

OISIN AND TIR NAN OG

There are many Irish stories and legends of fantastic islands. One of the most famous is Tir Nan Og, the Land of the Young.

Oisín was the son of Finn, a legendary leader of the Fenians. One day, while he was out riding with his men, he met a beautiful young lady, Niamh of the Golden Hair.

Oisín fell in love with her at first sight. He thought she was the most beautiful woman in the world. You can imagine how happy he was when Niamh chose him as her husband and asked him to go to Tir Nan Og with her.

They travelled over the land to the sea and then across the sea to the Land of the Young. During the trip wonderful fairy palaces appeared on the water and at one of these Oisín saved a princess from a monster who wanted to marry her.

At last they reached his wife's island. It was a splendid place, a paradise, and Oisín was so pleased with his new life that three hundred years passed before he thought of his country. Then one day he decided that he would like to return to his homeland.

Niamh gave him a magic horse and she told him to stay on it at all costs if he wanted to see her again.

It did not take Oisín long to ride to Ireland, but when he arrived there he discovered a country with many changes. It was completely different. Finn and the Fenians were a legend of the past and even the people seemed smaller compared to those he remembered.

He looked around and he noticed three men in a field. They were trying to move a big stone. Oisín was young and strong so he offered to help them, but while he was doing this, he fell off his horse. When his body touched the ground the horse disappeared and Oisín changed into a blind old man and never went back to Tir Nan Og.

QUESTIONNAIRE

Answer the questions.

1. What does Tir Nan Og mean?
2. Who was Oisín's father?
3. What was Oisín doing when he met Niamh?
4. Why did he fall in love at first sight?
5. What did Niamh ask Oisín?