How to Catch River Crabs

As a lifelong crabber (that is, one who catches crabs, not a chronic complainer), I can tell you that anyone who has patience and a great love for the river is qualified to join the ranks of crabbers. However, if you want your first crabbing experience to be a successful one, you must come prepared.

First, you need a boat, but not just any boat. I recommend a 15-foot-long fiberglass boat complete with a 25-horsepower motor, extra gas in a steel can, two 13-foot-long wooden oars, two steel anchors, and enough cushions for the entire party. You will also need scoops, crab lines, a sturdy crate, and bait. Each crab line, made from heavy-duty string, is attached to a weight, and around each weight is tied the bait—a slimy, smelly, and utterly grotesque chicken neck.

Now, once the tide is low, you are ready to begin crabbing. Drop your lines overboard, but not before you have tied them securely to the boat rail. Because crabs are sensitive to sudden movements, the lines must be slowly lifted until the chicken necks are visible just below the surface of the water. If you spy a crab nibbling the bait, snatch him up with a quick sweep of your scoop. The crab will be furious, snapping its claws and bubbling at the mouth. Drop the crab into the wooden crate before it has a chance to get revenge. You should leave the crabs brooding in the crate as you make your way home.

Back in your kitchen, you will boil the crabs in a large pot until they turn a healthy shade of orange. Just remember to keep the crab pot covered. Finally, spread newspapers over the kitchen table, deposit the boiled crabs on the newspaper and enjoy the most delicious meal of your life.