

The dark side of Africa's chocolate

On Halloween night, kids across the writer's neighbourhood where she lives in the United States can be heard howling with delight. Veins spiked with sugar and goody bags overflowing with chocolate bars propel tiny devils, ghouls and goblins from door to door.

Beyond the grinning jack-o-lanterns and just past the haunted house, the true horror of Halloween may be buried beneath the clever disguise of the seemingly sweet candy makers. This July, major chocolate producers such as Mars, Hershey's and Nestle revealed that they were more about tricks than treats.

The truth behind the chocolate is anything but sweet. On the Ivory Coast of Africa, the origin of nearly half of the world's cocoa, hundreds of thousands of children work or are enslaved on cocoa farms. With poverty running rampant and average cocoa revenues ranging from \$30-\$108 per household member per year, producers have no choice but to utilize child labor for dangerous farming tasks. Some children, seeking to help their poor families, even end up as slaves on cocoa farms far from home. Slavery drags on and we are paying the slaveholder's wages.

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