‘One day, one day congoyay,’
Dem family does say.
‘One day, one day congoyay,’
Every body have to pay

‘Jessie, get down from that tree, this instant!’ This was a normal cry that could have been heard every day at the end of a school day and all throughout the day on holidays, vacations and weekends at #12 Kingway Street, the home of the biggest tomboy of Arouca, the only girl in a family with four brothers. With a great deal of land and a lot of trees as her backyard playground, this only nurtured the tomboyish growth. Naturally there were many cuts, bruises, falls and brawls, but she stood defiant to her grandparents’ threats and punishments. They in turn relented, considered it to be harmless fun and thought that sooner or later she would grow out of it, always muttering, ‘One day, one day, congoyay,’ fearing that her love for climbing would soon result in more than a few scrapes and contuses.

When Jessie brought home a bad report card, however, her grandparents banned her from all of her after-school activities with the analysis that she did not put in enough time into her studies. Jessie, on the other hand, had already made arrangements with her friends for the August vacation, including a river lime. So, she decided that she could please both her grandparents and her friends. All she had to do was be studious around her grandparents, catch them off guard and sneak out when they were absent from the house. Every day, when her grandfather was collecting honey and/or wax from the bees in the hive and her grandmother, selling it at the side of the road, she would sneak out to her friends until she thought it was a good estimated time in which she could return home and appear to have done a lot of work in the time she was gone.

The day of the river lime had arrived and to Jessie’s fortune, her grandparents had their biannual doctor’s appointment. It was agreed that she would bring the duck-eggs to be cooked. She enduringly helped her grandparents’ get ready for their appointments, helped them out of the door, waited until she could not see them any more on the road, and by half past seven was headed in the opposite direction towards the rendezvous point at Henry Trace.

After a refreshing swim and a delicious brunch of boiled eggs, bread and jam, it was decided that they would play a game of cowboys and indians to dry off. Jessie, an indian, decided that with her expert climbing skills she could climb high in a mango tree and make it almost impossible for the cowboys to reach her. When her ‘cowboy’ friends couldn’t reach her by hand, they decided to use some bamboo to prod her out. Not wanting to get caught, Jessie decided to jump from the mango tree to a pomerac tree. Fate, as it seems, decided to allow her to get caught one way or another, fore as she jumped her foot got caught in the fork between the branches she was sitting in. This was about ten in the morning.

Jessie, hanging down like she was, was able to get caught very easily, and her friends thinking she gave up, began tugging her hands, hoping to pull her down. But after a few pulls and Jessie wasn’t closer to the ground, both she and her friends began to worry and Jessie more so as her foot was beginning to throb and compress against the tree fork. The only solution they could have thought of was to call an adult. This took a while, as the nearest place to the river was Uncle Martin’s Parlour, a half hour walk from the river.

Jessie was tough by nature, but the pain grew more and more unbearable and despite her best efforts, she could not hide her tears which formed slowly but surely. When Uncle Martin came an hour and fifteen minutes later, Jessie was exhilarated and the pain in her ankle was allayed for a few seconds. Uncle Martin helped her out of the tree but by the time...
she was safely anchored to the ground, who would she happen to see but her grandparents walking at their same slow pace up towards the river. Uncle Martin had called them. Apparently their appointment had been cancelled. When they returned home to an empty house, they became very worried and had the entire neighbourhood looking her. The look on their faces now scarcely showed any sign worry, mainly that of annoyance and anger.

After Uncle Martin, who also did a brief course of first aid in school, examined Jessie’s foot, which from brief examination seemed to be only sprained, Jessie’s grandparents commenced with the flogging.

All Jessie could think of during the flogging and all the way as she hopped, dropped and cried home was the saying her grandparents used to say:

‘One day, one day, congotay.’
When everybody play
‘One day, one day, congotay.’
Now is your turn to pay