

GREEN CURTAIN THEATRE

‘It’s Your Turn 2022’

SOME PERFORMANCE MONOLOGUES

VERSION 1

Monologues

We are a theatre company so we would love to include children performing a monologue in our video. We have written these for you to use.

In the first set of monologues the people speaking are characters from famous **Irish Myths and Legends**. We have included a short version of the legend before the monologue. Please email anne@greencurtaintheatre.co.uk to let us know which monologue you have chosen.

In the second set of three monologues, the writers have tried to capture some of the experiences, which Irish children or children of Irish parents living in Great Britain may have had over the years.

All of these pieces should be performed with great expression. A good way to do this is to think how the person speaking might be feeling and take it from there.

Please note that we are happy for you to adapt any of the pieces.

Eithne, Maureen and Anne.

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The Legend of How the Giant's Causeway Came to Be



The Giant's Causeway is located on the northern coast of Ireland, near the town of Bushmills in County Antrim. It is a set of dark-coloured rocks that stretch from the land out to sea. These large rocks, which could be imagined as stepping stones for a giant which is probably how the Legend of Finn McCool came to be.

The Giant's Causeway attracts visitors from all over the world. It is considered a great natural wonder. It was made a World Heritage site in 1986.



Long long ago there lived a giant named Finn McCool. He was the biggest and strongest giant in all of Ireland. He was 54 foot tall and he was said to have the strength of 500 men. His loud voice could be heard for miles around.

Finn lived happily with his wife Oonagh on the Antrim coast. At the same time there lived a giant name Benandonner on the Scottish coast opposite.

Benandonner believed that he was the strongest of all the giants. He kept taunting and shouting at Finn from across the water. One day Finn became so mad with Benandonner that he picked up a huge lump of earth and throw it at him. The earth missed but it landed in the middle of the Irish sea making the

Isle of Man. The hole left by Finn became Lough Neagh.

Tired of all of Benandonner's taunting, Finn finally agreed to fight Benandonner to settle who was the strongest giant. Finn started to build a path to Scotland that he called the causeway. With his enormous hands he laid down thousands of rocks. When Benandonner heard what Finn was doing he decided to build a path from Scotland to meet up with Finn's path. The two giants worked hard for weeks building their paths.

Finally, early one morning Finn's path met Benandonners'. Finn was delighted and was about to run across to find Benandonner to settle who was the strongest giant for once and for all when he saw him coming over the hill. Finn was shocked!!! Benandonner was twice his size and he looked twice as strong. Benandonner had not yet seen Finn so Finn ran back to his house.

Finn asked Oonagh to help him hide. Oonagh was very clever and she thought of a cunning plan. She disguised Finn as a baby and put him into a huge cradle. Benandonner knocked on the door and Oonagh answered it.

Finn dressed up as a baby pretended to cry. When Benandonner saw the size of the baby in the cradle he was terrified and thought that the parent's of this baby giant must be huge.

Benandonner turned as fast as he could and ran, ripping up the causeway behind him so that Finn would not follow him back to Scotland.

Monologue: Finn McCool

A giant comes in. He looks a bit nervous because people have run away from him before due to his size.

Hello. Anyone there? There's no need to be scared. My name is Finn McCool and I am a good giant. I live in Antrim in Ireland with my wife Oonagh and I have just discovered that Irish giants are cleverer than Scottish giants. Well, this one anyway.

You see my wife Oonagh and I chose to settle in this beautiful place because it was quiet. That was until Benandonner another giant who lives across the water over there in Scotland tried to pick a fight. He kept taunting me. Boasted that he was the tallest and strongest giant of all.

I didn't believe him. Well, why would I? After all people say that I am as tall as 54 people which means that I am over 200 metres tall. I'm no weakling either. I have the strength of 500 men or women.

I kept shouting back at Benandonner, telling him that there was no point fighting me because he would never win. But he just laughed. Then, one day, when I was least expecting it we heard these loud footsteps coming down the road. The ground began shaking and suddenly these enormous boots each the size of a cottage appeared.

Oonagh and I looked at each other in horror. We knew straight away that it was Bennadonner. And what's worse- he was twice my size. I knew that I would never be able to beat him in a fight.

I started shaking but Oonagh knew what to do straight away. She dressed me up as a baby and put me in a basket outside our cottage. When Bennadonner saw me, he got really scared. He said: *"If that is a baby giant, then its parents must be enormous."* This made him think again about fighting me. He ran back to Scotland as fast as he could.

Oonagh and I still laugh about it.

(311 words)

The Legend of the Children of Lir.



Long ago there was a king called Lir. He lived in a castle with his wife and four beautiful children Fionnula, Aodh, Conn and Fiachra. Lir's wife died and they all missed her very much. The king saw that his children were very sad and needed a mother, so he decided to marry again.

Dearg, the High King, sent Aoife, his daughter, to be Lir's new wife. Aoife was beautiful but she was not the kind-hearted person that Lir thought she was. At first Aoife loved the children, but soon she started to grow jealous of them. She knew that Lir loved them more than he loved her. She wanted the king's love all for herself so she planned to get rid of the children.

One summer's day Aoife took the children to swim in Lough Derravaragh, when the children were playing Aoife took out a Druid's magic wand and she cast a terrible spell on them. There was a flash of light and the children vanished. In their place was left four beautiful swans with feathers as white as snow. One of the swans opened its beak and spoke with Fionnula's voice: "What have you done to us?"

Aoife cackled, "I have put a spell on you. You will be swans for nine hundred years. You will spend three hundred years on this lake, three hundred on the Sea of Moyle and three hundred on the waters of Inish Glora. Only the sound of Christian church bell can break the spell"

When the children did not return home that evening, the king went to look for them beside the lake. But all he saw were four beautiful swans. To his amazement one of the swans called out. It was Fionnula. She told him what Aoife had done to them. Lir returned to his castle and pleaded with Aoife to reverse the spell, but Aoife refused. Lir became very angry and banished her from his kingdom.

Lir told Aoife's own father what she had done and he was so angry that he turned his daughter into a bat. Lir never recovered from losing his children. He spent all his time beside the lake talking to his children and listening to their singing. When Lir grew old and died the children were very sad.

After three hundred years had passed the swans moved to the sea of Moyle between Ireland and Scotland. It was very cold and stormy on the sea. The swans grew old and tired and they went to live on an island called Inis Glora.

Life was easier on the island, it was warmer and there was lots of food. Then one morning they heard the sound they had been waiting for. It was the sound of a Christian church bell. They swam to shore. Outside the church where the bells were ringing was a monk named Caomhog. He was stunned when he saw the four swans turn into four old people in front of him. Fionnuala put her arms around her brothers, they were so happy to be human again even though they were now 900 years old.

Caomhog listened to their sad story and baptised them, soon after they died of old age. He buried them in one grave. That he dreamt that he saw four children flying up through the clouds. He knew that the children of Lir were now with their father and mother.

King Lir's Monologue from the Children of Lir



The king walks in.

Hello. Isn't it a lovely day? Okay. I know that it is cold and raining. But I am so happy that all I can see is sunshine. You see I have just got married again. My first wife died a year ago and that took the joy out of our lives. I was so sad. My four children miss their mother terribly, so I feel blessed to have found them a new mother.

Aoife, my new wife is very pretty and has a kind face so I think things will be good. I am a bit worried though. You see she has been asking me strange questions like: *How early do the children go to bed?* and *How often do they go and stay with their grandparents?* And worst of all. *Had I ever thought of sending them to a boarding school?* I couldn't do that. I would miss them too much.

I try not to worry. Aoife hasn't been a mother before so she's probably just a bit nervous. I'm sure things will be fine. After all she has asked me if she can borrow the royal chariot to take them out for a ride sometime.

(198 words)

Fionnghuala's Monologue From the Children of Lir

A 'swan' walks on stage, making swan gestures and begins speaking.



Please listen to me. Most people don't and I get very lonely. Okay, I know it is unusual for a swan to talk. My name is Fionnghuala and I was once an ordinary little girl.

Well not that ordinary. You see my dad is King Lir of Ireland so that makes me some kind of princess. Our family was happy until mummy died a few years ago. Daddy missed her very much and he married a lady who he thought loved him. Only I think that she liked the idea of being a queen more than being his wife. Daddy didn't know that she had magical powers or that she wasn't prepared to love his children or I am sure that they would never have wed.

But he did. And look what happened? Aoife, our new step-mother asked Daddy if she could borrow the royal chariot to take us for a ride. Only she brought us down to the lake and turned me and my three brothers into swans. She told us that we'd have to stay like this for 900 years. 900 years imagine! It is a very long time.

It is going very slowly. It is very boring being a swan. There is not much to do other than swim and fly. And I hate having to put my head underwater every time I want to eat. I do hope daddy will sort it out soon.

The only kind thing my stepmother did was to leave us our voices. I enjoy the singing. We must have nice voices because people come from all over to listen to us. I've heard some people say that they feel better when they hear us sing.

(284 words)

This monologue can be spoken by a girl or a boy. Fionnghuala had three brothers Aodh, Fiacre and Conn so you can change the names around if you like.

Aoife's Monologue From the Children of Lir

A very annoyed bat appears.



Oy. Show some respect. You wouldn't look at me like that if you knew who I really was.

I used to be the queen of Ireland and lowlings like you would have to kneel before me. The trouble is, I did a really mean thing to the King's children, my

step children. Well, I don't think it was that mean when you consider that I was thinking of killing the little horrors. I may have turned them into swans but at least they're still alive.

The trouble with children is that their parents think they're cute. I couldn't bear it when the little horrors took up all their daddy's time. Running up to him when he came in the room. 'Daddy look at at what I have just made. Pick me up Daddy. Swing me round Daddy.'

Personally, I thought that he should have grabbed the little blighters by the ears and thrown them out of the palace. But best not to say.

Something had to be done. I mean I married the King to be Queen of Ireland not step-mother to his attention seeking children. Luckily, I'd brought my magic Druid wand with me when I came to live in the palace.

I decided on a cunning plan. I would use my wand to turn the little horrors into swans. That would get them out the way. Trouble was my husband, their dad came back and noticed that they were gone. He told my own father who was so cross at what I done that he turned me into a bat for the for the rest of my life as a punishment.

I hate it. All that sleeping upside down in those smelly back caves. And then I can only go out at night so I never see anything but shadows. Don't laugh you wouldn't like it.

(308 words)

The Legend of the Salmon of Knowledge by Maureen Alcorn

Long ago, there lived a boy called Fionn who wanted to know everything. But his mother got so tired of him asking questions all the time, that she sent him to live with Finnegas, the wisest man in Ireland.

One day, Finnegas sent him to fish in a pool near the River Boyne. Fionn sat under the shade of an old hazel tree watching a big silver salmon eat the hazel nuts that fell into the water. He caught the salmon. He showed it to Finnegas who told him to cook it. But he warned him, 'The fish is all for me. Don't eat any of it!'

Fionn was annoyed because the fish smelt delicious. As he was removing the salmon from the fire, Fionn burnt the tip of his thumb on the hot skin, so he sucked it hard to take the pain away. He took the salmon to Finnegas. Finnegas, licked his lips and asked Fionn if he had tasted any of the salmon.

'I did not!' said Fionn feeling hungry and annoyed.

'You sure that you didn't even taste the skin?' Finnegas demanded.

'Only when I put my thumb in my mouth because I had burnt it – but I didn't eat any!' Fionn told him.

Finnegas was furious. 'Now you have the knowledge!' he shouted. 'That fish was the Salmon of Knowledge. It has eaten the nuts from the ancient hazel tree of knowledge. The person who tastes that salmon gains all the wisdom and knowledge in the world! All the knowledge will be inside you now!'

'But I don't feel any different!' Fionn said.

'Put your thumb in your mouth,' ordered Finnegas, still angry.

Slowly, Fionn put his thumb in his mouth. Suddenly, he felt all the knowledge in the world rush into his head. Fionn knew all the answers to all the questions ever! Fionn and Finnegas sat down and ate the salmon but Finnegas did not have much of an appetite.

"There is nothing for me to teach you now", he said sadly. "You must go to Tara and take your father's place at the head of the Fianna. "Always use your knowledge wisely."

When Fionn grew up, he became a great warrior and a wise leader of the Fianna, the greatest band of warriors Ireland has ever known. Whenever he wanted to know something, all he had to do was put his thumb in his mouth and the answer just came to him. Always.

Fionn's Monologue from Fionn and the Salmon of Knowledge



I can still hear my mammy's words as she pushed me out of the door shouting. 'No more questions Fionn! My poor head can't stand it. Stop it now!'

All I did was ask how birds could fly. But she wailed and cried. She gave me a note for Finnegas the wise man and told me to go and stay with him. 'He can answer all your questions!' She cried. 'Leave us in peace!'

Finnegas knew more than my mammy, but he didn't know everything.

One day Finnegas told me to go and catch a salmon from the River Boyne. I liked it there, sitting in the shade of an old hazel tree, watching nuts plopping into the water.

Suddenly, I saw a great big silver salmon bobbing up and eating one of the nuts. I was excited. The salmon was so busy eating he didn't see me with my net – and I caught it! I was really excited and ran to tell Finnegas.

'Well done Fionn!' he said. He had a strange sparkle in his eyes when he saw the fish. He told me to cook it but not to touch a single bit of it. He wouldn't tell me why. It wasn't fair, I thought. I caught the salmon. It was a huge salmon. Why couldn't I have a little mouthful? What was the harm? But Finnegas was my master so I had to obey him.

The salmon smelt delicious cooking on the fire. I licked my lips, imagining the taste. And when it was ready, I lifted it off the fire gently with my fingers. But the salmon was so hot that its skin burnt my fingers.

Finnegas must have seen me because he kept asking if I had eaten any of the fish. I promised him that I hadn't. Then he asked me if I had tasted any part of it.

I was just about to say 'no' when I remembered. I told Finnegas that I had tasted the skin of the salmon when I had licked my fingers.

Finnegas was furious. I was a bit frightened. His face got red and blotchy and he shouted, 'You've done it now. You've stolen all the knowledge!'

I was confused. 'What do you mean, master?' I said.

‘That was the salmon of knowledge. It has eaten the nuts from the old hazel tree that holds all the knowledge in the world! The first person to taste the salmon gets all the knowledge in the world!’

Now I understand why Finnegas was so cross. I had tasted the fish first so I would be the cleverest person in the world, not he. No wonder he was cross.

(448words)

The Legend of How Cu Chulainn Got His Name



Culann was a smith who worked for King Conor. Culann had a really savage guard dog which attacked and bit people. Its name was Cu. It was so dangerous that it was kept in an iron cage when there were visitors. One day, King Conor came round to Culann's for a meal, and when he was safely inside the house, Cu was let out of the cage to protect the king from his enemies.

King Conor made a big mistake. He forgot his nephew, Setanta, was coming later, after his game of hurling. Soon, Setanta was whistling and skipping along the road to Culann's not realising the danger he was in. He was only seven, but he was already the best hurler in Ireland.

When Setanta reached the gate, he heard a savage growl behind him. Then suddenly, something huge and hairy was flying towards him. Cu's red eyes, yellow fangs and dripping jaws showed no mercy.

Without even stopping to think, Setanta threw his hurl straight down Cu's throat. The monstrous dog leapt high into the air, in agony, then dropped to the ground. Dead.

Culann opened the door, King Conor was right behind him. They had heard the terrible noise

'I was nearly killed by that dog!' Setanta said, calmly. 'I am Setanta, nephew of King Conor – and I want to train as a Red Branch Knight.'

The Red Branch Knights were the bravest of the king's warriors.

'And you will be a great one!' said the king, proudly. 'No one else could have killed the Cu.'

Culann was furious though. 'I have lost the best guard dog in Ireland!' he shouted.

Quick as a flash, Setanta replied, 'I will guard your house instead and protect you from harm until a puppy is raised to take the place of the dog you lost.'

Culann quickly agreed. And Culann's house was never attacked or robbed as long as Setanta was guarding it. Later, when Setanta became the most famous warrior in Ireland, he was renamed Cu Chulainn, which means Culann's hound.

Setanta's Monologue from the The Legend of Cu Chulainn



I love hurling. I practise hitting the sliotar as high up into the air as I can all the time. They say that I am the best hurler in Ireland. I can remember every little move I make in a game including we had just played.

I was in a hurry that afternoon. My uncle, King Connor, had told me to meet him at the huge gates of the smith Culann's house. He wasn't there when I arrived, so I pushed open the heavy gates myself.

Suddenly I saw a huge black shadow running at me. It was growling like a monster and I could see huge yellow fangs snapping wildly. There was no time to think. The huge beast leapt at me, all red fur and dripping jaws.

I knew that it was him or me. I threw my sliotar into the air, then hit it as hard as I could. I aimed for the monster's throat. Time seemed to stand still as it moved through the air. The suddenly the sliotar smashed straight down the hound's gullet. The beast dropped down dead, right in front of me. It was a mass of twisted legs and fur.

Some welcome, I thought, as the door opened. Then I saw Culann and my uncle, staring at me, then at the dead beast. My uncle told me that he was sorry about the guard dog and that he would have tied him up, only he had forgotten that I was coming.

'I killed it,' I said proudly, 'before it killed me! Now will you let me train as a Red Branch Knight and be one of your warriors?'

My uncle smiled proudly, 'I'm sure that you will be a great one,' he said. 'No one else could have killed the Cu.'

But Culann was very cross that I had killed Cu who was the best guard dog in all Ireland. I wanted to make things right so I told him that I would guard the house until they could raise a puppy to replace Cu.

And that was how my name was changed from Setanta to Cu Chulainn – Culann's hound. (362 words)

The Legend of The King with the Donkey's Ears



There once was a young boy called Donal who wanted to be a barber when he grew up. His mother was disappointed because she wanted her only son to be famous throughout Ireland. But Donal didn't want to be famous he wanted to cut hair and help people to look good.

Now, the King of Ireland had a big secret. His name was Labhrai Loingseach and his secret was that he had donkey's ears. He wore them flattened down under his crown. Each time he got his hair cut, he killed the barber so his secret would never get out.

One day, Donal was called to the palace to cut the King's hair. Donal was really excited but his mother wept and wailed and did everything in her power to stop him going. But when Donal took no notice she went to the palace gates and screamed and bawled out loud for hours. She made so much noise that everyone had to stick their fingers in their ears; except the king who had to keep his ears hidden. The King asked his Chief Minister who was making that terrible noise.

'It's your new barber's mother,' he replied. 'She doesn't want her son to die. She says she will keep on screaming unless he is allowed to live. She doesn't know what happens to all the barbers who cut your hair. All she knows is that she wants her son to come home safely.'

The king was so tired of the noise that he agreed that he would let Donal the barber live provided he agreed to keep the secret. When Donal arrived at the place he was made to promise that he would keep the king's secret whatever that was. He found out as soon as he took off the King's crown and saw the ears. But he cut the King's hair all the same and kept the promise.

Afterwards, Donal could not get the image of the donkey ears out of his head. He dreamed about them and became pale and sick. But he kept his promise to the king, and wouldn't tell anyone, not even his mother what the secret was.

His mother knew that something was bothering him so she suggested that he told a tree what was worrying him. So Donal did what she had suggested and went straight to the riverbank and told a big willow tree his terrible secret. He felt much better afterwards.

One day, a musician saw the tree and decided he would use a big branch from it to make a harp. He was an excellent musician and the king asked him to come to the palace to play for him. As soon as the musician began to play, the harp started to sing all by itself!

'Labhrai Loingseach has donkey's ears,

Labhrai Loingseach has donkey's ears...'

Everyone stared at the king as the harp continued singing. Labhrai was so furious he jumped out from his throne. But his crown fell off and everyone saw his huge furry donkey's ears. They pointed and whispered but that was all that happened. This helped the king to learn two things – first, that you cannot keep a secret in Ireland. Second, that being different is no big deal. Life was much easier for the king after this because he didn't have to keep his secret safe.

Donal became a hero because he had saved all the barbers in Ireland from certain death. The King made him the Royal Hairdresser, so he had the job he loved for life!

Donal's Monologue from the King with the Asses' Ears



Do your parents embarrass you sometimes? I love my mother dearly but I tell you, there are times when she is the end. I'm Donal, by the way and I was just getting ready to cut the king of Ireland's hair. Yes, you heard right Labhrai Loingseach, the actual king of Ireland's hair when all of a sudden I heard a screaming and screeching coming from the gate.

I recognised that holy row at once. It came from my Mam. She'd never wanted me to be a hairdresser and for some reason didn't want me to cut the King's hair.

I apologised to the king at once, but his reply chilled me to the bone. He said: 'Ach, your mother will be worried that I am about to kill you once you have cut my hair!'

Kill me? What had I done to deserve that? Then Chief Minister told me that it had to be done to keep the king's secret! The king's secret! That must be one bad secret.

I found out what it was when he took his hat off and I saw his amazing ass's ears. Tall and furry and elegant. That was some secret. That's why he'd killed other hairdressers. But I could keep a secret and I could really do something with those ears.

Maybe it was the way I styled his ear hair or Mammy's screeching at the gate, but he let me go. He liked my styling. Thought I looked honest and believed me when I said I wouldn't tell anyone.

From then on, I styled his hair and I noticed he didn't wear his hat indoor so much. But the secret was killing me. So, one day I went to the side of a beautiful lake and whispered the secret into the bushes: 'the king's got ass's ears'... 'the king's got ass's ears'. I didn't know the breeze would take it up, or

the reeds by the water or the trembling willow leaves... but they did and the king's secret went round the kingdom.

The king called me in and threatened me. But I told him he looked stylish and he should go on the balcony and see what people thought. He did. A few laughed, some gasped but mostly they cheered. Next day in the papers they said he was unique, brave and classy. One editor praised him for his honesty and said we could trust this honest king. He invited me to come and live with him in the palace, so I did. And I brought Mam. I knew if I ever got in trouble her screaming would be enough to save me.

(443 words)

Show and Tell



Have you ever played hurling, the Irish game which is a bit like hockey only speedier and more skilful? If you haven't then maybe you've watched a game. In this short story a child who lives in London and who is champion hurler, finds that his teacher at school doesn't really know much about the game.

Today was the day when I was going to be able to tell the other kids in my class that I am good at sport too. You see they think that I am rubbish just because I'm not good at football. I took the medal that I won in the minors' cup at the weekend in to show them; only it didn't go the way that I had planned.

After assembly Mrs Tingley called me in to her office to have a little chat. And she started off asking me about the bruise on my face, she called it a black eye.

So, I told her I got hit by the slither. She said "Slipper? Who hit you with a slipper?" So I had to tell her 'no', and explain what a slither is. So, then she asked "Curling? Isn't that a Winter Sports game?" So, I had to tell her what hurling is, and she was finding it hard to understand what I explained; she did say "Is it a bit like hockey?" So, I said 'I guess' so, but she wasn't really trying to understand. To her, hockey is what we play in PE with plastic sticks and a plastic puck. So, I just let her believe it.

Then, she asked me about the team but when I said that we're called "The Geraldines" she said: "Isn't that a girl's name?" But I didn't say anything. And she asked where we play and I told her Clapham Common. Then she asked if I'd played at the weekend and I told her about the final and winning the trophy.

I told her the score was 4-17 to 6-8. But she couldn't understand how we won with that score, and I tried to explain, but it was very hard. I showed her my medal, and she just nodded and said, "Very nice!"

When I went back to class and it was my turn for 'show and tell', I thought about showing the medal, but it seemed too much to have to explain. So, I showed them my Spurs pencil case and they all seemed to understand that.

(356 words)

Granny's House

In this short story a boy or girl who lives in England recalls holidays that she had with her granny in Ireland.



I can't really explain why Granny's house in Ireland is so different from ours. She has "the central heating" as she calls it, but it comes from a big tank in the yard, it's called an oil tank. She has a fire in the living room, and she burns these little bricks of turf. She told me about how, when she was young, they'd go up to the Wicklow Hills and cut their own turf from the ground, with a cutter called a sleán and they'd put it in a pile by the road to dry before they brought it home to burn. It's true I've seen those piles of turf on the roads in the country when we've been driving round.

Granny has so many holy statues in her house. There's one like a doll in a glass case with frilly petticoats, and it's called "The Child of Prague." She says it's Jesus, but it doesn't look like him to me.

When Aoife and I were there last year, we ran round the house counting them all and Aoife shouted: "There's more Marys in my room than in yours!" The grown-ups laughed, but I think I was supposed to be jealous, but I wasn't. Mind you, I'm not so keen on meeting the picture of Jesus with the blood on his face when I go to the toilet in the night.

On the wall in the hall is a nasty looking stick, it's like a bit of a log, all shiny polished black. Granny says it's a shillelagh and people used to use it if they got into a fight. I asked my Dad if granny'd ever used it on him and he said she never did, but 'watch out for the wooden spoon'. I think she might have smacked him with it when he was little, but she doesn't smack us. She spoils us and makes us pancakes, gives us the big eggs with double yolks from the hens in the garden and Taytos with red lemonade. We love going to Granny's.

(344 words)

Visiting Grandma

In this piece a child explains what happens when they visit their grandparent who has dementia, in an old people's home.



Often, when we visit my granny in her old people's home, she has a case and a coat beside her on the chair. Gran puts her coat on the minute we walk in. Then she smiles and tells us to *'hurry up because we've a long journey ahead because today, we are all going to Mayo'*. Mayo is the county in Ireland that gran comes from.

But we're not, so Dad has to take granny back to her chair and say: 'Not today Mum'. That always makes granny sad, so I hold her hand and say 'Perhaps one day grandma. Perhaps one day'. Dad doesn't like me telling fibs. You see granny is never going back to Ireland. It's because she's too old and too unwell.

But it doesn't stop her wanting to all the same.

Mind you, I'm not quite sure why granny wants to go. Where she lives now seems a much nicer, and we do visit her a lot.

Once, dad showed me a photo of the cottage that granny lived when she was young. It looked really run down. Dad says that the family were poor back then because there were hardly any jobs in Ireland at the time. That's why granny had to come over to England. And that's where she met grandad, who had done the same thing. Dad says that they fell in love the moment they set eyes on each other, in the factory where they both got jobs.

I asked dad why granny would want to go back to somewhere where she was much poorer. He said that it was about 'belonging'. England was a big shock to grandma when she first came over. It was much busier, there were more cars and people than she had ever seen in her life. And she missed her family. Dad also says that some people weren't always nice to Irish people. They called them names. A bit like they do to people who are different today.

Dad explained that this didn't last for long. The homesickness went, granny met grandad, they made friends, then children like Dad were born. They both worked hard and had a happy life in England. The trouble is that gran's dementia has made her forget this bit. She can only remember Ireland and doesn't understand why we won't let her go back.

Poor grandma. Dementia is not very fair is it?

(403 words)