

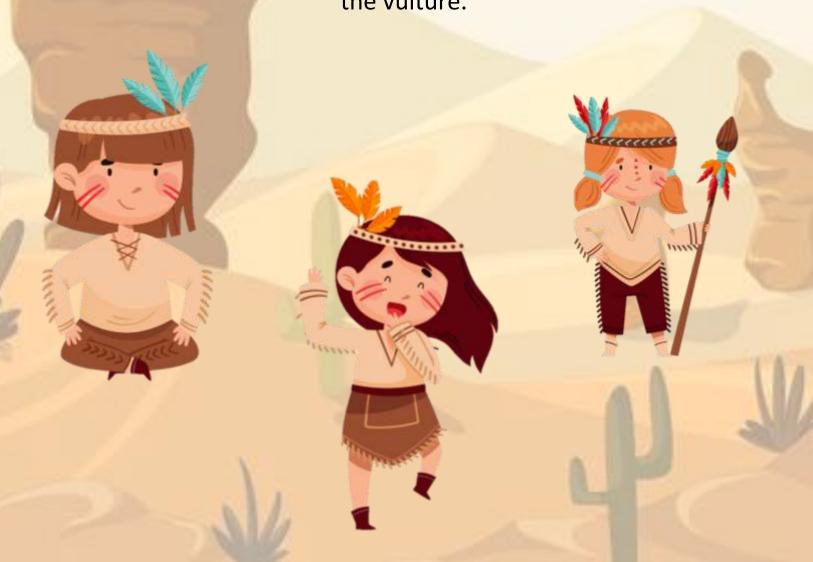
## The Story of Cochise

by Ann Donegan Johnson

## Once Upon a Time

There lived a little Indian boy named Cochise. Like all children, he loved to have fun. Sometimes he played with his Indian friends.

At other times he pretended that the animals were his playmates. He pretended to race with the rabbit and to talk with the vulture.



But as Cochise grew older, he learned that he had more to do than dancing and playing.

One day Cochise's father called the boy to him. Cochise's father was chief of the Chiricahua Apache tribe in the mountains of Arizona.

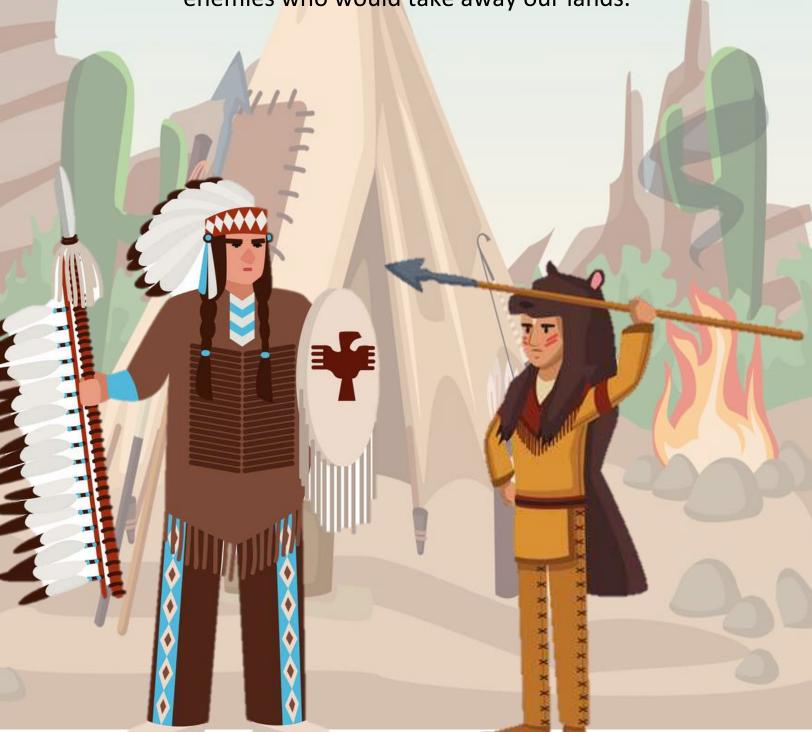
"My son," the father said, "someday you must take my place as chief. Before that time, there are many things I must teach you."



The lessons began when Cochise's father taught him to make weapons.

"But why do I need weapons?" asked Cochise.

"Because you must be a great hunter and warrior if you are to be chief," said his father. "The people must believe you are ready to protect them. And you may have to fight to defend our tribe against enemies who would take away our lands.



Cochise learned many things from his father. He learned from his grandfather too.

"To find an animal, you must follow the right path," said the wise old man. "And there is a right path to follow if you wish to be a great chief. Always tell the truth. If you lie, our people won't trust you to lead them. So be truthful. You'll feel better and you'll be happy."



Like most boys and girls, Cochise liked to pretend. One day he pretended that smoke from the fire was the Great Spirit telling him how to be a wise chief.

"Settlers are moving west," the Great Spirit seemed to say. "When you are chief, you can help them understand the ways of our people. Trust them and you can be friends."



Just then the vulture came to perch near Cochise. I'm not sure that's such a good idea," the vulture seemed to say. "I don't think you should be too trusting."



Cochise blinked. Then he laughed, for he knew that the vulture wasn't really talking. Cochise was really hearing his own negative thoughts.

Cochise also knew that it wasn't what he thought that would count. It was what he actually did that would be important.

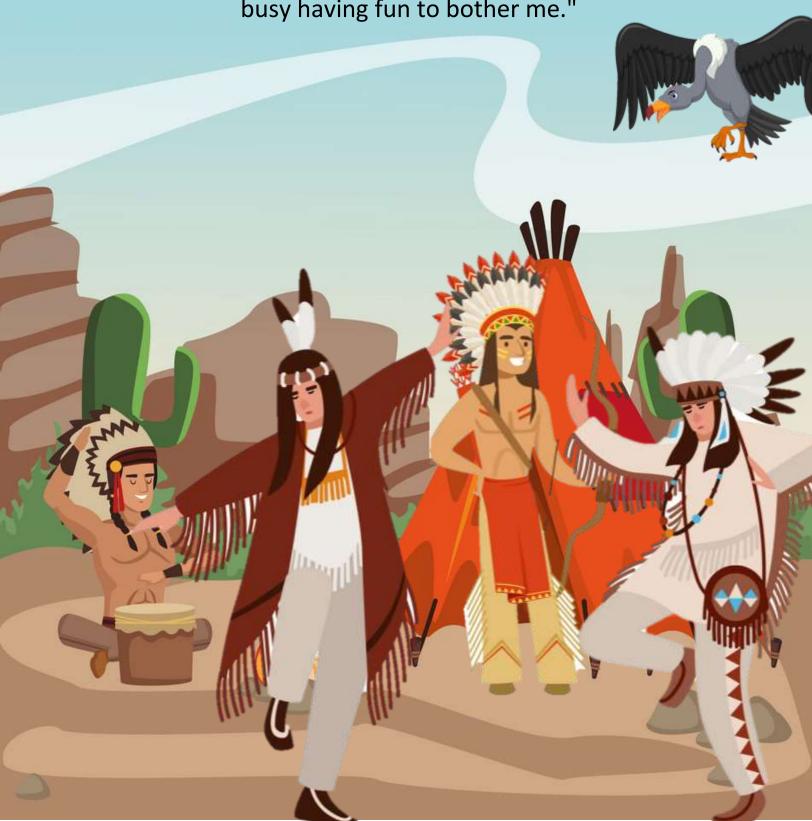


The years passed and Cochise became chief. He remembered his grandfather's words and he was truthful. His people knew they could trust him because he never lied to anyone.



There was a great feast when Cochise became chief. The Indian braves danced with joy, and even the vulture fluttered happily in circles.

"That's great!" said Cochise seeing the bird. "The vulture is too busy having fun to bother me."



Cochise wanted to be a wise leader. He promised himself he would do everything he could to make his people happy.

What do you think he did?



He went to the army post nearby, and he talked to the colonel who was in command of the soldiers there.

"White settlers are moving onto Apache lands," said Cochise.

"You and your men are here to protect them. I have come to tell you that I want peace with the settlers."



"I too want peace," replied the colonel.

"Good," said Cochise. "If my people are allowed to move freely on our ancient lands, we will have no reason to fight with your soldiers."

"I agree, " said the colonel.



The colonel and Cochise did try to keep the peace. But the ways of the settlers were too different from the ways of the Indians.

The settlers built fences that cut off old Indian hunting trails. This puzzled and annoyed the Indians. Everyone grew nervous and unhappy, and it was harder and harder for the Indians and the settlers to stay out of each other's way.



Then something very sad happened.

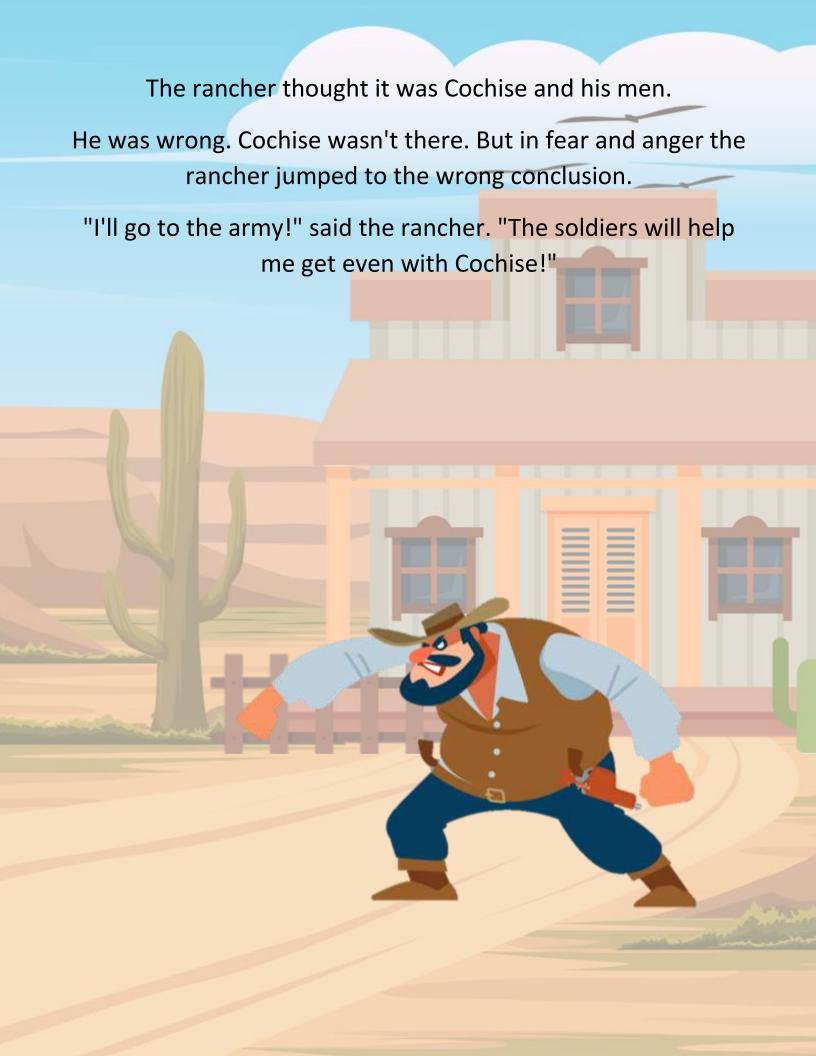
A group of Apaches who were not from Cochise's tribe went on the warpath. They didn't trust the settlers and they were angry about things the settlers were doing.

The Apache attacks made the settlers distrust Indians. They thought all Indians wanted to hurt them.

Of course this wasn't true. Cochise could be trusted to keep the peace.







The rancher went to the army post, where a young lieutenant was now in charge.

"Cochise and his braves attacked my ranch and stole my cattle!" cried the rancher. "They have to be punished!"

The lieutenant had just arrived at the post and didn't know Cochise. He believed the rancher's story. "I was afraid we couldn't trust the Indians," sald the lieutenant. "I'll find a way to take Cochise prisoner."



The lieutenant rode to the stage company. "I know you're friendly with Cochise," he said to the station keeper." Can you go to him and ask him to come to the army post? I want to question him about an attack on a ranch."

"Cochise wouldn't attack a ranch," said the station keeper.

"Well, the rancher says it was Cochise, so I have to get his side of the story," said the lieutenant slyly.

"I'll go and speak with Cochise," said the station keeper, "but I think there's been a mistake. Cochise only wants to build trust between the settlers and the Indians."



Cochise was very upset when he learned why the lieutenant wanted to see him. "I said I would keep the peace and I do not lie," he told the station keeper.

Then Cochise frowned. "I don't feel safe going to the army post," he thought, "but I promised to do everything I could to keep the peace. I must go and prove it was not my warriors who attacked the ranch."



"Be careful Cochise," whispered the suspicious vulture. "The lieutenant may be lying to you."

But Cochise wouldn't listen to the vulture.



He went to the post with some of his family, and as a sign of peace he went unarmed. As he approached the post, he could see a flag of truce.

"Good," thought Cochise. "That means I can come and go safely.

The soldiers will listen to my side of the story."

Do you think the soldiers were going to listen to Cochise? The doubting vulture wasn't so sure.



The vulture was right to be fearful. As soon as Cochise and his people entered the camp they were seized by soldiers and made prisoners.

Cochise was very angry. "My people and I have come here under a flag of truce," he said. "We have been living in peace. We did not attack the ranch. You have broken your word, but I have kept mine."

"I don't believe you," sneered the lieutenant. "You're lying."

"Cochise, try to escape!" cried the vulture.



Cochise was strong and clever. He did manage to get away from the soldiers, and he raced from the post with bullets flying everywhere.

"I told you the soldiers were lying," screamed the vulture.

Cochise didn't answer. He ran for his life, not stopping until the soldiers were far behind. And when he did finally stop to catch his breath, he thought of his people who were still back at the army post. They had not been able to get away.



Cochise was glad to have escaped, but he wondered what to do about his people. He wondered too about the value of truth and trust.

"Don't be silly!" croaked the vulture. "Look where telling the truth has gotten you. If the settlers and the soldiers lie to you, why shouldn't you lie to them?"

Cochise almost believed what the vulture said. But then he remembered the lessons his grandfather had taught him.



Cochise went back to his village and gathered his tribe together.

"The lieutenant lied to us," he told them. "He has broken his trust. The soldiers took some of us prisoner. I escaped, but the others did not.

"It is a sad thing that we must now do. The white men at the stage station must be captured and held until our people are returned to us.



The Apaches did capture the men at the stage station. Cochise then sent one of his braves to talk to the soldiers about exchanging the prisoners.

Would the young lieutenant listen? "No way!" he said. "We're going to teach you not to attack ranchers."

"But Cochise didn't attack that ranch," said the Indian.

"I don't believe you," snapped the lieutenant.



"Cochise never lies," said the Indian. "Even when it is difficult to do, he tells the truth. Everyone who knows Cochise trusts him."

"Well, I don't know him and I don't trust him," said the lieutenant.

What do you think happens when people don't trust each other?

They often end up fighting ...



When he couldn't get his own people back, Cochise felt he had no choice. He had to fight with the soldiers.



And so a terrible war began.

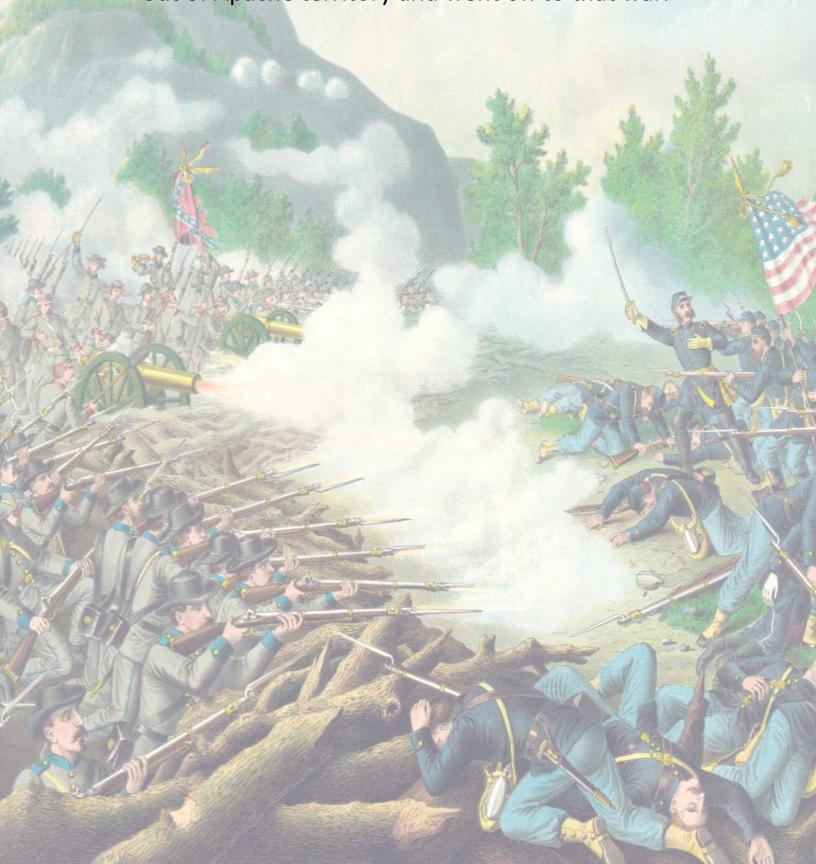
As in all wars, people were hurt on both sides. Some died. Many wished there was some way to live in peace again.



"If only we could trust the settlers and the soldiers again," thought Cochise sadly. "If only they would trust us. But we can never build trust while we are fighting."



While the war raged between the Indians and the soldiers, a second war started. It was called the Civil War. It was far away, in the eastern part of the United States. Many of the soldiers rode out of Apache territory and went off to that war.



Some of Cochise's braves thought that they had driven off the soldiers.

"Don't be too sure about that, Cochise," warned the vulture.

"You have no reason to think that the soldiers won't be back."

"Besides," said the vulture, "there are still settlers in the area.

Soldiers have probably stayed behind to protect them. Your war is not over, Cochise!"



But even while the fighting went on, something good happened.

A white man named Tom Jeffords found an injured Apache boy one day. Even though he was traveling deep in hostile Indian territory, Tom stopped to help the boy.

Tom had fought against the Apaches. He knew he could be in great danger. But he was a good and kind man, and in one way he was different from most other white men.



Tom respected the Apaches. He had even learned to speak their language.

He did everything he could to make the Indian boy feel better. And even though he knew it would be

dangerous for him to go to an Apache village, he promised to take the boy home.



Tom rode into the Indian village with the boy. He found himself surrounded by angry braves. Tomwas worried. He knew the Apaches did not trust the white men.

But the little Indian boy called out to his people, "This man saved my life!"



The warriors did not know what to do with this white man who had ridden into their village. They began to talk quietly among themselves.

"We should take him to Cochise," said one of the Apaches.

"Yes," said another. "Let Cochise decide what to do with him."

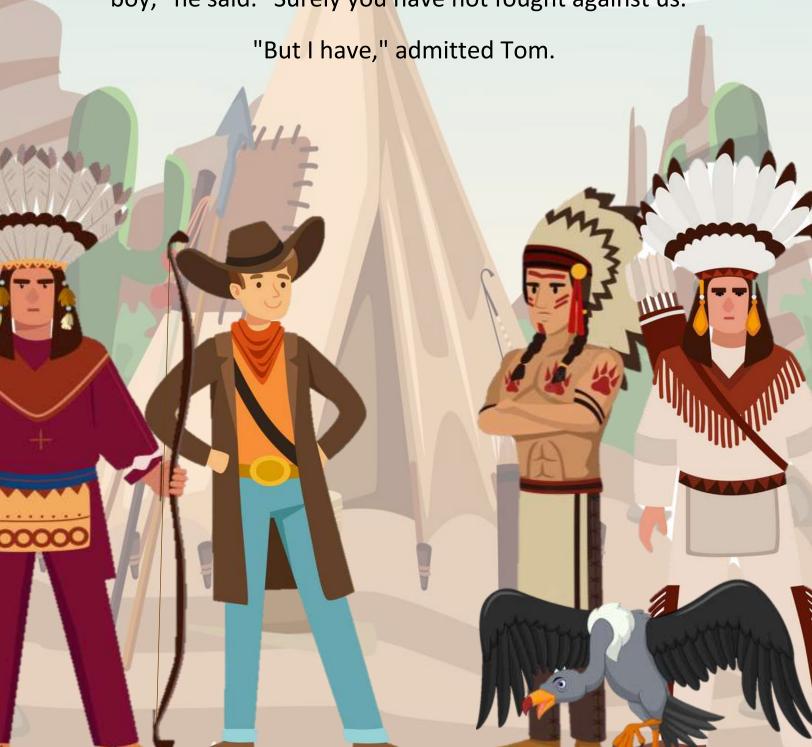
What do you think Cochise did with Tom?

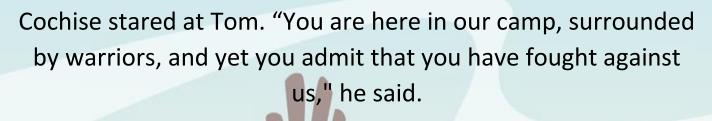


First he questioned the white man. "Why did you come to our village?" he demanded.

"Because the boy was injured and helpless," said Tom. "I couldn't just leave him to die."

Cochise was surprised. "You risked your life to save an Indian boy," he said. "Surely you have not fought against us."





Then Cochise turned to his braves. "This white man does not lie," he told them. "I feel we can trust him."

Why do you think Cochise trusted Tom so quickly?

Because Cochise saw that Tom told the truth even when it



Cochise so respected Tom for his bravery and truthfulness that the two men became close friends. Each one trusted the other completely. They even became blood brothers.

"Cochise," asked the vulture, "are you sure you can trust this white man?"

"Yes," said Cochise firmly.



But even though Tom and Cochise were friends, most of the Indians still distrusted white men. And when the Civil War was over, great numbers of soldiers returned to the Indian's land.

"I told you they'd be back!" the vulture squawked to Cochise.

"Now what are you going to do?"



Once again he put on his war paint. He called his braves together and they rode out of the Apache village.

Why can't more people be like Tom Jeffords?" thought Cochise.

"If they were, I could live in peace with them."



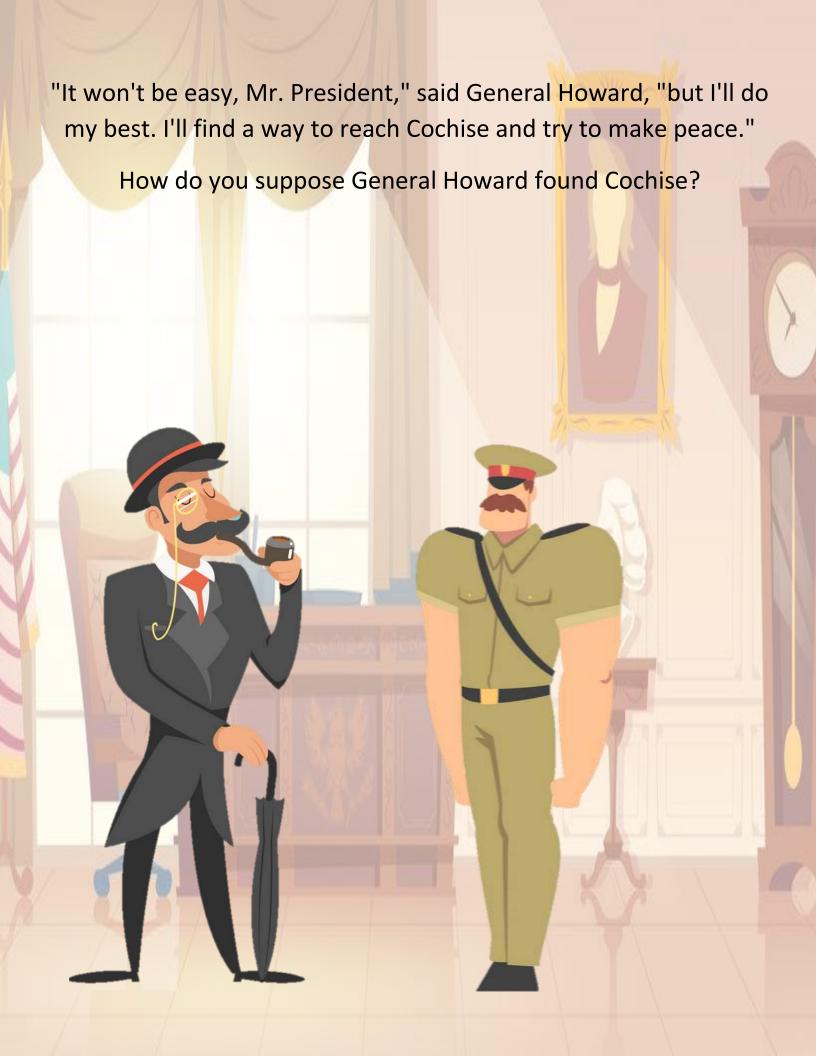
Now the battles between the soldiers and the Indians were worse than ever. More and more people were hurt or killed. Something had to be done to end the fighting.



Far away in Washington, the President of the United States met with a man named General Howard.

"Everyone knows that you're completely honest," said President Grant to the general. "This horrible war with the Apaches must be ended. I'm sending you to Arizona. If anyone can make Cochise believe we truly want peace, you can "

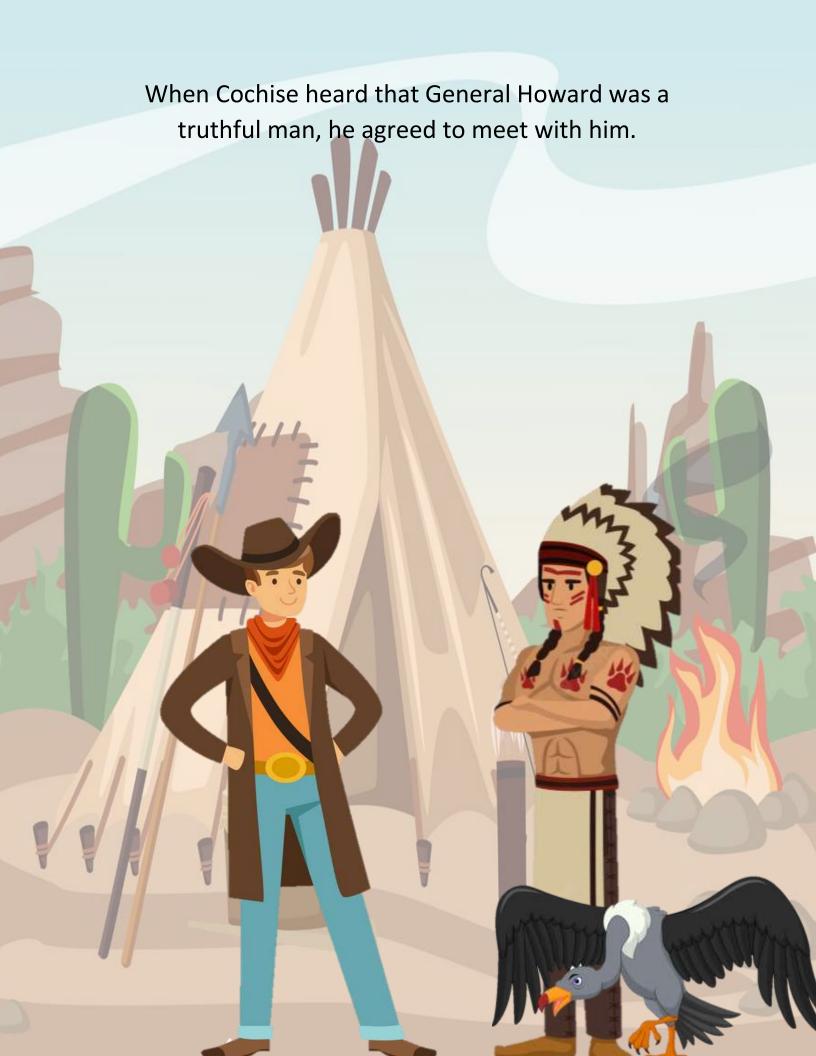




He asked Tom Jeffords to take word to the Apache chief. "Let Cochise know that we're ready to make peace," said the general. "Ask him to trust me the way he trusts you. Tell him I want to meet with him."

"Of course," said Tom, and he hurried to Cochise.





Cochise and a band of his warriors rode to the Dragoon Mountains to meet with General Howard and his soldiers.



"I trust Tom Jeffords," Cochise told General Howard. "He says that you are truthful. I have been waiting to find a white leader who can be trusted. I hope you are that man."



General Howard and Cochise agreed to stop fighting while they talked about ending the war. Cochise promised to call the other Apache chiefs together.

"We can't have a peace treaty until all the chiefs arrive," said Cochise.

"I will wait as long as it takes," said the general.



The vulture flew around Cochise. "Can you really trust General Howard?" he asked. "And will the other chiefs really agree to a treaty?"

"We will see," said Cochise, and when the other chiefs arrived he spoke up firmly. "I trust the general," he said. "I really believe the President wants peace. Once we agree to a treaty, we must keep our word. I am sure General Howard will see that the white people keep their word."



A few of the chiefs had fought too long. They had suffered too much and had heard too many lies.

They rode away, ready to go on with the war.

The rest of the Apaches wanted peace. They agreed to make the treaty.

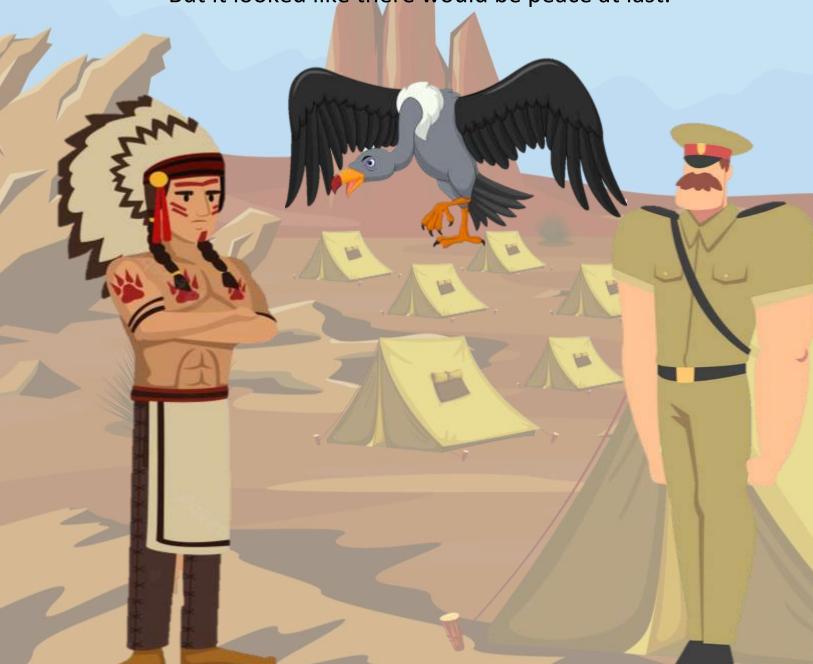


Cochise carried the message to General Howard. "Most of us have agreed," he said. "We want peace."

This was what the general had been hoping to hear. "I really believe that the Indians and the white people can learn to live happily together," he said.

"Perhaps he is telling the truth," thought the doubting vulture. "I'll wait and see."

But it looked like there would be peace at last.



At first the Apaches were offered a reservation far away from their homeland. "This will not do," said Cochise. General Howard then promised that the tribe would be free to live in peace on their ancient lands.

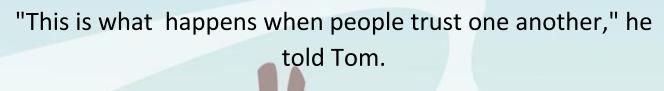
The general also agreed that Tom Jeffords would be the Indian agent for the reservation. Tom spoke the Apache language, and he would help the Indians to live peacefully with the white people.



The future looked bright. Life returned to normal.

Again Cochise had time to hunt and fish.





"Yes, Cochise," Tom agreed, "and we'll have peace so long as we all keep our word. If we lie, there will be more fighting, and more people will get hurt."

The vulture had certainly seen enough harm caused by distrust and lying. He thought for a moment, then he said, "Telling the truth and having people trust you are the best way. I just hope everyone remembers this in the days ahead."



Because Cochise and Tom Jeffords always told the truth, they trusted each other, and they were able to bring peace to lots of people.

And what about you? Aren't you happier when you tell the truth? Don't you feel better when people trust you because they know you don't lie?



Now you may not be able to end a war, as Cochise did, but you can do something just as important.

You can learn the value of telling the truth and can gain the trust of people who know you. Then you can be happier, too-just like our truthful friend Cochise.



## Historical Facts

Cochise was one of the most feared and respected Indian leaders in history. He was chief of the Chiricahua Apaches during that tribe's most critical years, when they made their most determined stand against the efforts of the white settlers to deprive them of their homelands.

He was born about 1815 in the mountains of southern Arizona. One of a long line of Chiricahua chiefs, Cochise was raised in an ancient tradition of leadership in peace and war. When the setters moved westward in the nineteenth century, the Apache tribes had al- ready been fighting the Mexicans, and before them the Spanish, for some three-hundred years. Cochise was trained from childhood to be able to defend his people against their enemies.

Under Cochise, the Chiricahua initially got along with the settlers. In fact, when Cochise was asked to permit the overland stage to pass through his territory unmolested, he promised to keep the peace. Because honor was a central concept of Apache beliefs, Cochise felt it was important to be true to his word in peace as it was to be brave in war. But although he main-tained the peace from 1857 to 1861, the settlers shattered his trust and forced Cochise to show his other, warlike side.

The war began as a result of misunderstanding, hatred, ignorance, and deception. A white rancher falsely accused Cochise of attacking his ranch; an immature and uninformed U.S. Army second lieutenant believed the rancher and under a flag of truce lured Cochise and his family into a trap.

Only Cochise was able to escape. Cochise took hostages of his own and tried to bargain for the release of his family, but the inexperienced and bigoted officer refused to bargain with "a savage." Cochise saw he couldn't trust the whites and fought a guerrilla war for more than a decade.

But Cochise did eventually regain his trust of white settlers, through his relationship with Thomas Jeffords. Jeffords had fought the Apaches, but respected them and had even learned their language.

After going to Cochise's camp unarmed, Jeffords made a personal peace with the Apache chief, who called him brother out of regard for his Apache-like bravery and honesty. And it was Jeffords who helped arrange the peace treaty that ended the war.

President Grant sent General Oliver O. Howard to find Cochise and make peace. Howard, a noted humanitarian, went unarmed with Jeffords into Cochise's mountain strong- hold. A peace was worked out under which the Chiricahua would have a reservation in their homeland on the Mexican border, with Jeffords as Indian agent. The peace held from October 12, 1872 until after Cochise's death on June 8, 1874.

Cochise made peace because he trusted Tom Jeffords and General Howard. But he was right in not trusting most of the white people he encountered. And yet, just before he died, Cochise affirmed his faith in the value of truth and of keeping one's word even to an untrust- worthy enemy. He predicted that the settlers would break the truce, but he told his sons that they should nevertheless maintain the peace, as the one last and best way for the Chiricahua to prove that they were different, better, and more honorable people than the settlers who had lied to them and tried to destroy them.

