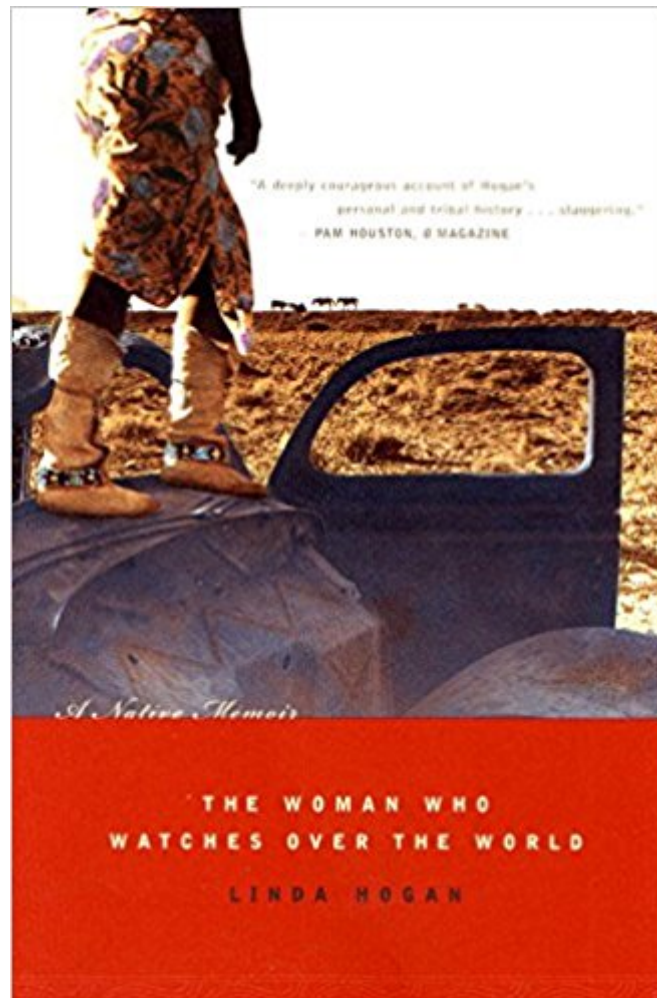




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# The Woman Who Watches Over The World: A Native Memoir



## Synopsis

"A deeply courageous account of Hogan's personal and tribal history...staggering." —Pam Houston, O Magazine "I sat down to write a book about pain and ended up writing about love," says award-winning Chickasaw poet and novelist Linda Hogan. In this book, she recounts her difficult childhood as the daughter of an army sergeant, her love affair at age fifteen with an older man, the legacy of alcoholism, the troubled history of her adopted daughters, and her own physical struggles since a recent horse accident. She shows how historic and emotional pain are passed down through generations, blending personal history with stories of important Indian figures of the past such as Lozen, the woman who was the military strategist for Geronimo, and Ohiesha, the Santee Sioux medical doctor who witnessed the massacre at Wounded Knee. Ultimately, Hogan sees herself and her people whole again and gives an illuminating story of personal triumph. "This wise and compassionate offering deserves to be widely read." —Publishers Weekly, starred review

## Book Information

Paperback: 224 pages

Publisher: W. W. Norton & Company; 4/17/02 edition (May 17, 2002)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0393323056

ISBN-13: 978-0393323054

Product Dimensions: 5.1 x 0.6 x 7.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.0 out of 5 stars 31 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #357,758 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #159 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Ethnic & National > Native American #1130 in Books > History > Americas > Native American #1627 in Books > History > World > Women in History

## Customer Reviews

In a Cree Indian story, Wolverine convinced the animals of the world to keep their eyes closed, so humans wouldn't see their "inner fire" and try to steal it. People, too, can close their eyes and protect their inner fires even if it means those fires may burn them, observes Hogan (Mean Spirit), an award-winning Chickasaw novelist and poet. She herself was seared by such bottled-up fire throughout her girlhood. Raised by an alcoholic, army sergeant father and a pathologically silent mother, she turned first, at age 12, to a steady older lover, then to alcohol. Her adult life, too, has

been a series of struggles adopting two seriously disturbed children, enduring amnesia following a head injury and coping with her fibromyalgia but she has learned from each experience to find beauty and grace even in darkness. Hogan's memories spill out in waves of layered associations: from fire to pain, from "phantom pain" to "phantom worlds," from glaciers to dreams. Into her personal history, she integrates stories from the American Indian past. In Hogan's writing, the smallest detail can evoke a whole history: that Chief Joseph's skull was sold to be used as an ashtray sums up the tragic mistreatment of American Indians at the hands of whites. Wiping out so much Native wisdom has left our world diminished, defoliated in "landscape and spirit," in Hogan's eyes. Still, Native culture is beginning to thrive again, reminding us that just as every "before" has an "after," "beginnings" have "returns." Life, Hogan concludes, "may never be easy but may be beautiful," even in this "broken world." This wise and compassionate offering deserves to be widely reviewed and read. Agent, Beth Vesel, Sanford J. Greenberger Associates. (June)Forecast: Deep and full of grace, Hogan's writing is every bit as good as ever. Anyone who knows anything about Native American writing will rush to buy it.Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Following critical praise for her other works, including the Pulitzer Prize-nominated novel *Mean Spirit*, Hogan offers a memoir rich with the texture of her life as a Chickasaw Indian. Each chapter weaves together her personal and often tragic experiences as the daughter of an army sergeant with Native history, myths, legends, earth, and contemporary life. Although she is often depicting painful events, her voice resonates calm. For example, an unsettling discussion of her pubescent love affair with an adult man while her family is stationed in Germany introduces exploitation and abuse. This is followed by the strong and tranquil chapter "Water: A Love Story," in which she crosses the ocean on her return to America. She is a "child held up by water" as she travels "away from a broken human past." Even the chapter titles emit an otherworldly quality: "Fire, Dreams and Visions: The Given-Off Light," "Silence Is My Mother," and "Bones, and Other Precious Gems." Words, after all, "are the defining shape of a human spirit." A very good book that goes a long way toward explaining Native Americans today; for all academic and public libraries.- Sue Samson, Univ. of Montana, Missoula Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Linda Hogan's prose is simply beautiful. Her book of essays, *Dwellings*, is one I've read a number of times because it is wise and elegant, so when I saw that she'd written a memoir, I was eager to read

it, but doubted it could rise to that level of excellence. It does. Not only do we receive her story, which honestly includes years drinking , a youthful love affair, current painful illness, and her devastating injury on a horse, but it is delivered in crafted language. The result is difficult stories carried in lovely phrases, evocative images, and profound reflections.

This memoir takes you on a frank and honest journey into the world of Linda Hogan. Her personal spirituality vis-a-vis her Chickasaw background is a foundation for much of her way of looking at the world. It has clearly been a source of strength and resilience for the difficult times she has faced and overcome. I was awestruck at the beauty of the language, yet found myself reading faster and faster just to find out how Hogan survived the many events. Brilliantly executed and crafted, this is a wonderful book by one of the country's leading writers.

I read this novel for class (lit. masters student) and loved it so much that i literally give it out as gifts for any occasion. it is sensitive. and if nothing else, her ability to communicate to the reader is completely profound and leaves the audience feeling like s/he knows hogan on a deeply personal level while learning much about our cultures."Our healing, we both knew, was connected to this other healing, as woman to land, as bird to water. We are together in this, all of us, and it's our job to love each other, human, animal, and land, the way ocean loves shore, and shore loves ocean and needs the ocean, even if they are of different elements" (29).

I enjoyed this very much in the early chapters, but found the last few rather tedious. But still worth reading. I am a big Hogan fiction fan--I think her Mean Spirit is my favorite. The first part reaches that level of interest and insight, in my opinion, but the ending does not.

i'm mixing them all together and forgetting which is which. this has good parts and intense parts. Mean Spirit is the best. she does say amazing things and i am reading them all.

A tender, tough telling of the Native Woman's soul. An unsentimental account of the mind and heart, Linda Hogan takes us in and teaches us about a world unknown to most. A sensitive sharing that will enlighten even the most reluctant heart.

This book is characterized by beautiful writing and deep insight. Hogan is a brave writer, not afraid to go where experience takes her. Enjoy. I did.

I had to get past the broken sentences, but after reading several pages, I learned to love and appreciate this book.

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