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READ SIR ALAN COBHAM'S GREAT STORY WITHIN!

"King of the

by
Sir Alan
Cobham
&



Bully Samson reached the water's edge, stopped there, and hailed: "Ketch ahoy!"

HAND TO HAND!

"SAR!" Koko, the Kanaka, put his head under the awning that sheltered King of the Islands from the sun.

Ken glanced at him. He was thinking, as he lay in the hammock, not of copra and native chiefs and tobacco sticks, but of the prisoner on Bully Samson's schooner, and of his determination to help the unknown Australian out of the South Sea ruffian's clutches.

"Sar!" Koko's brown face was wildly excited. "Bully Samson him come!"

Ken was out of the hammock with a bound.

On the dazzling white beach a tall and powerful figure was striding down to the lagoon.

Ken knew Bully Samson by sight—there were few traders in the South Seas who did not know the burly, black-bearded skipper of the schooner Shark.

Ken regarded him coolly. "I reckon he's after you, Koko," he remarked. "That Malaita boy must have told him you got on the ketch."

"Yes, sar! Him come for me," said the Kanaka.

"Let him come," said Ken. "You can cut below, Koko."

"White marster shootee from ship, killy Bully Samson on beach," suggested the Kanaka.

"Cut below, I tell you. Bully Samson's the man to shoot at sight if he sees you."

"Me savvy! Me no flaid if me gettee knife," said the Kanaka. "You lettee Bully Samson come in ship, me throw knife."

"Get below!" Kaio-lalulalonga went down the little companion-way. Ken King stood watching the black-bearded ruffian on the beach. Even at the distance he could read the passionate rage in Bully Samson's face.

The black crew of the Dawn watched Bully Samson also. They watched him with awed looks. Not a black man on the ketch would have raised a finger against the black-bearded, savage ruffian at any price. If it came to trouble, King of the Islands had only himself to depend on. But Ken was used to relying solely upon himself.

Bully Samson reached the water's edge and stopped there, his bare, huge feet in the lapping water. He looked a strange and terrible figure, with his bushy black beard, a great grass-hat on his head, and the dirty, red sarong with the leather belt buckled round it. The ketch was anchored a score of fathoms out, and

Samson put his hands to his mouth and hailed:

"Ketch ahoy!"

"Ahoy!" called back Ken.

"Send a boat!"

Ken called out an order, and the whaleboat pulled away from the ketch. A couple of minutes later, Bully Samson stepped from the boat to the Dawn.

King of the Islands greeted him with a nod and a smile. From his cool and civil manner it might have been supposed that he regarded this as a friendly call.

Bully Samson eyed him rather uncertainly.

He had come there to demand the Kanaka, with the fixed intention of shooting the man dead as soon as he was handed over. From Bully Samson's point of view, Koko was a deserter from his ship; and Bully Samson's methods with deserters were drastic.

He was quite prepared for a fight if the boy captain of the Dawn refused to hand the man over. His heavy hand lingered near the butt of the big Navy revolver protruding from the holster at his belt. But the smiling coolness and cordiality of King of the Islands puzzled him and a little daunted him, bully as he was. "I reckon I never looked to see a white man here, Captain Samson,"

Islands!

Charles
Hamilton



A Stirring Yarn of Adventure by Air, Land, and Sea.

said Ken. "Lompo, give the white master a chair."

Lompo slid forward a cane chair, but the skipper of the Shark did not take it.

"I reckon I'm here on business, Ken King!" he growled.

"Sit down to it, captain."

A grunt was the only answer.

"No good offering you limejuice," smiled Ken. "Brandy and soda is yours, captain. Lompo—"

"I ain't here to drink with you."

"You're changing your customs, captain. Is it only just a little friendly talk?"

"You've got a deserter from my ship on board here, Ken King!" growled Samson, coming to the point.

"A deserter?" repeated Ken.

"A Kanaka, called Koko."

"You want him?"

"I want him, and I mean to have him," said Bully Samson, with savage emphasis. "I reckon I don't allow black sailormen to run from the Shark. Where is he?"

"But what's the use of the man to you, captain?" queried Ken. "You sent two Malaitas after him, and they'd have stuck him like a pig if I hadn't weighed in with a Winchester. You've done with the man."

"I tell you I want him!"

"What for?" asked Ken, looking the black-bearded skipper full in the face.

Samson scowled.

"That's my business!"

"Mine, too, as he's on board my ship," said Ken pleasantly. "What do you want him for?"

"To send him to the sharks!"

snapped Samson. "That's my way with deserters from my schooner."

"I reckoned so," assented Ken. "Keep your ways for your own ship, captain. They won't do for the Dawn."

Ken King, known as King of the Islands, moors his ketch Dawn in a lagoon in the Pacific. He rescues a Kanaka, called Koko, who tells Ken that he was bo'sun on a Captain Samson's schooner and that the captain had ordered him to be killed because he tried to rescue an Australian boy, named Kit Hudson, who was being kept a prisoner on the schooner. In view of the captain's reputation—he is known throughout the South Seas as Bully Samson, blackbird, pearl-poacher, and reputed pirate—Ken is planning to rescue the young Australian, when Koko comes to him excitedly to say that Bully Samson is approaching them. (Now read on.)

"I want that man," said Samson, his voice husky with rage. "Are you handing him over, Ken King?"

"No."

"I'm not going without him."

"That's really good of you, captain," said Ken. "I'll have the pleasure of your company all the while I stay here, and it's a lonely place. I never counted on seeing a white man here, and it's a real pleasure to keep you on the Dawn. I can fix you up with a berth, though I reckon you'll find it too clean to please you—no dirt and no cockroaches."

And he laughed lightly.

The South Sea ruffian, trembling

with rage, gripped the butt of the revolver.

A moment more the weapon would have been drawn, and King of the Islands would have rolled on his own deck with a bullet through his heart.

But the boy skipper of the Dawn was on the watch.

He was watching and waiting for the ruffian to grip his weapon; and even as Samson's grasp closed on it, Ken leaped forward with the swiftness of lightning.

Crash!

A clenched fist that seemed as hard and heavy as a lump of pig-iron landed fairly between the eyes of the South Sea ruffian.

Bully Samson went down on his back on the deck, with a shock that almost shook the little ketch.

He lay dazed and almost stunned, and King of the Islands bent over him and wrenched the revolver from his grasp.

It circled in the air, gleaming in the blaze of the sun, and dropped into the lagoon a dozen yards from the ketch.

Bully Samson raised himself on his elbow, staring up with dizzy eyes at the cool, handsome face above him.

Ken's eyes gleamed down at him.

"Now, you dog!" said King of the Islands, between his teeth. "Why shouldn't I tell my men to throw you into the lagoon after your shooting-iron?"

"By hokey!"

Bully Samson staggered to his feet. He was disarmed now; but as he stood, his rugged features convulsed with rage, he towered over the boy skipper of the Dawn.

"Knocked down—knocked down by a boy!" he gasped, as if he could scarcely believe what had happened.

"By hokey!"

He made a spring like a tiger at King of the Islands.

Ken leaped back.

His hands went up like a flash, and he grinned over them at the enraged skipper of the Shark.

"Come on, captain—if you're not satisfied," he said. "You want to learn that you can't swagger on the deck of the Dawn."

Bully Samson did not speak; he attacked the boy skipper of the Dawn with savage ferocity. What followed seemed like some evil dream to the bully of the Shark.

The black crew stood staring on at the scene with bated breath. From the companion-way Koko the Kanaka's brown face stared out. Burly and powerful as the skipper of the Shark was, Ken King was handling him in a masterly way.

The frantic blows of the ruffian never reached his cool, handsome face. But all the time the iron-like knuckles of the boy skipper were beating upon the rugged, furious face, till at last Bully Samson went to the deck again, and lay there, gasping.

"Feller Samson him no good!" clucked Koko. "Little white marster him plenty too much good, my word!"

Ken was breathing hard, but he was still cool, and a smile lurked on his face.

"King of the Islands!"

(Continued from page 7.)

"It's hot weather for scrapping, captain," he remarked. "But if you want a little more, get on your hind legs and say so."

The breathless ruffian only panted. "Koko!" called out Ken.

"Yes, sar."

"Pitch that swab into the lagoon!" The exhausted ruffian stirred feebly as the Kanaka grasped him. In the mighty arms of the brown-skinned giant he was swept up from the deck almost like an infant.

Splash!

The burly skipper of the Shark went deep under, and it was some moments before he came to the surface, gasping and spluttering wildly.

Ken looked down at him over the rail and pointed to the beach.

"Beat it, captain!" he said tersely. "Next time you come around my ship, look out for a Winchester bullet. Beat it!"

The black-bearded ruffian struck out for the shore. He dragged himself up on the white beach, and turned back towards the ketch. A savage fist was shaken in the air, and a stream of curses poured out. Ken King picked up the Winchester and showed the muzzle over the teak rail. Bully Samson's cursing stopped suddenly and he whirled round and ran for the palans.

Ken laughed as he dropped the butt of the rifle to the deck.

A FEARFUL DOOM!

NIGHT, with the suddenness of the tropics, fell on the vast Pacific. Sea and land were wrapped in darkness. In a dark, velvety sky the stars came out in glittering myriads.

The blazing sun was gone; but the heat in the stuffy cuddy of the Shark was scarcely less intense.

Kit Hudson groaned in sheer misery.

The ropes on his sinewy limbs cut into the flesh; thirst parched his throat; his skin was torn by the bites of countless mosquitoes.

He lay in the darkness, aching with heat, aching with suffering. A bullet from the revolver of Bully Samson would have been a relief to him.

But if his body suffered, his spirit was as indomitable as ever. Not for a moment did he think of yielding to the demand of the lawless skipper of the Shark. Not for a moment, either, did he believe that it would save him to yield. Once the secret of the pearl island was in Bully Samson's possession it would be the deep sea and the sharks for the young Australian, and he knew it well. Bully Samson was not the man to share a treasure.

He lay in misery and waited.

His threatened doom was a fearful one, and that Bully Samson intended to keep his word he was assured. But even that doom was almost welcome as a relief from what he now endured.

Bully Samson had returned to the schooner, he knew. He had heard his

loud, savage voice soon after sundown, cursing the blacks, and he had heard the sound of blows and cries. Bully Samson had returned in a savage mood, and when his temper was roused the man was more like a demon than a man. His terrified crew shrank out of his way; they obeyed his orders swiftly, and almost anticipated them; but that could not save them from his brutal fury. A crew of a dozen brawny men, some of them cannibals, all of them savage and ferocious, trembled at the rage of the black-bearded skipper, and never dreamed of resistance. And yet, if a chance had come, and they had been able to take him off his guard, they would have turned on him like tigers, and Bully Samson would have gone to the cooking-pot on board his own ship. But they feared his brawny fists, his ready pistol, and the glitter of his fierce eyes; and Bully Samson was not a man to be taken off his guard.

Kit Hudson would have been glad to hear the sounds of revolt, though a successful revolt of that savage crew would have meant the cooking-pot for him as well.

But he heard only howls of terror and yells of pain following the sound of blows.

The schooner Shark was known throughout the islands as a floating hell, and never had it so well deserved its reputation as on that hot, breathless night.

Kit Hudson wondered what had happened.

He had caught the name of King of the Islands on the lips of the Malaita man; a name he knew, though he had never seen him who bore it.

He had felt the faintest throb of hope when he heard the name. King of the Islands was a white man, and might help another white man in the clutches of a savage ruffian.

But the hope was faint.

He had heard many tales of the boy skipper—he knew that King of the Islands sailed a ketch with a handful of black men as his crew, trading along the islands for copra and pearls. King of the Islands, if he heard of his fearful extremity, might desire to help him, but he could not. There were over a dozen savage blacks on the schooner, and though they shrank with terror from their brutal skipper they would fight like tigers at his order—like fierce bloodhounds, crouching to a master's hand, yet ready to tear the master's enemy in pieces. If Ken King attempted to intervene he could only find his death at the hands of the crew of the Shark.

There was no hope in King of the Islands. Even if he came, Bully Samson was the man to shoot him down at sight; and at Samson's order the whole of the crew would have fastened on him. Against such odds, what could the boy skipper of the Dawn do?

Kit Hudson knew that there was no hope; he knew that that hot, starry night was to be his last.

For a long time he lay unheeded; he almost thought that Bully Samson had forgotten him. The rage in

which the ruffian had returned showed that he had not been successful in his visit to the Dawn. Ken King had evidently held his own, and Bully Samson had come back more like a fiend than a man. Hudson wished that King of the Islands had put a bullet through the ruffian's head. Yet that would have left the prisoner in the hands of the black crew, and that, sooner or later, would have meant the cooking-pot. Relieved of their skipper and their fear of him, the blacks would have seized the schooner—and the prisoner.

Kit Hudson lay and listened to the wash of the water round the hull of the Shark.

The tide was going out.

His time was drawing near. When the tide was out he was to be taken ashore and tied to a stump. There the hideous land crabs would gather to their meal—their living meal. Only by betraying the secret of the pearl island could the prisoner win a respite—and he knew that it would be nothing more than a respite—he knew that Bully Samson's promises were worth nothing.

A Tonga man came down the cuddy steps at last, and lighted the smoky, swinging lamp.

He grinned down at the prisoner in the dim light.

"White marster him come," he said. "You makee kai-kai along land-crab plenty soon."

Bully Samson tramped down into the cuddy.

The prisoner stared at him.

The ruffian's face was a mass of dark bruises and one of his eyes was almost closed.

The Cornstalk understood now how he had fared at the hands of King of the Islands and why he had returned to the schooner in so fearful a mood.

The skipper of the Shark glared down at him.

"You going to talk?" he snarled.

"No."

"You'll die and keep the secret of John Chin's pearl island?"

"Yes."

"That does it!" hissed Samson. "You feller niggers, you take white feller on deck."

Two or three black seamen grasped the Australian and dragged him roughly up the cuddy steps to the deck of the schooner.

Kit Hudson looked round him with haggard eyes.

The sea was a sheet of molten silver in the gleam of the stars; like dancing silver the water creamed over the reefs. The island lay a black mass against the starry sky. Feathery palms stood out, tall and graceful, against the stars. It was a night of the South Seas—a night of almost unearthly beauty—in grim variance with the demon's work that was going on on board the anchored schooner.

"Fling him in the boat!"

The bound prisoner crashed into the boat that rocked alongside the Shark.

Bully Samson followed him, and six of the black crew. There was a revolver in Samson's belt, and he held a rifle between his knees. His crew were armed with long Malaita knives. Darkness enwrapped the shore, and

all was silent and still, but Bully Samson knew the South Seas too well to trust to appearances. He and his savage crew were armed and on their guard as they pulled for the beach.

The boat grounded.

Round the boat, and on the beach uncovered by the receding tide, crabs were crawling—sea crabs and land crabs—hideous, crawling things in the gleam of the stars.

A shudder ran through Kit Hudson.

Bully Samson grinned savagely as he noted it.

"There's time yet!" he snarled. "Your life for the secret of John Chin's pearl island, you young fool!"

Kit did not answer.

Bully Samson tramped ashore on the sand.

"Here!" he rapped out.

The blacks seized Kit Hudson and dragged him from the boat to a stump in the beach near high-water mark.

He was placed with his back to the stump, and a rope was run round him, securing him to it.

The blacks were grinning, and jabbering in their own savage dialect. To them the fearful torture of the young "white marster" was an entertainment.

Bully Samson growled an order, and the blacks went back to the boat.

The skipper of the Shark stood before the bound man, his eyes fixed on the white, tormented face. Round him the crabs were crawling. He cursed and kicked the hideous creatures away with his feet.

"You mad swab!" he growled between his teeth. "What's the secret worth to you when the crabs are biting?"

No answer.

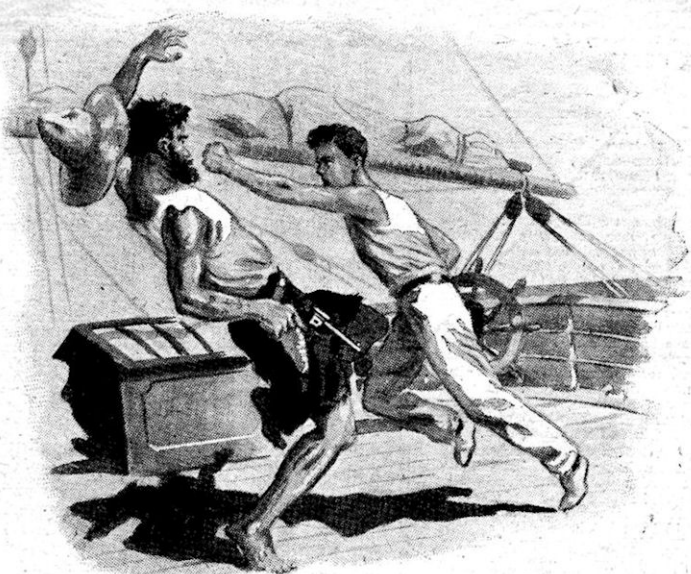
"I'll give you a chance yet," muttered Samson. "Look ye, once I step in the boat I go, and I don't come back. Once I'm in the boat, I swear that I pull for the Shark and leave you to the crabs."

"Go, then!" breathed Hudson.

"Give a hail if you change your mind!" snarled Samson. "Once I'm in the boat it's too late."

He tramped back to the boat.

He went slowly, for he clung to the hope yet that the Cornstalk would weaken; that he would buy his life, even a respite, with the secret of the pearl island. And if he did it should not save him, the savage ruffian was



As Bully Samson drew his revolver, Ken leaped forward with the swiftness of lightning. Crash! His fist landed fairly between the eyes of the South Sea ruffian.

determined. But his intended treachery, as clear to Kit Hudson as to himself, defeated his own object. If Kit had been tempted to weaken, as he was terribly tempted, the knowledge that it was useless restrained him and strengthened him. He knew that the black-bearded, black-hearted South Sea ruffian was not to be trusted, and that, if he betrayed his secret, he would betray it in vain. He shut his teeth hard.

Bully Samson reached the boat.

There he paused.

But no word came from the prisoner bound to the stump—the prisoner round whose helpless limbs the crabs were crawling.

With a curse, Bully Samson stepped into the boat.

"Washy-washy um schooner!" he snarled.

And the blacks pulled for the anchored vessel.

Bully Samson stared back at the dark shore. The still figure bound to the stump became a faint blur to him; it disappeared from sight in dark shadow as the boat pulled on.

The boat bumped on the schooner. The prisoner was invisible now, wrapped in the darkness of the shore. But as Bully Samson stepped on his ship there came a cry from the darkness that made even the hardened South Sea ruffian start and blench.

He muttered an oath and tramped below. But that fearful cry was still ringing in his ears; and though he strove not to listen, he could not help listening. And again and again from the shore the cry was repeated—till there came sudden silence!

KING OF THE ISLANDS TAKES A HAND!

KING OF THE ISLANDS wrinkled his boyish brows in deep thought as he watched the sun dip behind the little coral isle.

With Bully Samson anchored only a mile from the Dawn—though to sail round the isle to the inlet was a matter of many miles—Ken knew that there was danger in the air.

Flight was easy enough, if Ken had thought of that, for the boy captain of the Dawn would not have hesitated to take the ketch out among the reefs by the light of the stars.

But he was not thinking of flight.

He was thinking of the Australian lad held a prisoner by the bully of the Shark, and doomed to so fearful a fate.

To leave a white man to such a fate was not to be thought of.

Ken King was thinking hard.

An attack on the Shark was out of the question. So long as the prisoner remained on the schooner Ken could not help him. But he was thinking of what Koko had stated—that the Australian was to be bound to a stump and left to the crabs at nightfall. In that there was a chance.

He called *Kaio-lalulalonga* to him at last.

"What many boys um schooner?" he asked.

"Three five," answered Koko.

Fifteen was beyond the Kanaka's computation, but he had his own way of expressing a number.

"King of the Islands!"

(Continued from page 9.)

"Three five," said Ken thoughtfully. "Malaita and Tonga men?"

"Yes, sar."

Ken glanced at his own crew—five of them—happy, peaceful natives from Hiva-Oa.

They would not have been of much use in a fight with fierce Solomon Islanders and Tonga men.

They were good seamen, cheerful and happy and obedient, and with rifles served out to them would have stood by to drive off an attack of natives on the ketch, as was sometimes necessary in trading among the islands. But the idea of leading them to attack Bully Samson and his fierce crew made Ken smile.

Koko, however, was a Kanaka of quite a different stamp. He was, as he had proudly stated, no common Kanaka. He was a man of herculean strength, and a fighting-man.

Ken looked to the dark shore.

After the way he had handled Bully Samson he would not have been surprised had the skipper of the Shark led his men across the island to attack the ketch.

But there was no sign of it.

Not that such an attack would have made Ken uneasy. On the open beach the enemy would have been under his fire, and he could have picked them off with the Winchester long before they could have run out a boat and reached the Dawn. And Bully Samson would have stopped the first bullet, as he was doubtless well aware.

Ken was not afraid of an attack while he lay at anchor in the lagoon. At sea the matter would have been different; his position would have been perilous enough with the schooner itself attacking him, running alongside and hurling a crowd of fierce blacks upon his deck.

"You can pick your way back across the island to the anchorage of the Shark, Koko?" he asked.

"Um easy."

"Good! You'll come with me, then."

Koko looked at him.

"White marster goee findee Bully Samson?"

"I'm going to find his prisoner," answered Ken. "I'm going to try, at any rate. You're not afraid, Koko?"

"No flaid, s'posee you givee Kanaka um knife."

"You shall have a knife, and a spear, too, if you like. Plenty on board the Dawn."

The Kanaka shook his head.

"No spear," he answered. "Koko no common nigger. Allee same white man."

Ken grinned.

"Just as you like, Koko."

"Koko civilise Kanaka," explained Kai-o-lalulalonga. "Nebber catee long-pig, nebber makee kai-kai um white man."

"Not even of Bully Samson, if you get a chance?" grinned Ken.

"No makee kai-kai—cuttee off head," said Koko.

What Car Was That?



Panhard-Levassor. Maximum speed, about 65 miles per hour. A famous French car.



Austin Seven. Maximum speed, about 50 miles per hour. Britain's smallest car.



Standard. Maximum speed, about 56 miles per hour. Built at Coventry.



A.C. Maximum speed, about 60 miles per hour. Very popular British car.

Recognising cars is a fascinating pastime. This feature will help you to know the different makes by the radiator.

Ken glanced at the shore again. It was time to make a move if he was to attempt to help Bully Samson's prisoner. But the situation was full of danger. Leaving the ketch in charge of the black crew was not to his liking. He could depend on the faith of the Hiva-Oa men, but not on their courage or their resolution when he was not present. He was risking the safety of his ship—all that he had to take the risk.

He called Lompo to him and gave his instructions.

Rifles were served out from the cabin to the five blacks, with orders to shoot at anyone who attempted to approach the ketch in Ken's absence, whether white men or black or brown.

Then Ken stepped into the whale-boat with the Kanaka.

Koko was armed with a bush-knife, as keen as a razor, and almost as heavy as an axe—a terrible weapon in his powerful hands. King of the Islands carried his Winchester.

Ken beached the boat under the shadow of a big rock, and taking the oars from it, concealed them in a crevice near at hand.

Then he tramped up the beach with Koko.

From the woods of feathery palms the boy captain of the Dawn came out at last on the western shore of the coral isle.

Well out from the shore, the Shark lay at anchor in the inlet. No lights burned on the schooner, but her graceful lines were clearly seen in the gleam of the southern stars.

Her boat was slung up to the davits, and here and there a dark figure could be seen moving.

"Hark!" exclaimed Ken suddenly.

From the blackness of the shore opposite the anchorage of the Shark came a sudden thrilling cry.

Koko gave a violent start.

"Um aitoo!" he muttered, his brown face suddenly pale. "Um aitoo on dis island, sar!"

The cry was repeated again and again. It was strange and wild, and awfully thrilling.

Koko clutched his arm.

"No good aitoo," he muttered through his chattering teeth. "White marster comee back."

"Don't be a fool!" growled Ken.

"That was a human cry."

"We two be deaders we see aitoo."

"It isn't a devil, you black fool!"

It's a man in danger—a man tied up for the land crabs, savvy?" snapped Ken.

Koko understood.

"Me follow white marster," he said.

Ken was already running down the beach. The cry of the helpless victim of Bully Samson's ferocity rang in his very heart. He had no doubt what it meant—that fearful cry, charged with pain and horror and indescribable fear, told its own tale.

With a white, set face, Ken ran down the beach. Fast behind him came the Kanaka.

(There never was a more thrilling yarn than this, as you'll agree! Ask your newsagent to keep a copy of next week's MODERN BOY for you, for certain, or you may miss the big happenings in Sir Alan Cobham's following instalment!)