

The Woman Who Took Too Many Squid

On O‘ahu there lived a woman who was noted for her ability to catch squid. The chiefs of high rank loved to eat squid so any person who could catch a lot of squid was in demand. One day a great luau was to be given by a chief, and he wanted some squid, so he sent some of his men in search of someone who could catch squid. They found the woman and brought her to the chief. He told her he wanted squid from a certain reef and asked if she could catch some for him. She said she could catch all he wanted.

She went down to the beach at the place chosen by the chief, but before she entered the water, an old man met her. He told her the rules of the place: she could catch only a certain number—and no more—or something would be sure to happen to her. She called for her daughter, who had followed her, and told her daughter to come help her.

The lady caught all she had been allowed by the old man, but she kept on fishing until she had more than she could handle. She sent her daughter to shore with half the load and told her she was going home, but instead she remained, for she saw a huge squid she wanted to get. Just then a large shark came and began pulling the lady out to sea. She yelled for help. Her daughter tried to come to her rescue, but it was too late.

When the people found out what happened, they knew that it was done by a shark that guarded that reef. After that event, they named the place Paumalu, which means “taken secretly or illegally.”

What do you think is the lesson of this story? Why do you think the old man told the lady to take only a limited amount?