

# The Children of Lir



The most commonly cited locations for the curse of the children of Lir are Lough Derravarra (Irish: Dairbhreach) in the modern County Westmeath in the north of Ireland, the Straits or Sea of Moyle, located between Northern Ireland and Scotland, and the “Western Ocean”, often singling out the small island of Inishglora (Irish: Inis Gluaire) off the coast of Erris, County Mayo.



The Children of Lir are a widely embraced, almost nationalistic artistic motif in Irish and broader “Celtic” culture. Above is a depiction by Scottish painter John Duncan (1866 – 1945) and to the right is Irish sculptor Oisín Kelly’s interpretation, displayed in the Dublin Remembrance Garden.

The Children of Lir is an Irish folktale in which four children are cursed by their stepmother to spend hundreds of years in three successive locations in the form of swans; her only mercy is to leave them the power of speech and singing.



## Bibliography

McCarthy, Bairbre. *Favorite Irish Legends in Irish and English*. Mercier Press, 1997.

*The Children of Lir*. <http://www.askaboutireland.ie/reading-room/history-heritage/folklore-of-ireland/carlow-folklore/the-story-of-mad-sweeney/the-children-of-lir/>. Accessed 24 May 2018.

"The Children of Lir". *Read*, vol. 58, no. 13, Mar. 2009, p. 14.

## Image Credits

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 Oisín Kelly's *The Children of Lir* via <http://www.flickr.com/photos/turbona/8315874024/>  
 Irish Stamp via <https://roaringwaterjournal.com/2014/10/05/the-children-of-lir/>