



The wind was shifting to the southeast, "It's up to 22, sustained," I said. "And I weather.

Our choices: drop all the canvas and "In the wrong direction," I thought to or keep the sails flying, tacking out west in the Exuma Bank. and back across the straight path to our destination.

into the Exuma Bank.

way ahead of predictions, which would don't like those squalls on the horizon." put it right in our face on the next turn, "But we're going 8 knots!" Chip replied, that dreaded angle called beating to happy that we were crushing our usual pace of 6 knots.

motor into increasing wind and swell myself as we sailed farther and farther

I was struggling to keep our heading against too much sail, fighting the wind, We chose to sail and tacked southwest the sails and the boat. I wanted to reef. Chip didn't.

and I were still at odds about the sail deck. plan.

Partway through his watch, Chip roused abruptly, in my opinion. me from a nap, because he needed my help. I stumbled into the cockpit, and "But I don't even know what's going he handed me the wheel.

At the end of my watch, I went below "What do you want me to do?" I asked, to get out of the din, annoyed that Chip bleary eyed, as he dashed onto the side

"Just sail the boat!" he said, rather

on!" I said, and without a firm hand





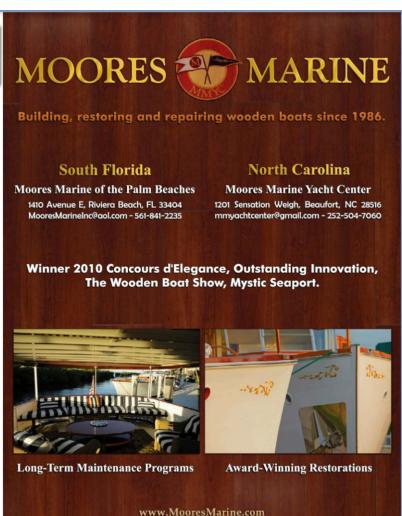
was turning off course.

We have since agreed on a protocol for handing over the helm in a more But we were new cruisers and helm considerate way, turning on the protocol was sorely missing that day

against the overpowered sails, Cara Mia and then briefing the incoming helmsman on anything relevant before stepping away.

autopilot, so the boat stays on course, on the wrong way to Black Point. I took





INTHESTREAM

and without knowing which heading to take.

Chip and I got in a fight that went off the wind, and the new reefing like most married fights go: nowhere, only this one went at an 8-knot clip with actual gusts and flashes of lightning.

"Why couldn't you just sail the boat?" Chip asked.

"Why couldn't you just tell me what was happening?" I said. I stomped below in anger and skulked until my watch.

decided -- in a chilly manner -- to reef the main with our new, untried reefing rig, yet another maneuver for a flock of startled hens and just as noisy.

the wheel in 25 knots of wind with The jib lines got twangled around annoying swell and too much sail, themselves and in the standing rigging.

Chip got everything tamed back As I was groggily finding my way, down and the main reefed. I turned ring popped off its new horn.

> Once again I steered into the wind, and Chip went forward to put the ring back on. I filled the sails, and the ring popped off again. Repeat.

> "Now we've got it," I said. The reefing ring was staying in place, the wind was easing to 10 knots -- just as we entered Black Point harbor, three hours after leaving Sampson.

On the tack toward Black Point, we That's when I noticed that the frenzied chicken maneuver had ripped out the entire back seam of the jib.

which we had no protocol. It was my Cara Mia had paid the price for our watch, and when I turned into the mistakes, schooling us in the value wind, the jib got away, flapping like of good seamanship -- and a new meaning of seakindliness that would serve us on land and sea.

Safely at anchor, Chip heaved my the jib billowing across the deck, he turned the hand crank while I guided the sail under the needle, working together to rethread the damage of working at odds.

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