

## Cuttleson and the Pirates, Part 22: OUT AND ABOUT

Bonnet walked until he reached the waterfront. He went past provisions warehouses, and a supermarket which was quite busy. Then he noticed a young black boy on the quayside, not far from the sailing ship's berth. He knew that the child's real name was Lynden, but he was known by the proprietors and dock workers of the Nassau waterfront, as 'Rascal'. Bonnet approached the child, and saw he was playing with coins.

"Hey, Lynden! How's things?"

"Hey, Mr. Bonnet! I'm checkin'."

The boy had arranged different denominations on the stone quay, and was holding a magnet on a string above each in turn. Bonnet stopped, fished in his pocket, and produced a still shiny 50 cents piece. "Here, check this."

Lynden took it from him and dangled the magnet over it, touching the coin a few times. He gave his verdict. "It don't pick up. It's good. Mostly genwine silver."

"What else can you tell me?"

The boy examined it further. "Queen 'Lizbeth II, an' Bahama Islands. That's us."

"What's on the other side?"

Lynden turned it over. "It's a Blue Marlin fish, an' waves. An' the date. It's last year, 1966."

"Okay! You can keep it."

The boy gave a broad grin. "Thanks, Mr. Bonnet."

"And shouldn't you be in school today, young scamp? Promise me you'll go directly."

"Okay. I'm goin' now.." Gathering up his coins and magnet, he put them in the pockets of his shorts, and got up. He went off down the quay, and glanced back as he reached a street corner. Mr. Bonnet waved. Lynden waved back, and hurried on.

Bonnet came to the ship, and went aboard. Cuttleson was there. He'd been on the vessel since dawn, having come from the British Colonial Hotel where he, the crew, and Morgana, had all taken rooms for a short stay.

Cuttleson greeted him. Did you see the Governor?"

"Sure did. It's as we expected, James. To be shipped to the Mother Country. A car's comin' to remove them to Government House."

"Right." Cuttleson spoke assuredly now. "They will be taken to the British Museum. Expect lengthy scrutiny."

They set about removing the hatch cover, and the quartermaster went below, followed by the shipowner. They retrieved the chests from their concealment, Cuttleson made rope slings, and the two men hauled them back up to the maindeck.

"What will happen to her now, Charles?"

"Who? Morgana?" said Bonnet.

"No. The Buccaneer," replied Cuttleson. "She needs an overhaul. I suggest the old girl be taken to drydock facilities at Grand Bahama for careening, some recaulking, and tarring." The Buccaneer swayed gently at her moorings.

"All right James. Have the crew's personal effects been removed?"

"Yes. All luggage is at the hotel."

They dragged the chests to the gangplank. At that moment a government limousine pulled up. The driver got out and helped to carry the chests onto the wharf. They were deposited safely inside the vehicle. "Deliver them to Governor Grey at once," said Bonnet.

"Yes, sir." The car sped off.

"Okay," said Bonnet. "A final check of the captain's cabin." They went through every locker and space. It was all clear. Cuttleson had already given the ship's log and charts to him, and all the pirate apparel had been taken to the hotel. The galley had also been cleared. The quartermaster had attended while the port authority removed the powderkegs into warehousing. Blades had also been handed over - and the pistols impounded, despite the shipowner having a firearms licence.

"I need to go and book the band for tonight. I might be able to get the Cool Cats - the caterin' has been arranged too." said Bonnet.

"Look forward to it," replied Cuttleson. Bonnet left.

Nev, in swim shorts for the first time this trip, went for a stroll on Junkanoo beach. He threw off his espadrilles and T-shirt, and waded in, thinking how strange it is, as a seaman, to spend so much time on the sea and yet rarely be in it. Brod also arrived, tramping barefoot in the sand, and had a paddle along the sea's edge. The water was pleasant and cooling.

Morgana had a lie-in, enjoying the luxury of a hotel room. After breakfast, she walked in the hotel gardens, enjoying the surroundings - the yellow elder, the oleanders, the pleasantness of it all. Then she thought about her daughter, and of their future, as far as she could ascertain it.

Tom went for a walk along the busy shaded thoroughfare of Bay Street, and soon saw a bookstore. There he found what he wanted. The book had the title 'Oceans'. There were photographic plates of extraordinary sea creatures, corals, and aquatic plant life. Maps of the world's oceans and their depths, temperatures, and currents. Diagrams of global wind patterns. He made his purchase, and headed back to the hotel.

Chang was in Downtown, asking questions of gem dealers.

*(Copyright by J. Cuttle)*