

Gráinne

A Level III Final Project for The Sacred Three Goddess School
by Priestess Emily Beatrice

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INTRODUCTION

Name pronunciationà Grawn-ya

Other Known Namesà Grainne, Grainne, Grinne, Grainia, Grian, Ygraine, Griannon (sun house).
*Grace is also an anglicized version of the name Gráinne.

Gráinne wouldn't have been my first choice for a Goddess project. Her name popped up while I was going through the Celtic Goddess Oracle Deck by Judith Shaw. Then it kept popping up. The more I learned about her the closer I felt to her. The trouble with Gráinne, like many Celtic mythology, is that there is not that much surviving information about her. What we do know has been passed down in surviving stories and indoctrinated into local practices. However, what has survived about her is powerful enough that it has been infused into neo paganism symbolism.

Gráinne and her two sisters form the Triple Goddess aspect. "Both Grainne and Aine were seen by locals as beautiful, golden-haired goddesses who visited their fields and hilltops to protect and nurture the land, people and animals." (Shaw, 2015) There is some suggestion that Gráinne and her sister are the same Goddess with alternating aspects representing the waning and waxing solar year. Gráinne is associated with the Crone Goddess aspect, as well as wisdom, and the earth's fertility. (See Figure 1)

The most interesting aspect about Gráinne is how her elopement story is reflected or at the very last has similar elements to other legends of the British Isles. She or her story at the very least must have been significant because it is very similar to the stories of Arthur and Guinevere, and Tristan and Isolde. All the women involved are promised to an older and/or powerful man, but are involved or in love with a younger man. "The woman's choice of the younger man is reminiscent of the Sovereignty Goddess who chooses youth over an ailing king." (Shaw, 2015) There are also similarities between the story of the Greek Goddess Persephone and an early version of the story of Gráinne the Sun Goddess where she, "...embraced the darkness with her love of Donn, God of the Underworld..." (Shaw, 2015)

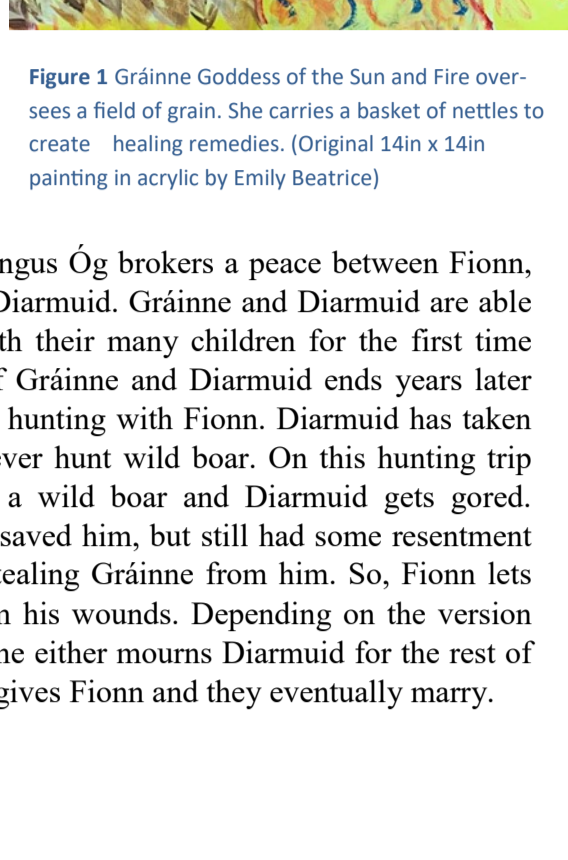


Figure 1 Gráinne Goddess of the Sun and Fire oversees a field of grain. She carries a basket of nettles to create healing remedies. (Original 14in x 14in painting in acrylic by Emily Beatrice)

Finally Aengus Óg brokers a peace between Fionn, and Gráinne and Diarmuid. Gráinne and Diarmuid are able to settle down with their many children for the first time ever. The story of Gráinne and Diarmuid ends years later when Diarmuid is hunting with Fionn. Diarmuid has taken another geis to never hunt wild boar. On this hunting trip they encounter a wild boar and Diarmuid gets gored. Fionn could have saved him, but still had some resentment about Diarmuid stealing Gráinne from him. So, Fionn lets Diarmuid die from his wounds. Depending on the version of the story Gráinne either mourns Diarmuid for the rest of her life, or she forgives Fionn and they eventually marry.

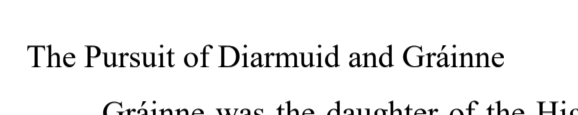


Figure 2 Gráinne Goddess Box featuring a Rowan tree. Gráinne's presence can be experienced at this sacred tree. (8in x 5.5in x 3.25in pine wood box painted in acrylic by Emily Beatrice.)

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Pursuit of Diarmuid and Gráinne

Gráinne was the daughter of the High King Cormac Mac Art. She is referred to as the most beautiful woman in Ireland. Gráinne is eventually promised to the elderly king Fionn (or Finn Mac Cumhal), leader of the Fianna and an Irish giant. The Fianna were a small group of warriors. Gráinne is repulsed by Fionn, but eventually agrees to marry him. In some versions Fionn has to complete an impossible task. In other versions she accepts the marriage as a marriage of convince.

Either way at the betrothal party she is miserable and then she meets Diarmuid, one of Fionn's best warriors. Gráinne and Diarmuid form an attachment, and instead of marrying Fionn she decides to run away with Diarmuid. "Grainne gave a sleeping draught to everyone with the exception of Diarmaid and three of his friends. First she asked those three if they would go with her. They refused. When she asked Diarmaid he could not refuse because he was under a geis, (a sacred vow/magical obligation) to never refuse a woman with particular circumstances which Grainne fulfilled." (Shaw, 2015)

They run away and with the help of Aengus Óg, the sympathetic God of Love, they were able to hide from Fionn and the Fianna as long as they did not sleep in the same place more than once. Diarmuid refused to consummate his love with Gráinne because he is a loyal warrior and a man of principle. He always left raw meat as a token of his abstinence, where they slept for the night. Eventually they consummated their union and had five children. Four boys and one girl. All the while they are still running from Fionn and the Fianna with all their kids in tow. The places where they stopped became known as spots that could help with female fertility, and bond love between lovers. Another place they stopped for the night was under a Rowan tree. This tree from the Mountain Ash family has become associated with Gráinne.

SACRED TO HER

Planet → Sun

Element → Fire

Number → 7

Shrine or Holy Place → Leinster, Ireland.

Festival → Summer Solstice. The first Sunday in Lent is also associated with Gráinne.

Colors → Red, Yellow, Orange, Gold

Plants/Herbs → Gráinne was a master herbalist. Consider all herbs sacred to Her. Agriculture is also sacred to Gráinne. (See Figure 3)

Trees → Birch and Rowan (Mountain Ash)

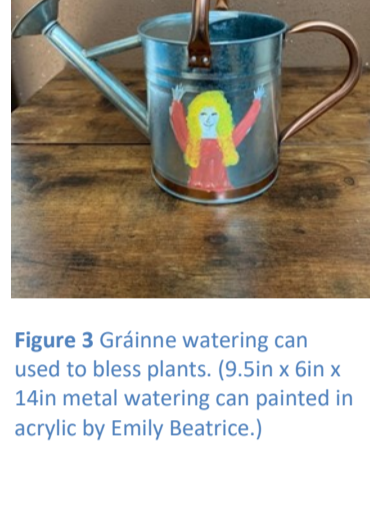


Figure 3 Gráinne watering can used to bless plants. (9.5in x 6in x 14in metal watering can painted in acrylic by Emily Beatrice.)

RITUAL

Ritual for Strength

Sometimes the right choice is the hardest choice. This ritual is designed to give you the strength to find your voice and claim your own authority over your life. Gráinne took control of her life in order to be happy. It was not an easy life by any means. Can you imagine being 9 months pregnant, and not being able to rest in the same place for the night? Then have to do it 5 times over, with many young children in tow? This is while trying to manage a relationship with your very principled partner, and running from your crazy ex and his band of warriors. Gráinne represents a pillar of strength, self-sovereignty, and fortitude. She whispers to us in the middle of the night when we are to keep going. She helps us make plans and hold on to our dreams. Below you will find a ritual to help you grab onto your own strength, and bolster your resilience.

Altar/Sacred Space Preparation

Prepare your sacred space/altar as you normally would. Use items that represent the sun in your ritual space/altar decoration. Use reds, yellows, oranges, and golds. You could also choose some of your favorite herbs to decorate with in addition to the for-mentioned items or research native Irish herbs to incorporate into your ritual.

Purify your ritual space using your preferred method.

Ground and Center using your preferred method.

Ritual Outline

Cast Your Circle:

I cast this Circle drawing from the energy of fire and the sun.

I cast this Circle in the name of Gráinne, Goddess of self-solidarity and strength.

The Circle is cast,

The Circle is cast,

The Circle is cast!

So mote it be!

Call the Quarters:

East →

I call the Guardians of the East!

The element of Air, the home of the waxing moon, and the rebirth of light!

May creativity and our new beginnings be nurtured in our ever changing circumstances.

Hail and Welcome East and Air!

South →

I call to the Guardians of the South!

The blessed element of Fire, the home of the full moon, passion, and the Creatrix!

May fullness and life be nurtured in our ever-changing circumstances.

Hail and Welcome South and Fire!

West →

I call to the Guardians of the West!

The element of Water, the home of the waning moon, the ocean, and the queen matriarch!

May our emotions be tampered by the wisdom of our years and nurtured in our ever-changing circumstances.

Hail and Welcome West and Water!

North →

I call to the Guardians of the North!

The element of Earth, the home of the dark moon, the mountains, and our ancestors!

May our potential and transformation be nurtured in our ever-changing circumstances.

Hail and Welcome North and Earth!

Spirit and Center →

I call to the Guardians of the Center!

The source of consciousness and psychic energy.

To the place beyond time where the Wheel of the Year turns.

Hail and Welcome Spirit and Center!

Goddess →

I call to the Goddess Gráinne!

Goddess of the Sun, fire, and self-sovereignty!

I come before you humbly yet within my power.

Hail and Welcome Gráinne!

Give Thanks

I give thanks for the Goddess provides. I give thanks for the presence of the Goddess in my life!

Intent

I call on Gráinne! Goddess of self-sovereignty. Bring me the strength of the sun and fire to propel me forward as I seek to meet my goals! Just as you took control of your life and forged your own path, guide me as I make my choice. Grant me fortitude as I remember that the right choice is not always the easy choice.

(Take a minute to meditate on Gráinne's journey. How she risked everything for what she wanted. For what she knew was right for her. And how she fought through every day to make that dream a reality. How hard it must have been for her to run for her life hiding in the wilderness with her family.)

I have met with Gráinne. I lay claim to Self-sovereignty, strength, and fortitude.

Closing

An' it harm none, this ritual is done!

Thank and Release Goddess

Goddess Gráinne, thank you for your presence and guidance in my circle. Stay if you will go if you must. You are always welcome here. Hail and Farewell Gráinne!

Thank and Release Spirit & Center

Guardians and Spirit of the Center!

The source of consciousness and psychic energy.

To the place beyond time where the Wheel of the Year turns.

Thank you for your presence here.

Hail and farewell Spirit and Center!

Thank and Release the Quarters

North →

Guardians of the North!

The element of Earth, the home of the dark moon, the mountains, and our ancestors!

May our potential and transformation be nurtured in our ever changing circumstances.

Thank you for your presence here.

Hail and farewell North and Earth!

West →

Guardians of the West!

The element of Water, the home of the waning moon, the ocean, and the queen matriarch!

May our emotions be tampered by the wisdom of our years and nurtured in our ever changing circumstances.

Thank you for your presence here.

Hail and farewell West and Water!

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Guardians of the South!

The blessed element of Fire, the home of the full moon, passion, and the Creatrix!

May fullness and life be nurtured in our ever changing circumstances.

Thank you for your presence here.

Hail and farewell South and Fire!

East →

Guardians of the East!

The element of Air, the home of the waxing moon, and the rebirth of light!

May creativity and our new beginnings be nurtured in our ever changing circumstances.

Thank you for your presence here.

Hail and farewell East and Air!

Take up the Circle

I open the circle now, yet it remains unbroken in my heart.

The circle is open but unbroken.

May the love of the Goddess be ever in my heart.

Merry meet and merry part and merry meet again!

Blessed be!

*Ground post ritual. I suggest a cup of nettle tea in honor of Gráinne.

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