

Crabs, Conchs and Cascadoux

“Yes Maa ah coming now!” I shouted as I ran behind the house to check the crab traps that I set last evening. I looked behind the coconut trees and saw that I had caught two big blue crabs, but had to leave them to go to the rice field with my mother.

Bare feet, I walked on the cold muddy banks of the lagoon. The wet mud oozing between my toes made my blood crawl but I couldn’t complain. I fetched the grass knife and set out to work. I had to cut two banks of ripe rice and bundle it for my mother to pick up. I worked fast, trying to hurry to go back for the crabs.

Mother kept looking at me cut eye; she knew what I had planned. As we worked, she said, “Chile, if you think you running away, you better think again.”

I got sad and started to work slowly. I took my time and as I carefully cut the rice, I looked for cascadoux and conchs. I collected a few conchs to add to the barrel I had at home, but I had not yet mastered the art of catching the cascadoux with my hands.

When we were almost done, mom saw a mass of eggs floating in the water. She put her hands in the water and gently paddled her fingers. Not long after, I heard a splash and she was holding a big fish in her hands. “See how it’s done child,” she said looking at me.

We left the rice field happy. Ma had her task of rice cut; I had a cascadoo and some conchs and was going home to get the crabs and set the traps out again.