

(A Druidic Play¹) by Susa Morgan Black, Druid (OBOD)

Characters:

Celtic Deities:

Name	Description	Suggested Prop or tool
Nemetona NEH-MEH-	Celtic Goddess of Sacred	Robed in the colors of the
TONA	Groves and forests	forest – greens and browns
Duine Glas DOON-YEH -	The Green Man	Green foliage, Celtic torque
GLAS		

Druid Fellowship:

Name	Description	Suggested Prop or tool
Druid	Master of Ceremonies, dressed in white robe and gold tabard (or plain white	Druid staff or shepherd's crook; or scythe and mistletoe
	robe with no tabard)	
Ovate	Seer; dressed in white robe	Ogham cards in ogham
	and green tabard	bowl, Druid wand
Bards	Poets, Musicians; dressed	Harp or Zither;
	in white robe and blue	Drum
	tabard	
Nymphs	Dressed as fairies	Fairy wands, flowers, etc.

The Ogham Trees (in one of the traditional ogham orders, *Beth Luis Fearn*). Each tree should have a sign with their tree name printed in Gaelic and English, so that they can be easily found at the time of divination

Name	Description	Suggested Prop or tool
Beith (Birch) BEHTH	A young, energetic maiden	white shawl
Luis (Rowan) LOOSH	A witchy, sexy woman	sheer red veil
Fearn (Alder) FARN	A strong determined man, a	Building tools (perhaps a
	"bridge builder"	hammer)
Saille (Willow) SALL-YEH	A mysterious lunar female	Luminescent shimmering
		veil
Nunn (Ash) NOON	A stalwart guardian tree	Spear
Huathe (Hawthorn) HOO-	The playful May Queen	Green and white finery with
AH		a floral wreath
Duir (Oak) DOO-OR	Regal Male, Druid King of	Oak staff, scepter, acorns
	the Woods	
Tinne (Holly) TCHEEN-	Young male warrior	Sword

¹ Inspired by *Oracles from the Living Tarot*, a Magical Acts Ritual Theater production, <u>www.magicalacts.org</u>

YEH		
Coll (Hazel) COLL	Wise Teacher, Scholar	Book of knowledge, or bowl
		of hazelnuts
Quert (Apple) KWERSHT	Consummate Healer	Apples
Muin (Vine) MOON	Party person, bar tender	Goblet of blackberry wine
Gort (Ivy) GORSHT	A wintery queen	Twining Ivy
Ngetal (Fern) NEGEH-	Secretive person	A fan of fern leaves to hide
TALL		behind
Straif (Blackthorn) STRAFE	Dark, sinister, mysterious	Blackthorn walking stick
Ruis (Elder) ROOSH	Wise old woman	Teacup and saucer
Ailim (Pine) A-LIM	Watchman, far seer	binoculars
Onn (Gorse) ON	Sunny, gay disposition	Sun symbol
Ur (Heather) OOR	Hearty Scots character	Scottish tartan, Sprig of
		heather
Eadha (Poplar) EH-YEH	Spreader of information	Communication equipment
Ioho (Yew) EE-OH	Cemetery guardian	Perhaps a spade

Stage Props:

- A set of ogham cards (I recommend the Green Man Tarot)
- An ogham bowl or cauldron
- Two wooden thrones (chairs appropriates draped in green)
- Twenty seats along the sides of the auditorium, marked as the appropriate dates in the Wheel of the Year (see Appendix #3)
- Harp or zither; drum
- Various props to depict the ogham trees

Stage Set:

- Entrance to auditorium is decorated in forest foliage boughs, branches, leaves, arboreal produce seasonal flowers, nuts, fruit, etc.
- Front stage is a simple woodland setting a semi-circular glade in the middle of the woods. There are two wooden thrones, center stage
- The walls along the auditorium are lined with twenty chairs, ten on each side, for the ogham trees to sit for ogham divination.

Act One

BARDS come on stage, sit, and begins to strum their harp (or zither) and drum. (There can be more than two bards, if they want to provide back up music on other instruments.)

OVATE stands by door with bowl or cauldron of slips of paper with an ogham written on it. (If there is a large crowd, there can be more than one Ovate.)

As participants enter between the boughs, the Ovate blesses them and offers them the bowl, from which they select their ogham.

OVATE

Welcome to the Forest!
The blessings of the trees upon you!
Please take a bit of their wisdom,
and seek them out for guidance,
At the time of divination.

Forest Nymphs may then direct the participants to a seat and instruct them to keep their ogham with them for a reading after the play. They must make sure no one takes the seats provided for the ogham trees along the side of the auditorium. This can be roped off until the trees are ready to be seated.

When all the guests are seated, the DRUID appears.

* Extra scene (Appendix #1) inserted here if this ritual is done near the time of Summer or Winter Solstice.

DRUID

Welcome to the Nemeton
Our Sacred Grove.

All trees are holy and much revered by Druids,
Because they are our guides and teachers,
Our protectors and providers,
And our awen, which means inspiration.
They are the very breath of life to us.
Let this ceremony to honor the Trees begin.

Druid raises his staff (or wand) to the air and invokes the directions (Celtic cross wise).

DRUID

May there be peace in the East May there be peace in the West May there be peace in the South May there be peace in the North.

Druid circumscribes three spiraling circles with his staff.

May there be peace throughout the Three Realms.

May the Old Ones come to bless this sacred Nemeton

And witness our Rites.

Druid pauses as if listening.

DRUID

We have been heard. They are coming! They are coming from the Otherworld!

Enter NEMETONA, the Goddess of the Grove; and DUINE GLAS, the Green Man.

DRUID

You honor us with your presence, Nemetona, the Goddess of the Grove, and Duine Glas, the Green Man!

Nemetona and Duine Glas take their thrones on center stage.

NEMETONA

The forest is too quiet.
Let us conjure the spirits of the trees,
With the Song of the Ogham.

Nemetona and the Duine Glas alternatively recite the song, while the bards play, creating an ethereal mood. As they recite, the trees appear and take their places in a semi-circle (behind the thrones) on the stage, facing the audience.

NEMETONA and DUINE GLAS

The wind stirs and, Trees sway and dance,

and whisper in their, Midnight Revelry.

The eldritch Elder, and the noble Druid Oak,

The laughing fairy Hawthorn, and the resilient bracing Alder.

The loving mother Birch, and the stalwart Fir.

The gentle, healing Apple, and the wise old Hazel.

The bewitching red Rowan, and the mighty warrior Ash.

The passionate Holly And the tenacious, binding Ivy

The hearty Highland Heather, and The whispering Poplars

The golden yellow Gorse, and The secret, furtive Fern

The mysterious Willow, and the somber Yew,

The intoxicating Vine, and the darkest tree, The sinister Blackthorn.

DRUID

Welcome, Spirits of the Trees!
In these troubled times,
We have come to offer you our support
And ask you for your guidance.

OVATE

I am an Ovate, a Seer among the Druids.
We come to ask for an oracle
of tree wisdom for the coming year.
Will you grant us this boon?

NEMETONA

Speaking for the trees, We shall do as you ask, For your need is great And our love is strong.

OVATE

Then we shall proceed.
Surrounding us are the stations
Of the Wheel of the Year.
A tree shall be selected
For each station,
And thus our year shall transpire.

Ovate faces audience.

OVATE

But I shall need your help.

It is your year,

And you must select the ogham.

Ovate goes among the audience fanning the cards from the Green Man Tree Oracle in his hands. He offers a choice to someone in the audience.

OVATE

Please take a card and give it to me.

The audience member does so.

OVATE

The time is Samhuinn, the Dance of the Dead, The ogham selected is (ogham)

There are twenty stations in the Wheel of the Year. These stations are represented by the twenty seats along the wall. Each seat is marked as a Celtic festival date or Moon Month. As each ogham is selected, the bard plays, and the tree chants or sings her rune (from Appendix #2).

TREE SPIRIT (sample reading)

RUIS

The Eldritch Elder tree,
Grandmother of the Grove
My wisdom I impart with tea,
In my flower hat and cream lace gloves.

Or perhaps you'll take some wine, Wisdom distilled in elderberry, I'm the Cailleach of the Trine, And an Elder Queen of Fairy.

In Fall I don a coat whose hue,
Deep purple, my delight,
And gently lead the passing souls,
From darkness back to light.

The tree then has an opportunity to manifest the tree spirit in her own way, doing whatever else inspires him or her – dance, cavort, advise, according to the tree's sacred nature. The Tree Spirit then takes her seat at the appropriate station – one of the chairs along the side wall which represents the date the tree was drawn for. In this sample, Ruis would sit in the chair marked "Samhuinn".

The Ovate again has an audience member select a card for the next station (in our example, "Hunter's Moon in November"), and reads it out, and the next tree performs, then takes her designated chair.

When all the oracular trees have taken their places in the seats provided for them along the sides of the auditorium.

DRUID

We thank the trees for Sharing their wisdom this day, And will heed their advice.

OVATE

Now the time has come
For each of you to approach the trees
And ask for a special reading
Of the ogham you selected for your year.
Please find your tree and await your turn.

Audience members approach the trees for a short reading. After everyone has been advised;

DRUID

Please take your seats once you have consulted the trees.

OVATE

As we are a community,
We share a common fate.
We need to know what challenges us
And what is the likely outcome.
Perhaps the Gods will draw these cards.

The Ovate offers the deck to Nemeton and Duine Glas, who each draw one.

DUINE GLAS

Our challenge in the coming year is (ogam)

SELECTED OGAM

The selected ogham comes to the stage and spontaneously gives a brief statement on what challenge the community is facing this coming year.

NEMETONA

The final outcome in the coming year is (ogam)

SELECTED OGAM

The selected ogham comes to the stage and spontaneously gives a brief statement on what the most likely final outcome will be for the community this coming year.

OVATE

And with that, our oracle has been delivered.

DRUID

It is time for the sacred grove to fade into the Otherworld,
Until we call it forth again.
May the tree spirits return to their forests
May Nemetonia and Duine Glas protect the sacred lands
And may all who came to this sacred rite
remember what they have learned today
and go in peace.

Nematona and Duine Glas rise and leave the stage, followed by the ogham trees, the Bards, Ovates, and lastly, the Druid.

APPENDIX #1 - ADDITIONAL SCENE

If this ceremony takes place near the Summer or Winter Solstices, this preliminary scene can be added whereby the Druid cuts the holy mistletoe from the oak.

Drualus, (Mistletoe) DROO-LESS	Dressed in white (for berries) and green (for leaves).	Bough of mistletoe, tied with red thread
Duir (Oak) DOO-OR	Dressed in greens and browns	Oak staff
Druid	White robes	Scythe (gold leaf if possible!) make sure blade is dull, or wrapped.
Bard	White robe with blue tabard	Harp or zither
Village Folk		
Props	Mistletoe, scythe, ivy circlet, white sheet	

Oak stands on stage, holding the hand of Mistletoe aloft. Bard sits on side of stage with harp, and narrates the tale. As the bard narrates, the Druid and villagers enter, and mime the tale as the Bard recites. Then the Druid carefully "cuts" the mistletoe apart from the oak, and leads holy plant triumphantly away, followed by a procession of villagers.

BARD

On the Sixth day after the full moon A procession of village folk.
Gathered to seek a special boon Underneath the ancient oak.

They spied a clump of mistletoe
High in the oaken canopy
The berries gave a milky glow
Against bare limbs of the winter tree. 2

A white robed Druid climbed the boughs
With his golden sickle blade
A green circlet of ivy 'round his brow
His long dark hair caught up in a braid.

Extending his body along a stout limb
He could just reach the holy plant
Anxiously below they waited for him
And began their sacred chant.

Uil-ioc! Draoidh-lus! Sùgh an Daraich!

9

² Or if performed at Summer Solstice – "Against the green limbs of the summer tree."

(mistletoe)

Stretched beneath the gnarled wood A sheet of white linen was spread For the herb to touch the ground would Be an ominous omen of dread.

Deftly the Druid cut the stem
And the herb fell upon the sheet
A cheer rose from within the glen
And the deed was declared complete.

A white bull was sacrificed that night And a midwinter³ feast was held for all The herb was preserved for a holy rite A gift from the venerable Druids of Gaul.

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³ Or midsummer

Appendix #2

The Song of the Ogham Trees.

Ruis

The Eldritch Elder tree, Grandmother of the Grove My wisdom I impart with tea, In my flower hat and cream lace gloves.

Or perhaps you'll take some wine, Wisdom distilled in elderberry, I'm the Cailleach of the Trine, And an Elder Queen of Fairy.

In Fall I don a coat whose hue, Deep purple, my delight, And gently lead the passing souls, From darkness back to light.

Duir

The Noble Druid Oak
I stand among the ancient stones.
The legendary spells evoked,
Lie silent with our buried bones.

But tree and stone together Have conspired a new age And born again are Druids Who are turning a new page.

For the magic of the world Cannot be thrown away The mystery is again unfurled And the Oak shall lead the way.

Huathe

The laughing fairy Hawthorn, Where the Sidhe meet on the First of May, And maidens gather dew, the morn Of this auspicious day.

White and Pink flowers adorn, The garland of a maiden fair, With the calling of the hunter's horn, Beneath the tree, she meets her Laird.

Hawthorn betokens revelry All on a summer's eve, Beneath this holy thorn tree Faerie magic begins to weave.

Fearn

The resilient bracing Alder tree Holy wood of Blessed Bran Who bridged the mighty Irish Sea Using our own body as the span.

Alder bleeds red and true In defense of ancient land Against our foes, old and new Alder makes a valiant stand

Alder, trees of timeless Power, On our watch, we never sleep. Where Raven's guard the sacred Tower, Our alliance with Bran we always keep.

Beith

The loving mother Birch Whose trunk is white as snow In a grove more sacred than a church, Where peace and solace grow.

Beith leads the ogham dance Where we hear first my call I sing my soft woodland romance In a milky moon-white shawl.

A white candle in the deep wood The birch stands for light and purity A beacon, I have stood From the beginning of eternity.

Ailim

The Stalwart young Fir, And the brave Scot's Pine, Tall, straight-limbed are valiant trees in their prime.

Sentinel of the mountains, Warriors of the plains, Guardian of the glens, Where these hardy trees reign.

When Fir and Pine stand guard Our ramparts, none can scale. Our wood, strong, straight and hard Against us none prevail.

Quert

The gentle, healing Apple, From the Isle of Avalon. The boughs, a healing chapel, A place the dead can rest upon.

The garden's fair and peaceful, And the apple blossom's white. The drone of bees, a gentle lull 'Til darkness steals their sight.

Then, Morgan stirs her apple brew, A healing draught to drink. And life begins to stir anew, As death's cold eyes begin to blink.

Coll

The wise old Hazel, In a woodland, deep and cool, Where the sacred salmon dwell, Eating nuts from Segais' pool.

The hazel nuts on Halloween, Foretells our future year. Cast on the grate upon the e'en, The veils do part, and we can peer.

Bringing Wisdom of the Ages, Wood of the Diviner's rod, Favorite staff of Druid Sages, Tree whom the poets laud.

Luis

The bewitching Rowan Red Maiden Tree of Brigid's Day, With my cloak of scarlet thread, I dance with the Winter Fey.

Snow is still upon the ground, I raise up my crimson hood, And dance lightly all around, My berries bright as new shed blood.

My realm the gentle mountain slopes, Along the stony streams, The sight of me can raise your hopes, And remind you of your dreams.

Nuin

The mighty warrior Ash, Provided wood for Nuada's spear And arrows for the archer's cache Wooden weaponry to fear.

Druid wands that hold the key To unleash power of the will, Ash promotes creativity. But, take care, and do no ill!

Ash, the Tree of Destiny, Planted near the holy well, Branches tied with clooties, A place where fairies dwell.

Tinne

The passionate Holly Stirs the fire in the blood. Known for youth and folly, I rule the winter wood.

The Green man is the Holly King, Who challenges the valiant Knight. And rules from winter through the spring, Until the Oak Man shows his might.

Holly keeps the greenwood live, For the holiest of reasons. For in my wood, life will survive, Through the coldest of the seasons.

Gort

The tenacious, binding Ivy, Adorns the Winter Queen. My crown is dark and lively, A vibrant Winter Green.

Ivy lays a lovers trail, To lure sweethearts to the wood, A wreath to hold Marian's veil, While holly adorns Robin Hood,

Broad leaves like roofs in winter dwell, Cloistered on the ground, with Tiny treasures: a cup shaped shell, Proof - a faerie dwelling found!

Ur Heather

The hearty Highland Heather I spread my *brat* of purple glory and withstand the Scottish weather To tells my ancient story.

Sprigs of white heather brings good luck, Gather pink for a lover's tryst, Royal purple lings leave us awestruck, Heather borders the road to paradise.

Called Fraoch by Scottish warriors keen, Who plucked the plant from the brae, And brewed by a good Scots colleen, Heather ale is still drunk to this day!

Eadha

The whispering Poplars
Utter secrets to the wind.
The enigmas of the stars,
We'll share with kith and kin.

Conferring 'cross the forest floor Our message spreads afar From the mountains to the shore We hold a woodland seminar.

Our nature is both black and white As we dwell beneath the Moon Seek us in the day or night And ask of us a boon.

Onn

The golden yellow Gorse, Eternal flower of the Sun. A bright symbol of the source, Of sustenance for everyone.

Plant sacred to the Sun God, Lugh Known as Samildánach. The many gifted one, who For every trade, had the knack.

A favorite shrub of fairy folk, A summer bed we make. Hidden 'neath their fairy cloak, Among the gorse, they lay.

Ngetel

The secret, furtive Fern, Whose seeds grant invisibility. Where being observant you can learn, Of every possibility.

The Faeries guard Fern's powers well, And if you seek to find, Where this magic plant does dwell, It may be you the fairies blind!

But if you dare to use this leaf The hidden world will be revealed. Enchanting scenes beyond belief, Will be in your mind, forever sealed.

Saille

The mysterious flowing Willow, Whispers to the White Moon. My long green fronds gently blow. I'm a Tree of Luna's Triune.

I walk the night in a green veil, My narrow leaves caress your face. My wooden moon-skin milky, pale, A tree of elegance and grace.

By the river's edge I wait, And tells the tale of yore. With silver words I create Dreams along the river shore.

loho

The somber Yews, whom Death knows, whose trunks form the gate to Annwn. Between our roots the river flows, And souls drift to sweet oblivion.

The winter berries shine bright red, Admist our dark green leaves. A beacon to the newly dead, To put their fears at ease.

For the land to which you travel now On the yonder side of Yew Is the apple vale of Avalon Where they drink of life again from Morgan's brew.

Muin

The intoxicating Vine,
The master of the brew.
A magic draft sublime,
Made from berries of every hue.

Fermented crop of bush and tree, or hearty vine of fruitful field. The sacred grape or blackberry, Renders a divine yield.

Vine gives us inspiration, The succor of the bard, Or steels us with courage, When times grow hard.

Straif

The sinister Blackthorn, Of the dark Moonless Night, A weird, eerie tree, sworn To put evil to flight.

A tree of dense thickets, a strong boundary wall, And sharp thorn pickets, That prevail against all.

I dance in the Dark and magic I'll weave, For I am the Monarch Of Samhain Eve.

Celtic Wheel of the Wear

Festival	Date	Oracle
Samhuinn	(October 31)	
Hunters' Moon	(November)	
Blood Moon	(December)	
Alban Arthan "Light of Arthur"4	(Midwinter Solstice)	
Mourning Moon	(January)	
Wolf Moon	(February)	
Imbolc	(February 2)	
Cold Moon	(March)	
Alban Eiler, the Light of the Earth"5	(Spring Equinox)	
Wind Moon	(April)	
Beltaine	(May 1)	
Leaf Moon	(May)	
Flower Moon	(June)	
Alban Hefin, "the Light of the Shore"6	(Midsummer Solstice)	
Fruit Moon	(July)	
Lughnasadh	(August 1)	
Mead Moon	(August)	
Barley Moon	(September)	
Alban Elfed, "the Light of the Water"	(Autumn Equinox)	
Harvest Moon (Start your cycle acc	(October) ording to the date of the per	rformance)

⁴ Known as Yule to Wiccans ⁵ Known as Ostara to Wiccans ⁶ Known as Litha to Wiccans

⁷ Known as Mabon to Wiccans

Appendix #4

Suggested meanings for the ogham readings. These can be cut into strips for participants to keep

7	Beith	Birch Beginnings. Start of a journey. Cleansing. Purification. Need to cut away the old and outmoded before making your beginning. Tree if the Bard.
7/	Luis	Rowan Knowledge of magic. Powerful Witch's wood. Protection against negative magic. Guardian of secrets. Enables you to see through lies and enchantment. Sharpens intuition.
7//	Fearn	Alder Sacred tree of Bran, Welsh God of Wisdom, protector of Britain. Make sure your foundations are stable. Use your knowledge to build bridges. Safeguard yourself and others. Pay attention to oracles. Listen to the Wise Ones.
7///	Saille	Willow Pay attention to intuition over intellect. Be aware of deceit. There is a need to connect with the unconscious or a Wise Woman. Be aware of lunar rhythms. Do not deny the feminine within. Be more aware of the inner levels of self.
7////	Nuin	Ash The Cosmic World Tree. The interconnection of all living things. Connects past, present and future. Divine process. The path of fate. Be wary of isolation and insulation from the process of life. Look for keys and links in your journey.
	Huathe	Hawthorn A time of cleansing and purification. A time to prepare for what is ahead. Be chaste. Protect yourself. Be patient. Powerful fairy tree. Be wary of being distracted or waylaid.
	Duir	Oak Strength and endurance will open all doors. Doorways to mystery will open to you. Take time to regain your strength. You are the guardian. You offer Security and Protection. You are s survivor Tree of the Druid – the teacher, judge, magician, and philosopher.

	Tinne	Holly Male energy. Defensive in battle. Paternity. Good and evil are balanced out. Just retribution. You will be victorious. Beware of petty revenge, bullying, imbalance. Make your objectives clear before you go to battle.
	Coll	Hazel Inspiration and intuition. Salmon's Wisdom. The nine hazel nuts of knowledge. Pay attention to your intuition. The search for the essence of all things. Creativity. Beware of creative blockage. You may be called on to mediate a dispute. Hazel twigs are used to find things. Use your intuition to find what is lost.
	Quert	Apple The Isle of Avalon. Awareness of the beauty of all life. A lover. A time to live fully. Your inner beauty shines and you attract others. Beware of over indulgence, delusions, scattered energy. Also a retreat from life to heal. Contact with those who have passed over. Contact with the Underworld.
/	Muin	Vine A time to harvest what you have sewn. Time to unwind and enjoy, to count your blessings. Your prophetic powers are released, pay attention to your visions.
#	Gort	Ivy Determination and tenacity brings development and transformation. A time of change. Focus on goals and avoid getting caught up in details. Do not get tangled on conflicted in the labyrinth.
#	Ngetal	Fern Actively seek to harmonize the inner and outer aspects of self. A time for ordered thought, careful planning, and direct action. Be straight as an arrow. Beware lack of discretion.
<i> </i>	Straif	Blackthorn A time of strife. There is no choice in the matter, it is beyond your control. You will find the strength to endure. Beware wasting your strength fighting the inevitable. Beware of indulging in negative magic. A time of sacrifice. Avoid bitterness.

	Ruis	Elder It is the end of one cycle and the beginning of a new. A new phase in your life is about to take place. Allow the changes to happen and avoid resistance and stagnation.
+	Ailim	Silver fir From this tree, you can see the distant horizons. Look to the future with objectivity. Use this clarity to wield authority with true balance. Avoid lack of objectivity.
#	Ohn	Gorse Gather together what is truly valuable. You are a collector with many treasures. Enjoy them and use them well. Partake of the gifts therein and gain wisdom. Avoid greed.
#	Ur	Heather Release inner passion and bring dreams to reality. Enter the world of spirit, but avoid getting lost in dreams. A time of healing yourself and others. Beware of betrayal.
<i>##</i>	Eadha	Poplar Inner resilience and endurance. Look within for strength - against adversaries, against illness. Avoid becoming overwhelmed. Words are your shield. Listen to the voice of the wind.
###	loho	Yew A death of self makes way for new self. Transformation. Respect what has gone before, but do not spend time grieving what is passed. Examine your past lives for what you can learn about yourself. Listen to your ancestors. Tree of the Ovate – the Seer and Healer.