

AUTHOR'S NOTE

K*iller of Enemies* is, first and foremost, a work of speculative fiction. Aside from its several references to Chiricahua Apache history and culture, it's a product of my imagination. And I had fun writing it.

The most important connection, perhaps, between this novel and Native American people in the years to come is that it asserts, as I believe, that Indians will be a part of whatever future this continent holds—post-apocalyptic or not. American Indians, and especially the Tinnéh (Apache) Nations have shown incredible resiliency throughout five centuries of cultural genocide and colonialism by majority cultures throughout the Americas. Lozen might be seen as an incarnation of that sort of spirit.

Thinking of spirit, as my main character knows, she's lightly based on the historical figure of Lozen. That first Lozen was a

true warrior woman of the Chiricahuas. She used her mystical power to find enemies as she fought beside her brother Victorio during the long Apache resistance against Mexico and the United States. Born around 1840, the first Lozen never married and died in 1890 in Alabama where the entire Chiricahua nation had been sent into exile by the United States government. Today, her memory is deeply honored and I know of several contemporary Native women who bear her name. My main character's toughness and determination echo her namesake.

My Lozen is also a sort of reincarnation of another important being in Tinneh traditions, one whose mission in life—back in the beginning times—was to kill the monsters that threatened human life. Called Killer of Enemies or Child of Water among the Apache nations, this being and his twin brother were born to Changing Woman at a time when terrible giant beings roamed the land. Some of the gemods Lozen terminates, such as the Monster Birds, are based on those awful creatures.

If you'd like to know more about the Chiricahuas, take a look at a historical novel I spent years writing and researching called *Geronimo* (Scholastic, 2006). (And let me take this opportunity again to thank the many Apache tradition bearers who were so generous to me over the years with their knowledge and helpful suggestions: Swift Eagle, Michael Lacapa, Michael Darrow, and Harry Mithlo in particular.)