

The Legend of the Giant's Causeway

A Reading A-Z Level M Leveled Book
Word Count: 531

Connections

Writing

Pretend Oonagh needs one more idea for her plan. Write a letter to Oonagh describing one more idea to help her.

Social Studies

Make a map of Northern Ireland. Label the water that surrounds it, the capital city, and any interesting places. Be sure to mark where the Giant's Causeway is.

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The Legend of the Giant's Causeway



**Multi
level
J•M•P**

An Irish folktale retold by Katherine Follett
Illustrated by César Samaniego

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The Legend of the **Giant's** Causeway



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Focus Question

What is the plan that Oonagh came up with, and did the plan work?

Words to Know

cradle
giants
Ireland

iron
Scotland
thunderbolt

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Correlation

LEVEL M

Fountas & Pinnell	L
Reading Recovery	19
DRA	24



Long ago, **giants** lived in the hills of **Ireland**. The strongest in the land was Finn McCool. He lived with his wife, Oonagh (OO-nuh), on top of Knockmany Hill.

Finn was helping build a bridge from Ireland to **Scotland**. He was almost done when the ground began to shake.



Finn McCool knew why. He ran home as fast as he could.

“Cucullin (koo-KUL-in) is coming from Scotland. I felt his footsteps shake the ground!” he shouted to Oonagh.

Cucullin was the strongest giant in Scotland. Once, he had smashed a **thunderbolt** into a flat, glowing pancake. He still carried it to show off.

Cucullin had fought almost every giant around—all except Finn McCool.

“We’ve got to deal with Cucullin once and for all,” Oonagh said.
“When will he get here?”

Finn put his thumb in his mouth.
(Thumbs are where giants get their strength.) “Tomorrow morning,” Finn said.



“We can beat Cucullin if you do exactly as I say,” Oonagh said.

She asked Finn to find a pot of cream and three white stones. She cooked the cream into a ball of soft cheese. She set it in a basket with the stones.

Next, she sent Finn to **borrow** a frying pan from every neighbor. She made twenty-one loaves of bread. Inside seven, she hid an **iron** pan.

Then Oonagh set up a large baby crib and blankets.

“I won’t sleep in a crib!” Finn shouted.

“Would you rather fight Cucullin?” Oonagh asked.

“No,” muttered Finn. He squeezed into the crib and hid under the blankets.



Early next morning, Knockmany Hill shook. Cucullin was coming!

“Where’s Finn McCool?” shouted Cucullin, bursting through the door. He waved around a bright disk. It was his smashed thunderbolt.

“He’s working on the bridge,” Oonagh said sweetly. “I haven’t seen him for weeks.”



“I thought I saw him running home. He looked like he was afraid of me!” Cucullin laughed.

"Oh, no," Oonagh laughed back.
"Finn is much bigger and stronger
than you. But you can wait for him.
I'll bring breakfast," she added.

Cucullin happily bit into a loaf
of Oonagh's golden-brown bread.

"Ouch!" he shouted. "What kind
of bread is this? I broke two teeth!"



"Oh, that's Finn's bread," said
Oonagh. "The only people who can
eat it are Finn and Finn Junior, here."

Oonagh handed a loaf to Finn,
still in the **cradle**. This loaf had no
frying pan. Finn ate it in two bites.

"Maybe you would like cheese
instead?" Oonagh offered.

She set one of the white stones on Cucullin's plate. She gave Finn the soft cheese, which looked just the same.

Finn squeezed the cheese until it dripped. Then he swallowed it whole.



Cucullin squeezed his stone, but nothing came out. He bit down.

"Ow!" he screamed. He'd lost four more teeth.

"That baby must have iron teeth! Let me look," he said.

Cucullin pushed Finn's mouth open with one thumb.

Chomp!

"Aaaagh! He broke my thumb!"
Cucullin screamed. "There's no way I'll fight that baby's father!"



Cucullin ran over the bridge back to Scotland. Then he smashed the bridge to pieces so Finn McCool couldn't follow him. You can still see the pieces on the coast today.





The Giant's Causeway

A *causeway* is a raised road across water. The bridge in this story is a causeway. The Giant's Causeway is a real landmark in Northern Ireland. It is made of thousands of tall stones packed together like puzzle pieces. They form natural stairways and walking paths that stretch into the sea.

The Giant's Causeway was formed by hot lava from a volcano. First, the lava flowed up from inside of Earth. When the lava reached the surface, it cooled and turned to rock. The rock shrank and cracked into many pieces. Scientists think the causeway formed between fifty and sixty million years ago.

Today, the Giant's Causeway is one of the most famous spots in Northern Ireland.

Glossary

cradle (<i>n.</i>)	a bed or crib for a baby (p. 10)
giants (<i>n.</i>)	make-believe creatures that are very large and often look like huge humans (p. 3)
Ireland (<i>n.</i>)	an island in northwestern Europe (p. 3)
iron (<i>adj.</i>)	made of a strong, hard silver-gray metal (p. 6)
Scotland (<i>n.</i>)	a country in the northern part of Great Britain (p. 3)
thunderbolt (<i>n.</i>)	a make-believe bolt of lightning that is thought to crash to the ground during a lightning flash (p. 4)