

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 915 (which corresponds to Litir 1,219). Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learngaelic.scot.

<p><i>Black Finlay MacRae was a gamekeeper hundreds of years ago. He was working in the area between Kintail, Killilan, Glen Affric and Glen Cannich. He and his wife were living in Glen Elchaig in Kintail.</i></p> <p><i>He had cattle. One afternoon, Finlay went out to look at his cattle. Some of them had gone missing. Finlay knew who was responsible – caterans from Lochaber.</i></p> <p><i>Finlay went after them. He reached them at night. The caterans were asleep. Finlay killed them. He went home with his cattle.</i></p> <p><i>Weeks elapsed. One day, Finlay was driving the cattle to the grazing hill. He became tired and rested. He saw three men coming towards him. Finlay suspected they were avengers. They came to him. One of them said to him, 'Are you a stranger (in these parts)?'</i></p> <p><i>'No,' replied Finlay. 'I'm often here.'</i></p> <p><i>'Do you know Black Finlay of the Deer?' said the first man.</i></p>	<p>Bha Fionnladh Dubh MacRath na gheamair o chionn ceudan bhliadhnaichean. Bha e ag obair anns an sgìre eadar Cinn t-Sàile, Cill Fhaolain, Gleann Afraig agus Gleann Canaich. Bha e fhèin agus a bhean a' fuireach ann an Gleann Eilcheig ann an Cinn t-Sàile.</p> <p>Bha crodh aige. Feasgar a bha seo, chaidh Fionnladh a-mach a choimhead air a chrodh. Bha feadhainn dhiubh air a dhol a dhìth. Bha fios aig Fionnladh cò a bu choireach – ceatharnaich à Loch Abar.</p> <p>Chaidh Fionnladh às an dèidh. Ràinig e air an oidhche iad. Bha na ceatharnaich nan cadal. Mharbh Fionnladh iad. Dh'fhalbh e dhachaigh le a chrodh.</p> <p>Chaidh na seachdainean seachad. Latha a bha seo, bha Fionnladh a' saodachadh a chruidh don aonach. Dh'fhàs e sgìth agus ghabh e fois. Chunnaic e triùir fhear a' tighinn ga ionnsaigh. Bha amharas aig Fionnladh gur e luchd-tòir a bha annta. Thàinig iad thuige. Thuirtear fear dhiubh ris, 'An e coigreach a tha annad?'</p> <p>'Chan e,' fhreagair Fionnladh. 'Bidh mi gu tric an seo.'</p> <p>'A bheil thu eòlach air Fionnladh Dubh nam Fiadh?' thuirtear a' chiad fhear.</p>
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<p><i>‘Yes,’ said Finlay. ‘I’m a cowherd for him.’</i></p> <p><i>The caterans asked Finlay to take them to his master’s house. ‘Excuse me,’ he said, ‘but I’m a bit disabled.’</i></p> <p><i>‘We’ll help you,’ said one of the strangers. They helped him and they eventually reached Finlay’s house. Finlay’s wife was at the door. Finlay must have made a sign to her. She understood that the strangers were there to kill her husband.</i></p> <p><i>‘Won’t you come in,’ she said to them. ‘You’ll get food.’</i></p> <p><i>‘We’re looking for the man of the house,’ said one of the three.</i></p> <p><i>‘He’s not well,’ she said. ‘He hasn’t got up yet.’ She was delaying the men. When they weren’t looking at her, she put a bow and arrows out through the window. Finlay was waiting outside.</i></p> <p><i>Finlay went to the door with the bow and arrows and he killed the three men inside the house. And that’s my story about Black Finlay of the deer.</i></p>	<p><i>‘Tha,’ arsa Fionnladh. ‘Tha mi na mo bhuachaille aige.’</i></p> <p><i>Dh’iarr na ceatharnaich air Fionnladh an toirt gu dachaigh a mhaighstir. ‘Gabhaibh mo leisgeul,’ thuirt esan, ‘ach tha mi rudeigin ciorramach.’</i></p> <p><i>‘Cobhairidh sinne thu,’ arsa fear de na coigrich. Rinn iad cobhair air agus mu dheireadh ràinig iad taigh Fhionnlaidh. Bha bean Fhionnlaidh aig an doras. Feumaidh gun do rinn Fionnladh comharra dhi. Thuig i gun robh na coigrich ann airson an duine aice a mharbhadh.</i></p> <p><i>‘Nach tig sibh a-steach,’ thuirt i riutha. ‘Gheibh sibh biadh.’</i></p> <p><i>‘Tha sinn a’ coimhead airson fear an taighe,’ thuirt fear dhen triùir.</i></p> <p><i>‘Chan eil e a’ cumail gu math,’ fhreagair ise. ‘Cha do dh’èirich e fhathast.’ Bha i a’ cur dàil air na daoine. Nuair nach robh iad a’ coimhead oirre, chuir i bogha is saigheadan a-mach air an uinneig. Bha Fionnladh a’ feitheamh air an taobh a-muigh.</i></p> <p><i>Chaidh Fionnladh don doras leis a’ bhogha is saigheadan agus mharbh e an triùir am broinn an taighe. Agus sin mo stòiridh mu Fhionnladh Dubh nam Fiadh.</i></p>
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