

# Ceremony by Leslie Marmon Silko

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A timeline of Tayo's journey and Myth time in *Ceremony*



## The Creation of White Men

A long time ago, a group of evil witches gathered together for a competition to see which of them could create the most evil thing. One witch came in and told them a story of white men who would come and destroy everything and said that the story would become true as she told it. The Earth was complete before any white people were on it and they are only tools used by witches to take from the land and kill other people and their cultures. This expresses how the Native Americans view the white Americans around them.



### **Laura's Attendance at Boarding School (1914)**

Laura began to attend a Native American boarding school in which she was influenced to value white culture over the culture of her own Native American people which eventually lead to her life as a prostitute and an alcoholic. Her experiences here ultimately are the reason Tayo lives with the rest of his family rather than his mother.



### **Tayo's Birth and Gallup (~1922)**

Tayo was born and raised in the slums of Gallup. His mother was gone the majority of the time, out drinking with white or mexican men. He was often left alone without any idea where his mother was or when his next meal was coming. Gallup was full of homeless people, drunks, and prostitutes. Spending the first few years of his life in this environment had a profound effect on Tayo.

### **Thelma**

Thelma was Tayo's aunt and Rocky's mother and has always had a pretty complicated relationship with Tayo. While Rocky and Tayo were growing up, Thelma often treated them very differently, making sure to leave out Tayo. She wanted Tayo to know that he was being excluded so she would favor Rocky and give him toys that she wouldn't let Tayo play with, but she always treated them as equals when other people were around.



### **The C'ko'yo Magic**

In myth time, a man named Pa'caya'nyi came from Reedleaf town and showed the people some new magic. The people became very intrigued by the magic and forgot their responsibilities so their mother, Nau'ts'ity'i became very angry with the people so she took all the animals, plants and rain down to the fourth world. The people then suffered from drought and began to starve.



### **Josiah's Mexican Cattle**

In the midst of the drought, Josiah bought Mexican cattle that he was told about by Night Swan. He figured these cattle would do well even without any water because they're not like other cattle who wait around for water. These cattle search for water and Josiah planned to breed them with Hereford cattle to create a new breed with the best traits of both animals. Tayo was excited to help his uncle and this experience lead to his affair with Night Swan.

### **Night Swan**

Night Swan was a prostitute who Tayo had sexual relations with. She had previously had a relationship with Josiah but had sex with Tayo when Josiah sent him to deliver her a note. Afterwards, Night Swan commented on the color of Tayo's eyes and Tayo remarked that he didn't like them because they showed that he was mixed race and he was made fun of for that. Night Swan told Tayo that people only don't like him because he represents change.



People like that their children look exactly the same as them because they think that means nothing is changing, but it actually is.

### **The Bataan Death March (1942)**

The Bataan Death March consisted of Japanese soldiers forcing American and Filipino soldiers to march to Camp O'Donnell. On this march, about 2,500–10,000 Filipino and 100–650 American prisoners of war died before the end. The soldiers were forced to walk 60 miles and were severely physically abused by the Japanese soldiers. It was on this march that the Japanese killed the wounded Rocky in front of Tayo.



### **Rocky's Death (1942)**

Before leaving for the war, Tayo promised Thelma he would keep Rocky safe so when Rocky died, Tayo felt very guilty. He cursed the rain that contributed to the ill-health of Rocky and he cursed the flies that buzzed around Rocky's body which later led to him feeling guilt and responsible for the drought.

### **Tayo's PTSD**



## **Greenbottle Fly and Hummingbird**

Greenbottle fly emerges from a jar and he and Hummingbird travel down to the fourth world to ask their mother for forgiveness. She tells them they must first get Old Buzzard to purify their town.

## **Betonie (July 1948)**

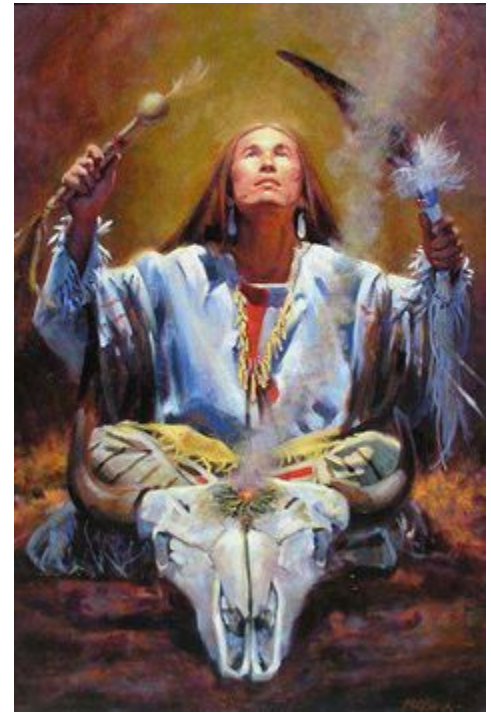
Betonie was an old medicine man suggested by Ku'oosh to help Tayo get past his PTSD symptoms. Betonie is also mixed race because his grandmother was Mexican. He lives on the outskirts of Gallup and has a very cluttered house which Tayo finds concerning. Betonie, unlike most Native Americans, believes in changing or evolving the ceremonies with time. He performs the scalp ceremony and tells Tayo what he needs to do to get past his sickness.

## **Old Buzzard and Caterpillar**

Once Greenbottle Fly and Hummingbird get to Old Buzzard, they ask him to purify the town. Old Buzzard tells them he will purify their town if they go get him tobacco so the two fly back to Nau'ts'ity'i to ask where to get tobacco. She directs them to Caterpillar.

## **Scalp Ceremony (July 1948)**

Betonie and Shush take Tayo to the foothills of a mountain and begin to paint and chant while Betonie cuts Tayo's scalp. Then, they sing and give Tayo some Indian tea. Tayo begins to feel cured but Betonie tells him the ceremony isn't quite complete yet. After this ceremony, Tayo finally begins to feel better and feel more connected to nature.





### **Ts'eh (September 1948)**

Tayo meets Ts'eh when searching for Josiah's cattle. At her house, Tayo sees the stars Betonie told him about and in the morning he leaves to get his cattle. After he frees the cattle, he makes his way back to the home of Ts'eh who has corralled his cattle for him. When he returns with Robert, she and the hunter are gone and their home is abandoned. He meets Ts'eh again when searching for the cattle and she tells him of her unfortunate prediction for his future. She thinks people are going to come for him and its going to result in Emo and his friends hurting him.

### **Mountain Lion (September 1948)**

While trying to get back his cattle, Tayo encounters a mountain lion. The mountain lion approaches him and stops and Tayo speaks to it. After a moment of looking at each other, the mountain lion leaves again and Tayo leaves pollen in the footprints it left in the ground.



### **The Cattle and the Yellow Bull (1949)**

The yellow bull was rescued from a rodeo by Romero who brought him home and nursed his hurt leg back to health. When the yellow bull was first introduced to the herd of cattle, they chased him around but then got frightened and scattered when he turned around and looked at them. The cattle eventually begin to join the yellow bull which excites Tayo because he thinks this means Josiah's dream of breeding the two types of cattle will finally happen.



### **Nau'ts'ity'i and the Storm Clouds Return**

Hummingbird and Greenbottle Fly get the tobacco from Caterpillar and bring it to Old Buzzard. Old Buzzard then agrees to purify the town. After he does, Nau'ts'ity'i agrees to come back and bring rain and plants and food with her. The people have then learned their lesson and are happy that their world is flourishing again.



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