

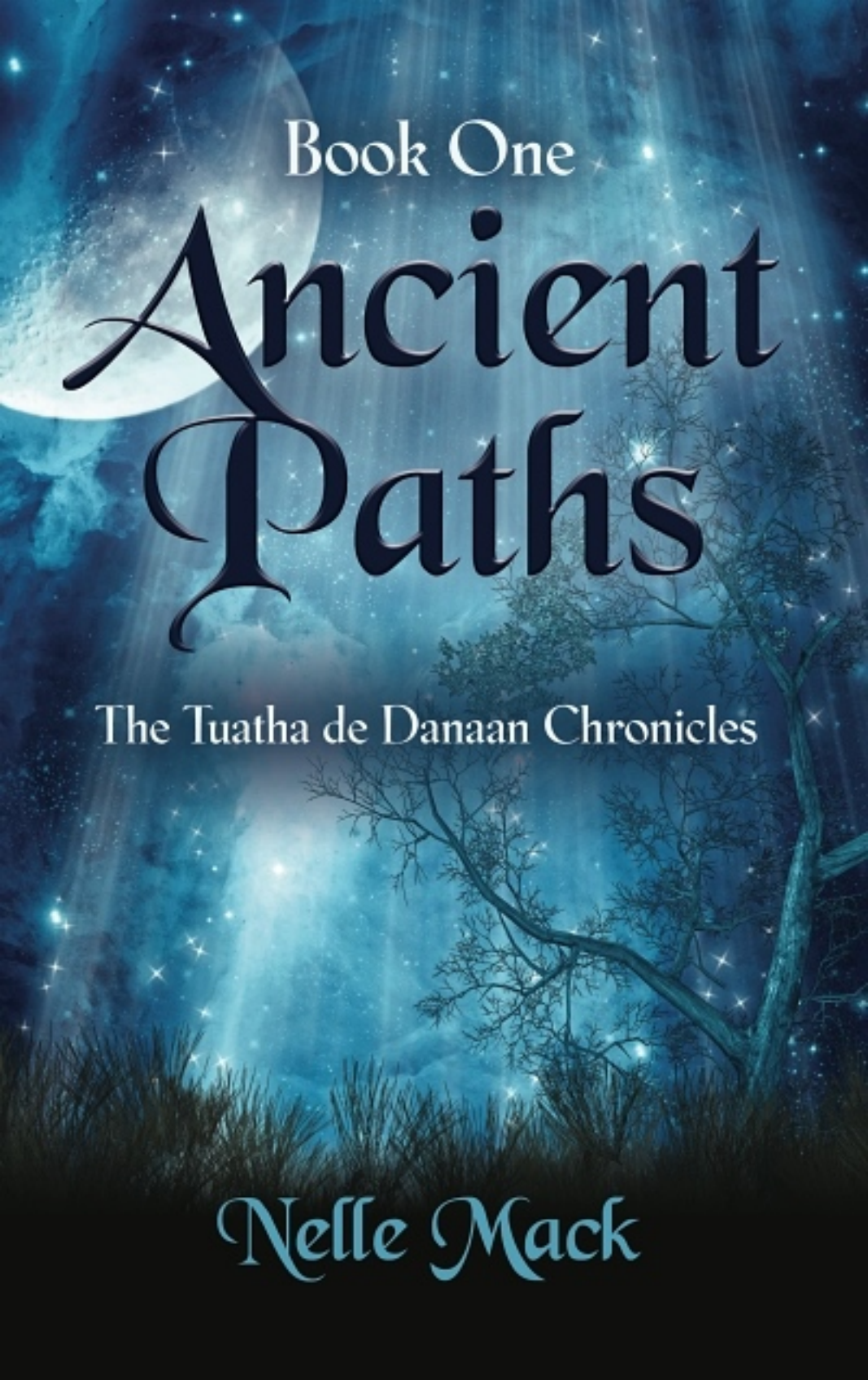
Journey through Ireland with Faelan, as he fulfills the prophecy foretold about him. He learns magic from animals, Gods, Goddesses, plants, and trees. Will he open the portal and let the Fairies back into our dimension?

**Ancient Paths:
Tuatha de Danaan Chronicles - Book 1**
By Nelle Mack

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The background of the cover is a magical night scene. A large, bright full moon is in the upper left, casting a soft glow. The sky is filled with stars and ethereal light rays. In the foreground, there is a dark, silhouetted tree on the right and some grass or reeds at the bottom. The overall color palette is dominated by blues and teals, creating a mystical atmosphere.

Book One

Ancient Paths

The Tuatha de Danaan Chronicles

Nelle Mack

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ONE

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THE TUATHA DE DANAAAN

There was much to do as the fairies were flitting here and there in preparation. They had gathered beside a large mound of earth and were bustling to finish the plans for their travel. The ancient trees that surrounded them gazed upon them with love. Green grass was waving at them as though it knew they were departing and wouldn't see them for many years. The sun glinted off of thousands of wings as the fairies finished their last—minute preparations.

These were the children of Danu, the Fairy Mother Goddess. Their name is the Tuatha de Danaan: People of the Goddess Danu, and they had co—existed with humankind since time began.

Their magic filled the Earth with beauty and grace. There was peace and harmony. This was thousands and thousands of years before Faelan was born. All people believed in magic and allowed it to flow in and through them. They honored all life on the planet and protected the weak.

When a human was sick, they would go lay in the fields and forests to sleep. As they slept, the Fae would come and heal them. The humans gave them offerings of almonds, milk, and honey. The Fae loved helping and humans benefited greatly from their magic.

But the peace and harmony did not last forever.

Danu, as Mother of her people, knew that it was time to move on for the safety and longevity of her people. No longer was their magic revered and sought after. Humans had forgotten the symbiotic relationship they had shared for millennia.

Today, they would leave the earthly dimension and move into a higher dimension. Still living on earth, but phased into another reality, so there would be no interaction with humans. It had become too unsafe and horrifying for the fairies who were pure of heart. Humanity had become ravaging killers. They killed each other for land and goods. Their emotions had degraded until they were selfish and only thought of themselves.

They pillaged the homes and dwelling places of the Fae folk, as some humans called them. Tearing down trees and ravaging the hillsides where the Fae dwelt. This broke the hearts of the Fae who existed to love and nurture nature. There was no longer the magical balance that had existed when time began and all was new.

Her plan was put into place by three trusted advisors. Before her stood a blondish Fae Warrior, by the name of Dain. He was strong in stature and always ready to protect his people. He was clothed in a fine linen suit of dark green and royal blue. A golden girdle, woven from flax mixed with Fairy Dust, brought his shirt and pants together in a royal fashion. His wings were light blue and perfectly matched the icy blueness of his eyes. He wore a headband wrapped around his head made of leaves and flower petals.

Fae knew all about the magic of plants and his headband was made especially for him to sustain his courage and

bravery. Borage and gladiola petals were woven among twined ivy to show his dedication to his position and people. He made a striking impression on anyone watching from afar, as he stood at attention with all his fairy finery on.

Next to Dain stood Aengus, the Irish God of Love. Aengus too was an offspring of the Tuatha de Danaan and a striking one at that. It was decided that he would stay behind to guard the portal for his people. He had taken on human form in preparation for his long sojourn among the humans. His stature was tall, but not too tall. Shall we say he was proportionate in size? His muscular body matched his emerald green eyes and long blonde hair, which slightly curled around his face and shoulders. He dwelt in a castle in the sky, which hung over the mound where the portal travel would take place. His protection and guidance would be vital to be sure their plan fell into place. The four doves that flew above him at all times circled the Fae group, sending love to them as they left the home they had lived in for so many years.

Lastly, a spritely little leprechaun, dressed in green garb with gold buttons and belt, was dancing and spinning, not paying much attention to what was going on. He snapped to attention when Danu raised her voice to be heard above his shenanigans.

“Leary, have ye completed yer portion of the plan?”

“Yes, milady, I have. I dropped that emerald in a very safe place that no one will find until it is time fer the prophecy to be fulfilled. I will be sure to have plenty of bags of gold to hide here and there along our path to aid the lad on his journey.”

“Very well then. Aengus, did ye have the amulet fashioned and enchant it with yer magic?”

“Most certainly I did,” answered Aengus, as he handed the amulet to Leary.

Dain chimed in last, “Mother Danu, the magical Raven will stay near the Hill of Ward. I made a pact with it, and all will go according to plan.”

Danu smiled with pleasure that all was going according to plan and breathed a sigh of relief. She had been under much stress as to how to protect her people. She was glad things were finally proceeding into a more peaceful existence.

A small group of Flower Fae approached the group, carrying with them flower petals and crystals. These were needed to help open the portal and aid the magic of their journey.

Callala, a Rose Fairy, dressed in pink glistening robes, spoke up to Danu. “Mother, we have rose petals to bring us good fortune and lilac petals for protection as we move through the portal. I sent Feya to gather more quartz pieces from the stone circle to energize the incantation and focus our energy into the portal. She brought back such beautiful pieces!”

Feya beamed with delight at the kind words spoken by Callala. She was a shy fairy with purple wings and wore a green robe made from mistletoe leaves. She could sniff out a crystal up to six inches underground and was looked upon with admiration by all the Fae.

All attention turned to Mariposa with questioning glances. She knew what they were all thinking: Will our plan work and will we be safe?

Mariposa had no predominant color as the other Fae did. She was a mix of all colors, woven together into a glorious shining being. Her wings were transparent with rainbow hues

dancing through them as the sunlight diffracted within them. Her gift was seeing the future, and her guidance meant so much to each Fae as they stepped into the unknown.

“I have seen the future and all will be well,” Mariposa said confidently. This caused Leary to dance another jig and sing a catchy tune. Danu laughed and joined his dance. The many fairies watching from a distance took their actions as a good omen, and soon everyone was dancing, twirling in a myriad of colors.

This was great merriment, but Danu knew they must be leaving, so she quieted them all down with her strong voice. “Well done, my daughters! We could not have done this without ye!” Danu spoke with pride and drew her flower daughters close to her in an embrace.

Now she just needed to be sure all her children were gathered and ready for portal travel. Traveling through portals was not generally a dangerous practice, but they must be sure that all made it through together. Once on the other side, the portal would be sealed magically and could not be opened for a very long time.

Gazing around at her many dear ones, she saw the young fairies playing games and throwing dewdrops at each other. She laughed in delight at their innocence and started calling to them to come and gather at her side.

They had chosen the Mound of Newgrange in the northern part of the land to travel through, as it contained a very strong portal that would carry them safely through to the dimension they longed for. Aengus was thrilled to assist them and promised to protect the portal for them once they passed through.

“It be time, my children! Gather close and we will begin the magical journey to our new home!” Danu said as the Flower Fae arranged the flower petals and quartz crystals in a circle on the stone in front of the Mound.

Danu chanted this incantation in her Gaelic tongue to open the portal and allow them through.

“Bíseach, bíseach, oscail mor!

“Spiral, Spiral, Open Wide!

Oscail Tairseach leathnaigh an doras!

Open Portal, widen the door!

Angus Dia, tabhair do lámh ar iasacht.

Aengus, God, lend yer hand.

Seol chugainn go tír níos fear!”

Lead us to a better land!”

All the Fae folk chanted with Danu and the energy built by their incantation forced open the portal and kept it open for their safe passage. As each Fae walked through the portal, a little more magic left our existence and all humans felt the emptiness. It was a sad day indeed for all who walked the Earth, but a new start for the pure of heart Fae folk!

Thus accomplished the plan of Danu and sealed the fate of Faellan, a boy full of magic thousands of years in the future!

TWO

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RAVEN MAGIC

Since that Black Moon eight years ago, much had transpired in the young lad's life. He spent most of his days roaming the countryside around the little thatched cottage he called home. In the morning, right after eating a bit of breakfast, he would wander off into the forest. He always stuffed some bread in his pocket and was often not seen or heard from again until it was time for his father to come home.

People in the village whispered about how strange this boy was and what was to become of him. Nechtan and Aoife cared none of what people said of their lad. They allowed him to live in the wild spaces surrounding them, knowing he was most at home there. They understood he was special and must be allowed to explore and grow in ways others did not.

When Faelan was just learning to walk, Aoife fell asleep by the fire after a long day of cooking and washing. She was visited in a dream by a raven who told her many things about her wee lad. Things many people no longer believe and do not think are possible.

The raven explained that Faelan had a destiny and would be one with the trees, animals, sky, and magic. He would merge with all of these things and become something more—one day setting out on a journey of destiny. Aoife must be

prepared for him to leave and make this journey, knowing he would be safe and would return to her in due time.

She woke with a start, finding herself by the dying fire, and sat for a bit gazing at the glowing embers, wondering about all that had been shown to her in the dream.

She spoke to her husband about it the next day. His eyes widened when he heard of the raven.

"Aoife, my grandfather, Ruadhri, used to tell tales of our family and ravens!" He told her the tales, just as his grandfather had told him so many times.

"In ancient times, before Ireland was a country, the clans lived scattered here and there, only gathering when there was a celebration or war at hand. The O'Broin clan was known by a different name then, the last remembered rendition of which was Bran, but has long been forgotten in time now.

"They neither took part in war nor joined in the celebrations much, as they were considered 'touched' by the other clans. A quiet clan, they kept to themselves. Some said that they could make things happen. They were connected heavily to the ravens that lived around them in the forest, and it was believed that they could control the ravens and have them do their bidding.

"One day, there was a clan warring against another clan and there had been no wrong done by the clan being attacked. It was a bloodbath, with many innocent people being killed. As news traveled to the O'Broin clan, the eldest son of the clan chieftain, whose name was Heyfedd, set off into the forest to the stone circle amongst some old oak trees. He had a small satchel with him in which he had placed some stones and dried herbs. As he reached the stone circle, he walked around it three times and then stepped into the very center. He took out the

stones, each of them having a spiral carved into them, and placed them in a circle around him. He pulled out a leather pouch filled with bog rosemary and began to sprinkle it around him while chanting in Gaelic:

*“Marós, Fitheach le chéile!
“Rosemary, Ravens call together!
Glaigh isteach draíocht do na lag!
Call in magic for the weak!
Ag na déithe nad ag an bandia,
By the Gods and by the Goddess,
Tabhair do cheartas tríd an líontán!”
Bring your justice through the nether!”*

“Suddenly a raven flew into the circle and dropped a feather right into the hand of Heyfedd, who then gathered his stones, and left the stone circle as he began his trek home through the forest. Before too long, word spread throughout the clans of a large unkindness of ravens who appeared at the place where the bloodshed was happening, attacking only the invaders. Many innocent people died in that tragedy, but almost all of the raiding clan died. Their bodies were scattered all over with their eyes and intestines pecked out and eaten.”

Aoife gasped in horror at this story, as her whole body tingled and she knew it was the truth and had great meaning for her young child.

Nechtan continued, “Grandfather used to say that there was a famine in the land around the time of Heyfedd’s grandson, Rani, rising to become chieftain. He was a lad of eleven and his father died suddenly. He was too young to rule

the clan, yet everyone loved him and they were fiercely protective of him.

“The earth had not been kind to the clans that harvest and many were struggling to make it through the winter. Those of the O’Broin clan gathered all the food they could and gave it to the young lad. Then they went back to their huts to wait out the winter, knowing they would not last very long. Rani, touched by the love and care of the clan, sat down by the fire, gazing intensely into the flames. Before long, he saw a raven appear in the flames, and he called to it, asking for help for his people. As suddenly as the raven had appeared, it was gone, and the flames died down as the young lad lay by the fire and slept.

“In the morning, as all the clan people stepped out of their huts into the snow, each saw ravens flying into the clearing that the huts were built in. The ravens were carrying berries, small game, and fruit, dropping them beside each hut and flying off. ‘Twas not even the season for fresh berries and fruit, yet the ravens brought them.

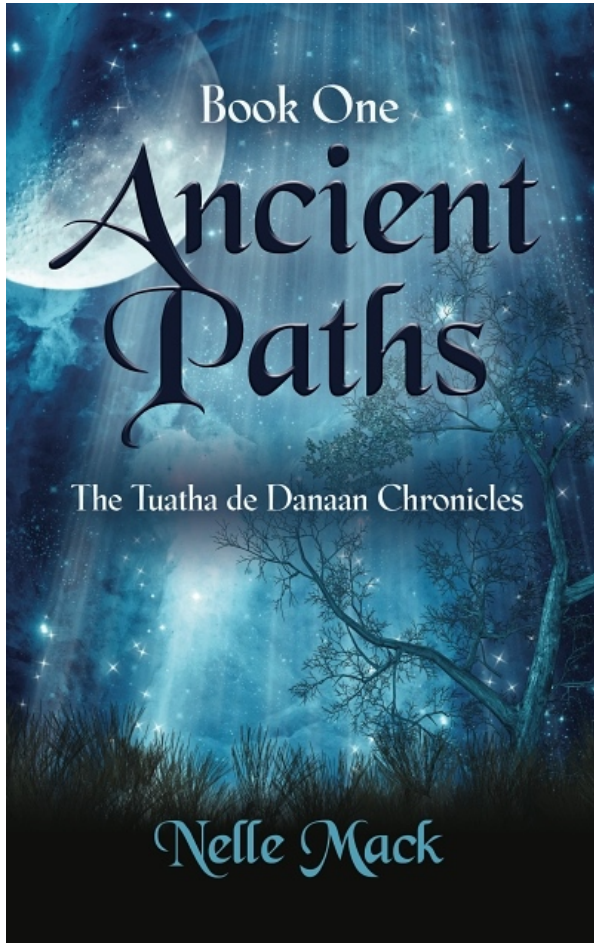
“Everyone stared in wonderment and began to gather the food. They prepared what they didn’t eat right away by drying and preserving it to last the winter. Little did they know that the ravens would keep coming, over and over again the next few days, until the small clan of one hundred people had enough food put away to last them through the winter.

“Everyone in the surrounding clans lost many of their people to the famine, and could never figure out how the O’Broins all managed to stay alive.

“My grandfather shared many stories such as this as we sat around the fire after offering a small gift to the moon each month. No one in the family talks much about ravens and

magic anymore,” Nechtan muttered. “But I do still feel it is all true, and that sometimes when I am out in the fields working, I see or feel a raven watching me, always staying out of sight, but there nevertheless.”

His wife gasped in wonderment and they both tucked these things away to be visited again one day in the future when their son would be called to start his journey.



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