

KILLER OF WITCHES

Killer of Witches: The Life and Times of Yellow Boy, Mescalero Apache, W. Michael Farmer, Five Star Publishing, their website is www.FiveStarCengage.com, \$25.95, Hard Cover, Fiction.

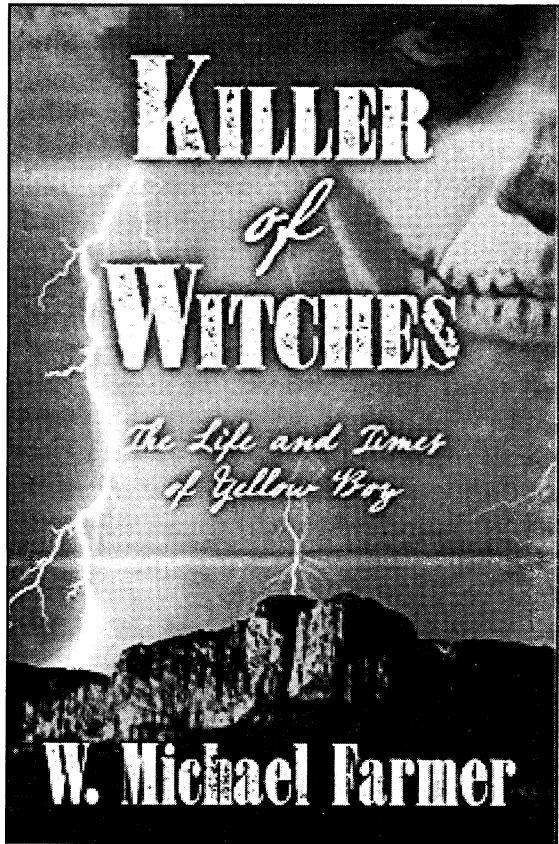
The Spur Award winning author W. Michael Farmer delivers a carefully researched story of a Mescalero Apache's adventures. Beginning in 1865, the boy, along with a small group consisting of his family and friends, "jump" the reservation at Bosque Redondo, New Mexico Territory where they have been unhappily confined.

Their well-planned escape in dead of night is rewarded when they join a larger group of Apache fugitives hiding in Mexico. The reader is swept along with the Apaches, particularly Yellow Boy, as he grows into a much-feared warrior. He rides, shoots, becomes expert with bow and arrow as well as guns and practices all the rituals and traditions of his People. Along the way he meets some famous Apaches such as Juh and Victorio.

The location of the story includes New Mexico Territory, Arizona Territory, and Sonora and Chihuahua, Mexico. The reader really feels the descriptions of a harrowing life on the bronco trail. Heat, cold, storms, water shortages, dangers from wild animals and possible ambush by American troops, Mexican soldiers or renegade killers along the border is constant.

Yellow Boy dreams of a girl he likes, but wisely chooses another more suited to his dangerous lifestyle. Juanita fights beside him and is a woman to be counted on. She's strong and smart, and totally devoted to her man.

A cantankerous old white man named Rufus Pike takes Yellow Boy under his wing and teaches him passable English as well as the expert handling of guns.



Yellow Boy is tough and determined yet a thoughtful young man who tries to understand the rituals of the Apache god, Ussen. Both Apache and Spanish words and phrases are found throughout the story including their meanings.

As the story progresses, Yellow Boy has a frightening dream during which he thinks he has been spoken to by Ussen. He is warned that a mysterious apparition too horrible to think about has attacked Yellow Boy's family campground in the mountains. When Yellow Boy rides to the rescue he discovers that sure enough, a sort-of Comanchero cross between a Mexican and a Comanche giant has murdered many of Yellow Boy's relatives including his beloved father.

Known as "The Witch", this hideous individual has taken over a hacienda and surrounds himself with captive women, fellow marauders, scalp hunters, murderers and thieves. The Witch, covered with tattoos, bird feathers and paint, dresses in an odd getup found only in poor Yellow Boy's wildest nightmares. Armed

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*Chronicle of the Old West will be at these events. Stop by and say hi!

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with a pet owl trained to kill humans, this Witch becomes the villain of all villains. Quite likely the guy has smoked a little too much peyote.

Yellow Boy, armed only with his aged grandfather, his favorite gun, and two boyhood pals, must settle the score. The reader knows he's being put-on by a clever and imaginative author who keeps readers glued to their book far into the night.

Well..., not too far into the night. I suggest you finish the story in the morning in the light of day when The Witch's horrible face, his murderous rages, his gang of cutthroats, his mistreat-

ment of women, and his diabolical urges to torture and kill anybody defying his authority won't seem so scary. Besides, we have to find out what happens.

Does Yellow Boy beat The Witch? Read the book. You won't be disappointed. But be careful, this book is the first of a trilogy featuring Yellow Boy and his nemesis, so we suspect even after turning the last page, there is still a lot more hard riding to do.

Editor's Note: The reviewer Phyllis Morreale-de la Garza is the author of many books including Hell Horse Winter of the Apache Kid, published by Silk Label Books, P.O. Box 700, Unionville, New York 10988-0700. www.silklabelbooks.com

