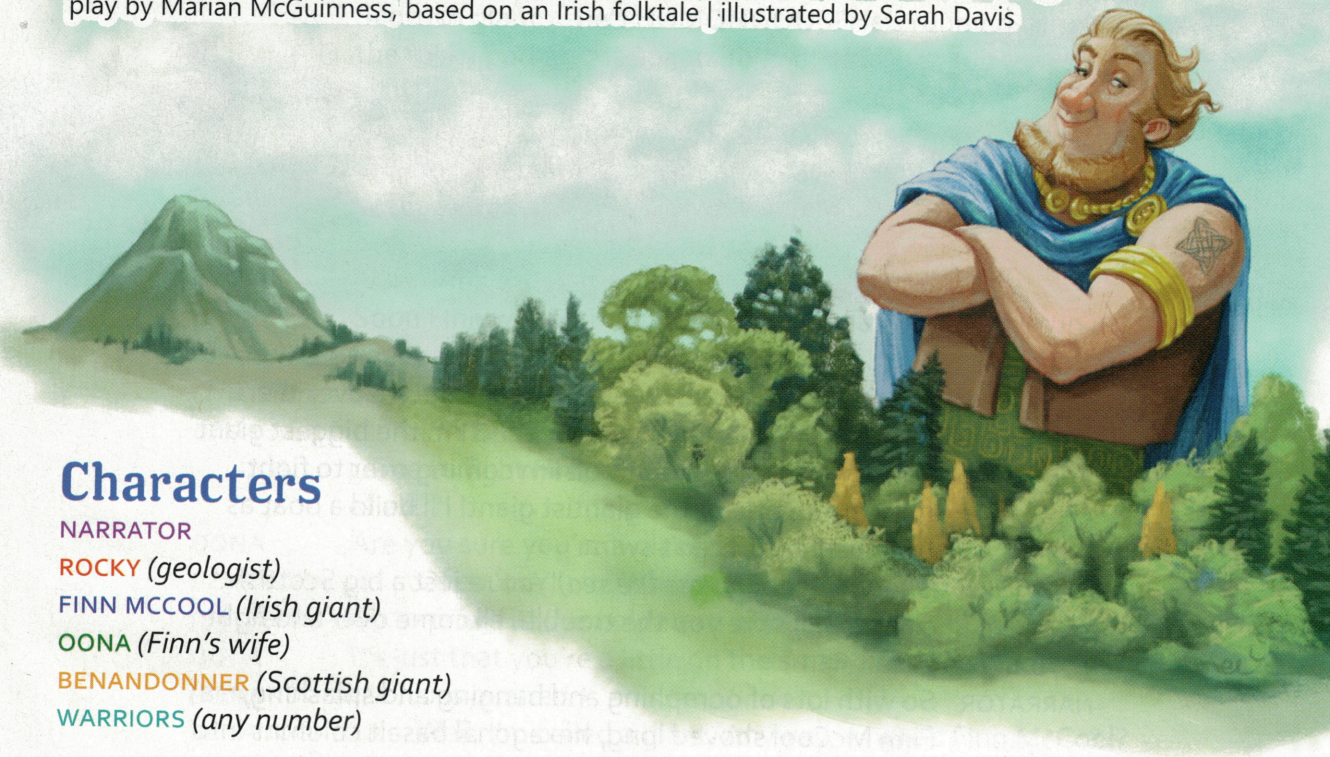


The Giant's Causeway

play by Marian McGuinness, based on an Irish folktale | illustrated by Sarah Davis



Characters

NARRATOR

ROCKY (geologist)

FINN MCCOOL (Irish giant)

OONA (Finn's wife)

BENANDONNER (Scottish giant)

WARRIORS (any number)

ROCKY

Long, long ago volcanoes erupted along the northern coastline of the country called Ireland. When the lava cooled it formed giant hexagonal basalt columns that looked like stepping stones forming a path into the sea. Today we call it The Giant's Causeway, which is another name for The Giant's Path.

NARRATOR

Well, Rocky, that's a bit boring, isn't it. I have a far better story to tell. And here it is. Long ago, in a village at the top of Ireland, there lived a woman called Oona. She was married to a giant named Finn McCool and he was the leader of a famous band of warriors.

WARRIORS

(singing and jigging) Oh ... Finn McCool, Finn McCool, only a fool would fight giant Finn McCool.

NARRATOR

But there was another giant who lived across the sea in Scotland. He'd heard the warrior's song about the famous Finn McCool.



BENANDONNER *(shouting across the sea)* I know you're over there Finn McCool. I'm Benandonner and I'm the biggest giant in the world and I'm no fool! I'm coming over to fight you for the title of the giantist giant! I'll build a boat as *(whispering)* ... I can't swim.

FINN *(shouting back across the sea)* You're just a big Scottish chicken. I'll save you the trouble. I'll come over and fight you!

NARRATOR So with lots of oomphing and banging and splashing, Finn McCool shoved long, hexagonal basalt columns into the water, joining them like a jigsaw puzzle and forming a pathway across the sea towards Scotland.

BENANDONNER You're taking too long tiny Irish giant. I'll make the path from my side too.

NARRATOR So the two giants jammed the stone columns into the sea, but when Finn McCool saw the huge size of Benandonner he became the chicken and ran back home to Oona.

(OONA is cooking porridge in a large pot. FINN rushes in, puffing and white with fear.)

FINN Oona, we're going to have to make a run for it. That giant from Scotland has been yelling at me across the water. He wants a fight. But now I've seen him, he's twice as big as me. His hair touches the sky and he's MEAN! His name is Benandonner and it means *(he shakes)* MOUNTAIN OF THUNDER!

WARRIORS *(outside the house singing)* Finn McCool, Finn McCool, only a fool would fight giant Finn McCool.

FINN *(calls through the window)* Stop singing that so loudly! The Scottish giant is coming to get me!

NARRATOR Everyone stopped talking and singing as a loud *thump thump thump* came from across the water.

ONE WARRIOR (*puffing*) I've just come from the headland. It's the Scottish giant ... he's HUMONGOUS! He's running across the rocky path in the sea to Ireland! Warriors, run for your lives!

FINN (*panicking*) I'm coming with you.

OONA Oh, no, you're not. I've got an idea. Go and lie in the bath.

NARRATOR While Finn did what he was told, Oona made a sleeping potion and put it in a baby's bottle.

OONA Now drink this, hubby dear.

NARRATOR Soon Finn was snoring like a bear. Oona wrapped him in a sheet and stuck his thumb in his mouth.

(*There are three loud bangs on the front door. OONA opens it.*)

BENANDONNER I'm Benandonner, the giant from the north and I've come to fight Finn McCool because I'm the biggest giant of all!

OONA Are you sure you're a giant?

BENANDONNER Of course I am. What are you talking about? And here's my giant's club to prove it! (*He holds up a wooden club.*)

OONA It's just that you're a little on the small side for a giant.

(*BENANDONNER looks puzzled.*)

BENANDONNER Well, I'm called a giant. Anyway, where's Finn McCool?



OONA I'm afraid he's not here. He's out in the field. He's hand-digging a dam. But you're welcome to come inside and wait.

NARRATOR Benandonner squeezed and squeezed and squeezed himself as best he could through the front door. The whole house creaked as its wooden walls almost collapsed.

BENANDONNER Oh, this is such a tiny house.

OONA Yes, we're going to do extensions soon. Please sit down, *(she walks to the bathroom door)* but I don't want you waking the baby.

BENANDONNER *(peering into the bathroom, then shouting)* That's Finn McCool!

OONA Yes, that's Finn junior. Our little darling, baby boy.

NARRATOR As Finn sleeps, he snores, sucks his thumb and scratches his beard.

BENANDONNER That baby's huge! And he's got a beard!

OONA Yes, but it's such a little beard. Finn senior is so worried about him. He's such a tiny baby. We just hope that he grows up big and strong like his daddy.

NARRATOR Benandonner is having second thoughts about wanting to fight Finn McCool.

BENANDONNER If this is your baby, how big is his daddy?

OONA Oh, just your average Irish giant size. About twice as big as you.

NARRATOR Benandonner starts to back out the door of the house. He knocks things over as he squeezes and squeezes backwards.

BENANDONNER *(stammers)* Aaactually, I don't think I can wait. I think I hear my mummy calling.

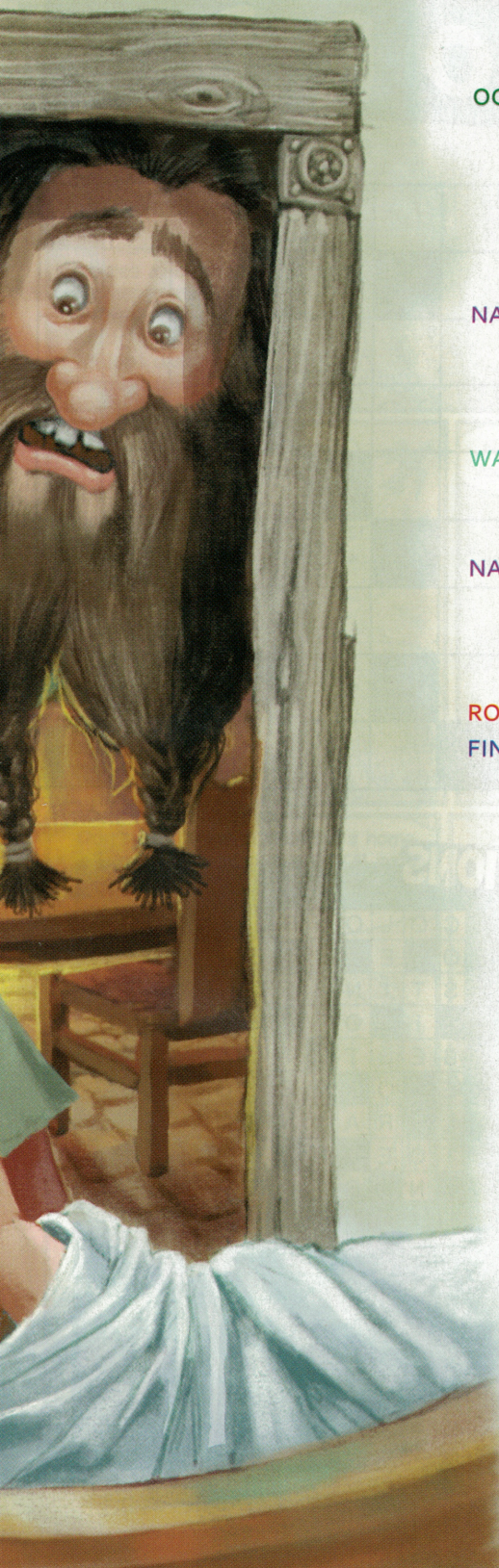
OONA You can't stay? Finn will be most disappointed.

BENANDONNER No. I can't stay. Mummy would be very annoyed if I'm late home. She's cooking haggis and mashed turnips.

OONA Hmmm. What's haggis? Sounds mysterious. Is it giant's food?

BENANDONNER It's liver, kidney and lungs mixed with oatmeal and onions and stuffed into a sheep's





OONA

stomach. And then it's boiled. Yum. Yum. Ew! Haggis sounds horrible. I'll stick to my porridge. At least that makes proper giants. Well, goodbye Benandonner. Maybe Finn can come and visit you when he gets home. Now that he's built a path across the sea, of course.

NARRATOR

And with that, Benandonner ran back to the path that Finn McCool had built and smashed it behind him with his club as he ran back to Scotland.

WARRIORS

(singing and jiggling) Oona McCool, Oona McCool, only a fool would try and outwit Oona McCool.

NARRATOR

And that's why the rocky sea path off the north coast of Ireland is called The Giant's Causeway. Which do you think is the true story?

ROCKY

Mine?

FINN and BENANDONNER *(winking)* or ours?

THE END

THE CARTOON



by Paul Woods