. Three days before the Battle of Gavra, Cairbhi invited Oscar to a feast in his palace. Oscar took three hundred men with him.

On the way, he met a fairy woman. She was cleaning clothes in a burn. 'What do you think, old woman,' said Oscar. 'Who will fall in the battle?'

'Oh,' she said, 'you will kill five thousand men, and the King himself.'

'And who will fall on our side?' asked Oscar.

'Ah, well,' said the fairy women. 'Your most valuable man will also fall.'

'Oh,' said Oscar. He knew that the fairy woman was talking about him. But he continued to the feast in Cairbhi's palace. It lasted three days.

On the day of the battle itself, the

An cuala sibh riamh mu Chath Gabhra? The Battle of Gavra. 'S ann aig Cath Gabhra a chaidh Oscar a mharbhadh. Oscar mac Oisein, ogha Fhinn.

Bha Fionn air falbh. Mar sin bha ceannas aig Oscar air na Fianna. 'S e sàrghaisgeach a bha ann an Oscar. Bha nàimhdeas eadar Oscar agus Cairbhi. Trì latha ro Chath Gabhra, thug Cairbhi cuireadh gu Oscar dhol gu fleadh anns an lùchairt aige. Thug Oscar trì cheud duine leis.

Air an rathad, thachair e ri bean-shìthe. Bha i a' nighe aodach ann an allt. 'Dè ur beachd, a chailleach,' thuirt Oscar. 'Cò thuiteas anns a' chath?'

'O,' ars ise, 'bidh sibhse a' marbhadh còig mìle duine, agus an Rìgh fhèin.'

'Agus cò thuiteas air an taobh againne?' dh'fhaighnich Oscar.

'A, uill,' ars a' bhean-shìthe. 'Bidh am fear as luachmhoire agaibhse a' tuiteam cuideachd.'

'O,' thuirt Oscar. Bha fios aige gun robh a' bhean-shìthe a' bruidhinn airsan. Ach lean e air don fhleadh ann an lùchairt Chairbhi. Mhair e trì latha.

Air latha a' chatha fhèin, thàinig

two armies confronted each other in a gorge. Oscar's host killed hundreds of Cairbhi's people.

Cairbhi threw his spear and it went through Oscar. Oscar fell to his right knee and he threw his spear. It hit Cairbhi in his head.

Cairbhi's son, Art, arose and picked up his spear. But Oscar threw another spear and he killed Art.

The Fianna came together and removed Oscar. They heard a sound from the beach. 'Your grandfather's fleet is there,' they said. 'Fionn has come to help us.' But Oscar didn't have long left, and he died. The fairy woman had been [was] right.

I'll finish my account with two verses from the Lay of Oscar. It's his grandfather, Fionn Mac Cumhail, who is speaking.

But the howling of dogs beside me, and the wailing of the old heroes, and the weeping in turn of the crowd of women, that's the thing that pained my heart.

You are the calf of my calf, the calf of my calf, the child of my white slender child, my heart leaps like a deer and I am devastated that Oscar will not rise.'

an dà armailt mu choinneimh a chèile ann an caol-ghleann. Mharbh sluagh Oskair na ceudan daoine aig Cairbhi.

Thilg Cairbhi a shleagh agus chaidh i tro Oscar. Thuit Oscar do a ghlùin dheis agus thilg esan a shleagh-san. Bhuail i Cairbhi na cheann.

Dh'èirich mac Chairbhi, Art, agus thog e a chladheamh. Ach thilg Oscar sleagh eile agus mharbh e Art.

Thàinig na Fianna cruinn còmhla agus thug iad Oscar air falbh. Chual' iad fuaim bhon tràigh. 'Tha luingeas do sheanar ann,' thuirt iad. 'Thàinig Fionn airson cobhair a dhèanamh oirnn.' Ach cha robh fada air fhàgail aig Oscar, agus chaochail e. Bha a' bhean-shìthe ceart.

Cuiridh mi crìoch air mo chunntas le dà rann à Laoidh Oskair. 'S e a sheanair, Fionn Mac Cumhail, a tha a' bruidhinn.

Ach donnalaidh nan con rim thaobh, 'S bùireadh nan seann laoch, 'S gul a' bhannail mu seach, siud an rud a chràidh mo chridhe.

Laogh mo laoigh thu, laogh mo laoigh, Leanaibh mo leanaidh, ghil, chaoil, Mo chridhe leumadh mar lon, 'S mo chreach lèir nach èirich Oscar.