

CHRONICLE

IS PUBLISHED BY MONDY ON MONDAY FOR THE MONDYS, THE JINKSES,
THEIR KIN, NEAR KIN, AND A FEW FRIENDS

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HE DID IT AGAIN. I got a birthday card from my brother-in-law, Cecil, sometimes known as Old Ornery. When he had a birthday not long ago, I labored over his card, trying to make the very best looking card I could. Then I told him how much I loved him and sent it to him. I had hoped to get back into his good grace and back into his will. I really need a half million dollars to pay off my debts and I was sure that would be only a piddling amount to him.

We picked up the mail at noon and Marg said, "Oh look, you got a birthday card from Cecil". I was sure he was telling me I was back in his will. Instead, he had written, "Because you have tried to make a peon out of my little sister, I shouldn't wish you a happy birthday. But because you may have some redeeming qualities (I'm still looking for them) I do. Have a happy one and many more."

Now I leave it up to you -- was that a slam? No mention of whether I was back in his will or not.

When I was in Colorado Springs last week I was crawled all over by my two sisters who called me all kinds of bad names because they said they knew Cecil, that he was a kind and generous man and that it was unworthy of me to say such bad things about him. They threatened to write a letter to the Chronicle telling the readers I was ^{NOT} being gentlemanly, (but they did not threaten to cancel their subscription.) Boy, has he got them fooled!

But I will keep trying; maybe some day he will see the light and help me pay off my house and my credit card bills, and buy a new car. I could do that with a quarter-million dollars, and he wouldn't miss it.

May I get on my soap-box again? I'm talking about the "haves" and "have-nots" in the field of education. Since I wrote an editorial in this paper several months ago in which I pointed out that this nation is rearing two kinds of children; those affluent enough to have access to computers and those who have no such access. I read of a school where every student has a computer in the class room and these are used extensively by a class of eleven year olds. Suppose, for example, they are studying the history of the earth. They go back to the time when all the land was in one great big continent called Gonwanaland. As cracks form in it and it begins to break apart, they can stop and look at the kinds of plants and animals that existed at that time. Then the cracks in the continent grow and North and South America break off and begin to drift westward, bringing with them plants and animals that gradually change their characteristics. Finally they are up to the present day, and go by imaginary helicopter to the bottom of Grand Canyon where they begin examining the layers of rock that they can trace back to Gonwanaland and as they rise a little at a time they begin to find new layers of rock which they have to examine and identify before going on to the next layer.

Later they go to a site where men are digging up dinosaur bones which they have to examine and identify. These scenes are so real you can hear the digging, the shoveling, everything. Even the

heat seems real and they have to have a drink of water.

Then they are at another site where men are digging at an old Indian camp ground. At any time they can stop and study the soil, measure the age of the charcoal being unearthed, and when they find an arrow head, they have to compare it with all the known shapes and determine when it was used. Of course this does not take place in the short time it has taken me to write this; it takes place over a school year, and every day they dig up something new. This is an interactive program, which means that they can stop the men digging in one place and ask them to dig in some place they have selected because they think they see something interesting. They might not find anything or they may discover something interesting -- just as in real life.

Now when kids go through this kind of education, they will remember it. They can spend a week exploring King Tut's tomb, or a month examining the pollen from King David's toilet to find out what kinds of plants grew around the palace.

These kids are getting a real education, but there are only a few schools in the nation where such an education can be had. These are the schools of the "haves". Most of the schools are not so well equipped. The "have-nots" do not have access to equipment that will allow them to go into the temple in Jerusalem and look around, or to wander around the streets of Bethlehem as it was 2000 years ago.

Now twenty years from now, which group will be the better educated? I insist that now is the time to educate our kids. If we have to give each one of them a computer (price about \$2000) that will cost a lot less than supporting them on welfare for the rest of their lives. The information superhighway is there already but only those with the proper vehicle can ride on it.

OK, OK, now I will get down off my soap box.

The world's oldest love letter has been found in the deserts of the east. It was written on clay by a woman who sent it to her husband who may have been away in the army. She signed it, "your loving wife who has had a child". Evidently, he had been gone for several months and did not know about his baby. It was written more than 4000 years ago in an ancient language only scholars can read.

Bessie I had a ripe tomato last week! It was the sweetest tomato I have ever eaten and Margaret says the same. The trouble is, it was so small -- smaller than a golf ball. But, it did not have a single seed in it. I guess I should have expected that - there were no bees to pollinate the blossoms. (Jis braggin.)

In 1940 I taught a class in how to operate, maintain, and repair motion picture projectors at the CCC Headquarters in Little Rock. Last week when I was going through some junk I found a little notebook with an outline of the course. That was 55 years ago and made me rather nostalgic.

Anne Armstrong -- You gave me two books for my birthday and I thank you for them. One was *Chicken Soup for the Soul* and I have read most of it. There was a cartoon that has Ziggy lying on a couch and saying to the psychologist, "After I found out that Babe Ruth struck out 1330 times, I've been feeling much better." I haven't started Ueberroth's *Made in America* yet. Just haven't had enough time.

Jake and Noal The little tape *Pocahontas* you gave me was a big hit with Gabe. He calls it the "Little Princess" tape.

Got a letter from Pat Mondy that did not arrive in time to get it in the last issue so you will have that in this issue.

If I find room I'm going to include another excerpt from my novel, *Tji*, about his birth.

The Aborigines had very little trouble with their aged. They lost all their teeth as they grew old and could eat only soft food, mostly snakes and lizards as far as their meat was concerned, though they would take some kangaroo meat and wallow it around in their mouths. When they thought they were too old to keep up with the tribe on their march from waterhole to waterhole, they would take a coolamon of water, find a good shade, sit there until their water was gone, bow their heads and wait for their death. This, they felt, was the last good thing they could do for their tribe. Isn't that interesting?

PAT SAYS

(March 16, 1995)"... Don't think I have forgotten you all. I just get so covered up with things I have to do and deadlines I have to meet, I haven't a spare second. Harrison, your "filler" on Australian Aborigines is so interesting, I'm considering writing only often enough to keep my name on the subscription list so you will have more space to tell us about your novel.

Now let me tell you why I am so busy. A few weeks back as I was writing against a deadline which was created when the "Luminaria" editor informed me that he had lost not one, but two of the articles I had written for him, I got a call that two of my first cousins (I only have six) were coming to Corpus Christi. This Luminaria periodical for which I write is having growing pains, and an enlargement of the pages entailed a juggling of the publication schedule and the article I had written for last December was no longer appropriate for the spring issue so a new article had to be conjured up quickly.

I was very excited about seeing my cousins who are about as reluctant letter writers as some of the Chronicle readers and I would be seeing them for the first time since one of them was only 18 months old and the other was age 16. They lived in Florida where we visited when we were children, but after I married and moved away from Springfield, Missouri where my parents lived, I kept missing their trips to Springfield.

One of the things I have liked about the Mondy

family is that they have stayed in touch with each other better than my Crumpley family has done. Our excuse is that early in our lives we scattered to the winds -- not a good excuse. This makes the *Chronicle* even more important to the family.

At my house one does not greet long lost cousins without first giving a swipe at the accumulated dust, not to impress anyone with my domesticity, but to prevent the early demise of unsuspecting guests from asphyxiation because of my slovenly housekeeping. And I don't like to spend my time showing off my lack of culinary knowledge while I have visitors. I always try to prepare food in advance so we'll have more time to visit and also to hide my embarrassment at not being able to find the kitchen. Also gives me time to taste food prepared in advance and see if I must heave it in the garbage and hustle off to the delicatessen. (Actually, I have never done this, just kidding. I really know how to cook three or four things.)

Holland and I both enjoyed getting acquainted with my cousins and showing them around Corpus Christi, and had hardly finished changing the sheets on their beds when a phone call told me that an old friend with whom I had taught at the local university wanted to escape the cold winter up in Bloomington, Illinois. We had been having wonderful spring weather all winter until my cousins brought a misty rain. This turned into a blue norther the minute my friend arrived at the airport. She didn't know it but had come for our winter. The short week she was here was awful, we had about 5 inches of rain. (My dentist cancelled my appointment because of the flooded areas.) I could not persuade my friend to stay another week and try to find a sunny day. She returned to Illinois saying the weather as better there. That's a gross exaggeration, of course.

A few days after she departed taking the cold wind with her, another old friend, and ex-neighbor, called to say she was visiting friends in Corpus Christi. Since she knew about my dust fighting prowess there was no need to keep

up the pretense of good housekeeping. She even knows we sometimes have to use dynamite to defrost the freezer and that I have championship dust balls under the bed. She lives in New Jersey and we didn't discuss the weather.

This is spring break for college kids and our beaches are three deep with young men and women. We never had spring breaks when I was in school. Anyway, Kristi called to ask if my granddaughter, Catherine could spend her spring break with us. She is only in the fifth grad and already having spring breaks. That will be jolly, of course, but we will not be able to get within three miles of the beach, one of Catherine's favorite places.

And more guests are coming! The last week in April daughter Lisa, Joel, and their two little ones are arriving for a vacation. Lisa and Joel will spend one week-end in Houston at a Rice special program of some kind. Guess who is going to get to keep nearly two year old Eliot and nearly five year old Beth? This too will be fun, but we may find out just how old we are. Then a month later they are all coming back for Lisa's high-school reunion. It'll be almost like we are living close together, getting to see them so often, something we have often wished.

The upshot of all this is this; I may be so busy that letter writing will have to take a back seat, but I'll keep trying. I don't want to lose my place on the Chronicle subscription list. But don't forget about those articles about Australia and keep us posted on that really bright member of the family, Brecken. We share in everyone's pride in her.

March 17, 1995 *(Pat's birthday, St Patrick's Day)*

Back again. I got sidetracked and not it is St. Patrick's Day already and I am having telephone calls to remind me that I am also a year older. This morning just after breakfast I was pleased and surprised to have a call from Cecil Jinks. At first I could hardly hear him, but then I recognized his voice and was so happy for his thoughtful call. We chatted for some time and

he says he will see me later in the year when he visits his daughter after attending a family reunion north of here.

Thought you'd like to have a report on Holland's tomatoes which have been producing from early spring but are now tapering off. He hates to dig up the vines that are still bearing green ones but they had better hurry and ripen or he'll get grumpy and pull them out. He has put out other plants and has several patio tomatoes in pots, so we hope to be well supplied with those red juicy fruits. We have to keep picking mature fruits or compete with the local possums for the ripe ones. This has been a real possum year for some reason. They are all over the country, of course, but this year they seem all to want to live in our yard, our greenhouse, or race across our roof. They must have a little Los Vegas up there complete with race track. We had to shoo six of them out of our greenhouse and patch up the entries.

I've got to run, I need to finish an art piece that I have earmarked for the big fund raiser for the Art Museum of South Texas here in CC. Every year they invite about a hundred local artists to donate a small piece which they auction off as a big expensive party. Donations are our way of helping the museum. The deadline is fast approaching.

It's only a couple of days until your birthday, Harrison. It's amazing how they pile up. Let's try for a bunch more. For example; if I could claim I was only middle aged, then I could live to be a hundred and forty-eight or so. No one lives forever, but it's worth a try, then maybe I could finish some of these projects. PAT

Bessie enclosed with her a letter a clipping from the newspaper concerning the investigation of mail fraud in St. Louis where the investigators found 13,000 pieces of mail in the basement of the home of one of the carriers. Bessie says that maybe this explains why a check she sent me never arrived. It might also explain why one Anne Armstrong sent never arrived. I hope both of you watch your bank returns to see if either of

them ever are cashed. The strange thing is that both of them disappeared the same week. If ever I fail to acknowledge a gift to this non-profitable institution, let me know. I try to report all donations (but not the amount).

**FROM BERTHA AND BESSIE
(MARCH 29, 1995)**

Dear Chronicle Cousins and Friends

"...We have had a few days of spring-like weather and everything is blooming. The pear trees are snow white, the forsythia is golden yellow, and the red bud trees are bright red. Our radio announcer says he has checked out a peach orchard and it is solid pink.

And I have just finished mowing my yard. It was a bit cool but those weeds just had to be cut down. Bertha is mowing her yard today. We had a rain storm last night and though we did not get much here, about 15 miles south the people reported a lot of hail, some of which was quite large. Our spring weather may be coming to a halt -- the weather man says the temperature will be down in the 30's for the next couple of nights and we may have rain by the end of the week.

Bertha and I visited J.E. and Katie one day last week. J.E. is recovering from viral pneumonia and is still weak but is improving. Katie served us coffee and banana nut bread, and after we had looked at a lot of pictures she served us sandwiches, chips, and devil's food cake. (She sure puts out a good lunch.) They are two great people and we enjoyed our visit.

We say Tommy and Josie yesterday. They were doing alright. Josie has gone back to work and seemed to be doing quite well. Neither of us have talked to the Reasons for several days. Bertha is up to her ears in work trying to get her furniture back in place after having the inside of her house painted. She over did it I suppose for her back has been giving her trouble, but, being Bertha, she doesn't complain much.

Our nephew, Lavelle (Elza's son), is having more trouble with his leg. He fell and broke the leg again at the place where it was supposed to

be healing. The doctors said that it had not healed properly and they may have to cut off another 2 inches of bone. He goes to the doctors again on the 30th to find out what will be done. Our niece, Carolyn, (Edward's daughter) is doing real well with her eye operation and will go back on April 14th for an operation on the other eye.

Just heard another weather report that we may have snow by Friday with temperatures near freezing. Doesn't sound good for our peach crop. Also, my dogwoods and lilacs are ready to bloom but maybe they won't get hurt too much

Love to all of you and our best wishes for a happy Easter and may God's blessings be with you, Bertha and Bessie.

FROM DENA HOUSTON

Great weather here (Pocahontas) Anything blooming there? Saw on TV some cactus blooms in Arizona. I love the Southwest. I planted an elephant ear bulb and some pansies in white granite pans --ought to show them off. Also planted some glads. Looked for hop peppers but didn't find any.

They are changing the highway between Pocahontas and Walnut Ridge -- it will look a lot better. It sure needed the changes.

The birds are really happy this morning. Dogwood and redbud trees are blooming but they are a sign of coming storms so we will probably have a change in the weather soon.

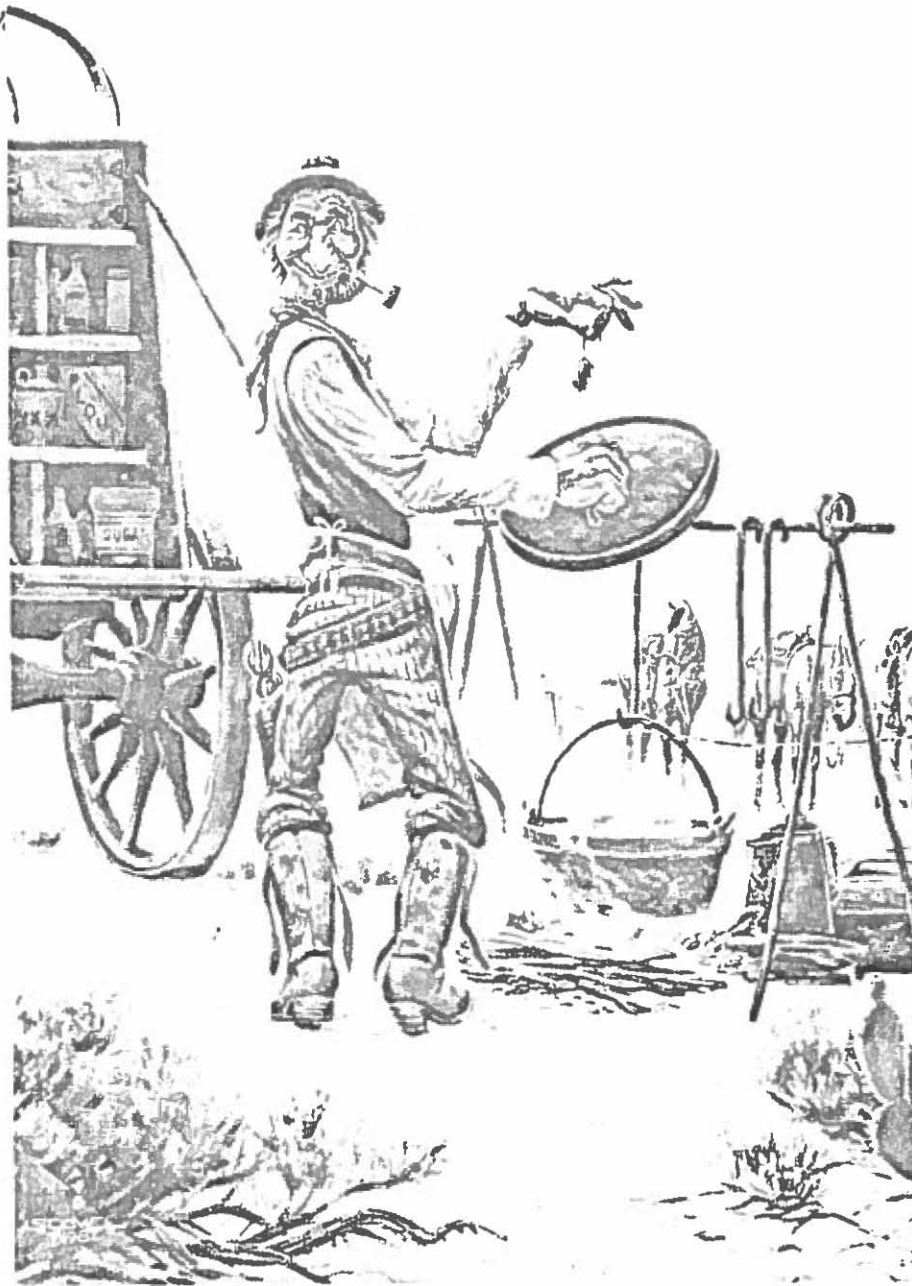
Dena, you asked several questions I will try to answer next time.

* * * * *

Sunday night -- just got a call from Brecken. She, Judy and John are on their way here for a visit. Will stay 4-5 days. We will enjoy having them. May get an answer from Brecken about the school she has chosen.

Love until next time.

Harrison.



THIS IS NOT MY BROTHER-IN-LAW CECIL

This picture was sent to me by one of Cecil's neices without identification. I knew it was not his picture the moment I looked at it. I realize that this gentleman is tall and skinny like Cecil but it is not he. There are several distinguishing features that prove it is not my brother-in-law.

- A. Cecil is afraid of mice (though he ate a green worm once) so he would not be holding one by the tail.
- B. Cecil cannot cook so no ranch would ever hire him for the chuckwagon detail.
- C. Cecil never smokes a pipe; only cigarettes.
- D. If Cecil was wearing a gun, it would be on his right hip, not on the left. Say what you will, you'll never convince me that this is Old Orner, my brother-in-law.

THE BIRTH OF TJI

Presented to Chronicle
readers for appraisal only

Excerpted from the novel, *TJI*
by H.C. Mondy

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[Intro: Tji, about age twenty, has been gone from the tribe some eight days, ever since the night he had clubbed Old Mitta, and had fled to prevent being killed by the tribe for the deed. Kulka, Tji's mother, is sitting by the waterhole, thinking about Tji, and remembering that many moons ago at this same waterhole, she had given birth to her son. The following has been excerpted from Chapter Eight of my stor TJI and is sent to the Chronicle readers for their comments. If you like it, tell me so.]

Kulka was happy and hummed a meaningless tune as she wandered away from the waterhole that morning many years ago. She had wanted her child to be born at this waterhole for it always provided plenty of food, and the water was sweet and plentiful. She had awakened that morning knowing her time had come, though she did not know how she knew. Quietly she had made her way out of camp and into the bush. She climbed over a steep hill and found on the other side an overhang of rock, under which lay many flat stones. On the way she had broken branches from acacia bushes to place over the child for protection against the sun and the flies. She laid down the bag she was carrying and set the coolamon with its contents nearby. She rearranged some of the flat stones to suit her needs and took her position between them. She looked at the sun and noted that it seemed unusually bright. She had come alone to this spot for she wanted to be alone with her child when it was born. That was the way it was done in the tribe from which she had come and she preferred it that way. There were old women in the tribe who would have insisted on being with her had they known where she was.

Her pains were coming more often and she knew the time was at hand. She looked at the sun which no longer seemed as bright as before. This seemed strange for there were no clouds in the sky. From the distant camp there came a noise of shouting but she paid little attention to it. She

was busily engaged with more urgent matters. She closed her eyes and in the blackness, she could see the sun again with a portion removed as if a bite had been taken out of it. A few more pains came and she leaned her back and shoulders against one stone and pressed her feet against another. In this way she could help the muscles of her body force out the child. She strained and pressed and pressed and strained and each time she felt the child was nearer. As she lay back to rest between the pains she was the sure the sun was becoming darker. She looked briefly at it and again closed her eyes to fix the image. This time the sun was half eaten by the devouring moon monster but before she could build up fear in her mind a great spasm of pain shook her frame and with a great heave the child was born. She pulled it part way up her naked body to reach the cord by which it was attached. She had prepared for this. For many weeks she had taken hairs from her head and rolled these together on her grease covered thighs into a string as long as her arm. The string lay beside her on the flat stone and she laid the baby across one leg while she tied off the cord. With a sharp piece of stone she cut the cord, leaving two handspans of length connected to the child's *pulyi*. All this was done as if she had practiced it but this was her first child and she had only seen fifteen summers, so what she did was only her instinct enhanced by advice from the older women of the tribe. At the time the child first entered the open world she had turned its face toward the ground and given it a hard slap on the back. This had driven the mucus from its throat and brought forth its first cry. The umbilical cord had been cut too long by the flint; now she held her child up so she could see it and with her teeth she cut the cord off close to the string. She laid the placental parts aside to be disposed of later. The child still cried and she held it to her breast. There was no milk yet but the rich yellow life-giving colostrum flowed into its mouth as it sucked. Over the baby on her breast she spread the aca-

cia limbs and leaned back to rest from her labor. It was darker than before and as she closed her eyes she saw that the sun was now more than half eaten by the moon and in her heart there was fear. But there was also a deep feeling of joy, for her first child was a boy. The labor had been great so she closed her eyes for the brief nap that comes to a mother who lives close to nature. The last sounds she heard were those of a healthy child sucking her firm brown breast and the distant sounds of her people as they bewailed the the dying sun.

Only a finger of sun-time passed before kulka awoke. The tempo of the tribe had changed -- the crisis had passed. Once again their pleas to the Great Spirit and their threats hurled at the voracious moon had been effective and the sun was recovering. The dancing and shouting and drumming grew more intense as the sun became brighter and brighter. In their excitement they had not missed Kulka and even if they had they would not have come to hunt for her.

The child was still asleep and as she hugged it closer to her she began its first bath. From her *yakutja* she took pads of soft grass that were saturated with grease and filled with the white ash of burned acacia leaves. Gently she wiped the tiny, almost white, infant with the pads, removing from his skin spots of blood and mucous. Its crying when she turned it over to complete the bath disturbed her not at all. Throughout the entire act she hummed her little tune and the sun grew brighter.

Having finished the bath she sat once more against the stone and held her baby in her arms. After a few minutes she reached for her coolamon and from the sand in it she removed a short piece of hollow branch in which a fire smouldered and smoked. At the place on the rock where her child had been born she laid the live coals and gathered a heap of twigs, leaves, grass, and dried branches. She blew the coals a few times and the dry material burst into flame. She gathered all the evidence of childbirth, including the pads used in Tji's first bath, and ceremoniously laid them on the fire. For several fingers

of suntime, she added fuel to the fire and when she was satisfied that all evidence had been destroyed, she scattered the ashes and left, carrying her child clasped against her breast.

The tribe lay in exhausted silence as she approached carrying the new member of the tribe. They had wept and wailed and shouted curses and pled for the intercession of all the Dream-time Spirits to prevent the sun's being eaten by the moon. When the sun regained control, they were happy and danced and shouted with joy to show their appreciation. Now they were exhausted and lay in the shade resting. One old woman who had been Kulka's chief advisor staggered to her feet and came to meet her. Her first act was to check the string with which the boy's cord was tied. Ascertaining that its two ends were carefully tied over the boy's kidneys, she added her own complicated knot to Kulka's and expressed her satisfaction that the *pulyu* had been properly cared for. She took the crying child and examined it carefully and finally let Kulka know that it was indeed a fine boy, born on a most unusual day, and therefore destined for great things.

By the time the others had recovered from the sun dance, Kulka had spread soft pads of grass in the coolamon and placed her baby in it to sleep while she dug yams nearby. She was humming her little tune and thinking of the unusual events that accompanied the birth of her child. It could be significant. Her own father had been a powerful medicine man, and her mother had hoped for a son. When Kulka was born a girl instead, the mother was not unhappy but told her that her first child would be a son and that he would be a great medicine man. And now that son had been born; and his having been born at a time when the great battle of the sky was at its peak, was of great portent. Kulka was sure that Tji would be that great medicine man and until the time when he had left her at the fire ritual, she had taught him daily all the things of her life -- the lore of the great sea adventures off the coast where she had been born, the religious rites of her tribe, the ways of life and death, the knowledge of spirits both good and evil, the tales of heroes long dead, and all about the cures of various illnesses.