

Chapter 13, in which we re-meet our old friend Dan Farley, Dan calls upon an old friend, Luke McNaughton, and a weather window is sought for a return to another old friend, the Exumas.

The sun rose clear and hot the next morning, waking Dan Farley as the panting of his dog slowly resolved out of the tangled dream he was having, where blue tangs swam amongst oleanders, and he was being chased, or chasing something through a bog ... but the foul miasma was real and he reached out and ruffled Moron's head.

Dan got up and pulled on his shorts ... he would soon be swimming with blue tangs and smelling the oleanders but first he had some work to do. It was almost a year since he had actually had the boat at sail, it having turned into more his house than his boat over the past five years. Dan had been working in construction since finishing his Master's degree at the University of Miami's Biscayne Campus, which housed The School of Environment, Arts and Society (SEAS) program.

That had been a full-time endeavour but luckily he had been able to live aboard his boat during his studies, moored at the Coconut Grove. But it had been wonderful to trade the dust of academia for the dust of construction, and the bustle of Miami for the relatively laid back charm of Key Largo. And now maybe these two interests would come together in Exuma, but finally working for himself he thought. He started visualizing his eco-resort, happily day-dreaming while conveniently forgetting that the First Bank of the Exumas actually owned the whole thing, he just had the debt, having somehow also been leant the money to finance it.

After a quick trip ashore with Moron, and breakfast in a local diner, Dan sat down and pulled out his old charts and fired up his laptop, feeling a twinge, caught between two worlds and not sure how they would collide, the speed of the new versus the calmer pace of the past. But retrospection and reflection would have to wait. Plenty of time on the sail to the Exumas which would take at least a week and that was counting on favourable winds. Possible to solo it, but much better with company, not merely canine, he thought, scratching the dog's head amiably.

He had never had much luck with the female of the species, he sighed to himself, wishing, as he had more and more frequently of late, that he had a first mate. Double entendre intended, a joke his parents used to make. He sighed again and picked up the phone, calling his old friend and sometimes boat-mate, Luke McNaughton, hoping to catch him between jobs and ready for an all-paid adventure to the Bahamas.

Luke had agreed almost immediately, wanting a break from his peculiar but fascinating job constructing water parks all around the world, [the most recent one in Beijing](#). He had always been a talented carpenter, really an artist, and despite a difficult family life, which had led to an alarming relationship with drugs, his ability to make everyday objects beautifully out of wood had kept him well-employed and had eventually led to this bizarre opportunity. But he was back in Miami, he had said, with no commitments for at least a month, and would high-tail it to Key Largo without delay.

A crew mate assured, and the best of the best, even if he would make a terrible wife ... Dan grinned at the thought of an enormous Scots wife, red-haired and possibly clutching a [claymore](#) ... and started to search for wind conditions over the next few days, hoping to see a weather window for the crossing to Bimini. There they could clear [Bahamian customs](#) and get their cruising permit, good for 90 days, and once in he could work on the logistics of getting an extended visitors permit. And then a long shot south to the tip of the Exumas, [Highbourne Cay](#), and then to what would be his new home he really hoped, in the same islands that had sailed in as a young boy with his parents.

