The Legend of Fionn MacCumhaill

The giant Fionn MacCumhaill was the leader of the ancient Fianna warriors in Ireland. He features in Irish, Scottish and Manx cycles of mythology. He was a soldier, known by his nickname Fionn or Finn (meaning "fair-haired"). The Irish tales link him with skirmishes and brave deeds in Leinster and Ulster.

Legend claims he lived on the North Antrim coast where he looked across the Irish sea to Staffa, where his adversary, Benandonner lived. The reasons for the quarrel are unknown but Fionn and Benandonner may have been competing over a giantess who lived on Staffa. The rivals shouted belligerent wagers, always challenging the other to a fight, but unable to stage a physical confrontation as no boat was strong enough to carry either giant.

Determined to meet and beat Benandonner, Fionn spent a week building a bridge from Ireland to Staffa. He did not stop working for six days and when he laid the final stones, Fionn fell asleep on the causeway. The thundering footsteps pounding on the causeway awoke Fionn who saw the giant Benandonner approaching. When Fionn saw that Benandonner was almost twice his own size, Fionn raced home to Oonagh, his wife. Oonagh wrapped Fionn up in blankets as if he was a baby and left him to sleep in a large cradle by the fire side. When Oonagh welcomed Benandonner into her home, she explained that Fionn would arrive soon and that Benandonner could wait by the fireside, as long as he did not awake the sleeping infant. When Bendandonner saw the huge size of Fionn's child, he could only imagine the size of the baby's father. A fearful Benandonner ran back to Staffa, tearing up the causeway to prevent Fionn from following.

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