

When the Land Was Not Owned

A Living Story of a Shared World

Hirad Abadi

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Author's Note

This story did not begin as a lesson.

It began as a listening.

Long before borders were drawn, before land became property and value became

something to store or trade, many human communities lived inside a different understanding of the world—one in which belonging mattered more than possession, and responsibility mattered more than control.

This novel is not a retelling of any single Native American nation's history or sacred tradition. It is a work of fiction, shaped by study, reverence, and imagination, inspired by Indigenous philosophies of shared life, reciprocity, and relationship with the land. The characters, places, and events here are invented, but the

worldview they gesture toward
is very real—and very old.

In writing this book, my
intention was not to preserve a
past as something pure or
unreachable, nor to suggest a
simple return to earlier ways of
living. The world has always
changed, and it always will.
What interested me instead was
a quieter question:

What did it feel like to live
before division became normal?

Before ownership hardened into
identity?

Before fear taught us to
measure what we had instead of
who we were?

I chose story over explanation
because stories are how wisdom
survives. Philosophy can argue.
History can document. But
stories invite us to enter a way
of seeing—if only for a while.

If this book unsettles you, I
hope it does so gently.

If it comforts you, I hope it does
not let you rest too easily.

And if it makes you look
differently at land, at

community, or at what it means to belong—then it has done what it was meant to do.

This book is offered with respect: to the peoples whose ways of life inspired it, to the land that still carries their memory, and to the reader, who brings the story fully alive by reading it.

— Hiran Abadi

The Story of the Land That

Refused a Name

Before the people learned to draw
lines,

before they learned to count more
than what their hands could hold,
the land had no name.

It did not need one.

The hills rose without being
asked.

The rivers moved without being
told where to go.

The trees leaned toward light and

did not keep it.

When the people arrived, they
came quietly.

They did not say, This is ours.

They said nothing at all.

They listened.

They learned which stones were
warm in the morning,

which waters remembered
footsteps,

which winds carried news from

places not yet walked.

For a long time, this was enough.

Then one day, a person stood on a high place and said,

“This land should have a name, so we can remember it.”

The land did not answer.

Encouraged by the silence, the person said,

“If it has a name, it can belong to us.”

That night, the river shifted its course.

In the morning, the path to the water was gone.

Another person said,

“Then let us mark it, so it will not leave.”

They cut into the bark of a tree—
not deeply, not cruelly—
just enough to remember.

The tree did not fall.