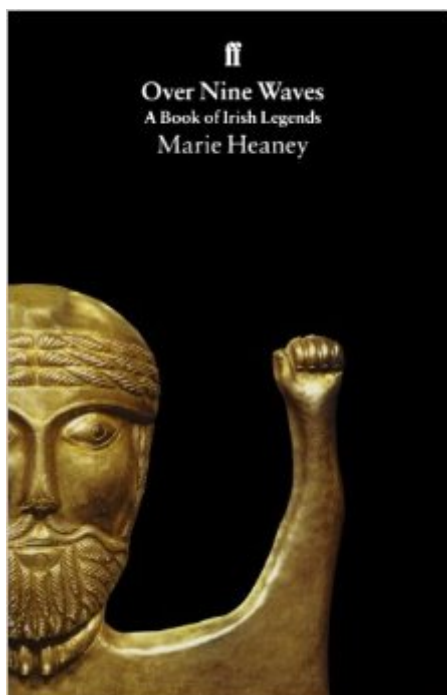


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Over Nine Waves: A Book Of Irish Legends



Synopsis

Journalist Marie Heaney skillfully revives the glory of ancient Irish storytelling in this comprehensive volume from the great pre-Christian sequences to the more recent tales of the three patron saints Patrick, Brigid, and Colmcille.

Book Information

Series: Book of Irish Legends

Paperback: 272 pages

Publisher: Farrar, Straus and Giroux; unknown edition (July 13, 1995)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 057117518X

ISBN-13: 978-0571175185

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.6 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 7 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (13 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #143,718 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #52 in [Books > Literature & Fiction > Mythology & Folk Tales > Folklore](#) #75 in [Books > Literature & Fiction > Mythology & Folk Tales > Fairy Tales](#) #369 in [Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Social Sciences > Folklore & Mythology](#)

Customer Reviews

Over nine waves is a modern (and fresh) rendering of the classic Irish myths. I loved this retelling just as I love the tales themselves. After reading so many 'straight' translations to was very refreshing to read these free renderings by a modern story teller. This is an excellent introduction for anyone not familiar with Irish legend who would like to get an overview. This is Not a 'things go bump in the night' series of ghost stories (though those have their own attractions) but a full blooded account of the legendary heroes of old Ireland (Hercules and Xena eat your hearts out) Prepare to be beguiled by a storyteller of delicacy and magnificence.

After traveling throught out Ireland every year for the past six I have seen many books on Celtic Myths. By far Heaney's is the best. It is very helpful in the fact that there is a pronunciation key included. A great book just for fun, but also a good learning tool that adds another dimention to a very complex land.

This was not one of the typical translations that one reads of the Irish Myth but I still enjoyed it. In this book Heaney worked from existing English translations and put them into a an "easier" style that is more modern and flows smoother than some of the direct translations that are available. Having read several of the other translations for the same stories I have to say she did a very good job. The language is a little elementary, I get the sense that she was writing this in hopes of the tales to be used by mid or high schooled age students, but for the most part is very loyal to the original translations. Frankly this would be better suited to someone as an introduction to the myths to be followed up later by more aggressive reads like *Of Gods and Fighting Men* or the more modern, scholarly translations. Heaney in *Over Nine Waves* included stories from 3 of the 4 mythological cycles of Ireland. Oddly she leaves of the Historical Cycle tales and replaces them with stories of the Three Saints of Ireland (Patrick, Brigid, and Columcille) while an interesting read they also seem a little jarring next the earlier texts which are faithful in highlighting the pre-Christian deity even calling them Gods and Goddesses. I have no way of knowing but I must assume this has more to do with the religious tradition of the author than any kind of desire to reunite the Mythological, Ulster, and Finnian Cycles with the stories of the Saints (of which only the story of Oisín's return would make any sense and he does not convert anyway). Over all I enjoyed the read and although almost all of the poetry is left out of this text so are some of the more tedious medieval structure of other translations. For someone new to Irish Myths this would be a great place to start.

This book was required reading for an Irish mythology class I took a few years ago while studying in Ireland. This book is very easy to read which makes it easy to know the characters and sympathize with them, even for someone new to this subject. For instance, I nearly cried after reading 'The Children of Lir.' A perfect book to read on a rainy afternoon - with a pint of Guinness!

This book is really great. In a form of a tale, the author tells you, the "beginnings" of the Irish myths, their heroes, their Deities, their adventures and misfortunes. Everything is told in the form of a small tale, very easy to read and to understand. This is a book for every age, for scholars that are interested in mythology, for teens that like a tale of romance, and for children who always welcome tales of every kind. Bryseyas

I possibly would have gotten more out of this as a beginner, although I'd still recommend Ella Young's "The Tangle-Coated Horse" (Fionn cycle), Lady Gregory's "Gods and Fighting Men" (Mythological and Fionn cycles), and Kinsella's or Carson's "The Tain" (Ulster Cycle). It's a broad

rather than deep book, and rather flat and prosy. To some, that might be helpful, but I found that it made a sad muddle of the longer tales (most notably, "The Pursuit of Diarmuid and Grainne"), and the description of of the Otherworld in "The Voyage of Bran" also suffered. A number of the tales are sadly compressed (the Tain, in particular). In some ways, this almost reads like study notes, or a summary made for someone planning on writing historical fiction. Not that this is a bad thing, just not what I would want for an introduction to the subject. And while I can understand that it might be hard to pick out a representative and entertaining selection from the Cycles of the Kings, I still would have preferred that to the Lives of the Saints section that ended the book.

Marie Heaney, the editor of this collection of Irish myths is the wife of Seamus Heaney, Nobel Prize winner for poetry. She has assembled an impressive group of Irish myths sure to please those interested in Irish history. The myths are based on translations of early manuscripts but written in a modern, clear style. Fantastic tales, wars wife-stealing and druid magic excite the imagination. Although the slender book, slightly over 200 pages, will appeal to a select group of readers they will be well rewarded by Marie Heaney.

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