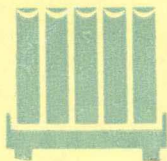


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# **The Twin Chariot**



**JANE SPIRO**



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**Jane Spiro**

**Edward Arnold**

**A division of Hodder & Stoughton**

**LONDON MELBOURNE AUCKLAND**

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## Chapter 1

### The Twin Chariot

The moon becomes bigger and then smaller, The sun is sometimes weak, sometimes strong. The sun travels across the sky, and usually when it finishes the journey, the moon takes its place.

Because of this continuous journey, many peoples see the sun as a traveller. The Greeks saw the sun as a chariot, a car pulled by horses. The son of Helios, the sun-god, drove the chariot one day. He was not a good driver, and the horses became crazy. The chariot rushed across the sky, setting fire to the world. 波兰

In a Polish story, the sun is also a chariot. It has two wheels of diamonds. It is pulled by twelve white horses across the sky. Some peoples see the sun as a boat, travelling from east to west. Others see the sun as a person. In the day he or she visits the earth. At night he or she returns to the sky. The Aztecs saw the sun as a great giant. He walked on earth at night, carrying his head under his arm.

The sun and moon are both travellers of the sky. To most peoples, they are relations: brother and

sister, husband and wife. One story explains the journey of the sun in this way: that all day the sun travels to visit the moon. Their meeting is always very short. So always the sun must continue its journey.

This book tells us of the two travellers, sun and moon. The stories answer questions such as:

Which came first, night or day?

How did the sun arrive in the sky?

Can we really see a face in the moon?

### **The beginning of day**

Some stories tell us that, first of all, there was night. The Maker was not happy with this. The Chuckchi Eskimo people of Siberia describe the beginning of day. The Maker asked birds to break the night. Two birds tried, but they were not strong enough. At last, a third bird tried and was successful. But the work made him so tired that he lost all his feathers. The story in this book is from Australia. Again it was a bird that made the first day. After that, people in the sky make the daylight. They light a big bonfire of dry sticks each morning.

Other peoples thought that the sun lived in another land. The Kiowa Indians of North America tell of Fox and Saynday. They travel to the land of sun and bring sun back. But the earth becomes so hot that they decide the sun must travel back and forwards. Then they can have night as well as day.

### **The beginning of night**

Some peoples have quite the opposite story. Their stories tell us that first of all there was day. The day was so strong, so hot, that everyone was uncomfortable. The story in this book is the opposite of the Kiowa Indian. The Maker, this time, begins with daylight. To find the moon he must travel to the land of night. Here he learns to make night: he brings it back to the land of day.

Another story tells us that the moon grew inside the earth. A man found it when he was gardening. The moon rose out of the earth and into the sky.

Another question about night was this: why is the light of the moon weaker than the light of the sun? Why is the moon white and cold, when the sun is bright and hot? The Australian story explains it this way: the moon was still growing inside the earth. When the man found it, the moon was still not ready. The <sup>NZ kviw</sup> ~~Zambez~~ <sup>people of Zambia</sup> have another story. The moon became <sup>jealous</sup> ~~jealous~~ of the sun: it stole some of the sun's fire one day. The sun was so angry it threw some mud at the moon. The moon still has a muddy face. That is why its light is weaker.

The sun alone is too hot; the night alone is too dark. When the world was young, the best answer was found: half of the time there would be night, half of the time day. All the peoples of the world seem happy with that answer.



### **The sun moves into the sky**

In many countries the sun seems very near. People see the sun as a friend, a real person: something very close to earth.

Some stories tell us that at one time the sun lived on earth. In Australia, South America, Africa and the Middle East, the sun lived for a time on earth. Sometimes he was a great king, like the Egyptian Ra.

When Ra became old, people were very bad to him. The goddess of the sky became a cow: she lifted him to the sky on her back, to escape bad things on earth. The Barotse people of Zambia tell a similar story. The Maker Nyambi lived on earth with his people. But one man tried to copy him. He was a proud and jealous man. Nyambi tried to escape him but he followed. At last Nyambi went into the sky. Only here was he safe from bad men. The Aztec people of Mexico see the sun as a god on earth. He died in a fire and his heart went to the sky.

### **The woman in the moon**

The moon is like a mirror of life on earth. People see themselves in the moon. They see a human face. They see a person who changes like they do.

Stories tell us this in two ways.

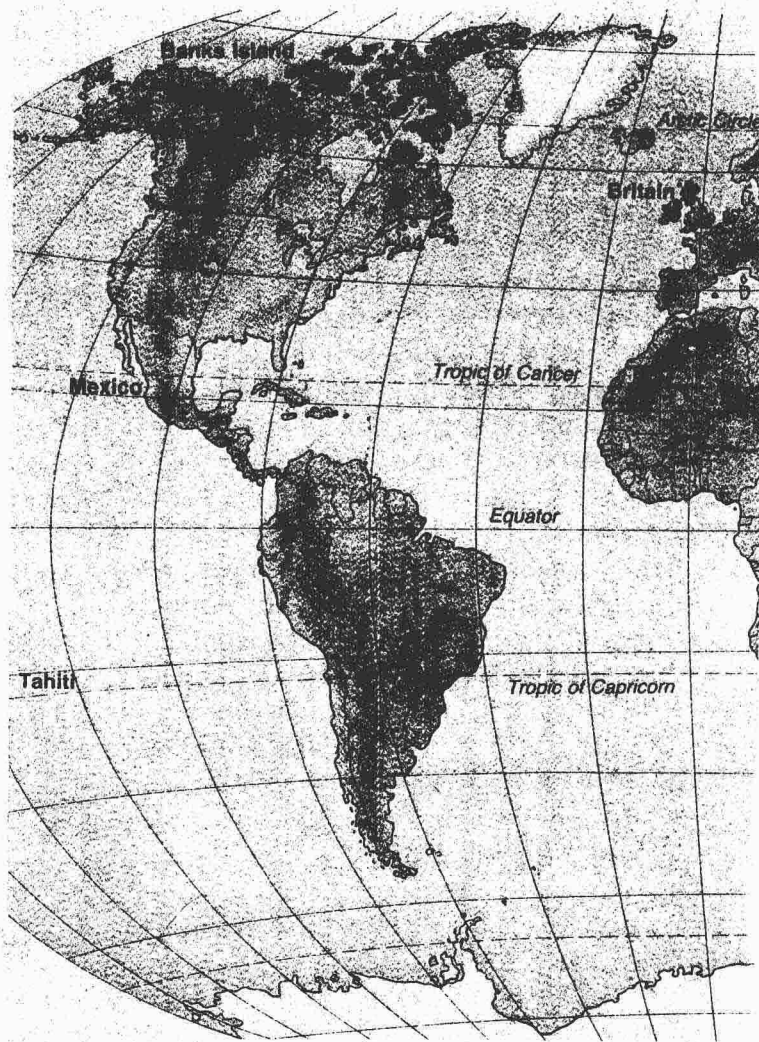
Firstly, they tell us that the moon itself is a person. The moon is the wife or sister of the sun. For the Barotse, the moon is Nasilele, wife of the Maker

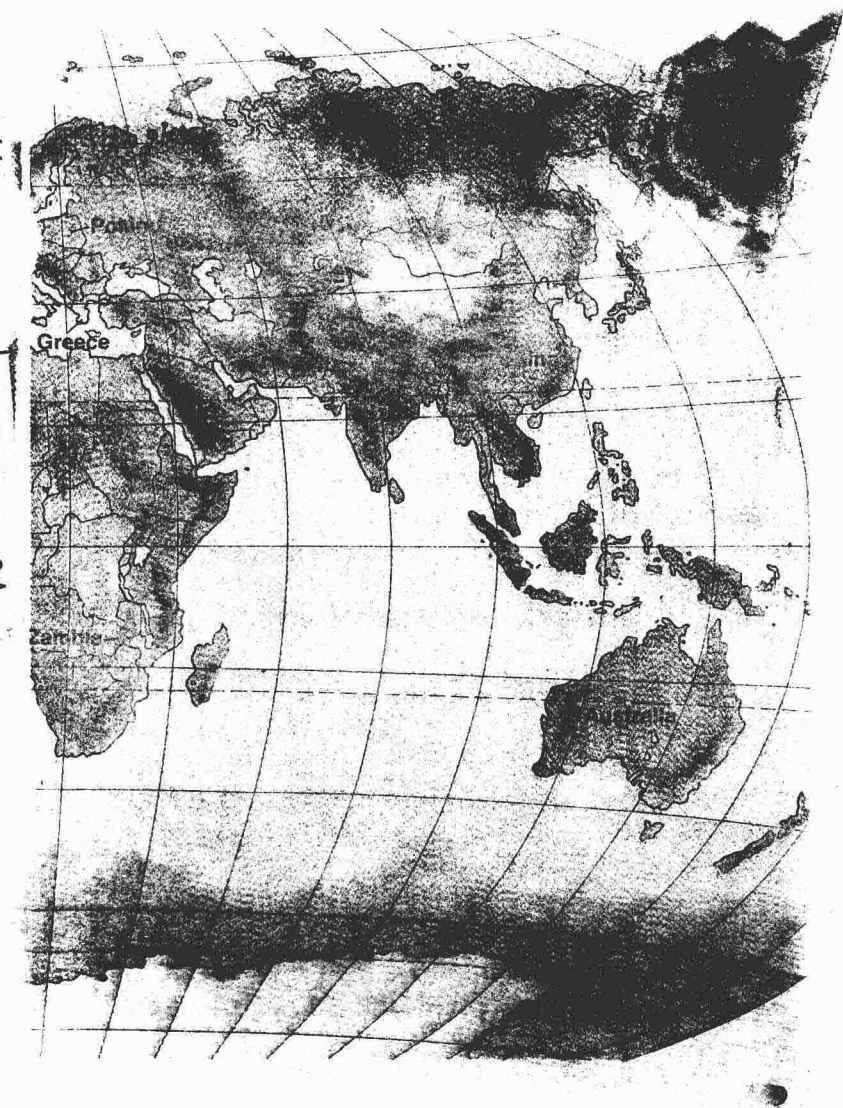
Nyambi. For the Greeks and Romans the moon was a young girl, Diana or Artemis.

Secondly, they tell us that a person lives on the moon. This person once lived on earth, but he or she left the earth. Sometimes this was to escape something; sometimes it was a punishment. The British tell of a man who carried sticks on Sunday. Sunday was a day of rest; no-one should work on a Sunday. As an example to others, he was sent to the moon. The people of Tahiti tell of a woman called Hina. She used to beat flour at night. This made the gods angry: it kept them awake at night. One of the gods beat her on the head. She flew to the moon. There she stays, still beating white flour. The aborigines of Australia tell us of two men. They had a terrible fight and both died. One went to the moon: the other went to the sea and became a fish. The story in this book is from China. It tells us about a woman who escapes her angry husband. She hides in the moon.

The sun and moon move across the sky: men or women, chariots or boats or sticks of dry wood.

Every story has its own reality.





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## Chapter 2

### The Beginning of Day

#### An aboriginal myth

Two birds sat on their eggs in the midday moon. They had long tails like brushes. They had combs standing high and bright on their heads. The day was dark as usual.

‘Rather dark, as usual,’ said the bird with the long legs.

‘Yes. Dark for the time of year,’ said the other. The wind moved in the trees. They could hear the cry of laughing birds, of animals running in the grass. But they could see only dark.

‘How many eggs is it this time?’ said the first bird, Emu.

‘Three, this time,’ said Brolga, the second bird. ‘They were big this time. Not like my last two. They were easy eggs.’

‘Oh, my two eggs were very easy last time,’ said Emu. ‘Lovely chicks they were. So hungry, so strong. In no time, they were away, finding their own food.’

‘My two chicks found their own food after three days,’ said Brolga, proudly.

‘With mine, it was after two days,’ said Emu. She



pulled herself up tall. Her throat stood high, like a tower. Her wings opened wide over the eggs.

Brolga pulled her eggs closer under her.

The time was in the beginning. The world was a child. Its eyes were still closed. The dark hung over all things. Emu and Brolga lived by sounds and smells. They found their food by listening to sounds in the grass, by following smells carried on the wind, by feeling steps in the earth. They knew the movement of every animal, how fast or how heavy were their steps, and how fast the wind and grass moved around them.

'My two chicks are so clever,' said Emu. 'They understand sounds in the trees better than I do.'

'Mine know the language of every bird that flies,' said Brolga.

'Well, at least your chicks are clever, because they aren't very beautiful,' said Emu.

'Well, your chicks are so strange, with their terrible long throats and long legs. It must be a worry for you, poor dear.'

Emu and Brolga spent many hours on their eggs. Their cries became louder and louder. Emu's throat became longer and longer. Brolga's wings became wider and wider. The eggs became hotter and hotter. Then suddenly Brolga lifted herself off her eggs. She flew across to Emu, wings wide. She lifted one round brown egg in her long foot and shouted:

'Take this, Emu! See if your chicks are better than mine!' and threw the egg into the sky.

It flew like a bullet against the dark, crashed against the wall of night and broke into a thousand pieces. The yolk flared out in sheets of gold. The light was so strong it burnt the corners of the sky. In seconds fire flared across the world and the night fell to pieces like falling rain.

At the time people lived in the sky. All this was a big surprise for them. Nothing like this usually happened. Usually it was quiet in the sky. Usually it was not possible to see the birds, animals, trees and plants below. But now the whole world opened out, like a marvellous painting. They saw silver rivers and golden beaches, colours as warm as the new fire opened below them. The sky-people stood at the corners of the sky looking down.

'This world is too good to hide,' they decided.

'This fire was a good idea,' said one. 'Maybe we could make fire more often.'

So they went to the forests, brought back sticks of dry wood and built a high bonfire. They set the bonfire in the middle of the sky. There it could light the whole world below, like a lamp.

'When do we light it?' said a sky-person.

This was a difficult question. Because Night was a good idea too. They asked Moon.

'When I finish my journey across the sky, I send



