



# *The Battle of the Crabs*

Mabel Cook Cole

Philippine

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*Intermediate*  
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One day the land crabs had a meeting and one of them said:

“What shall we do with the waves? They sing so loudly all the time that we cannot possibly sleep.”

“Well,” answered one of the oldest of the crabs, “I think we should make war on them.”

The others agreed to this, and it was decided that the next day all the male crabs should get ready to fight the waves. They started for the sea, as agreed, when they met a shrimp.

“Where are you going, my friends?” asked the shrimp.

“We are going to fight the waves,” answered the crabs, “for they make so much noise at night that we cannot sleep.”

“I do not think you will succeed,” said the shrimp, “for the waves are very strong and your legs are so weak that even your bodies bend almost to the ground when you walk.” Wherewith he laughed loudly.

This made the crabs very angry, and they pinched the shrimp until he promised to help them win the battle.

Then they all went to the shore. But the crabs noticed that the eyes of the shrimp were set unlike their own, so they thought his must be wrong and they laughed at him and said:

“Friend shrimp, your face is turned the wrong way. What weapon have you to fight with the waves?”

“My weapon is a spear on my head,” replied the shrimp, and just then he saw a big wave coming and ran away. The crabs did not see it, however, for they were all looking toward the shore, and they were covered with water and drowned.

By and by the wives of the crabs became worried because their husbands did not return, and they went down to the shore to see if they could help in the battle. No sooner had they reached the water, however, than the waves rushed over them and killed them.

Some time after this thousands of little crabs appeared near the shore, and the shrimp often visited them and told them of the sad fate of their parents. Even today these little crabs can be seen on the shore, continually running back and forth. They seem to rush down to fight the waves, and then, as their courage fails, they run back to the land where their forefathers lived. They neither live on dry land, as their ancestors did, nor in the sea where the other crabs are, but on the beach where the waves wash over them at high tide and try to dash them to pieces.

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