

## Sinann ~ The story of a River

***This is an old story, from the Book of Leinster that tells how the great River Shannon began.***

***Almost every river has its own tale to tell. Can you find out the story of your local river?***

**Characters:** *You can easily change the numbers of actors in your play if you wish.*

Sinann

4 Well Guardians

4 Tale tellers

7 children (boys and girls)

5 river people

6 river users

### **Props**

You will also need either a cardboard well shape or some blue crepe paper to make a small pool, some blue crepe paper streamers and some cut out cardboard fish, water bird and boat shapes to hold.

**Tale teller 1:** Once, long ago in the time of tales, there was a well.

**Tale teller 2:** It was a deep hidden pool, planted with nine strong hazel trees. In spring the yellow catkin pollen would sprinkle the water with golden dust, and as the year turned, red nuts would drop softly into the deep reflecting mirror.

**Tale teller 3:** Deep in the pool, the salmon swam, swallowing the nuts as they fell, becoming wise and full of knowledge

**Tale teller 4:** It was a place of wonder and enchantment. *(He looks around as if checking if anyone is watching)* It was a secret place.

*Enter the four well guardians. They are very confident and sure of themselves. They gather around the magic pool.*

*Behind them, in a semicircle come the ordinary folk, boys and girls. They watch the guardians carefully but they do not come any closer.*

**Well Guardian 1:** Secret! It is not a secret to me. I am a powerful wizard. The magic of this well would be dangerous for ordinary people like you, *(he rudely points his wand at the ordinary people)* but not for me of course.

**Girl 1:** *(to her neighbour)* That one is the big-headed guardian. He thinks he knows everything! *The well guardian turns and gives her a conceited stare.*

**Well Guardian 2:** And don't any of you lot *(points to the boys and girls)* even think of coming any closer. Secret places like this are not for ordinary people especially not girls. If girls tried to learn magic, their brains would explode. So JUST KEEP AWAY!

**All girls:** Humph! *(They fold their arms and look disgusted)*

**Girl 2:** He's the bossy one; always trying to tell us what to do.

**Well Guardian 3:** *(pointing excitedly into the pool.)* And just look at all that enchantment bubbling away in the water. *(rubs his hands together).* And it's mine, mine, It's ALL MINE! *(He laughs delightedly and then notices the other guardians. They are staring at him, frowning and tapping their feet angrily.)*  
I mean it's ours. It's all ours!

**Boy 1:** That one is always so selfish

**Boy 2:** The others are just as bad.

**Well Guardian 4:** *(proudly)* My friends, do not waste your time on those ordinary people. They cannot possibly understand the secrets of this magic pool. Only we shall share its secrets. We will be the keepers of the magical salmon. We will be the wisest wizards in Ireland.

*The four guardians face the pool making magic shapes with their wands. They ignore the boys and girls behind them.*

*The children behind them turn to each other as if they are trying to decide what to do.*

**Girl 3:** But I want to go to the well. I want to see the salmon.  
*She begins to creep forward while the guardians are busy.*  
*As she gets close, Well Guardian 1 turns and points his wand at her. She freezes.*

**Well Guardian 1:** How DARE you come here. YOU aren't clever enough to meet the salmon of knowledge. GO AWAY!  
*He waves his wand and she staggers back as if blown by a strong wind.*

**Boy 3:** Watch this. They can't keep me out. I can sneak past anyone.  
*He creeps around avoiding the guardians cleverly until he comes close. Suddenly, Well Guardian 2 turns and points his wand at him. He freezes.*

**Well Guardian 2:** Did you think you could trick me! You're rubbish! JUST DO WHAT YOU ARE TOLD AND GO AWAY!  
*Well Guardian 2 waves his wand and the boy walks stiffly back to his place like a robot.*

**Girl 4:** I don't see why we shouldn't go to the well. *(She thinks for a moment and then nods her head.)* I AM going. So there!  
*She marches towards the well and taps Well Guardian 3 on the back. He jumps and turns to face her. He stretches his arms wide as if to keep her away.*

**Well Guardian 3:** What are YOU doing here? It's mine. It's all mine

**Girl 4:** I only want a drink of water.

Guardian 3: frowns (*he could pick up a glass of water and drink it himself in front of her if you like*)

**Well Guardian 4:** My friends. You are wise wizards. Don't argue with these peasants. Use your magic to send them away..

*The wizards turn with their backs to the pool. Their wands' patterns whirl the children around and out off the acting space. You could make this quite funny. The wands could make the children act like puppets. You could use music or wind sounds for this if you like.*

**Well Guardians:** The magic pool is ours and we shall keep it. *They move to the corners of the acting space and face outward.*

*Sinann enters quietly moving gently, dancing around the edge of the acting area around the Guardians. They do not see her. As the tale tellers speak she slowly dances towards the well. You could play the sound of bubbling water if you like.*

**Tale teller 1:** But there was one who dared to come to the well. This young girl was Sinann, the granddaughter of the sea lord, Lir..

**Tale teller 2:** She moved like the sea, curiously, finding the unguarded pathways. She was unstoppable.

**Tale Teller 3:** Her feet were like white seashells and her hair was woven with the wind.

**Tale teller 4:** The salmon heard her steps from the well and began to flip slow fins.

**Tale teller 1:** As she reached the well the water rose to meet her.

**Tale teller 2:** Waves of white blue, green and turquoise rose to greet her

**Tale Teller 3:** As Sinann laughed the water laughed with her.

**Tale Teller 4:** As Sinann danced, the water danced with her.

*As Sinann reaches the pool, children carrying blue crepe paper streamers can join her in the acting area. Sinann remains still by the pool while the water wavers fill the space around her with movement*

**Sinann:** The Guardians watched in horror as their secrets were scattered

*The guardians react in anger holding out their arms as if to call the river back.*

**Well Guardian 1:** The salmon is escaping!

**Well guardian 2:** Our magic is gone!

**Well Guardian 3:** Our enchantments are washed away!

**Well guardian 4:** Come back. You belong to us!

**Sinann:** It was too late. The well no longer held in one place, had become a river.

*The water wavers with their blue streamers begin to form up into a long river line behind Sinann. They can be joined by others carrying fish shapes, water bird shapes or even boat shapes on sticks. You could play the sound of flowing water or even quiet watery music for this part if you like. The water wavers can move and speak at the same time.*

**Water waver 1:** Sinann danced on and on until she became the river herself.

**Water waver 2:** tumbling over rocks

**Water waver 3:** sparkling into streams

**Water waver 4:** rippling and rolling

**Water waver 5:** until all the land was green and growing

**Fish holder:** creating a world for darting fish

**Water bird holder:** a place for river birds to nest and feed

*Sinann stands still. The water wavers now form up in two lines using the streamers to make a river path. Now you have made a picture of the river with the boat, bird and fish shape holders standing facing the audience with their shapes at the level of the blue steamer water. Now everyone is standing still.*

**Boat holder:** As the river became older she became wider

**Fish holder:** becoming broad and beautiful

**Boat holder:** lifting boats upon her back

**Fish holder:** becoming a wide roadway of a river

**Fish holder:** carrying the salmon of knowledge on its way to join the sparkling sea.

**Sinann:** *(coming to the centre)* Once I was a girl, playing on the hillside by a bubbling pool. Now I am a river. Now I am free.