

HE FOUGHT TO STAY FREE

GERONIMO!



by Louis C. Adelman

ABOUT THIS PLAY

Geronimo! For many years, this name struck fear into the hearts and minds of soldiers, miners, and settlers who came to the Southwest.

Geronimo and other Apache Indians lived in what is now Arizona and New Mexico. The U.S. gained control of this territory in 1848, at the end of the Mexican War.

For more than 1,000 years the Apaches and other Indian tribes had roamed these plains and mountains. While the women picked ber-

Narrators A-G

Geronimo, an Apache warrior
Mangas Coloradas, a Warm Springs Apache chief
Old woman, an Apache
Juh, Geronimo's cousin
Juan, a Mexican peasant
Dolores, Juan's wife
Julio, a Mexican soldier
Isabel, Julio's wife
Cochise, a Chiricahua Apache chief
Taza, son of Cochise

ries, gathered nuts, and cultivated melons and corn, the men hunted deer, elk, and antelope.

The U.S. government wanted to move the Apaches and other Indian tribes to reservations. Geronimo fought to stay free. He was the last Apache warrior to be subdued.

SCENE 1

Narrator A: It is the summer of 1858, in Janos, Mexico. A group of Apache warriors is returning to its campsite from a peaceful trading mission. Apache women come running.

Mangas Coloradas: What is wrong?

Old woman: It is terrible!

Geronimo: Speak, woman. Speak!

Old woman: Mexican soldiers came while you were away, and killed our people.

Juh: Where are the warriors we left behind to guard our camp?

Old woman: Dead. All dead.

Geronimo: What about Alope?

Old woman: Your wife is dead.

Geronimo: Where are my babies?

Old woman: Dead. Your mother, too. All dead.

Mangas Coloradas: How can this be?

Geronimo: This must *not* be!

SCENE 2

Narrator B: Knowing that they are outnumbered by Mexican troops, the Apaches retreat. The next winter, at an Apache settlement in Arizona,

Mangas Coloradas speaks at a council of war.

Mangas Coloradas: The Mexicans pay bounties [awards] for the scalps of our people, even for scalps of women and children.

Juh: They cannot be trusted.

Geronimo: I must have vengeance on those who have wronged me.

Mangas Coloradas: We cannot bring back our dead people. Not your wife, your mother, or your children.

Juh: True. But we must have revenge — whatever the cost.

Geronimo: We must seek out the Mexicans in their own land.

Mangas Coloradas: Go to Cochise. Go to Victorio. See if their people will join us in a war of revenge.

Narrator: Geronimo goes to Cochise first. He speaks to the council.

Geronimo: My brothers — Apaches all. You know what the Mexicans have done. We are men. We can kill the Mexican soldiers, just as they killed our people. I know the way to their land. All I ask is that you follow.

All: We will follow!

SCENE 3

Narrator C: Three Apache tribes join forces. Led by Mangas Coloradas, they head for the town of Arizpe. Church bells ring out in warning; the townsfolk panic.

Juan: The Apaches are here!

Dolores: May God protect us!

Juan: Pray, my wife, that it is only a small raiding party.

Julio: It is more. Many more. Three men with painted faces have been seen by the river. But hundreds more are hiding in the mountains.

Isabel: Our soldiers will protect us.

Dolores: We must take the Apaches presents. If we show the heathen that we are friends, they will go away.

Isabel: No longer. Father Anselmo says that they no longer believe us.

Dolores: May heaven protect all who have lost the faith!

Narrator C: Eight men ride out to meet the Apaches, offering peace, but the Apaches kill them. In the

fighting that follows, Geronimo shows that he is fearless. The battle ends in victory for the Apaches.

Cochise: Victory is ours!

Geronimo: In all this fight, many thoughts of my mother, my dead wife, my babies, did guide my hand.

Mangas Coloradas: Your feats of battle bring honor to all your brothers.

Geronimo: My vow of vengeance has been fulfilled.

Narrator C: Encouraged by his success as a warrior, Geronimo leads many more raids into Mexico.

SCENE 4

Narrator D: The discovery of gold and silver brings many whites to the Southwest. The wave of incoming miners and land-grabbers upsets the Indians, and leads to violent clashes. The white settlers demand that the government protect them.

At the White House in Washington, D.C., the President meets with his Secretary of the Interior.

Ulysses S. Grant: Our policy regarding the Indians is distressing.

Columbus Delano: Military force has not brought peace with the Indians.

Grant: You are right. Do you realize that we have been at war with them

General Crook (below) captured Geronimo in 1866, but he escaped.



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ST

Ulysses S. Grant, U.S. President
Columbus Delano, U.S. Secretary of the Interior

Oliver O. Howard, U.S. Army general

Tom Jeffords } Indian Affairs

John Clum } agents

George Crook } U.S. Army

Nelson A. Miles } generals

1st Trooper } U.S. Cavalry

2nd Trooper }

Martine } Indian scouts

Kayitah }

for more than 10 years?

Delano: Only too well, sir. The army has built forts to protect our settlers throughout Arizona and New Mexico.

Grant: At the cost of millions of dollars. Millions of dollars, and thousands of lives wasted, and the country is no quieter for all that.

Delano: I understand, sir.

Grant: If we could supply the Indians with food, clothing, and farm tools, and settle more of them on reservations, perhaps the raiding would stop.

Delano: Yes, it is time they adapted to the white man's way of life.

SCENE 5

Narrator E: The U.S. government moves many Indians onto reservations. Geronimo tries reservation life. But unhappy over his loss of freedom, he escapes and joins Cochise in the Chiricahua Mountains. General Oliver O. Howard and Tom Jeffords, an Indian agent, trail Geronimo to Cochise's camp.

Oliver O. Howard: I have been sent by President Grant to make peace.

Cochise: We ask for peace, too.

Tom Jeffords: Then it will be ours.

Geronimo: We cannot live as you ask, shut up on the reservation.

Howard: That is only so you will have the protection of my government and its soldiers.

Geronimo: We want to be free — to go anywhere we like, just like you Americans.

Howard: I promise you will be free.

Cochise: We have heard such promises before.

Geronimo: Mangas Coloradas agreed to make peace and your soldiers killed him.

Howard: That was unfortunate.

Jeffords: Times are different now.

Cochise: If we must live within your boundaries, the land must be in these mountains.

Howard: Seventy square miles between the Chiricahua Mountains and the Dragoon Mountains shall be yours. But Fort Bowie must remain there under army control.

Geronimo: Are we free to cross into Mexico when we want?

Howard: My country is at peace with the people of Mexico. No Apaches can cross the border to make war.

SCENE 6

Narrator F: In May 1876, the Indian Affairs commissioner orders the Chiricahua Apaches to move to the reservation at San Carlos, which is in the desert.

Taza: Why must we move? Are we not at peace?

Geronimo: What of the treaty with my friend, General Howard?

John Clum: Chief Cochise gave his

word three years ago that the raiding in Mexico would stop.

Taza: Have I not honored his word?

Clum: Since the death of your father, many border raids have started up again. They must stop. The commissioner says that our troops will be able to keep a closer watch on your people in San Carlos.

Geronimo: General Howard gave us his word. He said that this would be our homeland. The water is good here. Nothing but weeds can grow in the hot sun and dry sand of San Carlos. The land there is cruel — just like your soldiers.

Clum: I'm sorry, but I have my orders. You must go.

Narrator F: Taza goes to San Carlos, but half the tribe follows Geronimo into Mexico.

Juh: Their aim is to massacre us all.

Geronimo: Not if we kill them first.

Narrator F: Hunted as a renegade (hostile fugitive), Geronimo lives by raiding and killing white ranchers, taking food, cattle, and supplies. In 1883, General George Crook, with 50 troopers and 200 Indian scouts, traps Geronimo at a camp in the Sierra Madre Mountains.

Geronimo: Many times I have asked for peace, but trouble always comes.

George Crook: Why have you killed innocent people?

Geronimo: I hear that you want to hang me — to smash my head like

Geronimo and his warriors in Mexico before their surrender to General Crook on March 27, 1886.



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they smashed the head of Mangas Coloradas.

Crook: They lie. Who said that?

Geronimo: Apache soldiers. Bad things happen on the reservation. That is why I always leave.

Crook: But it was you who lied. You promised that the peace would last.

Geronimo: Once I moved like the wind. Now I surrender to you, and that is all.

SCENE 7

Narrator G: Back in San Carlos, Geronimo escapes again, but is caught. He is transferred to the Turkey Creek reservation. With 38 warriors, he escapes again, cutting the telegraph lines to delay reports of his flight.

1st trooper: The Apaches have escaped again.

2nd trooper: President Cleveland thinks General Crook is too easy on the Indians.

1st trooper: I hear that General Miles is being sent to replace Crook. Miles can be very tough.

Narrator G: September 3, 1886. With 500 troopers, General Miles tracks Geronimo and his followers to Skelton, Arizona.

Martine (to Geronimo): The troops are coming from all directions. You are outnumbered. You must give up.

Kayitah: General Miles is your friend.

Geronimo: I have no need of such friends. Why has this "friend" not been with me before?

Martine: They will kill you. All of you. Even if it takes 50 years.

Geronimo: Then peace is better than war. Go tell the general that I will speak with him.

Narrator G: A little while later . . .

General Miles: If you lay down your arms and come with me to Fort Bowie, no harm will come to you.

Geronimo: That is your wish?

General Miles: In five days, you and your men will see your families.

Geronimo: Why should I believe you?

General Miles: That is a chance you will have to take.

Geronimo: I cannot speak for all the people. I can only speak for myself.

General Miles: Many of the Chiricahua people are in Florida, and many more Warm Springs Apaches are being sent there.

Geronimo: You are breaking the treaty we made. You said our people could stay on the reservation in Arizona. Why must we go to Florida?

General Miles: This is the wish of our President. He wants you to live there in peace.

Narrator G: Geronimo sees that he has no choice. He and his small band of followers cannot win against thousands of army troops.

Geronimo: If the war council agrees, I will quit the warpath.

AFTERWORD

Neither the climate nor the way of life in Florida suited Geronimo. General Crook and John Clum, a sympathetic Indian Affairs agent, helped the surviving Apaches to be sent back to the Southwest.

Always controversial, Geronimo was unwelcome in Arizona and New Mexico, but President Theodore Roosevelt invited him to ride in his inauguration-day parade.

Geronimo died in 1907 on the Fort Sill reservation in Oklahoma. He was buried in the Apache cemetery, still a prisoner of war. ☆

YOUR TURN

Word Match

- | | |
|-------------|-----------------|
| 1. council | a. slaughter |
| 2. revenge | b. fugitive |
| 3. heathen | c. meeting |
| 4. massacre | d. getting even |
| 5. renegade | e. nonbeliever |

Think About It

1. What made Geronimo hate the Mexicans so much?
2. Geronimo and the Apaches believed the land was theirs. Who had a right to the land? Explain your answer.

