

Chapter Ten: in which Angie waits, barely breathing, a package is lost and then found, and a well-earned nap is had.

Angie waited, barely breathing while holding Taxi to keep him still, hoping the men would not come looking for their missing package. They were looking around in the water and she assumed they knew how many packages had been dropped. She shivered intensely and suddenly had to pee desperately.

"Please leave," she implored the two men silently, to herself, "this is not the package you are looking for."

Much to her amazement one of them looked at his watch and gestured sharply to the other. They took one more quick look around, but then put the motor in gear and took off at high speed. Angie stayed put for what felt to her bladder like hours, and then released Taxi from her panicked hold. The grateful hound ran off and peed under a bush, finding what little shade there was. Angie imitated her clever pooch and then sat down and pondered, while Taxi licked the blood off her right shin, the only scratch that turned out to be bad.

"There is nothing for it," she finally told the dog, "we need to go down there and at least find out what is in that bundle. Dollars to doughnuts, it isn't doughnuts."

Poking her head up over the bush, she looked around and could see the speed boat way off in the distance, just about to round the point near the resort. It seemed safe enough, and she scrambled down, much more carefully than she had ascended, toward the driftwood that had snagged the errant parcel. It was still there, bobbing with each ebbing wave, as the tide was just beginning to turn.

Heart in throat she pulled it out, ripping the garbage bag outer-wrapping that had snagged on a sharp piece of metal, caught up in the driftwood and seaweed. The inner bag was tightly packed and intact, and she stared at it, uncertain of her next move.

"Okay, genius, now what? You cannot take this back to the boat . . ." she began, starting to argue with herself, as she often did. But the argument was over

before it had really begun, as it often was, the answer lying in the denial.

She stood up, holding the package close to her chest, and climbed once more up the jagged coral path and then with much relief down the other side of the cay to the little beach. There was the houseboat, lying serene out of the Atlantic wind and waves, and her flippers and mask on a rock to the side making the whole thing like a postcard.

Angie and Taxi crashed through the idyllic scene, Angie floating the package before her as she pulled on her flippers in the shallow water, eager to get within the confines of the houseboat. They tied, reaching the swim platform at the stern of the boat at the same time, and Angie helped Taxi up with an undignified push on his backside, having tossed the package as far inside as she could.

She grabbed a big towelling gown, and then stripped naked, wrapping herself with much grateful pleasure in the warm folds, chilled to the bone both physically and mentally. Picking up the package she went into the galley and put it on the table.

"Curiosity was bad for the cat," she thought as she got the sharp paring knife from the drawer. Trying not to cut the string that bound the plastic, she slipped the knife under a fold and made a little slice. A tiny bit of white powder dribbled onto the table. Angie touched some to her lips. Cocaine, not pot. And now she had it on her houseboat. She tipped the package up so it could spill no more, and looked around for something to plug the leak. Angie stuffed in the tiny corner of a garbage bag, and then wrapping the parcel tightly with the rest of the bag, she jammed it under the hot water tank in the utility cupboard, .

"We will have to take it back," she told Taxi, "but we will do it under cover of darkness." And then, despite all the anxieties of the situation, she lay down on her bed and fell sound asleep. Taxi took a quick tour of the boat, and then lay down at the door of her bedroom, deciding he should be on watch, or at least in the way, while his mistress took a well-earned nap.

