

Dear Anam Cara Apprentices,

Welcome to Month 2 of the Celtic Myth track. We hope you have enjoyed working with Merlin and your dream symbol for the last month, and are now ready to explore The Children of Lir with us.

In this folder you will find a video dialogue between Phil and Margaret on the Children of Lir, as well as a dream interview template that you will have already received by email. You will also find a recording and script of next month's story "Fionn MacCumhail and the Salmon of Knowledge". Finally, you will find a PDF file containing Jeremy Taylor's Touchstones for Dreamwork, which was mentioned in our last presentation.

Month 2: The Children of Lir

Reading Assignments:

All About Dreams Ch4 and Ch5 (pp102-144)

Awakening the Heroes Within Ch6 and Ch7, The Innocent and the Orphan

Listen to the Land Speak pp60-131 (NB: pp123-131 are about Samhain, particularly relevant this month)

Dream Assignments:

This month we will be working with Gayle Delaney's **Dream Interview** technique (see handout and video link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=omnaIOt3ROM>).

1. When you have completed the reading (Chs 4-5), try diagramming or outlining one of your own dreams (pp104-108). Highlight the feelings in the dream. Try following the four steps of the **Dream Interview** with one of your own dreams:
 - a. Define and describe each of the major elements of your dream.
 - b. Recapitulate the description, either verbatim or in condensed form.
 - c. Bridge to waking life – what does this remind you of in your waking life?
 - d. Summarise the exploration – ask the dreamer how they understand the dream so far and what parts remain unclear.

2. Carry out a dream interview with your dyad partner. This can sometimes be a lengthy process so it doesn't matter if you don't get to the end of it. Try it out, use the handout for sample questions, don't be afraid to make mistakes, and see if you enjoy it! Remember that the dreamer's 'aha!' is the only reliable measure of what a dream means, so don't impose your own views on your partner, no matter how obvious or inspired they seem to you.

Nature Assignment

This month's assignment is to find a 'Sit Spot' (see this video for a good introduction: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TE4l64y4EEw>).

We would like you to begin to form a conscious relationship with a place that is special to you by visiting it regularly and spending time in it as the seasons change (as weather and

good sense permit!). You might return to the practice of ‘Geanceannach’, or ‘love talk’, as outlined by Frank MacEwen in *The Celtic Way of Seeing* pp89-90.

How does your relationship with your sit spot change as you visit it regularly? How do you feel when you are there? How do you imagine your place feels about you?

Dyad Assignment

Please arrange a one-hour (or longer if you wish) Zoom meeting with your Anam Cara partner during the month. Share your experience of the webinar, and the month’s assignments. How does this month’s story impact you? Please note any insights or questions that arise that you might wish to include in your paper. If you are carrying out a dream interview during this session, you may not have time to share everything that is happening for you, so feel free to prioritise!

The **reflection questions** for Month Two are:

1. In times of loss, abandonment or ‘orphanhood’ as shown in the story of the Children of Lir, how do you stay true to yourself (the ‘wise innocent’) when the world seems unfair?
2. Everyone’s family has its strengths and challenges. What strengths and challenges can you identify in your own family of origin?

Journal

We suggest that you journal throughout the month on your reading and experience of this work – noting questions and difficulties as well as insights. You might also wish to reflect on the dyad questions for the month as part of your journaling.

Reflection paper

Your reflection paper should offer insight into how you are engaging with the practices and material for the month, as well as your sense of your larger personal journey through the year. It doesn’t have to be long (1-2 pages) but should include at least one insight from the month and one question that arose for you based on the readings and/or practices. If you are journaling throughout the month, this will help you in writing your papers.

Optional resources

Audio: The *Candlelit Tales* podcast presents and discusses Irish myths. Episode 21 discusses The Children of Lir and you can find it here: <https://soundcloud.com/candlelittales/episode-21-the-children-of-lir>. Warning for occasional use of foul language, but very engaging, and they have space to present longer versions of the stories than we can here.

Novel: Deirdre Sullivan, in her award-winning novel *Savage Her Reply*, presents this tragic story from the perspective of Aoife (or Aífe), the 'wicked stepmother'. Well worth a read.

Images: The beautiful illustrations of *The Children of Lir* are from Irish illustrator P.J. Lynch. Some of them can be found in the collection *The Names Upon the Harp* by Marie Heaney.

Blog: Here you can find an article from The Druid's Cauldron blog on the symbolism associated with swans in the Celtic tradition: <https://thedruidscaldron.net/2022/11/20/the-swan-symbols-of-love-and-oaths/?amp=1>