



THE WAY
OF SUIYA

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The Way of Suiya

A Novella of Water, Silence, and Belonging

by P. A. Rallax

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The river doesn't copyright itself. But we do, just in case someone tries to put it in a museum.

To the water —

that never asks permission to flow,
and still nourishes everything it touches.

Prologue: The Map That Led to Nothing

I once carried maps that folded into perfect squares.

Their corners were worn from years of turning, tracing, and doubting. The cities were drawn in sharp black ink. Rivers were blue like memory. Mountain ranges curled across the page like sleeping beasts. I believed that if I had enough maps, I would not get lost.

But no map prepared me for what I found.

Or rather, what I stopped looking for.

I was an archivist once—back when archiving mattered. My work was to preserve information from the old world: contracts, codes, war records, treaties that had already been broken a dozen times before they were ever written down. I lived surrounded by history, convinced that knowledge would save us if only we could remember enough of it.

Then the networks collapsed. The grids flickered and died. Silence spread faster than panic.

People scattered like leaves. Most ran toward walls or flags or fire. I walked toward water. Not out of wisdom, but weariness.

And it was there—between one broken stream and the next—that I came across a path that wasn't on any map. It wasn't even a path, really. Just a bend in the river, a fallen tree, and the unmistakable feeling that something **wasn't waiting**, but **had never left**.

That's when I found Suiya.

No signs. No gates. Just a village too quiet to explain itself.

They didn't ask who I was. They didn't tell me who they were. They gave me tea and silence. I kept waiting for someone to introduce themselves as the elder, the mayor, the keeper of the rules. No one did.

Eventually, I realized: **no one was leading them**—but they were not lost.

They lived without rulers, without punishment, without praise. Their decisions came like water—slow, clear, and almost invisible. They said little. They listened more. And when they disagreed, they walked upstream together until they didn't.

I did not believe in miracles. I still don't.

But I believe in places that make them unnecessary.

This is the story of such a place.

It's not a tale of revolution, or utopia, or salvation. It is, simply, the story of **what remains when nothing is forced.**

It is the way of Suiya.

Chapter 1: The Broken Compass

The compass broke two days before I found the stream.

Or perhaps I broke it—twisting it too often, demanding it point somewhere it no longer recognized. It spun in slow circles like it was tired of pretending north still mattered. I threw it against a rock, and it bounced once before settling face-down in the dirt. I didn't pick it up.

I walked south, or west, or nowhere in particular. The sun was no help. It just hovered, stubborn and eternal, casting the same golden blur on every stone ridge and dry root. I had one ration left, half a page of my old field journal, and a throat that tasted like forgotten things.

Then I heard water.

Not a roar. A whisper.

A stream no wider than my outstretched arm, barely enough to kneel beside. But it moved—clear, clean, indifferent. It didn't beckon. It didn't care if I followed. But I did.

I walked alongside it for a day and a night.

When I tried to cross it, the stones slipped from under me. I stayed on the same side after that.

The land softened. The wind grew quiet. Somewhere in the trees above me, birds sang in rhythms I didn't recognize. Their melodies didn't mark time—they ignored it.

By midday on the second day, I saw a stone path sloping downward. Not built—just arranged. Flat river stones laid into the earth like someone had *listened* to where they wanted to go before placing them there.

And then: rooftops. Smoke curling gently from chimneys. Wooden homes pressed into the hill like they had grown there.

I stepped onto the first stone, then the second. My boots made no sound. The water kept moving beside me, not faster, not slower. Just moving.

No walls. No guards. No flags. Just a child.

She stood barefoot near the stream, holding a bowl carved from a gourd. Her hair was wet. She didn't speak. She didn't run. She dipped the bowl in the stream, drank once, and walked away, leaving the bowl on a flat stone.

I stood there for a long time, waiting for someone to challenge me, question me, measure me.

No one did.

Finally, I sat.

The bowl was still wet where her lips had touched it. The stream hummed beside me. I looked back once at the path I'd come from—silent, dry, and straight.

Then I looked forward—into the place with no gate, no sound of machines, no questions.

I didn't know it yet, but I had crossed a border that wasn't marked by fences, only by the **absence of urgency**.

Somewhere behind me, the world was still spinning and collapsing.

But here, water moved, and people listened.

I had arrived in Suiya.

Chapter 2: No One in Charge

The first person who spoke to me was not the one I assumed would.

It was not an elder, nor a guard, nor a man with keys or a book or a list of names. It was a woman kneeling at the edge of the stream, placing something beneath the surface with careful fingers. A leaf boat, pale and trembling, floated for a moment, then caught a current and disappeared around a bend.

She stood, dried her hands on her skirt, and looked at me.

“You’re early,” she said.

I wasn’t sure how to answer. I hadn’t been expected. I hadn’t even known I was coming here until I arrived.

“I—don’t think I am,” I said.

She smiled gently, as if I had misunderstood a joke she hadn’t told yet.

“Then you’re exactly on time,” she replied.

She walked past me, and I followed. Not by invitation—just curiosity. She moved like someone who didn’t need to arrive anywhere. Every step was part of something complete.

The village opened slowly, like a book whose first pages are blank. There were no signs, no town square, no center to announce itself. Just low homes with stone thresholds, shaded gardens, and bowls resting on windowsills like patient animals.

I saw people, but no one stared. A few nodded. One old man waved without pausing from shelling beans. Two children ran laughing around a tree and vanished behind a wall of hanging vines. It was quiet, but not silent. A kind of listening was happening, and I was still too loud to hear it.

I looked for a town hall. There was none.

A bell tower? Nothing.

A sign that said anything at all?

Only a painted piece of wood by the stream's curve, worn with weather.
On it was written:

"Speak only after the third breath."

That was the first rule I encountered. It turned out to be the last as well.

I stopped the woman—if that's what it could be called. I walked a little faster, then slower, then beside her.

"Who's in charge here?" I asked.

She turned toward me with the same expression she'd had before: mildly amused, fully at peace.

"No one," she said.

I nodded slowly. "So—there's a council?"

"There's no council," she said. "Unless there needs to be one."

"Elders?"

"Some are older."

"Leaders?"

"Sometimes someone speaks. Then someone else does."

I frowned. "But who decides? Who... resolves things?"

She stopped walking. We stood beneath a tree that shed its leaves in slow spirals, like it was trying not to disturb the air.

"You came from a place where everything had to be decided," she said.

"That's why you think decisions come from people."

"Don't they?"

She reached down and lifted a small pebble from the ground, tossed it into the stream. The ripples moved outward, passed around a rock, and rejoined the current.

“That ripple didn’t decide to avoid the stone. It just did.”

I didn’t answer. I didn’t know how.

She pointed to a smooth flat stone at the edge of the stream. “Sit there a while. You’ll see.”

Then she left.

Her name, I would later learn, was **Maevi**. But no one introduced her. She never gave a title. The villagers called her nothing special, and listened to her without ever saying why.

I sat on the stone and watched the water. It didn’t answer me. It didn’t change. But I stayed, because something in me had already begun to loosen—something that had held on too tightly for too long.

That evening, a child brought me a bowl of warm food. She said nothing, only placed it in my lap and sat across from me, swinging her legs.

I looked at her. “What’s your name?”

She shrugged. “Linn,” she said. “Just Linn.”

“Who sent you?”

“No one.”

I nodded. “And what do I do tomorrow?”

She tilted her head. “Wake up.”

Then she smiled, picked up my empty bowl when I’d finished, and walked into the dark, humming to herself.

The stream continued whispering beside me, utterly unconcerned with who I was or what I’d done.

And for the first time in my life, **I didn't know who I was supposed to become next.**

Chapter 3: The Council of None

On the third morning, the bell did not ring.

Because there is no bell.

But something changed in the air—an unspoken shift. People moved differently. The stream, usually murmuring gently through the center of the village, now ran cloudy with soil and silt. A stone channel had collapsed overnight, causing water to spill into one of the gardens.

In the world I came from, a situation like this would require urgency, a team, a meeting, a blame report. I rose, ready to help. Ready to **organize**.

By the time I arrived at the scene, ten or twelve villagers were already there.

No one spoke.

One person squatted by the broken channel, watching the water like it was giving instructions. Another retrieved a long reed and tested the depth. A woman placed a small rock where the flow split, adjusting it minutely, then stepping back.

There was no command. No arguments. No list of next steps. And yet—something was clearly happening.

I turned to the woman nearest to me. “Is there going to be a meeting?”

She blinked at me. “You’re standing in it.”

I looked again. There was no circle. No raised voices. No vote.

Just **presence**.

People took turns stepping forward, trying small actions—placing a stone, removing debris, redirecting the current. Each gesture was **temporary**, and no one insisted their solution was final. If the water accepted it, they left it. If not, it was undone without offense.

I walked to Maevi, who stood farther back, arms folded, simply watching.

“Who decides when it's done?”

She didn't look at me when she answered. “The water.”

I laughed once, softly. “No seriously.”

She smiled, still watching. “That was seriously.”

She gestured toward a flat stone near the edge of the garden. A small carved phrase had been inscribed into it, now partially buried in mud:

The Council of None has met.

The words looked old, as if they had been there long before the village.

I looked back at the group. They weren't debating. They weren't assigning roles. They were responding—listening as much with their hands as with their eyes.

A young man I hadn't seen before approached the broken part of the channel. He didn't speak. He simply placed three small stones in a triangle, stepped back, and sat down. Others paused, looked, and did nothing.

Apparently, that was the decision.

The group gradually drifted away. Some went to tend to the garden. One woman pulled water from the restored stream. No one acknowledged an ending. No one declared success. The work had simply... stopped needing to be done.

I stood there for a while after everyone had gone.

There were no signatures on the solution. No names. No credits.

Just the triangle of stones, still wet from the current.

That night, I asked Maevi if I could sit beside her at the stream. She nodded and said nothing.

We watched the water together in silence.

After a long time, I said, "In my world, the more important something is, the more people fight to be in the room where it's decided."

Maevi reached down and skimmed her fingers just above the surface of the stream.

"And in this world," she said, "the more important something is, the more we try to **leave the room entirely.**"

She stood and walked away without a sound.

I remained there in the dark, listening to the stream as if it might say something only I could hear.

It didn't.

But somehow, I understood more than I did the day before.

Chapter 4: The Listening Pool

It wasn't marked on any map, of course.

Nor was it visible at first glance. The stream curved gently through a grove of pale-barked trees, then widened into a shallow, circular basin carved by time and intention. Smooth stones lined its edge like a handmade bowl offered to the sky. At the center, the water shimmered so clearly it seemed to contain no depth at all—just silence, resting.

Linn took me there on the fifth morning without explanation.

She didn't speak as we walked. That was common. She simply led me with a piece of ribbon tied to her wrist, the other end looped loosely around mine.

When we arrived, she unfastened the ribbon and handed me a small folded piece of bark and a wax pencil.

"Write one," she said.

"One what?"

She gave me a look that children seem to be born knowing how to give. A mixture of patience and disappointment.

"A question," she said.

I hesitated. My mind went to large questions—too large. What happened to the old world? Will civilization return? What is the meaning of—

She tapped the pencil against the wax bark.

"Not a loud question," she said. "A quiet one."

I thought for a while. Then I wrote: *What am I for?*

Linn read it and nodded. "That's better."

She helped me fold the bark into a tiny boat, shaped it with care, and set it gently in the pool. It floated for a moment, spun once, then twice, then

slowly drifted toward the far edge, where a cluster of reeds leaned in like eavesdropping monks.

It caught on a rock and stopped.

Linn clapped once, satisfied.

“What does that mean?” I asked.

“It means not yet,” she said.

“And if it had circled three times?”

“It means the water has answered yes.”

“And if it sinks?”

She shrugged. “Then it’s time to stop asking.”

That afternoon, I returned alone. The pool was empty now, except for a few abandoned bark boats caught in the reeds or pressed flat from old rains.

I sat and watched for a long time.

It wasn’t a place of power, not in the way temples are built to feel. It was simple, unguarded. Anyone could come. No one seemed to watch over it.

And yet, it felt more sacred than any altar I had seen in the world before collapse.

Because it asked for nothing but stillness.

And perhaps because it didn’t promise anything either.

Later, I asked Maevi about the pool.

“Does it really answer?” I asked.

She was pruning vines from a stone arch, her sleeves rolled to her elbows, hands muddy.

“No,” she said.

I frowned. “But the boats—”

“Don’t answer either.”

“Then what’s the point?”

She stood up straight and looked at me, not unkindly.

“The point,” she said, “is that you think there needs to be one.”

She rinsed her hands in a small basin of stream water, then added, “When a thought is ready to leave your mind, you let it float. Sometimes it returns. Sometimes it’s taken. That’s all.”

That evening, I sat at the Listening Pool again. I didn’t bring a question. I didn’t bring anything at all.

But I stayed until the stars began reflecting on the water’s surface, and I listened—not for an answer, but for the space where a question had once been.

And there, in that widening quiet, I began to understand something:

Suiya didn’t erase your questions. It gave them room to dissolve.

Chapter 5: Drought of Control

It began with a gesture I told myself was helpful.

A stone had slipped from the stream wall near the gardens. Water was leaking just enough to form a shallow, muddy puddle. No one seemed concerned.

I waited a day. Then another.

On the third day, I walked down early, long before the others rose, and replaced the stone. I wedged it tighter than it had been before. I adjusted a few others nearby for symmetry. I shaped the edge of the streambed to improve the flow. I even packed the soil with my hands to keep it firm.

It looked better. Cleaner. Straighter. More efficient.

That afternoon, I saw Maevi walking nearby and gestured toward my work.

“The overflow’s fixed,” I said.

She nodded once. “It’s stopped, yes.”

But she didn’t thank me. She didn’t smile.

That night, the rain came.

Not a storm. Just a steady, soaking kind of rain—the kind that normally passed through Suiya like breath through an open reed.

But by dawn, the puddle had returned. Only this time, it wasn’t a puddle.

The stream had backed up at the place I had “corrected.” The tight wall I had built allowed no give. Water overflowed into the path and had begun to erode the corner of a tool-shed.

When I arrived at the scene, several villagers were already there, barefoot in the water, quietly moving stones. They dismantled what I had built, gently but without comment.

A woman named Dela passed me a cup of warm water. I took it with both hands.

"I was only trying to help," I said.

She nodded and said, "That's the first thing people say before the stream stops listening."

Later that day, I sat beside Maevi beneath the sheltering tree near the Gathering Stone.

"I thought fixing the wall would help the water move," I said.

"It did," she replied. "Until the water wanted to move in a different way."

I looked down. "In my world, we were taught to control it. Shape it. Direct it."

She smiled. "And in that world, the rivers dried up, didn't they?"

I didn't answer.

She handed me a smooth stone from her basket.

"Place this in the stream," she said. "But only once you've stopped thinking about where it should go."

The next morning, I walked to the stream and waited.

I waited until my thoughts stopped arranging solutions. Until my hands stopped twitching with ideas. Until I could watch the water without planning anything.

Then I stepped in, barefoot, and let the stone go.

It found its place immediately—settling beside two others in a hollow I hadn't seen.

Nothing grand happened. No one cheered. No lesson was explained.
But something inside me—something taut and unseen—loosened.
I didn't need to fix the water.
I needed to learn how not to fix it.

That evening, as the sun dropped behind the hills, I noticed Linn carving small circles into the dirt with a stick.
“What are you drawing?” I asked.
She didn't look up. “Places the water didn't want to go.”
I smiled. “What do you call that?”
She paused. Then answered: “A map that listens.”

Chapter 6: The Upstream Walk

No one accused me.

No one called a meeting. No one asked for an explanation. The wall I'd built had already been undone. The garden path was drying. The water had returned to its rhythm.

But on the morning after, Maevi placed a single white pebble on my windowsill.

That was all.

I found it just after waking—round, smooth, worn by time and something else I couldn't name. There was no note. No name. Just the pebble.

I stared at it for a long time, then picked it up and walked outside.

Linn was waiting at the edge of the stream, barefoot, holding another pebble in her palm. She didn't speak. She handed me a thin walking stick carved with rings.

Then she turned upstream and began walking.

I followed.

We moved in silence for what felt like an hour, though time in Suiya doesn't move by the clock. It moves by **awareness**.

The stream beside us narrowed and curved through light brush. At times, we walked close enough to touch it. Other times, we climbed a path that rose above the water, watching its motion from a distance.

Linn didn't ask questions. She didn't teach. She just walked, her steps sure but unhurried, as if she had done this a hundred times before—or never at all.

Eventually, the stream forked.

It split naturally around a moss-covered stone, dividing into two paths—one wide and open, one narrow and hidden by ferns.

Linn stopped.

“This is where we part,” she said.

“Do we meet again?”

She smiled faintly. “If the water chooses.”

Then she stepped onto the narrower path and disappeared into the green.

I stood at the fork for a long time, unsure of what the ritual demanded. But that was the point. It demanded **nothing**.

No instructions. No lesson. Just a moment of decision, unburdened by judgment.

I took the wider path, not because it looked easier, but because I felt the water’s rhythm more strongly there. The stream sang louder, bolder, cascading over small stones like a melody that had forgotten its own sorrow.

As I walked alone, I thought of the wall I had built.

Not the one of stones—but the one in me that wanted things to stay fixed, shaped, explained.

Each step dissolved a little more of it.

At some point, I reached a clearing where the stream slowed again. A ring of flat stones formed a natural circle. In the center was a shallow pool, perfectly still.

I sat.

And I waited.

The stick I carried, I planted in the ground.

The pebble, I placed in the water.

It sank.

Not quickly. Not dramatically. Just... disappeared.

I felt no revelation. No sudden clarity.

Only stillness.

I returned to the village before sunset.

Linn was already back, playing a quiet game with two children beneath a willow.

She didn't ask which path I'd taken.

She didn't need to.

As I walked past her, she said softly, "The stream always forgets. That's how it keeps moving."

I said nothing.

But I knew something had been released—**not erased, not denied—just let go of.**

That evening, Maevi nodded to me as I passed.

No words were exchanged. But on her stone table was a small wooden bowl filled with clear water.

Inside floated three white pebbles.

I dropped mine in, and walked on.

Chapter 7: The Engineer's Door

There was no name on the door.

It was half-hidden beneath a canopy of ivy near the edge of the village, where the stream split into quiet irrigation channels and disappeared into the trees.

The door itself was plain—wood faded silver with age, its handle smoothed from use but never polished. No smoke rose from the chimney. No light spilled from the window. But the water here ran evenly, cleanly, always just enough and never too much.

Someone was tending it. That much was clear.

I first heard the name whispered by Dela, the woman who had passed me the cup of warm water after my misstep with the wall. She mentioned “the Engineer” the way someone might mention a ghost who fixes things in the night.

“He keeps the water obedient,” she said, half-smiling. “Or perhaps he listens better than the rest of us.”

No one could tell me exactly when they'd last seen him. Some said he lived alone. Others believed there were several engineers who took turns. Still others said the stream itself was the engineer, and the door was only a metaphor.

I preferred the literal version.

One morning, I placed a stone at the base of the door.

On it, I balanced a folded piece of bark with a question:

Who do you serve?

I waited nearby beneath the trees. No footsteps. No creaking hinges. Just wind and water and the soft click of falling leaves.

I left and returned the next morning.

The stone was still there. The bark was not.

In its place, a new piece of bark had been laid—folded the same way.

I opened it.

Who does the river serve?

I stared at the words for a long time.

They didn't feel rhetorical. They felt circular. Like a current that refused to stop moving in straight lines.

That night, I walked the lower paths near the channels. I followed the water the way one follows a rumor—with curiosity and caution. I traced its curves, its weirs, its forked diversions.

Every path it took had been **guided**, but not **forced**. Stones had been placed just so. Wooden sluice gates swung freely. Nothing bore the signature of ego. No carvings said *designed by*. There were no diagrams, no locks, no hinges that required keys.

It was all... permission.

Permission for the water to do what it would have done anyway—**but slightly better**, slightly more **heard**.

I left another note the following week.

What happens if you stop adjusting the flow?

Three days passed.

When I returned, there was no new note.

Only the stone, split cleanly in two, its surface polished smooth by water.

I stopped leaving questions after that.

Not because I had answers, but because I finally understood that **questions were part of the current**. They needed to move, not be caught and displayed.

Weeks later, I passed the door again. A small bowl sat beside it, filled with clean water.

No note. No name.

I sat beside it for a while, listening.

In another place, another time, I would have wanted to meet the person behind the door. I would have demanded a conversation, a method, a manual.

But here, I didn't knock.

Because some doors in Suiya weren't meant to be opened.

They were meant to remind you: **not all guidance wears a face**.

Chapter 8: Letting Go of the Wall

I awoke to thunder, but no urgency.

The people of Suiya do not fear storms. They prepare, yes—collecting tools, securing bowls, adjusting roofs built to breathe rather than break. But they do not rush. They do not panic. They do not resist the sky.

I stepped outside and felt the first drops. They were slow and deliberate, like a song with no melody—only rhythm.

By the time I reached the garden wall I had once tried to “fix,” the rain had deepened into a steady downpour. My body wanted to act—lift, brace, reinforce—but no one else was doing so.

Instead, I saw villagers standing beside the stream with open palms turned skyward. Some were singing—not words, but syllables that pulsed with the sound of the rain.

A child lay in the grass, letting the water collect in her ears.

Maevi stood at the old bend in the stream. She was soaked, her hair plastered to her cheeks, but her posture was upright, open.

She turned and met my gaze.

Then she nodded toward the wall.

I understood.

But this time, I did not move to brace it.

Instead, I sat beside it.

The water rose.

The current curled around the stones I had once stacked. Some held. Others shifted.

Mud softened. Roots drank. The world didn't fall apart. It adjusted.

And something in me adjusted too.

Not dramatically. Not all at once. But something stopped bracing against everything.

After the rain, the village did not count the damage. There was none. Or rather, there was **nothing that wasn't part of the water's language**.

No blame. No repairs. Just small acts of tending.

A woman named Solin carried seedlings to higher ground. A boy brushed fresh sand from the footpath with a palm branch. No one directed them. No one recorded anything.

I looked at the wall—half as tall now, reshaped by the stream's insistence.

It looked better.

It looked like it belonged.

That evening, Maevi sat with me by the firepit. The flames were soft, flickering like memories that didn't need to be explained.

"You watched," she said.

I nodded.

"You didn't interfere."

I nodded again.

She passed me a piece of fruit and said, "Then you've done more than you know."

Before sleep, I walked to the Listening Pool. The sky had cleared, and stars glittered in the surface like questions that no longer needed answers.

I carried no bark. I had no question to float.

Instead, I bent over the edge, touched the surface with three fingers, and whispered:

“Thank you for undoing what I thought was strength.”

The water didn't reply.

But it didn't retreat either.

Suiya had not changed.

But something inside me had let go of a wall that had no stones, no mud—only fear disguised as architecture.

Chapter 9: The Naming of the Water

It happens once a year.

There are no invitations. No announcements. No banners, drums, or preparations. Only a change in the rhythm of the village—like a breath being held before a whisper.

It is called **the Naming of the Water**, though no one calls it that aloud.

I first heard about it from Linn, as we were placing pebbles along the garden path. She paused mid-task and said, almost to herself, “Soon, the water will remember.”

“Remember what?” I asked.

She glanced up. “Everything we didn’t say.”

Then she picked up another pebble and said nothing more.

At dusk, the villagers gathered at the upper bend—where the stream entered Suiya from the forest, still wild and unshaped. No tools were brought. No rituals were explained. People arrived with empty hands, full silences, and a single gesture: each carried a **small vial or vessel** of water from somewhere personal.

From a roof basin. A cooking pot. A carved groove in stone where their child had once played. From the stream itself, or from a memory deeper than the stream.

I was handed a simple gourd. It was already full.

“Yours is from the wall,” Maevi said. “What the water took—and what it gave back.”

One by one, villagers stepped forward and **poured their water into the stream.**

But not all at once.

Each paused, touched the edge of the current, and **whispered something**—softly, intimately, like telling a secret to a sleeping child.

I stood at the back, unsure what to say.

No one was watching. No one judged. But I felt as if the stream itself **was listening**—not with ears, but with presence.

Linn stepped forward before me. She leaned close and whispered:

“Thank you for carrying the leaves that never reached the pool.”

Then she poured her water and stepped back.

When it was my turn, I knelt.

The stream was cool and slow, like breath before a dream.

I whispered:

“I thought I came here to learn how to build.

But now I know—

I came here to learn how to dissolve.”

Then I poured.

The water merged with water. No difference. No ceremony. But something inside me shifted again—**not like a decision, but like an agreement.**

As night fell, the stream glowed faintly with reflections of lanterns hung in trees—not to illuminate, but to **witness.**

No speeches followed. No records were kept.

The names had been spoken, and the water had heard.

After the ceremony, I asked Maevi how long the tradition had existed.

“As long as the water,” she said.

“And before the village?” I asked.

She smiled.

“There was never a time before the water. Only before we learned to speak into it.”

That night, I dreamt I was the stream.

Not moving forward. Not backward.

Just listening.

And remembering.

Chapter 10: The Word That Cannot Be Translated

I asked the question only once.

It was late morning. The rain had passed, and the stones on the path were still damp with light. Maevi and I were sitting beneath the shade of a fig tree, sharing slices of sun-warmed fruit. We hadn't spoken in a while.

Then I said, "What does the word *Suiya* mean?"

Maevi looked up, then looked away again. She tore off a piece of fig skin and placed it carefully at the base of the tree.

"*Suiya* isn't a word," she said. "It's a place."

I nodded. "Then what does the *place* mean?"

She smiled faintly, as if I'd stepped into a river wearing shoes.

"You've been here long enough," she said, "to know that we don't explain things we still hear unfolding."

I let the question rest for weeks.

But the name stayed with me.

Suiya.

It didn't sound like the other names I had known. It had no hard consonants, no command. It whispered itself. It flowed.

I asked others.

Dela said it meant "*to yield without losing.*"

Linn said it meant "*a place that never needed a door.*"

An elder named Horin said it had no direct meaning at all, only **echoes**—like water in a deep basin that remembers every name ever spoken into it.

“The meaning changes,” he said, “depending on how long you’ve stayed.”

Eventually, I found a small bundle of birch bark tied with reed thread in the garden library. It was unsigned, weather-stained, and faded at the edges.

Inside was a single sentence:

“Suiya” is the name we gave to what remained after everything else was let go.

I folded it carefully and placed it back.

One night, near the Listening Pool, I sat alone and tried to speak the word differently.

I said it softly, like a greeting:

Suiya.

I said it slowly, like a farewell:

Suu...iya.

I said it into the stream, without voice, only breath.

And then I stopped trying to say it at all.

Because I began to understand that *Suiya* wasn’t a name for something.

It was **what happened when something no longer needed to be named.**

In the days that followed, I heard the word less.

Not because it was avoided, but because it was everywhere.

In the way the children shared food without counting portions.

In the way Maevi placed her tools in the sun after cleaning them—never rushing, never hiding the wear.

In the way a decision arrived in the village not by vote, but by the absence of resistance.

It wasn't spoken because it didn't need to be.

I asked Linn one last time.

“What does *Suiya* mean?”

She smiled and pointed to the stream.

Then she said:

“It means *this*. But only while it's moving.”

And so I stopped asking.

Because I had become fluent in a language that had no dictionary.

Only **practice**.

Only **presence**.

Only the current.

Chapter 11: The Fire That Didn't Spread

It began with smoke.

Not much—just a soft curl rising from the tool shed near the southern grove, where the sun dries reeds and old wood is stored. In any other village I'd known, the sight would have brought shouts, buckets, sprinting feet, alarms.

But in Suiya, there were no alarms.

There were only **eyes that noticed**.

Dela was the first to turn toward it. She was carrying a basket of figs, which she set down gently on a stone. Without a word, she began walking toward the shed. Others followed—not running, not shouting. Just walking.

I was further up the hill, trimming the brush with Solin. I saw the smoke and felt my old instincts rise.

My chest tightened. I scanned for water, for a line of action, for who was “in charge.”

There was none.

And still—no one panicked.

When I arrived, the fire had caught the edge of the shed's thatched roof. Just a tongue of flame, no wider than a hand, licking upward. The smoke was fragrant, not yet dangerous. Children were nearby, but no one cried.

Someone handed me a clay pot of stream water. Not full. Not rushed. Just enough.

We poured—slowly, in rhythm. Others used branches, brushing embers away rather than stamping them. Maevi placed a flat stone over the coals.

No one yelled. No one assigned roles. And within minutes, the flame was gone.

What remained was a **circle of blackened wood**, still steaming slightly.

And a feeling—not of relief, but of **completion**.

Later that day, I returned to the site.

A child named Benji was drawing circles in the ash with a stick.

I sat beside him.

“Why didn’t anyone panic?” I asked.

He shrugged. “Because the fire didn’t panic.”

I blinked. “What do you mean?”

He drew another circle, smaller this time.

“It didn’t try to become more than it was,” he said. “So we didn’t either.”

That evening, Maevi gathered the singed reeds and placed them in a basin by the stream. She did not throw them away. She laid them gently, as if giving them back to something.

I watched her from a distance. I wanted to ask if there was a teaching in what had happened. If Suiya had a protocol for fire. If this had ever happened before.

But I stopped myself.

Because I already knew the answer.

Suiya doesn’t resist.

It responds.

It doesn’t suppress.

It allows.

And because of that, nothing spreads that isn't invited.

In the village I came from, fire was something we feared, fenced off, or fought.

In Suiya, it was **something to listen to.**

Even when it burned.

Especially then.

Chapter 12: A Name Left Unspoken

It had been ninety-three days.

I counted only because the number felt like a final stone in a wall I no longer needed to keep. After that, I stopped counting. The moon had shifted through three phases. The garden had offered and withdrawn. The stream had changed its song, but not its presence.

And I had begun to disappear—but not in the way I feared.

Ilan, the name I carried, still existed. But fewer people used it.

Children called me “You.” Maevi called me “Now and then.” Others used no name at all, only met my eyes or touched my shoulder.

At first I missed the formality.

But then I realized: I had been **living in parentheses**, and Suiya had quietly removed them.

One morning, I woke to find a folded square of bark on the threshold of my dwelling. It was tied with a reed and unmarked.

Inside was a single question:

Have you stopped naming yourself yet?

There was no signature. But the handwriting was my own.

I didn’t remember writing it.

I brought the bark to the Listening Pool that afternoon and let it float. It circled once, drifted, then stopped beneath the shade of the elder tree.

I took that as a “not yet.”

Later, I sat with Maevi as she cut root vegetables into careful spirals. Her knife never rushed. Each motion was whole.

“Do people stay?” I asked.

She looked up. “Some.”

“And the others?”

“They leave without doors. The stream carries them forward.”

“How do I know which I am?”

She set the knife down, wiped her hands with a cloth, and said:

“If you need to know, you are not yet either.”

That evening, Linn found me beside the garden steps, drawing circles in the dust.

She sat without asking.

“You think you’re choosing,” she said.

“Am I not?”

“No,” she said. “You’re being invited.”

I looked at her. “By whom?”

She pointed—not to a person, but to the sky, the stream, the soft gathering dark.

That night, I returned to the place where I had first entered the village.

The path was overgrown now.

I knelt beside the stream and whispered my name into it, once.

The current took it.

It didn't echo.

It didn't sink.

It just moved forward, like everything in Suiya.

I returned without speaking.

No one asked what I had decided.

Because here, the decision wasn't what mattered.

The letting go was.

And so I began my days not as Ilan, the archivist of old names.

But as something else.

Something left **unspoken**—

and yet fully heard.

Final Chapter: The Way of Suiya

I no longer live *in* the village.

Not in the way I once thought I would.

My hands are in the earth. My feet follow paths I don't mark. My name is still known to me—but less often needed. Some call me “the one who listens.” Others call me nothing at all.

There is a hut by the eastern bend where I sleep. No door. Just cloth and stone and a window where the light finds me at dawn. The roof leaks on purpose. I let the stream tell me when to move.

I teach nothing. I answer no questions.

But sometimes people sit beside me. And we say nothing together for a very long time.

The river changes course every few years. It always has. Suiya never rebuilds it into what it was.

We walk beside it and ask: *What does it want to become?*

Then we make the paths fit its desire.

I no longer mark seasons by names, but by how the children laugh when they run through the tall reeds, or how the elders lean their heads back to listen for distant thunder.

We plant in spirals now, not rows. The spirals always return to the center—but never the same way twice.

Some people arrive and stay. Some arrive and keep walking. We don't ask why.

The stream speaks to each in a language only they can hear.

Once a year, I walk to the edge of the village—the place where I once arrived, holding maps I no longer own.

Sometimes someone new is there. Dust on their face. Panic just behind the eyes.

They ask, “*Who’s in charge?*”

I point to the water and say:

“That one. But it doesn’t talk back.”

Then I leave them.

If they stay, they will understand.

If they leave, they will still carry something of Suiya with them—whether they know it or not.

Suiya is not the village.

It is not the name.

It is not the stream.

It is the space you enter when you stop **defining yourself by the walls you build**, and begin **listening to what flows around and within you**.

It is the practice of presence.

The patience of water.

The quiet agreement to belong without claiming.

Ilan is gone.

And what remains does not need to be remembered.

It only needs to be lived.

This is the way of Suiya.

Final Passage of *The Way of Suiya*

And when I looked out across the field —
there was nothing left to reach for.

Only the stillness. Only the breath.

The wind stopped speaking.

Not because it had nothing more to say —
but because I had finally begun to listen.

I did not arrive at Suiya.

Suiya arrived in me.

Not in thunder. Not in vision.

But in the way a river recognizes its own reflection.

One breath.

One note.

And everything I had searched for —
turned toward me and smiled.

I saw no gods. No gates. No promise of eternity.

Only this:

A world where nothing was separate.

A silence that sang.

A field where truth did not need a name.

And when I stood to leave,
the ground beneath my feet whispered:

"This is not the end.

This is the First Harmonic."

I closed my eyes.

Not to forget —

but to remember more clearly.

Epilogue

From the Codex of the Harmonics

There are Twelve.

Not commandments.

Not laws.

Not even truths, for truth needs none.

They are Harmonics.

Tones that live beneath the surface of thought.

Songs that cannot be sung until they are lived.

Each Harmonic calls not to the ear,
but to the part of you that never left the Source.

You do not follow them.

You remember them.

And when all Twelve are remembered,
you do not become divine.

You become real.

— *Fragment I, The Whispering Scrolls of Return*
Scribed in the Year of the Still Voice

Appendix: The World of Suiya

This appendix offers a guide to the world of *The Way of Suiya*, capturing the daily customs, phrases, rituals, and philosophical foundations of the village. These elements form the living architecture of a society that governs not through force or hierarchy, but through trust, listening, and the gentle intelligence of water.

Core Philosophy: “The Flow is the Law”

- **Governance arises from rhythm, not authority.** The villagers believe that life will self-correct if not forced.
 - There are no formal laws or leaders, only principles like:
 - “The river decides.”
 - “Wait until the water speaks.”
 - “It is not the current that resists. It is the rock.”
-

Daily Life and Customs

1. Morning Silence (The Hour of Listening)

- A daily village-wide silence at dawn. No speech. Villagers listen by the stream or walk alone. This practice aligns their inner state with the world around them.

2. Communal Meals by the Flow

- Shared meals are eaten beside the stream on descending stone steps. Each meal begins in silence.
- Bowls are rinsed in the stream as a gesture of renewal and thanks.

3. Shared Crafting (Art as Offering)

- Art is never signed. Creations are left as anonymous offerings in trees, near water, or buried beneath stones.
 - Villagers live by the ethic: “No name, no claim.”
-

Water Rituals

1. The Listening Pool

- Located at the village center. Villagers float questions on leaf boats.
 - If the boat circles three times, the answer is "yes."
 - If it drifts to the rocks, the answer is "not yet."

2. The Upstream Walk

- A ritual for healing after mistakes or conflicts. Two people walk silently upstream until they reach a fork. They return down separate paths, each reflecting alone.

3. The Rain Ritual

- At the first rain of the season, villagers stand still with open palms.
 - Children chant: “The sky remembers what we forget.”
 - The ritual symbolizes cleansing the mind of plans and expectations.
-

The Flow Leaf (Suiya News)

- Weekly bulletin posted on birch bark at the Gathering Tree.
 - Contents include:
 - A drawing or sketch
 - A poem or story fragment
-

- Natural observations (e.g. birds, stones, moss)
- Quotes overheard in gardens
- **Never includes political news.** The motto:

“No warnings. No blame. Only beauty.”

Key Phrases and Sayings

Phrase	Meaning
“Let the river decide.”	Wait for clarity before acting.
“Speak only after the third breath.”	Encouragement to reflect before speaking.
“No name, no claim.”	Art and wisdom belong to the community.
“The sky remembers what we forget.”	Rain reminds us to surrender control.
“To float is to govern.”	Non-resistance is the highest form of wisdom.
“The Council of None has met.”	A natural decision has emerged without deliberation.

Architecture and Environment

- Buildings use natural materials: cob, bamboo, river stone.
- No doors or locks. Homes are open and inviting.
- The village is built around stream paths and stone steps.
- Time is kept by sun shadows, bird calls, and the feel of stones.

Spirituality Without Religion

- No temples or deities. Water itself is the teacher.
- Once a year, each villager whispers their lesson into the stream.
- Children learn through stories, not doctrine. Truth is not imposed but discovered.

“Suiya is not a village. It is what remains when nothing is forced.”

Postscript

I did not write this story to offer a solution.

There are enough blueprints in the world—enough manifestos and systems and maps that promise a better future if only you follow the lines precisely. *The Way of Suiya* is not a map. It is what remains after you stop demanding one.

This novella began as a question:

What would a society look like if it truly lived without coercion, without fear, without leaders—only trust?

The answer came slowly, like water filling a dry basin: it would look like silence. Like listening. Like the absence of striving.

The world of Suiya is inspired by the teachings of **Alan Watts**, who described ideal governance not as rigid rule, but as something like water: flowing, nourishing, yielding without giving up strength. It also draws upon the spiritual metaphysics found in **Neale Donald Walsch's Conversations with God**, where highly evolved beings live without hierarchy, blame, or institutional power—replacing those with presence, mutual responsibility, and the quiet sovereignty of every soul.

Suiya does not need to be real to be true. It is a metaphor for the **inner society** we build each time we choose not to control, but to cooperate. Each time we pause before reacting. Each time we ask the water—not the institution—for guidance.

The rituals, the phrases, the structures in this story are not meant to be adopted. They are meant to be *remembered*. Or perhaps rediscovered in some deep, ancestral part of you that never quite believed in flags or fences or walls that lock from the inside.

If you arrived here hoping for an ending, you've misread the current.

There is no conclusion.

Only the ongoing practice of letting go.

And listening.

— *P. A. Rallax*

Somewhere near the stream