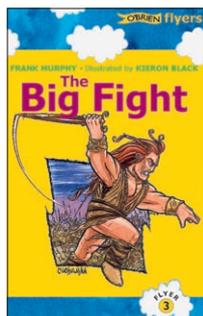


THE BIG FIGHT – FLYER 3



by Frank Murphy, illustrated by Kieron Black

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Queen Maeve of Connacht and her husband, Ailill of Leinster, were both extremely rich. They lived in a fine palace and wanted for nothing. But when Maeve realised that Ailill possessed a fine white bull that she could not match, she decided to acquire the only bull in Ireland which was better than his. Careless talk from her warriors, who revealed that she was prepared to fight in order to possess Daire's brown bull, led to the invasion of Ulster by Queen Maeve and her army. Only Cúchulainn could defend the territory and honour of King Conor. In this retelling of an ancient Irish epic, we read of that most famous *táin* or cattle-raid, which features greed, friendship, bravery, honour and betrayal in a form readily accessible to the younger reader.

LANGUAGE – ENGLISH

- ◆ Language of battle: Twisting and turning, falling and rising, limping, charging, shield, armour, warrior.
- ◆ Discussion: Many died to satisfy Maeve's greed, but why did she really want the Great Brown Bull so badly? Discuss her rivalry with Ailill and the results of their boasting.
- ◆ Discussion: The *Morrigan* was a shape-changer. Children think of other mythological creatures that have the power to change. Which shapes might the children adopt if they could?
- ◆ Creative: Read the messages on pp.21, 25; write imaginative notices with similar content.
- ◆ Story: Children read/listen to the story of Mac Datho's Pig (pp.61–66, *Celtic Way of Life*) and discuss similarities with *Táin Bó Cuailgne*.
- ◆ Story: Children listen to Cúchulainn, read by Gay Byrne on *Boyne Valley Irish Legends*.

LANGUAGE – GAEILGE

- ◆ *Logainmneacha agus ainmneacha eile*: *Áth Gabhla* from *gabhal* meaning fork of a river and *áth* meaning ford; *Ardee* from *Baile Átha Fhirdhia*, the town of *Ferdia's* ford; *Cúchulainn*, the hound of *Culann*.
- ◆ *Cúchulainn* was a godson of *Lugh*, the greatest of the gods, who gave his name to the festival of *Lughnasa*, or *Lugh-assembly*. See pp.73–78, *Celtic Way of Life*.

SPHE

- ◆ *Myself*: Self-identity. Recognising and appreciating the similarities and differences between people, talking about personal strengths and weaknesses with reference to Maeve and Ailill's rivalry.
- ◆ *Myself and others*: My friends and other people. Identifying and exploring qualities and skills associated with friendship: Discussing the notion of honour and how the warriors insisted on keeping their word; the friendship, kinship, loyalties and strong bonds created by fosterage.

SESE – HISTORY

- ◆ *Myself and my family*: Games in the past. Exploring traditional non-formal games: Street games, local games, house games, *Hallowe'en* games, *May Day* games. See Ch. 7, *Celtic Way of Life*.
- ◆ *Myself and my family*: Feasts and festivals in the past. Exploring and discussing the origins and traditions of some common festivals. See Ch. 8, *Celtic Way of Life*.
- ◆ Story: Listen to, discuss and retell *Rúraíocht* or *Red Branch* myths and legends.

VISUAL ARTS

- ◆ *The Art of the Celts*, Ch. 9, *Celtic Way of Life*.
- ◆ Script: Ogham writing. See *Celtic Way of Life*, p.71. Write some words in Ogham script.
- ◆ Script: See *Everything Irish*, pp.28–29.