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Taza, Son of Cochise

By George Zuckerman

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In 1872,
the long bitter war fought
between the United States cavalry
and the Apache bands
led by Cochise came to an end.
The peace treaty signed
by Cochise and General Howard
brought peace to the Arizona territory.
But three years later,
the mighty leader
of the Chiricahua Apaches grew ill
and came to the end of his days.
My sons.
Hear the words of Cochise
for the last time.
Taza, mi first son,
lead the Chiricahuas
as I have led them.
Honor the peace
we have made with the White Eyes.
Think only and always for our people.
Naiche, my second son,
follow your brother and defend him
so long as he defends
the ways of Cochise.
One last wish.
Let no White Eyes find the ground
where Cochise makes the big sleep.
It is done.
My father's spirit joins the Sun.
No White Eyes will ever see this grave.
Now Cochise begins his big sleep.
News of the death of Cochise
reached the lone Apache Chieftain
who continued to ride the paths of war.
His name was Geronimo.
Where is Geronimo?
Geronimo.
- The soldier coats are coming?
- No.
I bring the word of Grey Eagle.
Cochise has died.
- When did you leave?

- Two days and two nights ago.

They're taking him to the top

so that no White Eyes

could find his grave.

Good. Geronimo will again lead

a strong Apache nation.

For peace will die with Cochise

on the Chiricahua Mountain.

Stay here, Chato!

Naiche!

The ceremony is over, brother.

- It is time to laugh.

- Find someone else.

I have found her. Her name is Oona.

- She is beautiful.

- And she hates Naiche.

Her words mean nothing.

Her father favors me.

'Cause I don't speak

the ways of women, of cowards.

'Cause I want to live like a warrior

by the lance, the arrow and the knife.

Go back to the village.

Our father fought for 11 years

to win our peace with honor.

- Now you speaking of breaking it.

- I wait only for Geronimo.

- When he returns, I'll join him.

- You never will.

No while I lead the Chiricahuas.

Taza!

Why don't you kill him?

Kill him! Kill him!

- He is my brother.

- But he bears evil for us.

And for our people.

Take him back to the village

and put him under the guard.

- Why did you leave the other women?

- I knew you were sad.

I wanted to be near you.

I must come back to the village.

My father would be worried.

Soon you will be my worry,

not Grey Eagle's.
You forget Naiche.
I will not forget him.
But now I can think only of you.
Kocha, get your rifle.
Watch him well.
My father.
Jeb, Aaron.
- What's wrong, Mary?
- Something scared the horses.
- Maybe Indians.
- Indians?
Don't start fretting.
This is Chiricahua country.
Only peaceful Redskins live here.
And Cochise...
Kocha, did you hear something?
Naiche, throw down your gun.
Troops!
Halt!
Halt!
- Lieutenant Willis.
- Yes, sir.
Water your horses.
Keep the men out of the village.
You better tell your man
not to dismount and not to relax.
What's wrong, Hegan?
I don't reckon
we'll get to talk to Cochise.
The chief's feather is being worn
by Cochise's eldest son, Taza.
What's he like?
He's got it in him to be
a greater chief than Cochise
or a worse devil than Geronimo.
- Alert your men.
- Yes, sir.
- It's good to see you.
- Thank you, Taza. Thank you.
Captain Burnett, the new Soldier Chief
of the San Carlos reservation.
The Captain came to talk to Cochise.
Is about the killing

of the three White Eyes?
Yes, they're killed near your village.
Tell me, has Geronimo been around here?
We figured it was
some of his dirty work.
It was not Geronimo.
Some of my people are to blame.
Walk with me.
These are the evil ones.
But that's your brother Naiche.
I'll have to take
these six Chiricahuas to Fort Apache.
- These men must be punished.
- Look again, Captain.
They are being punished.
Captain,
Taza is giving it to you straight.
Facing a firing squad,
that's an honorable thing,
but being punished like this
makes them lose face.
There's nothing worse for an Apache.
- You've broken the treaty.
- Some of my men have.
I've punished them.
I'm sorry, Taza. I have my orders.
Forward!
As I understand the treaty,
if any Chiricahua kills a white man,
the tribe must surrender their arms
and move to the reservation.
This is up to General Crook.
He's due back to Fort Apache tomorrow.
You can appeal to him if you wish.
I had a wish for peace.
Lieutenant Willis.
Yes, sir.
We're taking this men.
Sergeant Hamma and four men, over here.
May I have your knife, Hegan?
I remember when the Apaches
were proud and brave.
You spoke those words to my father.
Sergeant.

- Taza!
- Dismount!
Dismount!
- Lieutenant Willis.
- Yeah.
- He tried to take my sword.
- How? He was half dead.
Taza, I regret this very much.
This was the very thing
I tried to avoid.
The last thing I wanted to happen.
I'm sorry.
Hurry it up, men!
Sergeant, prepare to move out.
Troop! To mount!
Even Cochise
wouldn't let this go unpunished.
I'll do what must be done.
Company, left wheel!
Forward, march!
This is the place
the White Eyes call Fort Apache.
Three sentries have been posted.
Alright. Tank you. Good night.
Good night, sir.
If I were you
I would sleep my boots on.
We have sentries posted.
I'd feel better if we had
Taza behind bars.
- Better still in front of a firing squad.
- Good night.
Good night, Captain.
General Crook and his soldiers.
Open the gates for them.
Where were your sentries, asleep?
They're on duty, General.
They didn't know what hit them.
General Crook, this is Taza,
Chief of the Chiricahuas.
- Is Cochise dead?
- He died five days ago.
- I knew peace would die with your father.
- I did not want it so.

- I warned the Captain.
- You ordered me to capture the Apaches.
- I did.
- You did right.

We'll not talk of right or wrong.

- We'll talk of peace.
- Peace?

He means it, General.

Your soldier coats are my prisoners.

I'll release them

if you fulfill my demands.

What are they?

San Carlos is an empty land.

It's wrong to send us there.

It's according to the treaty.

Cochise signed it and you broke it.

Why should my people be punished
for the evil done by six Chiricahuas?

If you want peace,

you must agree to this.

Let White Eyes punish White Eyes.

- And Apaches punish Apaches.
- Impossible.

Light the torches!

- He punished the six Apaches.

- That's so.

If I hasn't seen it

I wouldn't believe it.

The authority for punishing crimes
rests with the United States government.

Set fire to the fort!

Do we talk peace

or do I ride with Geronimo?

- Hear him out.
- What are your demands?

I have no wish to break my father's word.

We will move to the reservation.

We must have tools

to work the land, seed and sheep.

- Enough food 'til we grow our own.
- Alright.
- Agreed?
- Agreed.

One more thing.

No soldier coats in the reservation.

- You must be policed.

- We'll police ourselves.

That's the army's function.

I'll never agree to that.

Let's Taza form

a Reservation Police Force.

- As an auxiliary to the army.

- Armed?

- And uniformed.

- This I will do.

Are you willing to accept it

even it jeopardizes your army career?

I realize that, sir. But I trust Taza.

Well. I agree.

Release the captives!

I will never betray you, Nantan.

"Nantan"?

When an Apache calls you "Nantan",

he means you're a great leader,

a good friend.

And he will protect you with his life.

Put out the fire!

Weeks later,

the Apache nation led by Taza

left their beloved mountains

and moved to the San Carlos Reservation.

Taza, come in.

I have your uniforms.

- Well, it's yours.

- My people are restless.

They keep asking about the tools.

The seed, the sheep you promised.

They're on their way.

Should be here tomorrow.

Tomorrow?

- Good.

- Try for size.

It will easier fit my body,

than my mind.

- What is it?

- Message from Fort Apache.

The Sixth Cavalry

has captured Geronimo.

Captured? Geronimo?

Yes.

Will he and his people be brought here
in the reservation?

Certainly.

They'll be here in a few days.

We'll be ready for them.

Taza!

It's yours.

- Fine horse.

- Courtesy of the Army.

Thank you, Nantan.

Detail! Prepare to mount!

Mount!

Good luck.

Forward!

- What is it?

- Geronimo was captured by soldiers.

Our last hope.

Maybe they'll bring him
in the reservation.

- Without his weapons.

- He is still Geronimo.

With him here

we'll find our way out to this...

Detail! Prepare to dismount!

Dismount!

- Sergeant.

- Yes, sir?

Break out the uniforms
and the equipment.

Yes, sir.

Taza, it's up to you now. Good luck.

He led us to this barren land
and now he betrays us.

Father, that's not true.

He moved us here to keep the peace.

He thinks of his people.

In her father's presence
a girl should hold her tongue.

I trust no one

who wears a soldier coat.

Last night at the council fire,

I told you evil Apaches

would not be punished by the White Eyes
but by the Apache Reservation Police.
I'll choose these policemen
from among our warriors.
It is strange to see
an Apache wear a soldier coat.
You must trust me.
Hear me!
I want warriors
for the Reservation Police.
I want Apaches
who think of their people.
Who are able, if they have to,
to punish a friend,
a father or a brother.
Come forward when you hear
your name, if you can do what I ask.
Chato! Tubac!
Naiche.
Naiche, do not turn your back
on your people.
Kayita!
Eskina!
Maco!
Oona.
What's wrong?
Nothing, Taza. You just startled me.
I saw a look of trouble.
I look at you, Taza,
and I see a soldier coat.
Which my father hates.
Grey Eagle is old.
He has old wounds, old hates.
I have to live with them.
Not for too long.
Soon I'll take you for my wife.
When? How soon?
When I can settle our people
I'll think of you and me.
Forgive me, Taza, for giving you grief.
I know your burden is heavy.
Oona.
- Have faith in me.
- I have, Taza, I have.

Come in.

- What is it?

- Geronimo.

He'll be here before sunset.

- How did you find it out?

- I saw smoke signals at dawn.

He was answered by the Jicarillas
and my Chiricahua.

Geronimo has been guarded
by the Sixth Cavalry.

How could he be sneaking out
smoke signals?

- Squaws at cook fires.

- I'll be darned.

It takes an Apache to watch an Apache.

Taza, keep a close eye on Geronimo.

Where do you plan
to let them build their wickiups?

Next to my Chiricahua.

We'll see if he makes no trouble.

- Has Geronimo many followers?

- His names is magic.

They're many who would ride with him
if they had guns.

Taza.

Better I be blind than see
an Apache in a soldier coat.

Geronimo has been blind
to the ways of peace.

You mean, the ways of Cochise.

The hate I had for your father
I now have for you.

Just as Cochise did,
I will always challenge you.

Geronimo,

Chief of the Mogollon Apaches.

And Lobo, his lieutenant.

- How many are they?

- 27 warriors, 7 women and 10 kids.

44 in all. That tallies.

Geronimo, I hope
we'll walk together in peace.

Never in peace.

I leave you to the Reservation Police.

- Give them instructions and report me.

- Yes, Nantan.

"Nantan"!

The Captain is our friend.

Because of him

you are not in Fort Apache.

Anyone in a soldier coat is my enemy.

Have you not had enough of fighting?

Of stealing and killing.

Of hunger and cold...

We'll give you blankets and food.

Start building the wickiups.

Geronimo.

Where is Taza is taking Geronimo?

An hour from here,

the Redsand Mountains.

Where's my daughter?

Find Taza and you'll find Oona.

Taza!

I'll join you later.

Taza, you must take me away from here.

I can't without the word of your father.

That is the Apache law and it is sacred.

Would you not break the law,

even for me?

We can't think of you and me now.

When Geronimo is settled,

I'll bring presents to your father.

Make it soon, please!

There were smoke signals from our village.

Did you see them?

Was it Naiche?

What is wrong?

I feel we're being watched.

No one is there. This is important.

Who gave the signals?

- Naiche, Skinya and...

- And?

And my father.

If you hear any word of a breakout,

you must tell me.

I will. I will.

Taza is an enemy.

You will tell him nothing.

- Here you'll built your wickiups.

- Then what?

Do we sit here on this evil land?

We'll starve to death.

- You'll be given sheep and corn.

- Corn?

Sheep? We are warriors, hunters.

Not traitors.

- Like that Taza.

- You betrayed the Apache with war.

With the talk of war.

I warn you now,

do not make a wrong move.

Yeah.

There is no warrior as brave,

as strong or as wise as Geronimo.

- Yet he let the soldiers take him.

- Why?

The soldiers gave us no rest.

Food was gone,

our horses worn out, no bullets.

And now Geronimo

will plant corn and raise sheep.

Not while I have money...

300 dollars.

I took this from the White Eyes

and I'll give it back for bullets.

300 dollars. This is good.

It is only talk if we don't find

someone who will sell us what we want.

- We know someone.

- His name is Tiswin. One day to the North.

The police coats!

What can we do?

Taza and his soldiers

watch every move we make.

We'd have to bring

the stupid White Eyes instead of Taza.

If someone kills Taza's friend,

Captain Burnett...

The Great Soldier Chief would have

to put and end to the Police.

Oona.

Grey Eagle?

He watched us last night.

He heard what we said.

- I'll kill him.

- No, Taza, you must not.

- My father has a right to beat me.

- I know the Apache law.

You did nothing to be punished for.

Taza, I could not sleep last night.

- The pain will go away.

- It is not that.

My father has a gun hidden.

Last night he gave it to Lobo.

If your father wanted to kill me,
he'd do it himself.

The bullets are meant for someone else.

Please, Taza, be careful.

Tomorrow I'll bring presents

to your father

and take you as my wife.

But now I must find Lobo.

Chiricahuas!

The White Eyes have kept the promise.

They have send us the plows,
the seed corn and the sheep.

The squawks must bring their baskets.

We'll fill them with seed.

I have something to say to Grey Eagle.

- What is it?

- I want Oona for my wife.

I'll give my daughter

to whom brings me the right presents.

- What do you want?

- Guns and bullets.

The White Eyes

will not let Apaches have guns.

The Reservation Police have.

I have none to give.

You asked me what I wanted.

I'll bring you my presents tomorrow.

- Where's Lobo?

- Maybe he plant corn.

- You'd wise to talk.

- I'm wise.

- In the ways of an Apache.

- You'll learn nothing from us.
Kayita.
Tell Captain Burnett Lobo is missing.
And that he has a gun.
Taza knows about Lobo.
He looks for him.
I will rip off my daughter's tongue.
Chato, come with me.
We must search all the villages for Lobo.
- Find Lobo?
- No, Captain.
- He's headed for Mexico?
- Not without Geronimo.
He must be hiding somewhere.
- Nobody is talking?
- Geronimo knows.
But he'll not talk.
I should report this to General Crook.
Give us more time, Captain.
We'll find Lobo.
Alright.
You've got 24 hours.
Thanks for saving my neck.
An Apache has punished an Apache.
Geronimo.
I found Lobo.
Where is he?
Where his blood was spilled,
in the San Carlos agency,
by me.
That was close.
Very close.
Too close to my wedding.
- Grey Eagle knows I killed Lobo.
- He hates you 'cause of who you are.
- That is not enough.
- It is all I have.
He'll spit at it.
Must I give this?
Taza.
- Delay the wedding.
- No.
- For a few days.
- I promised Oona.

- Better break a promise than your heart.

- It must be tomorrow.

Taza? Taza?

It's all for you.

Every warrior gave what it could.

I'll never forget this.

- They're good friends.

- Grey Eagle won't turn his back.

- Good morning, Taza.

- Good morning, Nantan.

It's quite a haul. What's it all about?

- There's gonna be a wedding.

- I'm taking Oona as my wife.

My best wishes.

I'll be an honor to have her on the post.

Did you ever see an Apache wedding?

- Lots of colors, lots of victuals.

- No more.

- This land is not like Chiricahua.

- That's too bad.

We'll throw a party

for you and the bride.

Take a wagon to Fort Apache

and come back with six turkeys.

I won't forget the trimming's either.

Thank you, Nantan.

Beautiful!

Get away from here!

I came to help you gather willow.

They're green and fresh.

That'll make a strong house.

I built my wickiup for Taza.

For a daughter like you,

Grey Eagle will want many presents.

He'll get more than enough.

I know he will.

I ask Grey Eagle for his daughter Oona.

Let me see your presents.

These are fine presents.

I'm happy you're pleased.

Is there any other who offers

presents for my daughter?

I do.

I ask Grey Eagle for his daughter Oona.

Where are your presents?

300 dollars.

- Where did you get the money?

- Hold up the ceremony.

Naiche's presents

are bigger than Taza's.

- Your daughter hates Naiche.

- I want Taza.

If you want Oona,

your presents must be bigger.

I have no more to give.

Your soldiers have guns and bullets.

- Bring them to me.

- I came here to take a wife
not to betray our people.

Cochise is dead.

Let's bury the peace with him.

I'm sick of this reservation
and our lives here.

We need guns and bullets
to break away from here.

I speak my father's words.

You speak Geronimo's.

Look at Geronimo, the great warrior.

He came here hungry, cold and beaten.

He wants to curse us
with war and death.

- Bring and end to the Apache nation.

- Hear me, Taza.

I am here to give my daughter as a wife.

Unless you bring me guns,

I'll give Oona to Naiche.

I'll never betray my father,
my people or myself.

I'll bring no guns for Geronimo
or for Grey Eagle.

I give my daughter to Naiche.

The wedding

will take place in three days.

You shame Cochise.

You shame the Apache nation.

No longer are you my brother.

My blood cries out to kill you.

I'm Chief for the Chiricahuas

so I cannot do this,
but if you wrong Oona,
I will tear out your heart.
Taza, are you alone?
Grey Eagle gave Oona to Naiche.
- Did you have a chance?
- I did.
What do you mean?
Oona would be mine now,
if I have given Grey Eagle
the Police's guns and bullets.
If it means anything to you,
I'm grateful.
I hope your people appreciate
the sacrifice you have made.
I'll never forget what I have done to her.
The drums of the Dolse.
The Chiricahuas.
Captain.
Listen.
The Mescaleros.
Who is talking?
The Mescaleros, the Dolse
and the Chiricahuas.
What are they saying?
- The Coyoterros.
- What's it all about?
The drums say
all Apache warriors
must be ready to fight
or die.
Because the soldiers
will come soon to kill them.
- That's crazy.
- They don't go in for idle talk.
Geronimo and many Apaches
- have broken out.
- Rush back to your people.
No harm will come
to anyone that doesn't leave.
- I'll notify General Crook.
- Captain.
The Chiricahuas
will no longer follow me.

- They'll ride with Geronimo.
- I've no choice.
- Those are my orders.
- We'll deal with it.

Only an Apache punish an Apache.

The Jicarillas.

Nantan,

did I give up Oona for nothing?

Alright.

I'll request permission from Crook
to send the Reservation Police
after Geronimo's band.

That's the best I can do.

Nothing yet.

- This it?
- No, Captain.

Where do you think Geronimo will head?

- The boarder?
- He'll make a raid for guns and bullets.

Captain.

"To Captain Burnett from General Crook.

- Due to Apache uprising, confine"...
- Confine?

"...Indian Police to post".

You cannot leave the post.

"Move all available troops out
by morning.

We'll join forces to pursue
and destroy Geronimo.

Signed:

I do not believe.

- The General has given his word.
 - Taza, you must trust me.
- They promised to trust me.
- I'm sorry, my orders...
 - I did give up Oona for nothing.

The peace has broken.

The White Eyes are to blame.

Giddyup, go!

Go!

This is Grey Eagle, this is Geronimo.

Pleasure. Tiswin Charlie.

This is my partner, Jim Blake.

Where are the guns?

Right this way.

- Looks old to me.

- You expected brand new Winchesters?

You are lucky to be given these.

Well. Let's see the color of your money.

We got to be on our way.

- 300 dollars.

- Three?

My guns are 60 dollars a piece.

- He said you had 600.

- We gave you enough for these old guns.

No, Geronimo. You are behind the times.

If you want the full load,

you're gonna pay 300 more.

- We have no more.

- Then you get just 6 rifles.

When you inherit more of these greenbacks,

come and see us.

Hold it, Jim. Let's see...

Four, five... And almost new Henry.

Box of ammunition, Jim.

Nice knowing you, gentleman.

Giddyup!

Left wheel, forward!

Good morning.

- What's troubling you?

- My conscious.

You disobey my orders

about confining the Police?

I did not, sir.

They're confined as ordered.

I take it you believe

the order was unwise.

I hope I'm wrong.

We've lost Taza as a friend.

Enough about Taza.

We're concerned with Geronimo.

Yes, sir.

- Recognize them, Hegan?

- Yes, sir.

Jim Blake and Tiswin Charlie.

Some critters who sold guns

to anybody who could pay.

I presume Geronimo

has now those weapons.

- Captain, bury these two bodies.

- Yes, sir.

Bolin, Casey.

One of my men, sir. From San Carlos.

The Reservation Police broke out.

- They did?

- They left the uniforms behind.

We'll have to contend

with Geronimo and Taza.

Captain, you admit

you were wrong about Taza.

No, sir. I believe the general

was wrong to issue the order.

Captain, I'm afraid

your army days are numbered.

General.

We better get started.

We're losing time.

Forward. Ho!

Column, right!

Cavalry horses.

- What did you find?

- Fresh markings.

- Geronimo must have taken the pass.

- Let's lose no time.

- General.

- Captain.

I suggest you take a detour to the south.

- It'd be safer for us.

- And it'd be too for Geronimo.

- He'd have cross the border by then.

- Yes, sir.

Sergeant Hamma.

- Yes, sir.

- See if that pass is clear.

Reily! Douglas!

Inform the General the pass is clear.

Yes, Sergeant.

It's gonna be a fast ride

if we're gonna catch Geronimo.

Forward! Ho!

- Lieutenant - Yes, Captain.

- Tell them to make every bullet count.
- We haven't got a chance.
Before they wipe us all out,
we'll take some devils with us.
Taza!
He comes not as a soldier coat,
but as an Apache.
Taza!
Pray your friend
gives you a Christian burial.
- General, Taza is with us.
- He comes as a traitor.
Tell your people
to stop fighting or you die.
Tell them!
Hold your fire!
General! Hold your fire!
Hold your fire!
Hold your fire!
Apaches!
Throw down your weapons!
Throw down your weapons.
Naiche, throw down your gun!
Never! If you want me, take me dead!
- Captain, I apologize.
- I think all apologies belong to Taza.
Taza, I admit with shame
that I doubted you.
I assure I never will again.
I'll remove all troops to Fort Apache.
What do you intend doing with Geronimo?
I would like the White Eyes
take him to another reservation.
With him gone,
the Apache nation can leave in peace.
I'll make the request to Washington.
They'll agree.
You built it strong.
I'll be finished before night.
My brother's shadow has walked away.
Oona will be Taza's wife.