Empire Of The Summer Moon Book Summary, by S. C. Gwynne

by Allen Cheng


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Full Summary of Empire Of The Summer Moon

Overall Summary

Empire of the Summer Moon: Quanah Parker and the Rise and Fall of the Comanches, is a historical nonfiction book about how powerful the Comanche Nation was. The book also follows several characters in this story, including Quanah Parker (a descendent of Chief Peta Nocona).

The Comanches migrated from Wyoming to the southern plains, where they discovered wild horses. They learned to wrangle and tame them, as well as breed them. The Comanches became a warring tribe that raided settlements and other Indian tribes. They were so adept at mounted warfare that they were able to defeat their rivals, the Apaches, and dominate all other southern plains tribes. They also fought the once-mighty Spanish Empire to a standstill in an effort to keep control of their lands (Comancheria).

Pioneers moved westward, and they eventually had to confront the Comanches. The first settlement that was raided by the tribe was owned by a family called the Parkers. In this raid, many members of Parker's family were killed or captured. However, one young girl named Cynthia Ann Parker would be adopted into the tribe and marry a chief. She gave birth to Quanah Parker who would lead his people against settlers in their final days on the plains.

The Comanches were able to defend themselves against many invasions by the Spanish and Americans because of their horse-riding prowess, as well as the fact that they were able to fight in skirmishes. However, with Mexico's defeat in 1848 and America's relentless invasion Westward, pressure mounted on them. Eventually, Colonel Ranald Slidell Mackenzie led a coordinated campaign that defeated the Comanches using new rifles and mounted charges. The Comanche people had to face either annihilation or subjugation; they chose reservation life over death.

Even after the Comanches lost their land, they still fought for their rights. Quanah Parker recognized that his people needed to change with the times and integrate into American society as best they could. He worked hard to make sure his people were treated fairly by the government and was a great leader in this time of transition.