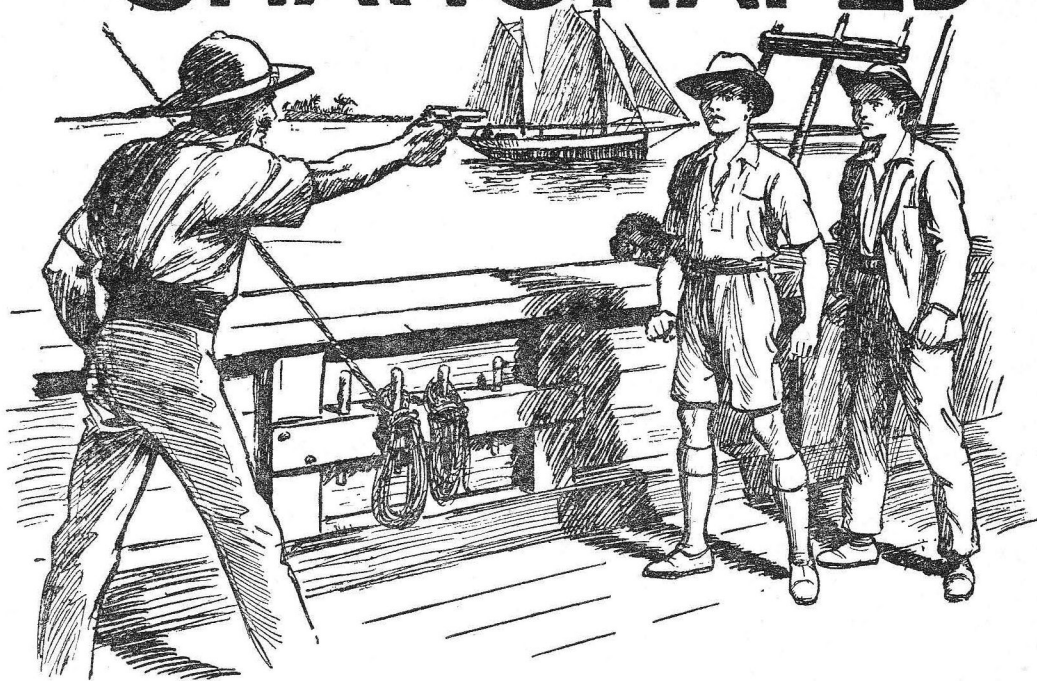


SHANGHAI-ED



by Charles Hamilton

A Story of the King of the Islands

CHAPTER I

BECALMED !

“**T**HAT feller sing out plenty too much, mouth belong him!” Koko, the brown-skinned boatswain of the *Dawn*, made that remark, ceasing for a moment to twang his ukelele.

The yell of pain and anguish that came echoing across the blue water did not disturb Koko’s serenity: though it made King of the Islands and his mate, Kit Hudson, knit their brows.

There was a dead calm on the Pacific.

The ketch *Dawn* lay like a log on the blue water. King of the Islands scanned the sea, in vain, for the slightest sign of a ripple. Kit Hudson whistled for a wind—in vain.

Ken King's handsome ketch, which was wont to skim the waves with the speed and grace of a sea-bird, lay like a painted ship on a painted ocean.

Hardly a cable's length distant, equally helpless on the motionless sea, waiting for a wind, lay the *Sea-Cat*—Dandy Peter Parsons' cutter from Lukwe.

The tall palm-tops of the island of Tovuku nodded on the horizon, to the east.

With a wind, the *Dawn* would have made the island almost in a matter of minutes. But there was not the faintest breath to stir the canvas. For long, long hours those palm-tops had nodded tantalizingly in sight, while the ketch lay immobile. Skipper and mate watched sea and sky, hoping against hope for a sign of a catspaw, while Kobo sat on the coamings of the cabin skylight and twanged his ukulele, and the Hiva-Oa crew lolled in contented laziness and chewed betel-nut.

To the Kanaka crew of the *Dawn*, what might be happening on the Lukwe cutter was a matter of no interest. The brown boys did not trouble to turn their heads, as the wild yelling came across the water. But the frown was darkening on the brow of King of the Islands.

Dandy Peter of Lukwe was no friend of the boy trader. Chance had becalmed them within a cable's length, as Ken King was making Tovuku, and Peter Parsons sailing away from it. Dead calm chained them both to the spot, till the wind came. But Ken would have given no heed to the Lukwe cutter, but for the sounds that came across the sea.

Looking across Ken and Hudson could see the neat, dapper dandy of Lukwe, in his spotless ducks—handsome, slim, elegant, but hard as nails, ruthless as a tiger-shark. Dandy Peter sailed his cutter with a crew of three black Lukwe boys, and he was always as ready with a blow as with a word, and as ready with the lawyer-cane as with his knuckles. But what was going on now was something out of the common, even on a floating hell like Dandy Peter's cutter. Some hapless native "boy" was howling under the lawyer-cane—and the howling and yelling had gone on, intermittently, for a long time. Why even Dandy Peter, cat-like as he was, was keeping it up so long, was a puzzle to the shipmates of the *Dawn*, and their faces grew darker and darker as they heard.

"My word, sar, that feller along cutter sing out plenty too much!" said Koko. "Tinkee white master kill that feller altogether too much along lawyer-cane."

"The swab!" muttered Ken.

"The lubber!" grunted Kit Hudson. "Look here, Ken, there's a limit. Are we letting this go on?"

Ken set his lips.

To intervene between a skipper and his crew was against all the laws and customs of the sea. But there was, as the Australian mate said, a limit. Whatever might have been the native boy's offence, it could not justify such con-

tinued punishment. Ken King had hesitated long: but now, as his mate spoke, he made up his mind.

"No!" he said. "It's going to stop! Koko!"

"Yessar!"

"Lower the whaleboat."

"Yessar."

Immediately there was activity on board the *Dawn*. Koko laid down his ukulele, and shouted to the crew. The whaleboat dropped from the davits to the sea: and in a minute more, was pulling for the Lukwe cutter, with Tomoo and Lompo at the oars, and Ken and Kit in the stern.

From the ketch, Koko and the Hiva-Oa boys watched it, interested now, even Danny the cooky-boy coming out of his galley to watch. They knew how little the desperado of Lukwe was likely to tolerate interference on his own deck—and they knew, too, the grim set look on Ken King's face. And they watched in excited anticipation of an affray on the *Sea-Cat*.

The low freeboard of the cutter gave the shipmates a full view of the scene, as the whaleboat approached Dandy Peter's craft.

Peter Parsons was sprawling in a Madeira chair, smoking a cigarette. A native was standing face to the mast, round which his arms extended—a rope securing his wrists together on the further side. A black boy was wielding the lawyer-cane—another black boy looked on with indifferent face. Dandy Peter generally sailed with a crew of three: and it came into Ken's mind that the man tied to the mast was not, perhaps, a member of his crew at all, but some native whom he might have "shanghaied" on the beach of Tovuku. And that suspicion grew stronger, as the boat drew nearer, and he discerned that the tied man was a brown Polynesian, like his own crew. The Lukwe boys were black, and he could see only two of them.

"My sainted Sam!" muttered the boy trader. "That's not a Lukwe boy, Kit—it's not one of that brute's crew. May be a Tovuku boy. It would be like that swab to shanghai a boy on the beach if he wanted an extra hand."

"He's seen us coming," said Hudson.

Dandy Peter had half-risen from the Madeira chair, and was looking towards the whaleboat. An unpleasant glint came into his dark handsome eyes. His look showed plainly enough that if the shipmates of the *Dawn* were coming to interfere, trouble awaited them on the deck of the *Sea-Cat*.

Trouble with the dandy of Lukwe had no terrors for King of the Islands. He had had trouble with him before, and Dandy Peter had not had the best of it.

"Washy washy plenty quick, you feller boy," rapped King of the Islands: and the whaleboat shot on towards the cutter.

Kit Hudson stood up, and held on, as it floated under the low rail. Dandy Peter leaped from the Madeira chair, and came to the side, with the quick, elastic tread of a panther. The two Lukwe boys stared at the boat.

The beating ceased, though the native tied to the mast still howled. His bare brown back was a criss-cross of scoring from the lawyer-cane.

"What do you want here, King of the Islands?" Dandy Peter's voice was cool, but his eyes were gleaming. "I reckon I haven't asked you to step on my craft."

"We're coming aboard," rapped Ken.

"Guess again!"

Ken, without answering, put his hands on the rail. The dandy of Lukwe clenched his hands.

"Keep in your boat, King of the Islands," he said, between his teeth. "If you step on my cutter, I'll knock you back into the sea."

"Handle that boat-hook, Kit, if that swab uses his hands," said King of the Islands.

"Aye, aye!"

Ken swung himself lightly over the rail. Dandy Peter's arm was drawn back for a blow. But the blow did not come. Before it could be delivered, Dandy Peter had to jump back from the lunge of the boat-hook in the Australian's hand. Hudson lunged straight at him, and the desperado of Lukwe just saved himself by a backward leap.

A second more, and King of the Islands was standing on the cutter: another second, and Kit Hudson had followed him on board: and Dandy Peter, his handsome face red with rage, snatched a heavy Navy revolver from the back of his belt.

"Get off my ship! Or—!"

The barrel was rising, as King of the Islands leaped forward. The revolver spun from Dandy Peter's hand, and whirled into the scuppers, exploding as it fell: as Ken King's fist, clenched and as hard as iron, crashed into the dark handsome face, and Dandy Peter of Lukwe, lifted from his feet by that terrific jolt, went rolling headlong on his own deck.

CHAPTER II

TOKOLOO OF TOVUKU

KING OF THE ISLANDS stepped towards the bound man at the mast. The Lukwe boy who had been wielding the lawyer-cane at his master's order, eyed him very uneasily as he came.

"Drop that feller lawyer-cane, hand belong you!" rapped Ken.

The Lukwe boy hesitated, glancing at his master, sprawling on the deck, dizzy and breathless. Dandy Peter was, for the moment, in no state to intervene. The lawyer-cane dropped to the deck.

"My sainted Sam!" muttered Ken. His brow was dark, as he looked at the brown back of the prisoner, scored again and again by cruel lashes.

Dandy Peter sat up, his hand to his bruised face. He sat dizzily, his eyes burning with malevolence at the shipmates of the *Dawn*. Ken gave him no heed, but Hudson kept a wary eye on him, prepared for any desperate move on the part of the sea-lawyer of Lukwe.

"You feller boy!" rapped Ken.

"Yessar," mumbled the Lukwe boy.

"Cast loose rope along hand belong this feller."

Again the Lukwe boy glanced at his master. Again he obeyed the order, as there was no sign from Peter Parsons.

The rope was cast loose, and the prisoner tottered from the mast, and turned, to face his rescuers.

Ken scanned the brown face, drawn with pain.

He knew already that the man did not belong to Lukwe, as he was brown, and the Lukwe boys were black. Now, looking at him, he could see by the bluish tattoo-marks on the brown skin that he was a native of Tovuku. It was no new feat on Dandy Peter's part to kidnap a Kanaka. Evidently Parsons had picked up this brown-skinned "boy" at Tovuku. The "boy" was more than twice Ken's age—but all Kanakas were "boys".

The brown face, anguished as it was from the cruel beating, lighted up, as the Tovuku boy looked at the boy trader.

"Feller King of the Islands!" he exclaimed.

Ken nodded and smiled.

"I've seen you before, I think," he said. "You know me?"

"Savvy plenty, sar! Me see you, eye belong me, along you stop along Tovuku, trade along big-feller chief Kameka, master belong me. Me Tokoloo, sar."

Ken nodded again. He knew the man now.

"What name you sail along Cap'n Parsons, Tokoloo?" he asked.

"No wantee, sar! Cap'n Parsons makee."

Peter Parsons staggered to his feet. Tokoloo's black eyes shot round to him, dilating with terror. He moved closer to the boy trader.

"Oh, sar, you good feller along this feller Tokoloo," he panted. "You no likee lawyer-cane stop along back belong me, sar."

"They won't touch you again, Tokoloo," said King of the Islands. "I heard you from my ketch, and came across to put a stop to it! You no fright along feller Cap'n Parsons."

Peter Parsons came towards him. His eyes were smouldering with rage, but he kept his temper in check. He was in a mood to use the revolver, had it been still in his hand. But the revolver lay in the scuppers, and Kit Hudson stood ready to knock him spinning if he made a movement towards it. Force

was on the side of the shipmates of the *Dawn*, and they cared nothing for the half-suppressed fury of the dandy of Lukwe.

"You swab!" breathed Parsons. "You've come on my ship without leave, and laid your hands on me—"

"I'll lay them on again, fast enough, if you give trouble," snapped Ken, contemptuously. "I've more than half a mind to give you a taste of the lawyer-cane before I go."

Parsons trembled with rage.

"Get off my craft!" he breathed. "You've no right here, King of the Islands—you've come on my ship like a pirate—"

"Oh, belay it," said Ken. "I'll go, and take this boy with me. I'm making Tovuku as soon as the wind rises, and he's going back where he belongs."

"You can't take a man off my ship, King of the Islands."
"If the man belonged to your crew, I'd take him all the same, after the way you've used him. But he is no man of yours—you've shanghaied him on Tovuku—he is a servant of old chief Kameka—"

"He stays here," snarled Parsons.

"That's for Tokoloo to say," answered Ken. He glanced at the Tovuku boy with a smile. "You likee stop along Cap'n Parsons?"

"No, sar! No likee plenty too much!" exclaimed Tokoloo, in great haste.

"You likee comey along *Dawn*, along we sail along Tovuku?"

"Yessar! Me likee altogether too much," grinned Tokoloo.

"That's that!" said Ken. "Step into my boat, Tokoloo."

"Yessar!"

Still eyeing Peter Parsons with scared eyes, the Tovuku boy sidled towards the rail. The dandy of Lukwe seemed to choke.

"You're taking that boy off my ship, Ken King?" he breathed.

"Aye, aye."

"If I had a gun in my hand—!" muttered Parsons, hoarsely.

"You had—but it didn't help you much!" snapped Ken. "Throw that gun into the sea, Kit!"

Hudson, grinning, picked up the revolver, and tossed it overboard. It splashed and sank.

"That's that!" said Ken, again. "You step along boat, you feller Tokoloo."

"I tell you you're not taking that man off my ship!" breathed Peter Parsons. "You can see I'm short-handed—one of my crew deserted at Tovuku, and I cannot sail my cutter with a couple of black boys. I picked up that swab on the beach because I needed a man. He got the lawyer-cane because he refused to jump to orders. I'm keeping that man on my cutter, King of the Islands—I'm not pulling out to sea with a crew of two—"

"That's enough!"

Ken turned his back on the sea-lawyer of Lukwe, and went to the side. Tokoloo jumped down into the boat. King of the Islands and Kit Hudson

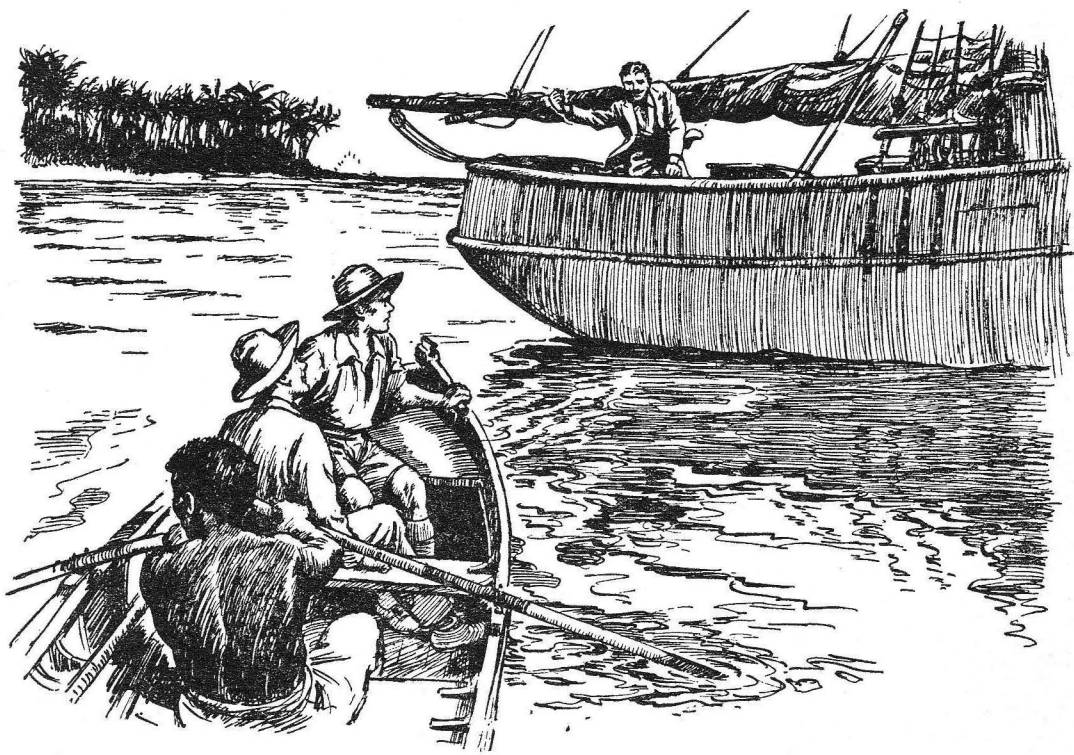
followed him. Dandy Peter stood staring after them, his hands clenched, his eyes blazing. The desperado of Lukwe could scarcely control his fury. But there was nothing he could do. He had been knocked down on his own deck, and the man he had shanghaied was taken off his ship under his eyes—and he was helpless to prevent it.

“Washy-washy along ketch, you feller boy,” said King of the Islands.

Dandy Peter leaped to the low rail, and stared down, as the boat pushed off from his cutter. His eyes burned at King of the Islands. The boy trader eyed him with cool contempt: Hudson with a grin.

“I’ll remember this, King of the Islands!” Dandy Peter’s voice came in a hoarse gasp of fury. “I’ll remember this! I’ll give you reason to remember it, too! My turn next—!”

His voice died away as the whaleboat pulled back to the *Dawn*.



... the whaleboat pulled back to the *Dawn*.

CHAPTER III

A PUZZLE!

"THE wind at last!" said Kit Hudson.

There were catspaws on the calm water. At long, long last, the wind was coming, and the becalmed ketch could get into motion.

It was several hours since the spot of trouble on Dandy Peter's ketch. Through the long hot hours, the two vessels had lain in sight of one another, hardly a cable's length between. Every now and then the shipmates of the *Dawn* had had a glimpse of Dandy Peter's savage face, staring across at the ketch. They gave it no heed. Dandy Peter's rage, and his threats of revenge, passed by the shipmates unregarded. They were through with the sea-lawyer of Lukwe.

Tokoloo sat on a tapa mat on the ketch's deck, with a cheerful brown face. Koko had rubbed his scored back with a native ointment, and Tokoloo was feeling better, though he still wriggled and twisted: it was likely to be long before he ceased to feel the effect of the lawyer-cane on the *Sea-Cat*. But the prospect of returning to Tovuku, as soon as the wind came, was enough to make the brown boy cheerful. His eyes were on the distant nodding palm-trees as he wriggled.

But the wind was coming at last. The catspaws that ruffled the calm surface of the Pacific were followed by the wind, and it came fair for Tovuku. It was a tremendous relief to the shipmates to shake out sail, and feel the ketch moving at last. The nodding palms drew nearer and clearer; over the sea to the east.

King of the Islands glanced back at the *Sea-Cat*, as his ketch glided through the blue waters. Dandy Peter was making sail too. He was shouting to the two Lukwe boys, who were jumping to his orders. But there was no doubt that the cutter was short-handed with a crew of two, and Parsons missed the "boy" who had deserted on Tovuku. The shipmates could see that he had himself to lend a hand with the bellying canvas, which was not in the least to Dandy Peter's taste. But he had no choice, for his boat-steerer had to attend to the tiller, and a single man was not enough to handle the sails. Kit Hudson chuckled, as he looked back, and watched the dapper dandy of Lukwe pulling and hauling like a Kanaka.

"No wonder Parsons picked up a boy on the beach at Tovuku," he remarked. "Three boys on that cutter is cutting it fine: and a crew of two means more work than that swab has a fancy for. I daresay the boy who deserted had had enough of the lawyer-cane and Dandy Peter's knuckles."

"More than likely," said Ken, with a frown. "Let him pull and haul, all the way back to Lukwe: it may be a lesson to him."

But the boy trader's look grew puzzled, as the ketch glided on, and the cutter swung into motion. The shipmates knew that Parsons had sailed out of Tovuku before the wind failed, and they expected him to set a course for his home port, Lukwe, or some other island. But Peter Parsons was doing nothing of the kind. He was setting the same course as the ketch, and heading back to Tovuku.

Kit Hudson whistled.

"By gum, we haven't seen the last of that Lukwe blackguard, Ken," he said. "He's not pulling out—he's making Tovuku again."

Ken's face set grimly.

"If he's looking for more trouble, he will get all he wants, and a little over," he answered.

"More likely looking for a chance to shanghai another Tovuku boy," said Kit. "He doesn't choose to sail short-handed."

King of the Islands laughed.

"He won't have much chance on Tovuku," he said. "As soon as Tokoloo sets foot ashore, and spins his yarn, Parsons life won't be safe on the beach there. He can't be mad enough to land on Tovuku after what he's done. Tokoloo's a servant of the old chief Kameeka, and Kameeka would be more likely than not to send Parsons to the cooking-pots, if he set foot on the beach".

Hudson nodded.

"But he's making Tovuku!" he said.

There was no doubt about that whatever the Lukwe sea-lawyer's intentions were, he was making Tovuku. The tall sail of the cutter, bellying in the wind, danced on the sea, astern of the *Dawn*, heading for the same destination. Whether to seek further trouble with the shipmates of the *Dawn*, or in the hope of picking up the hand he wanted for working the cutter, Peter Parsons was following the ketch to the island he had left earlier in the day.

As the wind strengthened, the *Dawn* flew before it, and the cutter dropped further astern. The *Sea-Cat* was a good boat, and Dandy Peter, blackguard as he was, knew how to sail her: but she did not equal the speed of Ken King's handsome ketch. Further and further astern the tall sail dropped. But it was still in sight, and still on the same course.

It was a puzzle to the shipmates. After what he had done on the beach at Tovuku, Peter Parsons could not fail to know that the whole island would be hostile. He could anchor in the lagoon: but he could not step ashore without taking his life in his hand. Indeed, one glance at Tokoloo told what the sea-lawyer had to expect if he landed. The Tovuku boy was watching the cutter's sail astern, at first in astonishment, and then with a malicious grin. He looked round at King of the Islands.

"That feller Parsons he comey along Tovuku, sar!" said Tokoloo.

"Looks like it!" answered Ken.

"My word! Him kill back belong me, along lawyer-cane," said Tokoloo.

"Sposee him comey along Tovuku, big chief Kameeka makee kaikai along that feller Parsons. Him comey along beach along Tovuku, me plenty too much please altogether."

And Tokoloo resumed watching the cutter, with a grin on his tattooed brown face: a grin of anticipation.

The shipmates exchanged glances.

"The man must be mad to make Tovuku," said Ken. "He will have a hundred natives on him if he steps off his cutter. Mightn't even be safe in his anchorage, after Tokoloo's spun his yarn to Chief Kameeka. But he's coming on."

The *Sea-Cat* was still keeping the same course. The tall sail was far astern, but it was clearly visible over the sea, when the *Dawn* ran the reef passage into the lagoon at Tovuku. Dandy Peter was coming to the island.

There, the shipmates dismissed him from mind, however. They were at Tovuku to trade, and the stay was to be brief: and many hours had been lost in the calm. Late in the afternoon, the shipmates landed, and Tokoloo was taken ashore in the whaleboat. The excitement on the beach, when Tokoloo had told his story of the kidnapping, and of Peter Parsons' drastic method of "breaking in" a new hand, was intense. Crowds of natives gathered to listen to Tokoloo's tale and to stare at the marks of the lawyer-cane on his brown back. And when the tall sail of Peter Parsons' cutter was seen over the reef, there were yells, and howls, and brandishing of spears and clubs.

Ken's face was very grave when the *Dawn's* boat pulled back to the ketch in the sunset. His eyes were on the *Sea-Cat*, coming in at the reef passage. A howling swarm on the beach watched the cutter coming in.

"The man's mad!" muttered Ken. "He's woke up a hornet's nest here, and now he's putting his head into it. We'll give him a hail, Kit, and warn him."

"I can't make out his game!" said Hudson. "He can see from his cutter what's waiting for him on the beach."

"It beats me! But we'll give him a hail."

The whaleboat pulled to intercept the cutter as she glided into the lagoon. King of the Islands stood up and shouted:

"*Sea-Cat* ahoy!"

A dark handsome face, with a dark bruise on it, looked at him over the rail, and Dandy Peter's eyes glittered at him. The whaleboat pulled closer.

"Peter Parsons—!" shouted Ken.

"What do you want?"

"If you've got the sense of a tunny-fish, pull out!" exclaimed Ken. "Look at the beach—you've roused up the whole island. Have you come back here to be kai-kai'ed?"

Parsons shrugged his slim shoulders.

"Didn't I tell you I was short-handed?" he sneered. "I've come back here to pick up a man for my crew."

"Are you mad?" exclaimed Ken. "You'll be torn to pieces if you step ashore."

"That needn't worry you."

"We don't want to stand by while a white man goes to the cooking-pots!" snapped Ken. "But we could not help you—"

"I've not asked your help."

"You're a dead man if you step on the beach. You won't be safe on your cutter after dark. They may pull out in canoes—"

"Belay your jawing tackle, and mind your own business."

"You're asking for it!" exclaimed Hudson.

"No concern of yours."

"Are you mad enough to fancy that you can pick up a man here, when the whole island's up?"

"Why not?" said Parsons, coolly.

The cutter glided on, and the whaleboat pulled back to the ketch. There was nothing more that the shipmates could do, and Dandy Peter had to be left to his own devices.

But if the sea-lawyer of Lukwe was wildly reckless, he was not, at all events, reckless enough to land on the beach swarming with exasperated natives. The *Sea-Cat* anchored far out in the lagoon: and her dinghy, trailing at the end of its tow-rope, was not pulled in for Dandy Peter to go ashore. If the sea-lawyer had plans in his mind for kidnapping the extra hand he wanted, he was not thinking of carrying them out at once. The *Sea-Cat* rode to her anchor as the sunset deepened to dark: and the last the shipmates of the *Dawn* saw of Dandy Peter, he was lounging in a Madeira chair on his deck, smoking cigarettes, apparently deaf or indifferent to the savage howling from the beach. Then the swift tropical night fell, and the *Sea-Cat* and her skipper were blotted from view.

CHAPTER IV

SHANGHAI-ED!

KING OF THE ISLANDS hardly knew what happened.

It was dark on the lagoon of Tovuku. The sunset had died out: the moon had not yet risen. Only a glimmer of starlight fell on the lagoon and the beach. In that star-glimmer, a native dance was going on, on the beach, in which the Hiva-Oa crew of the *Dawn* were joining. Koko the boatswain, Tomoo, Lompo, Lufu, Kolulo and Danny the cooky-boy, were all on shore leave. Kit Hudson was taking his watch below, fast asleep in his bunk in the state-room. King of the Islands sat with a ledger on his knees, a pencil in his hand, totting up accounts by the glimmer of a lantern. Once or twice he glanced

at the beach, where the natives danced with garlands of the scarlet hibiscus trailing as they moved, to the twanging of the ukeles—once or twice in the direction of the *Sea-Cat's* anchorage, where Dandy Peter's cutter rode unseen in the distance and the gloom. But he did not heed a faint splash that was audible for a moment, and even if he had looked, he would hardly have discerned the dim shape of a small dinghy, dark in the darkness. Of peril on the ketch he never even dreamed. That Peter Parsons, on the cutter, might be in peril from the incensed natives of Tovuku, he knew: but there was no peril for the shipmates of the *Dawn*. If he gave Peter Parsons a thought at all, it was only to hope that the sea-lawyer of Lukwe would have sense enough to pull out to sea, and give up his mad scheme of picking up a hand at Tovuku.

And then suddenly came the crash: and for a split second the boy trader saw a thousand dancing lights, before blackness rushed on him, and he knew nothing more.

Consciousness came back slowly. Ken stirred, and a blinding pain shot through his head. His eyes opened, dizzily, and as in a dream, he saw a face grinning down at him: the dark handsome face of Dandy Peter. He stared at it blankly, and stared round him. He was no longer on his own deck. He was lying on planks, and the motion told him that he was at sea. A great sail bellied over him. He glimpsed another face—a black face—the face of a Lukwe boy. It seemed to him like some strange hallucination. But consciousness lasted only a few moments, and he sank again into insensibility.

His eyes opened again. He stared up at a cloudless blue sky, feeling the motion of a ship. His aching head was slow to clear. A full round moon sailed in the blue heavens, dazzling him with its light.

Was it a wild nightmare?

He had been sitting on his own ship, with a ledger on his knees. He remembered that. But this was not his own ship. He was at sea—but the *Dawn* was not due to pull out till the trade at Tovuku was through. There was a blinding ache in his head. Surely he was in his bunk on the ketch, and dreaming!

He stirred, and passed a hand over his aching head. There was a bruise under the thick hair—a large bruise! Slowly he realized what must have happened. He had been struck down—struck from behind—and stunned. Struck down on his own deck, while his crew were ashore, and his mate sleeping below. He was no longer on the *Dawn*. But if he was not on the *Dawn*, where was he—and what did it all mean?

He heard a voice. It was a voice he knew: a mocking sardonic voice.

"The lubber's coming to! Souse him with that bucket, you feller Suloo."

Ken's brain reeled. He could not be on board Dandy Peter's cutter—it was impossible. But it was Dandy Peter's voice that broke on his ears.

A splash of cold water followed. A grinning Lukwe boy "soused" him with a brimming bucket, and Ken gasped for breath. But the effect of the sudden

cold water was to awaken him thoroughly, and clear his head. He struggled to a sitting position, and stared round him, in the brilliant moonlight.

He was on the *Sea-Cat*. The Lukwe cutter was gliding through the water. One of the black Lukwe boys was at the tiller—the other handled the bucket. A slim figure in white ducks stood looking down at him, grinning.

It was no dream! He was on the *Sea-Cat*, out at sea, and it was Dandy Peter of Lukwe who was grinning down at him with malicious amusement. How it had happened he could not understand. But it had happened. He lay on his elbow, staring up at the sea-lawyer of Lukwe.

"You've taken your time to come round, King of the Islands!" grinned Dandy Peter.

"This—this is the *Sea-Cat*?" gasped Ken.

"Aye, aye!"

"How did I get here?"

Peter Parsons chuckled.

"You're shanghaied!" he answered.

"What?"

"Don't you know the meaning of that?" grinned Dandy Peter. "You're shanghaied, my man—shanghaied on board my cutter."

Ken could only stare at him blankly.

"You took a man off my cutter!" Dandy Peter's tone was venomous. "You knocked me down on my own deck, King of the Islands, and took a man off my ship. Didn't I tell you that I put in at Tovuku to pick up another man in his place? You didn't guess what man I had in mind."

He chuckled again.

"You chose to take away my Kanaka," he said. "You told me I couldn't pick up another on the beach at Tovuku, and you were right. I've picked up you."

"You—you've picked up—me!" breathed Ken.

"That was why I came back to Tovuku!" Parsons passed his hand over the bruise on his handsome face. "You've got this to pay for, King of the Islands—and other things. I don't leave this kind of account unpaid. You'd have done better to steer clear, and leave me that Kanaka Tokoloo. I'm not sailing short-handed, my man. You're in my crew now."

"In your crew?"

"Chew on that, and get it into your head that you're not a skipper now, but a foremast hand jumping to orders!" said Parsons. "Give me any lip, and you know what Tokoloo was getting yesterday—there's the lawyer-cane ready."

Ken could only stare. It was not easy for him to believe that the ruffian was in earnest.

"I had it all cut and dried, when I got sail up after the calm," went on Dandy Peter. "You in the place of the nigger you took off my ship! That's why I dropped my hook in the lagoon at Tovuku, King of the Islands. I was watching

for a chance—and you gave me one.” He laughed. “It was easy money! You never saw my boat in the dark—or heard it. Your crew ashore—your mate taking his watch below—you were asking for it, my man! A crack from a revolver-butt on the back of your head—”

Ken understood now.

“You treacherous swab!” he muttered.

“I reckon your mate wonders what became of you!” grinned Parsons. “He never woke up while we lifted you into the dinghy and pulled back to my cutter. I reckon he’s awake now and wondering. Not that he could have stopped me—he’d have stopped a bullet if he’d woke up and chipped in. I didn’t lose any time in pulling out of Tovuku, after I had you aboard.” Dandy Peter waved his cigarette towards the horizon. Ken followed the gesture with his eyes, and had a faint distant glimpse of nodding palm-tops in the far distance. “That’s Tovuku, King of the Islands. You won’t see Tovuku, or your ship, again, in a hurry! You’re in the crew of the *Sea-Cat* now—under my orders, and by hokey I’m sorry for you if you don’t jump to them. We shall be well under the horizon before morning. You’re my man now!”

Ken’s eyes blazed at him.

“Got it clear?” jeered Parsons.

“I’ve got it clear, now! You’ve kidnapped me off my ship—!”

“Correct!”

“You’ll answer for it!”

Parsons shrugged his shoulders.

“I’ll take my chance of that!” he said, banteringly. “We’ve had trouble more than once, King of the Islands, and you’ve had the best of it. My turn now! You’re shanghaied in the place of the nigger you took off my ship! You’re going to turn to and work for your keep! Get that clear! Now get on your feet!”

“You lubberly swab—!”

“Get on your feet!” snapped Parsons. “I warn you to belay your jawing-tackle, King of the Islands. I don’t allow my hands to give me any back-chat on this hooker. Get up!”

King of the Islands struggled to his feet. His head was reeling—he was far from recovered from the blow that had knocked him out. But the rage that burned in his heart was like a spur. It was not easy to believe that the ruffian of Lukwe intended to carry out his threat: but he had to believe it. It was no new thing for Dandy Peter to knock a Kanaka on the head and kidnap him. That he would dare to try the same game with a white man Ken had never dreamed. But the grinning rascal was evidently in deadly earnest: this was his revenge for King of the Islands’ intervention on his ship: the boy trader was to take the place of the Kanaka he had rescued from the lawyer-cane. Ken, with burning eyes, staggered to his feet, and his hand went to his hip-pocket. But the pocket was empty: his revolver was gone. Dandy Peter had not neglected to

take precautions, while the boy skipper of the *Dawn* lay senseless on his deck.

"You swab!" King of the Islands panted with rage. "You treacherous shark! You've shanghaied me as you did that Tovuku boy—you—" He did not finish, but like a tiger he sprang at the sea-lawyer of Lukwe.

Dandy Peter snatched a revolver from the back of his belt. He was on the watch for a desperate move on the part of the kidnapped skipper of the *Dawn*.

The next-moment the boy trader was upon him. But the dandy of Lukwe swung up the heavy revolver, and the barrel crashed on Ken's head, sending him spinning over. He crashed back on the deck.

"Mutiny, will you, you dog?" said Dandy Peter. "By hokey, I'll teach you to feed from my hand, before I'm through. You feller Suloo."

"Yessar!"

"You take lawyer-cane along hand belong you, givee that white feller plenty too much lawyer-cane along back belong him."

"Yessar."

The black boy picked up the lawyer-cane which, the day before had lashed the brown back of Tokoloo. King of the Islands, half-stunned, lay on the deck, as the lawyer-cane rose and fell. He strove to struggle up, and Dandy Peter grasped him, and pinned him down. In his present condition, he was no match for the wiry, sinewy sea-lawyer of Lukwe: Dandy Peter handled him with ease. And the lashes of the lawyer-cane rained on him. Not till twenty lashes had fallen, did Peter Parsons sign to the black boy to stop.

He grinned down at King of the Islands.

"Chew on it that you're in the crew of this hooker," he said. "Jump to orders, or you get the lawyer-cane every time. Got that?"

Ken did not speak.

"I'll have no mutiny on my craft!" said Parsons. "I've broken in Kanakas, my man, and I'll break you in. Chew on that! Now get on your feet."

Ken did not stir. He was utterly spent, and he lay panting for breath. But as Dandy Peter made a sign to the Lukwe boy, and the lawyer-cane rose again, he made an effort, and staggered up.

Dandy Peter laughed.

"That's better!" he said. "You're learning, my man!"

Ken, his head reeling, leaned on the mast for support. Dandy Peter looked at him, grinning, and then strolled aft and left him. The kidnapped skipper of the *Dawn* leaning on the mast, watched him with burning eyes as he went. Far away, the palm-tops of Tovuku waved and nodded under the bright moon that shone down on the ketch riding at anchor in the lagoon—the ketch whose skipper was "shanghaied" on board Dandy Peter's cutter, and on his way to distant Lukwe—a prisoner in the power of Dandy Peter!

CHAPTER V

OVERBOARD!

“YOU feller boy!”

Ken gritted his teeth.

It pleased Dandy Peter to address him, as he addressed the black crew of his cutter, Dandy Peter had the upper hand now, and he was the man to rub it in.

For a while, King of the Islands had been left to himself, leaning on the mast, his strength slowly returning, as the *Sea-Cat* glided over the Pacific waters in the bright moonlight.

Far away to the east, the tall palm-tops of Tovuku still nodded under the soaring moon. The wind had been fair for the *Sea-Cat* and the *Dawn* to reach Tovuku, after the calm. But it was not fair for getting away from the island. Dandy Peter was beating to the west, his course set for distant Lukwe: and only by a series of long tacks could the cutter make headway.

The sea-lawyer had had no choice about pulling out, as soon as the kidnapped skipper of the *Dawn* was on his ship. He dared not remain near the *Dawn's* anchorage. But it was weary work beating against the wind, and progress was slow. After hours of tacking and wearing, the palm-tops of Tovuku still nodded on the horizon in the moonlight.

To Ken, the sight of those palm-tops was a consolation. If Kit Hudson, when he came up from his watch below, and missed him, surmised what had happened, there would be immediate pursuit. He could guess that Dandy Peter feared it, and was keenly anxious to drop the palms below the sea-line.

The *Sea-Cat* was running on a long tack, as Ken leaned on the mast, with a long white wake astern, on which the trailing dinghy danced. Like many small vessels in the South Seas, the cutter had no davits, and towed her boat. The dinghy danced astern, the tow-rope sometimes taut, sometimes sinking under the water. Ken had heard Dandy Peter's voice, cursing the wind: and now the sea-lawyer came striding towards him, with a scowling brow.

“You feller boy!” he snapped. “Turn to! Handle the sheets with Suloo, and handle them lively or you get what's coming to you.”

“You swab—!”

“No lip!” said Parsons, threateningly. “You've had one lesson, you feller King! Do you want more lawyer-cane?”

King of the Islands breathed hard and deep. He was at the mercy of the dandy of Lukwe. Peter Parsons' hand was very near his hip-pocket: he was ready to snatch out his revolver if it was needed. Even the desperado of Lukwe might have hesitated to shoot a white man, but he was prepared to knock him spinning with the butt. Ken's eyes wandered, for a moment, to the pin-rail—
With a belaying-pin in his hand—!

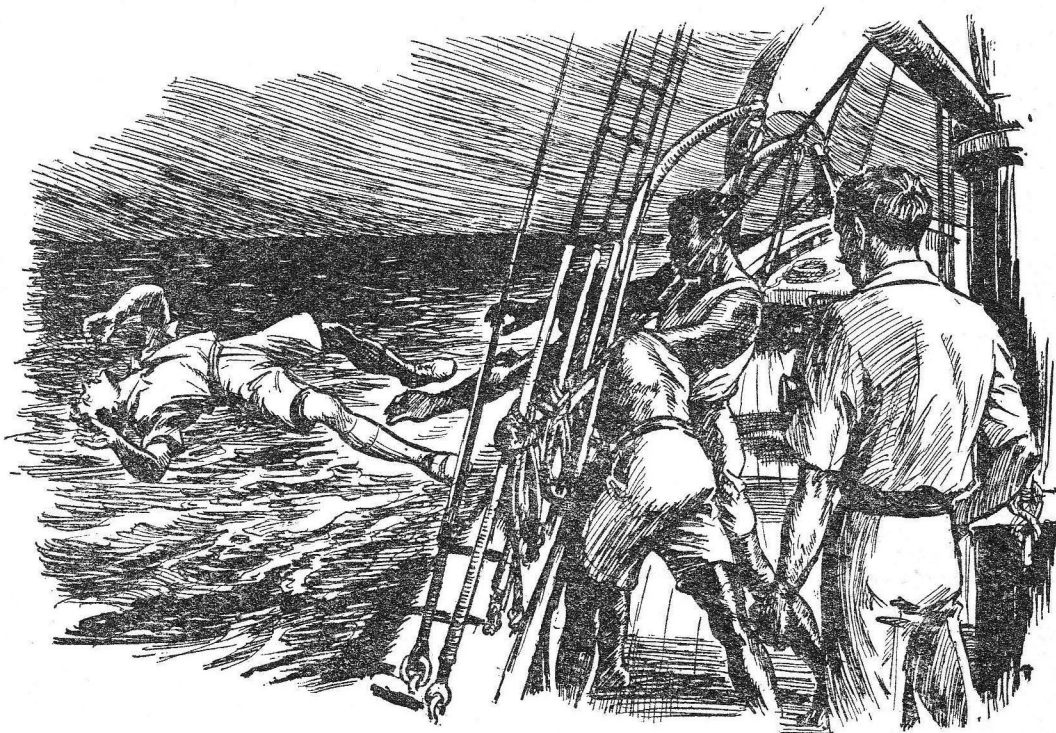
Dandy Peter, easily reading his thoughts, gave a sarcastic laugh, and the revolver glimmered in his hand, his finger on the trigger.

"Forget it!" he said, menacingly. "Give me trouble, you scum, and you go down on this deck with a bullet through you. I'm not taking chances with you, King of the Islands. You're pulling with the Kanakas, on this hooker, and you're my man till I raise Lukwe, with the lawyer-cane to teach you manners—but lift a finger, and you go down, and your carcass to the sharks. I reckon the sharks won't tell the tale of what became of you. That's a warning."

Ken clenched his hands, hard. He knew that Parsons meant every word of it. At the first attempt to turn the tables on him, he was ready to pull the trigger: and a belaying-pin in his hand would not have helped.

"Now turn to!" snapped Parsons. "I'm short-handed on this hooker, and I'll have no idlers. Jump to orders, or it's you for the lawyer-cane."

Ken made no reply: but, as Parsons rapped out orders, and Suloo handled the sheet, he joined him, in swinging the boom. The *Sea-Cat* was taking a new tack, and every hand was wanted. Nolulo, the boat-steerer, was at the tiller, and Parsons himself lent a hand with the sheets, and the cutter shifted to



The dark sea stretched below him.

her new tack. But still the palm-tops of Tovuku nodded on the moonlit horizon.

But the moon was dimming now towards dawn.

Between the setting of the moon and the sunrise there would be an interval of darkness, and that was the thought that was working in Ken's mind. Peter Parsons had no doubt that he was going to "break in" the kidnapped skipper of the *Dawn*, as he had broken in many a shanghaied man in his time: and he was going to revel in the breaking-in process. But there were very different thoughts in the mind of King of the Islands. If a chance came in the dark—! The most desperate chance was good enough for Ken. As the risk of the sea-lawyer's revolver, at the risk of being flung to the sharks, he was fiercely resolved that sunrise should not find him a shanghaied "hand" in the Lukwe cutter.

The moonlight faded, and the palm-tops of Tovuku disappeared in darkness. There was relief in Dandy Peter's face as he stared back towards the unseen island. The cutter was making but little way to the west, but he was safe from pursuit now, hidden in the darkness if Kit Hudson followed on in the *Dawn*: and by sunrise the *Sea-Cat* would be well below the horizon: and Hudson, if he pursued, would be welcome to comb the Pacific for her.

The last gleam of the moon was gone, as he stared back in the direction of Tovuku, and he laughed as he turned away. The next moment the laugh turned into a yell of rage, as something whizzed through the air, and struck him on the head.

He staggered, as a belaying-pin dropped clanging at his feet. He had been off his guard only for a moment: but a moment had been enough for the shanghaied skipper of the *Dawn*.

As he staggered, King of the Islands came with a rush.

Dandy Peter, staggering from the blow, tore at the revolver in his hip-pocket. At that moment, he would have shot down his prisoner without a second's hesitation.

But the boy trader was too swift for him. Even as he dragged the weapon out, Ken's hands were upon him, and he was borne backwards to the deck. The revolver spun from his hand as he crashed.

"Now, you scum—!" breathed Ken.

Parsons struggled fiercely, giving grip for grip. And as he struggled, he yelled madly to the Lukwe crew.

"You feller boy! You Suloo, you Nolulo! Help here, you feller boy! You seize that feller King, hand belong you!"

There was a padding of bare feet on the deck. Suloo flung himself on King of the Islands, and grasped him. Nolulo hesitated a moment before he abandoned the tiller: then he joined Suloo, and the cutter yawed wildly as the tiller swung free. Parsons struggled and yelled, as the boy trader's clenched fists beat in his furious face.

For a moment or two, Ken hoped—it seemed that he had a chance. To

knock the dandy of Lukwe senseless: then, with the belaying-pin in his hand, to face the Lukwe boys—he had no fear of them with Parsons *hors de combat*. It was a chance—but it was the most desperate of chances, and it failed. The grasp of Suloo was on him too swiftly, and he was dragged over, still clinging to his enemy, and then Nolulo's grasp was added, and he struggled and wrestled in vain in the brawny clutches of the Lukwe boys.

They dragged him off the sea-lawyer, still fighting fiercely.

Peter Parsons sat up dazedly. The blood was streaming down his face. That face was, for the moment, the face of a demon. He caught at the low rail, and dragged himself to his feet, his eyes blazing at the boy trader struggling in the grasp of black hands. His voice came in a splutter of fury.

“Throw him overboard! Do you hear? You feller boy, you makee that feller stop along sea, plenty quick!”

Ken King was fighting like a wildcat. But the two pairs of strong black hands were too much for him. They grasped him, and held him but the Lukwe boys did not immediately obey their skipper's furious order. Many a dark deed had been done on Dandy Peter's cutter, but throwing a white man into the sea taxed the obedience of his crew to the limit. They stared at him with rolling eyes.

The sea-lawyer of Lukwe, beside himself with rage, almost gibbered at them, foaming.

“You hear me, ear belong you?” he yelled. “You make that feller stop along sea, or me knockee seven bells out of your black hides! Makee stop along sea, plenty too quick.”

They hesitated no longer. A swing of sinewy black arms, and Ken was over the low rail. The dark sea stretched below him: he had a last glimpse of Dandy Peter's furious face, and then he was flung headlong over the side. There was a heavy splash in the water, a choked cry, and King of the Islands sank deep in the Pacific—and the yawing cutter surged on without the “hand” that Peter Parsons had shanghaied at Tovuku.

CHAPTER VI

THE LAST CHANCE!

DEEP down in the sea, deep under the rushing water, King of the Islands sank. The Pacific closed over him in the darkness. It was the end—his desperate bid to turn the tables on Dandy Peter had failed, and all was over. But he struck out, in the deep water, and came to the surface, panting and panting for breath, as his head came clear of the water again. Hope there seemed none: flung overboard many a long mile from the nearest land. But while there was

life there was at least a glimpse of hope: and Ken King was not the man to give way to despair while life beat in his veins. He was a strong swimmer, and the sea was calm. He swam strongly and stared about him in the baffling darkness. A dark shadow that loomed against the dark sky was the tall sail of the cutter—it loomed almost over him.

He wondered for a moment that it was still so near: then he remembered that Nolulu had abandoned the tiller at Dandy Peter's yell for help, and that the cutter was yawing uncontrolled. Through the darkness, he could hear the voice of Peter Parsons, though he could not distinguish the words. The sea-lawyer of Lukwe was yelling orders to his crew; the cutter, with the tiller swinging free, had swung into the wind. If Dandy Peter had been disposed to waste a thought on the man who had been flung overboard, he had no time for it now: he was concentrated on getting his craft under control again.

The *Sea-Cat* was still close at hand: but there was no help or hope for Ken King from that quarter. There was no help or hope at all—for Tovuku was too far away for the strongest swimmer. He had been hurled to his death: and the dim waters were to close over his head for ever when his strength failed and he could swim no longer. He knew it: but he swam steadily and strongly. And then, suddenly, a shudder ran through him, as something touched him in the water, with the terrible thought of sharks.

But it was not a shark. Something struck against him as he swam, but after one dreadful second, he knew that it was not a shark. It was a rope—and his hand shot to it and clutched it.

A rope! For a moment he wondered whether Dandy Peter, or one of the Lukwe boys, had thrown it, to save him. But that was only for a moment. He knew that it was not that. The three on the cutter were too busy to give him a thought, even if they had cared to do so. But the rope was there—and as he held on to it, it dragged him through the water, holding him above the surface. Suddenly it slackened, and he dipped under. But he did not let go the rope, and he came up over the sea again as it tautened once more.

He knew now what it was—the tow-rope, at the end of which trailed the cutter's dinghy.

He could not see the trailing boat: the *Sea-Cat* itself was only a looming shadow in the dark. But he knew that it must be the tow-rope to which he clung, for it could be nothing else.

It slackened again, and he dipped under—again it tautened, and he came up. His hold on the rope was vice-like: it was all that stood between him and death in the deep waters.

For long minutes he held on to the rope, dipping under and coming up again, as it slackened or tautened with the motion of the cutter. Then, slowly and carefully, hand-over-hand, he worked his way along the rope towards the boat. He reached it in a few minutes and breathed a prayer of thankfulness as he grasped at the gunwale. A few moments more, and he had dragged him-

self out of the water, and lay in the dinghy, panting and panting for breath.

The cutter was under control again. Once more she resumed her course, Nolulo at the tiller, the bellying sail slanting to the wind on her port quarter. Once more Dandy Peter was on his way: to distant Lukwe, leaving behind him, as he believed, his enemy to death in the deep waters. If he thought of King of the Islands, he thought of a dead man rolling in the waters like a fragment of driftwood. Either by moonlight or sunlight, he could have seen that the trailing dinghy now had an occupant: but in the darkness he could see nothing of the boat. For the time—until the light came—King of the Islands was safe from the desperado of Lukwe. Dandy Peter sailed on in the veil of darkness, never dreaming that he was towing astern the boy trader who had been flung into the sea.

Ken sat up in the boat, his eyes on the dim shadow that was the sail of the *Sea-Cat*. He was saved from the sea—safe till the light came. But it could not be long now till dawn—and when the sun rose over the Pacific, he would be seen—every eye on the cutter would be upon him: within easy range of Dandy Peter's revolver. Hope had revived in his heart: there was a chance yet, and he was the man to make the most of it.

With a grim, set face, he thought it out, as he sat in the dinghy, towing in the darkness behind the cutter. It could last only till dawn, and dawn would soon be glimmering on the Pacific. If he was to save himself he had to act while darkness still veiled the sea.

And he was not long in forming his plans. Kneeling in the bows of the dinghy, he grasped the rope, and pulled it in. Slowly, but surely, he coiled in the tow-rope, drawing closer, inch by inch, foot by foot, fathom by fathom to the cutter's stern. It was slow work and hard work: but he did not pause for one moment, in dread of seeing a glimmer from the eastern sky. Darkness was his only friend: life or death depended on getting through, before the first gleam of the rising sun tipped the Pacific surges with gold.

There was a slight thud—the bows of the dinghy touched the stern of the *Sea-Cat*. The boat glided under the starboard quarter, lightly scraping against the hull. Ken was on his feet in a moment, and his grasp changed from the tow-rope, to the low freeboard of the cutter. Standing on the boat, he was able to look over the low rail, and scan the deck. There was only a glimmer of the binnacle lamp in the gloom. He glimpsed Nolulo at the tiller, and Suloo at a distance, standing holding to a sheet. For the moment, he saw nothing of Peter Parsons. Then he made out the glimmer of a white Panama hat, over the back of a Madeira chair. The sea-lawyer's back was to him.

King of the Islands drew a long, long breath.

Under his feet, the boat was dragging. No eye was upon him in the gloom—for the moment! To clamber over the low rail was easy—he would be on the deck, before any man on the *Sea-Cat* knew he was there—before they knew that he was still living. And then—!

Then he would be one against three—but with the advantage of the sudden surprise. He had to take the chance—it was all that was left to him. Already, in the eastern sky over Tovuku, there was a faint glimmer. Ken set his teeth, and swung himself on the rail. The boat under him shot away to the end of the tow-rope. He did not heed that. With a swift spring, King of the Islands leaped on the deck of the *Sea-Cat*.

CHAPTER VII

THE TABLES TURNED!

DANDY PETER was nodding, half-asleep, in the Madeira chair. The *Sea-Cat* was running on a long tack: Nolulo at the tiller, Suloo at the sheets: and the sea-lawyer of Lukwe was easy in his mind. Far astern, as he had no doubt, King of the Islands had gone down to his death in the depths of the Pacific: and there was no remorse in the hard heart of the handsome blackguard of Lukwe. Before the sun lighted the ocean, the *Sea-Cat* would be below the sea-line: there would be no clue for the mate of the *Dawn* to follow, even if he guessed that his ship-mate had fallen into the hands of his old foe—and would he even guess? There was no fear, and no uneasiness, in Dandy Peter's mind, as he sprawled drowsily in the Madeira chair on deck. His course lay clear before him, and he was done, for ever, with the boy trader he had always feared and hated. He had not planned that last crime: but if a shanghaied "hand" kicked, he had to take what was coming to him—that was all that Dandy Peter thought or cared about. He could afford to take his ease now.

But drowsiness, and easiness of mind, left him suddenly, at a sudden startled outbreak of yells from the two Lukwe boys. Nolulo and Suloo had seen King of the Islands leap aboard, at the same moment, and they stared at him with eyes popping from their black faces, as if he had been a ghost from the sea—as indeed they supposed him to be, for the moment. Neither of them made a movement, but their terrified howls rang over the cutter. Dandy Peter leaped up from the Madeira chair, and spun round.

He had an instant's glimpse of a set, fierce face and blazing eyes. But he had only one glimpse, for one instant: for the next, a clenched fist crashed between his eyes and he went down like a log, crashing on his back. As he sprawled half-stunned by that terrible blow, King of the Islands was upon him like a tiger, groping with a hurried hand for the revolver in his hip-pocket. The revolver was in Ken's hand, his finger on the trigger, before the sea-lawyer knew what was happening, or indeed that anything was happening at all.

"Now, you scum!—" panted Ken.

Dandy Peter, sprawling, could only give him a dazed and dizzy stare. Ken turned, revolver in hand, on the Lukwe boys. He would have fired on either

or both, without a moment's hesitation, had it been needed. But it was not needed. Suloo and Nolulo only stared at him in terror.

"Feller King of the Islands!" babbled Suloo. "That feller no walk about along bottom of sea—"

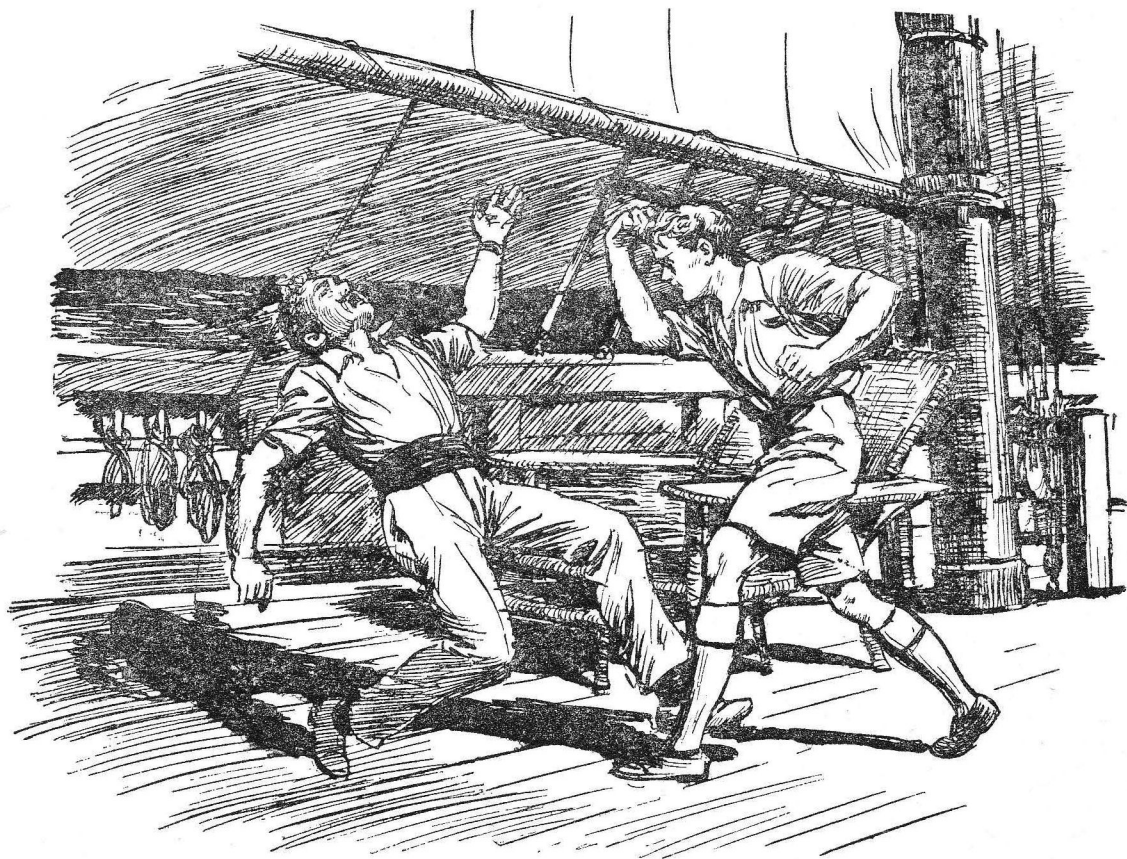
"That feller stop!" stuttered Nolulo. "That feller stop too much altogether! He no go finish along sea."

Ken's eyes glittered over the levelled barrel.

"You feller Lukwe boy, you lift hand belong you, you go finish close-up!" he rapped, with a menacing motion of the revolver. "You no good boy along me, you go finish altogether."

"Oh, sar, you no shootee along this feller!" gasped Suloo. "This feller boy good feller along you, sar."

"Plenty good feller too much!" howled Nolulo.



... a clenched fist crashed between his eyes.

There was no danger from the Lukwe boys, with a firearm in the white man's hand. Ken turned to the sprawling sea-lawyer.

Dandy Peter, with swimming brain, was striving to get on his feet. Ken's eyes glittered at him. Even yet the dazed ruffian of Luke hardly knew what was happening. Ken watched him stagger to his feet: and he stood unsteadily, his hand on the Madeira chair for support. The boy trader looked at him, over the half-raised revolver.

"You scum!" he said, between his teeth. "My turn now, Peter Parsons! Lift a finger, and you go down on your own deck, you scoundrel."

"You!" breathed Peter Parsons. His dizzy eyes were almost unbelievably on Ken's face. "You! You alive—"

"No thanks to you, you villian!" said Ken. "Stand where you are, Peter Parsons. I'd as soon shoot you as not. I've turned the tables on you, you scum, and I'm master of this hooker now. Get that into your head, you sea-thief."

"By hokey! I—I—" Dandy Peter clenched his hands, convulsively, his eyes burning at the boy trader. "You—master of my ship—by gum—!"

"You feller Suloo!" rapped Ken.

"Yessar!" gasped Suloo.

"You take feller rope, hand belong you, tie up that feller Parsons, hand belong him, foot belong him."

"Yessar!"

Parsons made a movement. Ken lifted the revolver, and the barrel looked the sea-lawyer full in the face. And Dandy Peter stood still.

Suloo came to him, rope in hand. His threatening glare had no effect on the Lukwe boy. It was King of the Islands whom Suloo feared now. The sea-lawyer panted with rage, as the black boy dragged his wrists together, and bound them fast. But he did not venture to resist, with the levelled revolver only half a fathom from his furious face. The rope was knotted: and then knotted again round his legs, hard and fast. He sank into the Madeira chair, unable to stir hand or foot. But his eyes smouldered at King of the Islands.

Over the Pacific, from the east, came a glimmer, heralding the sunrise. Ken shouted orders to the Kanakas, and lent a hand with the sheets. The cutter swung into the wind. Nolulo at the tiller, Suloo at the ropes, jumped to the orders of the boy trader. The helpless desperado of Lukwe watched them, with fury in his face.

"King of the Islands!" His voice came panting. "You're giving orders on my ship—you're seizing my craft like a pirate—"

Ken glanced at him, and laughed.

"I'm running this cutter back to Tovuku," he answered. "I've taken command, Peter Parsons, and I'm giving orders to your crew. Make the best of it: and think yourself lucky that I don't order the Kanakas to throw you into the sea. Do you think they would jib at obeying the order, if I gave it?"

Dandy Peter made no answer to that. He sat silent, writhing with rage in the knotted rope, as the sun rose higher, and gleamed on the rolling Pacific. The palms of Tovuku were below the horizon now: but Ken had set the course for the island, and before long, the feathery fronds rose into view in the bright sunshine. The west wind against which the cutter had been so long beating, was a fair wind for Tovuku: and the *Sea-Cat* skimmed the waves at seven knots.

Ken's face brightened, as he watched the island rising into view in the sunlight. The face of Peter Parsons grew blacker and blacker. But he was helpless on his own deck: it was King of the Islands who was giving orders on the *Sea-Cat*, and the Lukwe boys jumped to them. Under the blaze of the tropical sun, the Lukwe cutter ran down to Tovuku, and ran the reef passage into the lagoon.

CHAPTER VIII

TIT FOR TAT!

"KEN!" shouted Kit Hudson.

Koko gave a yell
"Little white master!"

The Hiva-Oa crew of the *Dawn* stared blankly.

The sun was hot on the beach of Tovuku. Natives thronged there, most of them staring towards the anchored ketch. That morning Kameka, and his chief man Tokoloo, had expected King of the Islands ashore to trade and copra and pearl-shell and ivory nuts were ready: but that morning there was no trade. King of the Islands was missing from his ship.

It was a blank mystery on the *Dawn*.

Kit Hudson had turned out after his watch below, to find no one on deck. The whaleboat was still at the beach, to bring the crew back later: and he could only wonder whether Ken had called a native canoe to take him ashore. In the moonlight he noted that the Lukwe cutter was gone: but from that he had only concluded that Dandy Peter had taken the hint to go while the going was good: he did not connect it in his mind with King of the Islands. Not for a moment did he suspect that the Lukwe sea-lawyer had crept on the ketch like a thief in the night, and that Ken had been "shanghaied" on his own deck. Later, no doubt, that suspicion might come to him: but for the time, he was simply puzzled and perplexed by Ken's disappearance.

The crew came back from shore leave in the whaleboat, but they had seen nothing of the boy trader. If he had gone ashore in a canoe, he had not fallen in with Koko the boatswain or any of the Hiva-Oa boys. More and more puzzled, Hudson paced the deck till the sun rose, and all Tovuku was spread before his eyes in the light of day. His binoculars failed to pick up any sign

of a white man on the circling beach: and a dozen natives in canoes, to whom he called, could tell him nothing of his shipmate. It was as if the boy skipper of the *Dawn* had vanished into thin air. Yet so far as Hudson could see, he could only have gone ashore, for some unexplained reason: if it was not that, what was it?

But as the morning hours advanced, his perplexity was mingled with alarm. His thoughts turned, at last, to Dandy Peter: the enemy who had been anchored in the lagoon when the sun set, and who had disappeared in the hours of darkness. Could the Lukwe sea-lawyer have had a hand in this? There had been no sound in the night—no shot: no struggle on deck: Hudson would have awakened at once, at either—no sign that the Lukwe skipper had been anywhere near the ketch. Tokoloo came out in his canoe, to inquire why the white men did not come ashore for trade: and rolled his eyes in astonishment to hear that the white master was missing. Since then, Tokoloo and a crowd of natives had been searching for him on the island: but nothing had transpired.

Where was King of the Islands? It was a question that had no answer: unless, as Hudson was beginning to believe, Dandy Peter of Lukwe knew the answer. And he resolved that, if no trace of his shipmate was discovered at Tovuku by noon, he would pull out of the lagoon, and search the seas for the Lukwe cutter.

But it was not yet near noon, when a tall sail was seen glancing over the reef, and the *Sea-Cat* ran in from the Pacific. Hudson gazed in sheer surprise at the Lukwe cutter as she glided into the lagoon: the very last thing he would have expected, was Dandy Peter's return to Tovuku. But a greater surprise was in store for him: for as he stood with his eyes fixed on the cutter, a well-known figure was seen on her deck, and a hand was waved to him.

"Ken!"

In utter amazement, the mate of the *Dawn* shouted the name. He could scarcely believe his eyes, as they fixed on the well-known sunburnt face of his ship-mate, standing on the deck of the *Sea-Cat*.

"Ken!" he repeated. "Shipmate ahoy!"

"Little white master!" gasped Koko. "Little white master stop along feller Parsons' cutter—little white master comey back along *Sea-Cat*."

"Ahoy the *Dawn*!" came back from the cutter.

"Ken, old man!"

King of the Islands shouted orders to the Lukwe boys. The sail dropped, and the *Sea-Cat* glided alongside the ketch. With a single bound, Hudson was on her deck.

His eyes popped at the sight of Dandy Peter, bound hand and foot in the Madeira chair. Dandy Peter's eyes burned at him. But the Australian gave Parsons only one astonished glance. Then he gripped the hand of his ship-mate.

"Ken, old man! How—what—why—thank heaven you've come back safe

and sound—in another hour I should have been sailing to hunt for you—I half-suspected that Lukwe shark—but how—what—?”

King of the Islands pressed his hand.

“That swab got me, last night, on the *Dawn*,” he said. I was stunned by a blow from behind—”

“And I asleep below!” muttered Hudson.

“I came to, on the *Sea-Cat*—shanghaied!”

“Shanghaied!” stuttered Hudson.

“Just that! Shanghaied in the place of the Tovuku boy we took off the cutter yesterday! That was Dandy Peter’s game.”

“The swab! By gum—!”

“But that’s a game that two can play at!” said King of the Islands, grimly. “Here, you feller Koko!”

“Yessar!”

“Cut that swab loose, and put him on the *Dawn*.”

“Yessar,” grinned Koko.

While Dandy Peter was released from the ropes, Ken related, in brief words, what had happened on the cutter. Kit Hudson’s face grew grim as he listened. The Hiva-Oa boys held the cutter alongside the ketch. Dandy Peter, freed from the ropes, struggled in the grasp of Koko. But the sea-lawyer of Lukwe was little more than an infant in the boatswain’s mighty grasp. Koko swung him to the side, and tossed him on board the *Dawn* like a sack of copra, amid a cackle of laughter from the Kanaka crew. Dandy Peter sprawled on the deck of the *Dawn*, spitting with rage.

Ken and Kit followed. Suloo and Nolulo, staring, were left to themselves on the cutter, as it drifted away from the *Dawn*.

Dandy Peter struggled to his feet. He shook a furious fist in the faces of the shipmates. For the moment, rage outweighed fear, and he looked as if he would spring at them like a tiger. But Koko’s big brown hands were ready to grasp him again, and he controlled his fury.

“What’s this game, King of the Islands?” he panted. “Put me back on my ship! What do you want with me here?”

King of the Islands eyed him coolly.

“You shanghaied me on your craft!” he said. “You’ve shanghaied Kanakas, many a time, and now you’ve shanghaied a white man. Now you’re going to have your turn. You’re shanghaied!”

“What?” yelled Parsons.

“You’re shanghaied on board this ketch, to work with the crew!” said King of the Islands. “You sail on the *Dawn* as a foremast hand, Peter Parsons. Koko!”

“Yessar!” chuckled Koko.

“Keep an eye on that feller Parsons! Sposee he no jump to orders, you givum plenty too much lawyer-cane.”

"Yessar."

Dandy Peter breathed fury.

"You—you—you—!" He panted. "What's to become of my ship, left to those Lukwe niggers—?"

The boy trader shrugged his shoulders.

"That's your worry, not mine," he answered. "You're going to get your own medicine, Peter Parsons—get it down as best you can. You sail on the *Dawn* when we pull out of Tovuku, and you won't be kicked ashore till we raise Olua, which won't be for three weeks from now. Chew on it, and make the best of it."

Kit Hudson chuckled.

"Sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander, Parsons!" he said. "By gum, you'll be fed up with shanghai-ing hands on your cutter, by the time we raise Olua."

Dandy Peter, white with fury, made a spring for the pin-rail. Ken made a sign to Koko, and the boatswain's grasp closed on the sea-lawyer of Lukwe. Peter Parsons was swept off his feet, with a crash to the deck.

Ken glanced down at him.

"Better turn to, and obey orders, Parsons," he said. "Koko knows how to handle a lawyer-cane! You'd better jump to it."

With that, King of the Islands turned away. He was through with the sea-lawyer of Lukwe: the new "hand" on the *Dawn* was left to the boatswain.

TRADE was brisk on the beach of Tovuku that day. At sunset the ketch pulled out. Among the crew sailed the dandy of Lukwe: ignored by the skipper and mate, but very carefully looked after by Koko the boatswain. He looked back at his cutter, left to the Lukwe boys, and wondered whether he would ever see it again. But during the following days, Dandy Peter had little leisure to think of his cutter, or anything else, but making himself useful on board his new ship. For the first two or three days, his savage temper broke out: and the lawyer-cane in Koko's brown hand had plenty of exercise. Two or three days were sufficient to tame even Dandy Peter: after that he was almost feeding from the boatswain's hand, and jumping to orders with even more alacrity than the Kanakas. By the time the *Dawn* raised Olua, and he was kicked ashore, Dandy Peter of Lukwe had had ample time and opportunity to realise what it was like to be "shanghai'd."

THE END