

Another beautiful yet sad story is the story of Lir and his children who became swans. Lir's wife, Eva, had given him four beautiful children and died during childbirth. As the children grew, Lir's spirits declined until one day he met Aoife, the sister of his wife. Aoife was possessed of magical powers and soon enough it was known that she and Lir would marry. For a very brief period all was well but it wasn't long before Aoife's jealousy grew towards the children took its toll on Aoife's health. Aoife soon became a changed woman and one day suggested that she and the children should visit their grandfather. On the journey they stopped by a lake and she encouraged the children to go for a swim. The four children played happily in the water, not noticing that their stepmother was now standing at the water's edge wearing her father's magic cloak. Aoife could not kill the children, as Lir's ghost would haunt her forever, instead she decided to change them into swans.

At this she bowed her head and started an incantation. The children looked at each other and saw Aoife open up her cloak from which the great light of a fireball emerged and hurled towards them.

It hit the water and caused masses of steam to rise about the children and they soon lost all feeling in their legs, arms, shoulders and the head. They soon regained their sight only to see Aoife laughing at them.

Aoife scowled at them again and told them that they were to spend nine hundred years as swans, three hundred on Lough Derravaragh, three hundred on the Straits of Moyle and three hundred on the Isle of Inish Glora. To end the spell they would have to hear the bell of the new God.