

Chapter Twenty in which Dan discovers the joy of responsibility, Angie makes a quick decision, and Luke and Mickey go off to get the beer.

When we last saw Angie and Dan they were staring out to sea trying to see into the future. Luke and Mickey, two men who firmly lived in the now, broke them out of their reverie by calling to the dogs. It was coming up on noon and they were both starving. They had already recognized the futility of trying to break up the newly formed gang and Mickey was going to walk back to the kayak and grab the beers and food he and Angie had packed earlier while Luke took the dingy back to Dan's sailboat and grabbed some lunch to bring back to the beach. Breaking up the dogs also proved somewhat futile, and they both followed Mickey, sensing correctly that he was the closest to any food.

Dan and Angie were thus alone at the edge of his new property as the full weight of the responsibility this ownership, or really a loan just as it was financed, bore down upon him. The word stewardship passed through his mind and he thought he suddenly understood it. Dan found to his amazement that the responsibility brought joy as well as fear, and felt that he might have finally found something he really cared about. His actions would have an immediate impact, something he had never felt before in his academic life. It was why he loved small construction where theory held little sway.

As these enormous thoughts were washing through Dan's brain in emotional waves he turned to Angie who had touched him gently on the arm and made a small sound. She was looking a little bit weepy, having had a very different rush of emotional thought, realising that she had promised her father she would of course keep his cover but that simultaneously she couldn't lie to this brand new stranger. And then she had thought of telling her father about Dan knowing he would run a police check on him and she would never be able to face him again. And then she realised that her father already would have snooped all through Dan's past.

Knowing it was either one of the smartest choices she had ever made or one of the stupidest, she found herself blurting out, "My dad's a nice guy with the Canadian Coast Guard but he is working with the DEA on an internal drug sting and might be here on Exuma by tonight undercover."

"Wow," Dan slowly replied. "Don't you hate it in movies when there is trouble and the guy just says to the girl, 'I don't have time to get into it!' but they have spent hours in a hotel room or airplane together? I really don't feel like that right now. Could you repeat that more slowly?"

"No," replied Angie now smiling, "that was a once off opening of the vault."

"Okay." And that was all he said, after zipping his mouth shut with his hand, turning an imaginary key to lock it, and throwing the key deep into the surf.

With that Angie stood up, pulled off her sun shirt and started walking towards the water.

"Where are you going," Dan asked, cringing at his pale question as he watched her tanned form and stood to follow.

"To go and find that key ... I think I just might want to keep it."

