Hi all!

Please read the story below. It might seem familiar, but here’s a little background for you all the same.

This story is one of over 1,000 stories about the Fianna, a band of hunting and gathering heroes from Scotland and/or Ireland. Indpendent versions of these stories are found in both Ireland and Scotland, so most folks think the stories did not move from one country to the other but instead arose from a common source.

The stories concern Finn MacCumhail (pronounced “Finn Ma-COOL”) and his band which includes Oisin (his son, a poet who after years spent in the otherworld arrives in the modern world to tell a Christian priest about the Fianna) as well as Diarmuid (the most compassionate and handsome of the Fianna) and many others.

Oisin is pronounced “Oh-SHEEN”

Diarmiud is pronounced “DER-mut” (rhymes with “Kermit,” with a little more “uh” in the second sylabble).

This is taken from a book published in 1904, so the language reflects that. But it’s an interesting contrast to the Nart saga I told. See you next week!

Jay

**The Daughter of King Under-Wave**

ONE snowy night of winter the Fianna were come into the house after their hunting. And about midnight they heard a knocking at the door, and there came in a woman very wild and ugly, and her hair hanging to her heels. She went to the place Finn was lying, and she asked him to let her in under the border of his covering. But when he saw her so strange and so ugly and so wild-looking he would not let her in. She gave a great cry then, and she went to where Oisin was, and asked him to let her shelter under the border of his covering. But Oisin refused her the same way. Then she gave another great scream, and she went over where Diarmuid was. "Let me in," she said, "under the border of your covering." Diarmuid looked at her, and he said: "You are strange-looking and wild and ugly, and your hair is down to your heels. But come in for all that," he said.

So she came in under the border of his covering.

"O Diarmuid," she said then, "I have been travelling over sea and ocean through the length of seven years, and in all that time I never got shelter any night till this night. And let me to the warmth of the fire now," she said. So Diarmuid brought her over to the fire, and all the Fianna that were sitting there went away from it seeing her so ugly and so dreadful to look at. And she was not long at the fire when she said: "Let me go under the warmth of the covering with you now." "It is asking too much you are," said Diannuid; "first it was to come under the border you asked, and then to come to the fire, and now it is under the bed-covering with me you want to be. But for all that you may come," he said.

So she came in under the covering, and he turned a fold of it between them. But it was not long till he looked at her, and what he saw was a beautiful young woman beside him, and she asleep. He called to the others then to come over, and he said: "Is not this the most beautiful woman that ever was seen?" "She is that," they said, and they covered her up and did not awaken her.

But after a while she stirred, and she said: "Are you awake, Diarmuid?" "I am awake," he said. "Where would you like to see the best house built that ever was built?" she said. "Up there on the hillside, if I had my choice," said he, and with that he fell asleep. And in the morning two men of the Fianna came in, and they said they were after seeing a great house up on the bill, where there was not a house before. "Rise up, Diarmuid," said the strange woman then; "do not be lying there any longer, but go up to your house, and look out now and see it," she said. So he looked out and he saw the great house that was ready, and he said: "I will go to it, if you will come along with me." "I will do that," she said, "if you will make me a promise not to say to me three times what way I was when I came to you." "I will never say it to you for ever," said Diarmuid.

They went up then to the house, and it was ready for them, with food and servants; and everything they could wish for they had it. They stopped there for three days, and when the three days were ended, she said: "You are getting to be sorrowful because you are away from your comrades of the Fianna." "I am not sorrowful indeed," said Diarmuid. "It will be best for you to go to them; and your food and your drink will be no worse when you come back than they are now," said she. "Who will take care of my greyhound bitch and her three pups if I go?" said Diarmuid. "There is no fear for them," said she.

So when he heard that, he took leave of her and went back to the Fianna, and there was a great welcome before him. But for all that they were not well pleased but were someway envious, Diarmuid to have got that grand house and her love from the woman they themselves had turned away.

Now as to the woman, she was outside the house for a while after Diarmuid going away, and she saw Finn, son of Cumhal, coming towards her, and she bade him welcome. "You are vexed with me, Queen?" he said. "I am not indeed," she said; "and come in now and take a drink of wine from me." "I will go in if I get my request," said Finn. "What request is there that you would not get?" said she. "It is what I am asking, one of the pups of Diarmuid's greyhound bitch." "That is no great thing to ask," she said; and whichever one you choose of them you may bring it away."

So he got the pup, and he brought it away with him.

At the fall of night Diarmuid came back to the house, and the greyhound met him at the door and gave a yell when she saw him, and he looked for the pups, and one of them was gone. There was anger on him then, and he said to the woman: "If you had brought to mind the way you were when I let you in, and your hair hanging, you would not have let the pup be brought away from me." "You ought not to say that, Diarmuid," said she. "I ask your pardon for saying it," said Diarmuid. And they forgave one another, and he spent the night in the house.

On the morrow Diarmuid went back again to his comrades, and the woman stopped at the house, and after a while she saw Oisin coming towards her. She gave him a welcome, and asked him into the house, and he said he would come if he would get his request.And what he asked was another of the pups of the greyhound.

So she gave him that, and he went away bringing the pup with him. And when Diarmuid came back that night the greyhound met him, and she cried out twice. And he knew that another of the pups was gone, and he said to the greyhound, and the woman standing there: "If she had remembered the way she was when she came to me, she would not have let the pup be brought away."

The next day he went back again to the Fianna, and when he was gone, the woman saw Caoilte coming towards her, and he would not come in to take a drink from her till he had got the promise of one of the pups the same as the others.

And when Diarmuid came back that night the greyhound met him and gave three yells, the most terrible that ever were heard. There was great anger on him then, when he saw all the pups gone, and he said the third time: "If this woman remembered the way she was when I found her, and her hair down to her heels, she would not have let the pup go." "O Diarmuid, what is it you are after saying?" she said. He asked forgiveness of her then, and he thought to go into the house, but it was gone and the woman was gone on the moment, and it was on the bare ground he awoke on the morrow. There was great sorrow on him then, and he said he would search in every place till he would find her again.

So he set out through the lonely valleys, and the first thing he saw was the greyhound lying dead, and he put her on his shoulder and would not leave her because of the love he had for her. And after a while he met with a cowherd, and he asked him did he see a woman going the way. "I saw a woman early in the morning of yesterday, and she walking hard," said the cowherd. "What way was she going?" said Diarmuid. "Down that path below to the strand, and I saw her no more after that," he said.

So he followed the path she took down to the strand till he could go no farther, and then he saw a ship, and he leaned on the handle of his spear and made a light leap on to the ship, and it went on till it came to land, and then he got out and lay down on the side of a hill and fell asleep, and when he awoke there was no ship to be seen. "It is a pity for me to be here," he said, "for I see no way of getting from it again."

But after a while he saw a boat coming, and a man in the boat rowing it,and he went down and got into the boat, and brought the greyhound with him. And the boat went out over the sea, and then down below it; and Diarmuid, when he went down, found himself on a plain. And he went walking along it, and it was not long before he met with a drop of blood. He took it up and put it in a napkin. "It is the greyhound lost this," he said. And after a while he met with another drop of blood, and then with a third, and he put them in the napkin. And after that again he saw a woman, and she gathering rushes as if she had lost her wits.

He went towards her and asked her what news had she. "I cannot tell it till I gather the rushes," she said. "Be telling it while you are gathering them," said Diarmuid. "There is great haste on me," she said. "What is this place where we are?" said Diarmuid. "It is Land-under-Wave," said she. "And what use have you for the rushes when they are gathered?" "The daughter, of King Under-Wave is come home," she said, "and she was for seven years under enchantment, and there is sickness on her now, and all the physicians are gathered together and none of them can do her any good, and a bed of rushes is what she finds the wholesomest." "Will you show me where the king's daughter is?" said Diarmuid. "I will do that," said the woman; "I will put you in the sheaf of rushes, and I will put the rushes under you and over you, and I will carry you to her on my back." "That is a thing you cannot do," said Diarmuid. But she put the rushes about him, and lifted him on her back, and when she got to the room she let down the bundle. "O come here to me," said the daughter of King Under-Wave, and Diarmuid went over to her, and they took one another's hands, and were very joyful at that meeting. "Three parts of my sickness is gone from me now," she said then; "but I am not well yet, and I never will be, for every time I thought of you, Diarmuid, on my journey, I lost a drop of blood of my heart." "I have got those three drops here in this napkin," said Diarmuid, "and take them now in a drink and you will be healed of your sickness." "They would do nothing for me," she said, "since I have not the one thing in the world that I want, and that is the thing I will never get," she said. "What thing is that?" said Diarmuid. "It is the thing you will never get, nor any man in the world," she said, "for it is a long time they have failed to get it." "If it is in any place on the whole ridge of the world I will get it," said Diarmuid. "It is three draughts from the cup of the King of Magh an Ionganaidh, the Plain of Wonder," she said, "and no man ever got it or ever will get it." "Tell me where that cup is to be found," said Diarmuid, "for there are not as many men as will keep it from me on the whole ridge of the world." "That country is not far from the boundary of my father's country," she said; "but there is a little river between, and you would be sailing on that river in a ship, having the wind behind it, for a year and a day before you would reach to the Plain of Wonder."

Diarmuid set out then, and be came to the little river, and he was a good while walking beside it, and he saw no way across it. But at last he saw a low-sized, reddish man that was standing in the middle of the river. "You are in straits, Diarmuid, grandson of Duibhne," he said; "and come here and put your foot in the palm of my hand and I will bring you through." Diarmuid did as he bade him, and put his foot in the red man's palm, and he brought him across the river. "It is going to the King of the Plain of Wonder you are," he said, "to bring away his cup from him; and I myself will go with you."

They went on then till they came to the king's dun, and Diarmaid called out that the cup should be sent out to him, or else champions to fight with him should be sent out. It was not the cup that was sent out, but twice eight hundred fighting men; and in three hours there was not one of them left to stand against him. Then twice nine hundred better fighters again were sent out against him, and within four hours there was not one of them left to stand against him. Then the king himself came out, and he stood in the great door, and he said: "Where did the man come from that has brought destruction on the whole of my kingdom?" "I will tell you that," said he; "I am Diarmuid, a man of the Fianna of Ireland." "It is a pity you have not sent a messenger telling me that," said the king, "and I would not have spent my men upon you; for seven years before you were born it was put in the prophecy that you would come to destroy them. And what is it you are asking now?" he said. "It is the cup of healing from your own hand I am asking," said Diarmuid. "No man ever got that cup from me but yourself," said the king, "but it is easy for me to give it to you, whether or not there is healing in it."

Then the King of the Plain of Wonder gave Diarmuid the cup, and they parted from one another; and Diarmuid went on till he came to the river, and it was then he thought of the red man, that he had given no thought to while he was at the king's house. But he was there before him, and took his foot in the palm of his band and brought him over the river. "I know where it is you are going, Diarmuid," he said then; "it is to heal the daughter of King Under-Wave that you have given your love to. And it is to a well I give you the signs of you should go," he said, "and bring a share of the water of that well with you. And when you come where the woman is, it is what you have to do, to put that water in the cup, and one of the drops of blood in it, and she will drink it, and the same with the second drop and the third, and her sickness will be gone from her that time. But there is another thing will be gone along with it," he said, "and that is the love you have for her."

"That will not go from me," said Diarmuid. "It will go from you," said the man; "and it will be best for you to make no secret of it, for she will know, and the king will know, that you think no more of her then than of any other woman. And King Under-Wave will come to you," he said, "and will offer you great riches for healing his daughter. But take nothing from him," he said, "but ask only a ship to bring you home again to Ireland. And do you know who am I myself?" he said. "I do not know," said Diarmuid. "I am the messenger from beyond the world," he said; "and I came to your help because your own heart is hot to come to the help of another."

So Diarmuid did as he bade him, and he brought the water and the cup and the drops of blood to the woman, and she drank them, and at the third draught she was healed. And no sooner was she healed than the love he had for her was gone, and he turned away from her. "O Diarmuid," she said, "your love is gone from me." "O, it is gone indeed," said he.

Then there was music made in the whole place, and the lamenting was stopped, because of the healing of the king's daughter. And as to Diarmuid, he would take no reward and he would not stop there, but he asked for a ship to bring him home to lreland, to Finn and the Fianna. And when he came where they were, there was a joyful welcome before him.