



# In the Beginning the Dance: a novel

*Lanny Cotler*

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## **In the Beginning the Dance: a novel** Lanny Cotler

In the Beginning the Dance is about: The healing of three generations of a spirited but dysfunctional Pueblo family. The eldest generation, Simon, calls upon the tribe's medicine woman for healing and, in the process, affords the entire community a chance to heal and re-empower itself. His son, Frank, is a talented substance-abusing Indian performance poet and musician. His anger is assuaged when he learns the truth about his mother's death. Simon's grandson, Dayone, shifts from drugs and dark, hostile acting-out to tribal respect after a vision quest with his grandfather. The inner struggles of a young Indian woman who gives up a prestigious fellowship at Cambridge to return and study the old ways with the village's 90-year-old medicine woman. The struggles of a brilliant, young Jewish doctor to learn the difference between doctoring and healing, while fencing with his dying grandfather about the current policies of Israel. The attempts by the Feds to convince the tribe to store nuclear waste on tribal lands, which causes a schism between the moderns and the traditionals. Plus ça change. In the Beginning the Dance is a present-day, multi-generational intersection of Native American and Jewish themes—conflicting with modernity on a fictional northern New Mexican Pueblo. It is a transformational drama about the power of women, lost and found, about stubborn men and their softening at the hands of their community, about the disconnect between the government and things sacred.

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