

**KING OF THE ISLANDS STORY—Complete Inside!**

# *The* **MODERN BOY**

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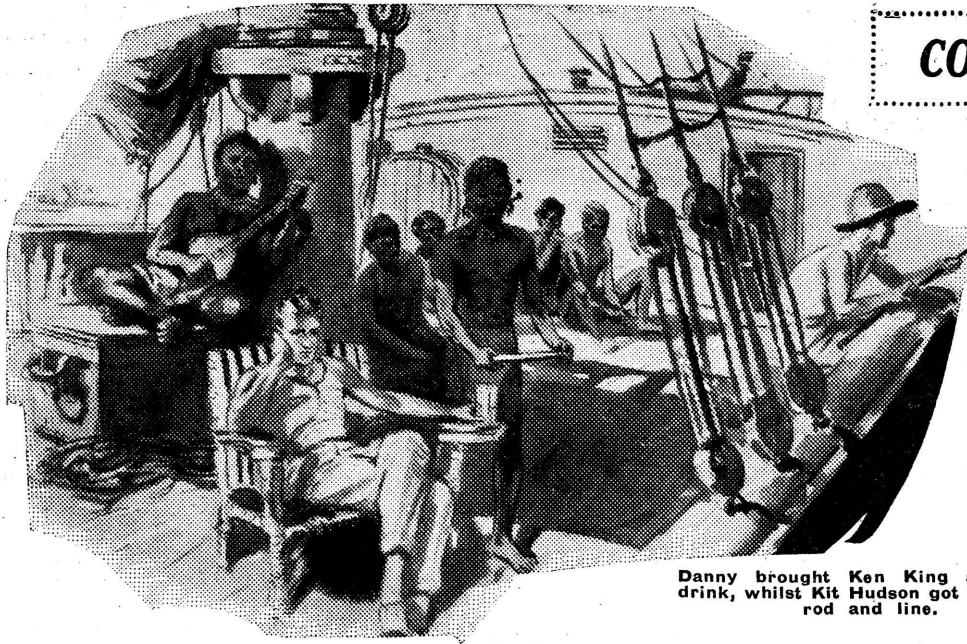
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**HITTING THE TRAIL UP-TO-DATE!—See page 3.**



**COMPLETE**



No. 1 of a  
NEW SERIES  
of COMPLETE  
adventure  
stories of life  
in the Tropics

Danny brought Ken King a cooling drink, whilst Kit Hudson got busy with rod and line.

**"Belay That!"**

**S**HRILL screaming from the bush made harsh accompaniment to the twanging of the ukelele in the hands of a gigantic Kanaka, sitting with his brawny back against a palm-tree on the beach of Ou'ua.

The yelling of a black man, squirming under blows from a belt, was not an uncommon sound to the player, and like all South Seas natives he had an infinite capacity for minding his own business. But the noise jarred on his musical ear.

The ukelele player was Kaiolalulalonga, Koko for short, the boatswain of the ketch Dawn in which Ken King, known far and wide as King of the Islands, sailed the Pacific in search of cargo. Koko had rowed the boy trader ashore and was awaiting his return.

At the back of the beach and the fringe of coco-palms, high bush grew thick and tangled. It was from the bush the screaming came, and from where he sat Koko could hear the thudding of a leather belt on a bare back; but the bush shut off the scene from sight.

Opposite the beach the Dawn lay at anchor in the lagoon, which was as smooth as a pond under a dead calm. On board, Kit Hudson, Ken's young Australian mate, was sitting on the taffrail, fishing with rod and line. About the deck lolled the remainder of the crew—Lompo, Lufu, Tomoo, Kolulu, and Danny the cooky-boy, all natives from the island of Hiva-Oa.

The twanging of the ukelele ceased, and Koko jumped to his feet as Ken King, a handsome sunburnt figure in white ducks and sleeveless vest, came striding down the beach from the trader's bungalow.

"What name that feller he sing out plenty too much?" asked King of the Islands, gesturing towards the bush.

"That feller he sing out along he too much kill, sar!" Kaiolalulalonga grinned cheerfully. "My word! Me tinkee feller white master knock seven bells outer that black feller, sar."

Koko made a step towards the whaleboat, beached at a little distance. He was ready to take his master back to the ketch, with a happy indifference to the fearful uproar from the bush.

But King of the Islands stood where he was, a frown on his boyish

able to learn that the "feller white master" was "along bush." Now the yelling of the black man in the bush told where Horn was, and how he was occupied.

"The swab!" growled King of the Islands.

Kaiolalulalonga looked curiously at his white master. The big Kanaka was good-natured and kind-hearted, but the yelling of the hapless wretch in the bush left him quite unmoved. The South Sea native is not sensitive to such things.

But Koko was aware that white masters had ways that were not the ways of brown and black men. So he was not surprised when Ken King, after a few moments of hesitation, strode towards the bush.

He followed his master promptly. Of his own accord he would not have dreamed of intervening. But at a word from King of the Islands, he would have tossed Ezekiel Horn to the sharks in the lagoon without giving the matter a second thought.

Ken forced a way through the thorny bush. He was not keen to interfere between a white man and a black, but the screaming from the bush was too much for him. With eyes glinting, he forced a way on, and at a little distance came into an open runway.

A black boy lay squirming and yelling in the path. Over him stood the trader of Ou'ua—a long-limbed, bony, rough-bearded man, clad only in a cotton shirt and shorts. Horn's right hand wielded a heavy belt, raining lashes on the squirming black.

"Belay that, Horn!" shouted King of the Islands, running forward.

At the sound of Ken's voice, Ezekiel Horn stared round in savage surprise.

The black man on the ground still

# The SOLOMON ISLANDER

*A stirring story of Ken King, boy trader of the South Seas, known far and wide as King of the Islands—skipper of the swiftest ketch in the Pacific!*

By

**Charles Hamilton**

brow. He was not in his usual placid mood. The Dawn had run into the lagoon of Ou'ua to pick up bags of copra from Ezekiel Horn, the only white man on the island.

But Horn, an American, was not to be found at his warehouse or his bungalow, and Ken had wasted hours waiting for him—precious hours, for while he waited a calm had fallen, and it was doubtful when the ketch would be able to get away.

From the natives he had only been

## The Solomon Islander

Howled. Long weals showed on his back. King of the Islands glanced at him. He could see that he was not an Ou'ua native. Ou'ua was a Polynesian island, and the natives were brown. The hapless wretch was a black Melanesian.

"King of the Islands!" muttered Horn, staring at the boy trader. "Guess you must have run into the lagoon while I was asleep."

"I've been cooling my heels round your warehouse for hours!" snapped Ken. "If you're going to do business, now's the time—you've given that boy plenty."

"I guess he ain't had enough yet!" the trader snarled. "I gave a good price for that Lu'u boy, and he's tried to run away twice! I guess he won't try a third time."

And the trader swung up the belt again, and brought it down across the squirming back. Up went the sinewy arm again for another lash; but the blow did not land. King of the Islands leaped forward, and his clenched fist, hard as a lump of iron, crashed full in the face of the Ou'ua trader.

Ezekiel Horn spun over as if a bullet had struck him, and landed with a crash on his back in the run-way, where he lay gasping, blinking dizzily up at the frowning face of King of the Islands.

"You brute!" cried Ken. "There's plenty more of the same medicine if you like to get up and take it." He rubbed his knuckles, barked on the bony face of the trader, and turned to the wriggling black, who was staring up at him with astonished eyes. "Here, you feller Lu'u boy, you run along bush plenty quick."

The Lu'u boy did not need telling twice. He was still howling with pain, but he scrambled swiftly to his feet and made off.

Horn dragged himself up, his face like a demon's, and yelled to the Lu'u boy.

"You feller Loloo, you stop along this place! You stop—"

He broke off as the Lu'u boy vanished into the bush and made a leap after him. Ken King stood in the way. The Ou'ua trader turned on him, panting with rage.

"You swab!" he roared. "Reckon you'll butt in between a man and his nigger, do you?"

He hurled himself at the boy trader.

King of the Islands stood like a rock. His hands were up, his blue eyes glinting.

Kaio-lalulalonga made a step forward. But he stopped and grinned. The bony trader over-topped King of the Islands by a foot or more. But Ken King was well able to handle him.

Right and left his fists went crashing into the other's face, and Horn reeled over and went into the grass again.

King of the Islands stared down grimly at the sprawling trader. Horn's eyes gleamed up at him like a snake's.

"Want any more, you swab!" snapped King of the Islands. "Get

up, you lubber, and I'll be glad enough to put you on your beam-ends again."

But Horn made no attempt to rise. He lay glaring and gasping. He had had enough of the boy trader's hard hitting, and he remained where he was.

Ken waited a few moments, then turned contemptuously away. The snarling voice of the Ou'ua trader followed him.

"I'll make you pay for this, King of the Islands! I guess I'll make you pay for it through the nose!"

The snarl died away behind the boy trader as he strode through the bush, back to the beach.

### Hot Lead!

**K**IT HUDSON rose from his seat on the taffrail as Ken stepped on the deck of the Dawn. He fanned himself with his big grass-hat, and yawned. The sun was dipping towards the Pacific in the west, but the heat on Ou'ua was still like that of an oven.

"Through with Horn?" asked the mate of the Dawn.

"Quite!" answered Ken, smiling grimly.

"Plenty of time to get the copra on board," said Kit. "There won't be a wind before morning."

"We shan't be taking copra on board here," replied King of the Islands. "I'm through with Horn—but we haven't traded. I don't think he's likely to trade with us again." He held up his barked knuckles.

"Fallen foul of him, have you?" remarked Hudson. "They say on the beaches that Horn has the worst temper in the Islands, and that's saying heaps! But you generally keep yours, old bean."

Hudson had seen nothing of the encounter. The high bush had screened it from the sight of all on board the ketch in the lagoon. King of the Islands explained briefly.

"Whistle for a wind, then," said Hudson. "We shan't do any more trade on Ou'ua, Ken."

"We could have got the anchor up before the breeze dropped if we hadn't had to hang about for that swab," growled King of the Islands. "Now we've got to hang on for a wind. My sainted Sam! I wish I'd given Horn a few more."

Hudson's eyes turned to the beach, and he grinned. From the bush a staggering figure emerged into the blazing sunlight.

"Looks as if you gave him enough, old man," chuckled Kit.

Ezekiel Horn stopped on the beach to shake a furious fist towards the ketch. There was a cackle of falsetto laughter from the Hiva-Oa boys at the sight of his bruised face. Certainly it looked as if King of the Islands had given him enough.

"My word," murmured Danny, the cooky-boy. "That feller Melican plenty kill along face belong him."

Horn stood shaking his fist. Then he tramped away along the beach towards his bungalow, which stood under the palm-trees at a little dis-

tance from the native huts of Ou'ua. He tramped into the building and disappeared.

King of the Islands dropped into a chair, and Danny brought him a lime-squash. He sat frowning as he sipped the cooling drink.

The call at Ou'ua had been a waste of time, and time was money to the boy trader of the Pacific. And after what had happened, Ou'ua had to be marked off the list for future calls. Obviously, there was no more business to be done. And so long as the calm hung over the Pacific, the Dawn was imprisoned in the lagoon.

Hudson resumed his seat and his rod and line. Kaio-lalulalonga, sitting with his back to the mizzen, tinkled on his ukelele and hummed a song. The Hiva-Oa crew lounged and chewed betel-nut. Ken watched the sky, hoping for a sign of a breeze.

On the shore, natives in white lavas loafed under the palms, many of them staring curiously towards the ketch anchored in the lagoon, grinning and laughing. Of the hundreds of brown-skinned natives on Ou'ua, there was probably not one who did not rejoice in the downfall of the savage-tempered Yankee trader—though they would have been extremely careful not to display any sign of that satisfaction in his presence.

A splash in the lagoon caused Ken to turn his head. A black, fuzzy mop of hair showed over the shining water. A black figure had crept from the bush, run down the beach and plunged into the lagoon, and was swimming out with swift strokes towards the ketch.

Ken rose to his feet, staring at the swimmer. He had a glimpse of a black face and rolling eyes. It was Loloo, the Lu'u boy whom he had saved from the brutality of the trader.

"Your protegee's coming aboard, Ken!" chuckled Kit Hudson.

"Well, let him come," said King of the Islands. "We can give him a passage to the next island when we sail. His life would not be worth much on Ou'ua if Horn got after him."

Bang! The sudden roar of a rifle came from the direction of the beach.

"Great pip!" yelled Hudson, leaping up from the taffrail and dropping rod and line in astonishment.

"What—"

"Melican man shoot along gun belong him!" yelled Koko.

A puff of white smoke floated from the veranda of the trader's bungalow. Behind the palm-wood rail the Yankee trader was kneeling, the barrel of the rifle resting on the rail. Evidently Horn had been watching the ketch, and he had seen the black man swimming off from the beach.

The bullet splashed into the water a dozen yards from Loloo, and whizzed along the surface harmlessly. With a shrill squeal, he redoubled his efforts to reach the ketch. He was still half a cable's length distant when the rifle roared again. This time the bullet went closer, splashing up the water over the fuzzy head.

There was a yell of excitement from

the natives on the beach. Every brown face on Ou'ua was turned towards the ketch. Loloo, swimming desperately, drew closer to the Dawn.

"Stand by to help that feller Loloo on board, Koko!" rapped out King of the Islands, and the boatswain trailed a rope over the side for the Lu'u boy to catch.

Ken stared towards the bungalow. His keen eyes picked out the Yankee trader reloading the rifle. The barrel was laid across the rail again, and the eyes of the trader glared along it.

Ken tore the revolver from the back of his belt. For a second he was tempted to send a bullet through the savage brute.

But he resisted that temptation, and took rapid aim and fired. The hat spun from the head of the kneeling ruffian. The rifle jumped as the trigger was pulled, and the bullet soared towards the blue sky.

Horn had no time for another shot. Loloo had reached the trailing rope and grasped it, and the brawny boatswain dragged him on board the ketch. He sank down on the deck, panting, stared at curiously

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**King of the Islands leaped forward—and Ezekiel Horn spun as if a bullet had struck him.**  
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by the Hiva-Oa crew.

"I've half a mind to go ashore and take a lawyer-cane with me—" muttered Ken.

The rifle roared again. The Ou'ua trader was firing at the ketch. He had the range now, and the bullet tore along the teak deck.

"The-man's mad!" gasped Hudson. "He's firing on us, Ken!"

Ken, his eyes glinting, shouted to Koko, and the boatswain ran down to the cabin for a rifle. The native crew had thrown themselves down on the deck, cackling with excitement. Ken and Kit stood staring towards the bungalow up the beach. Koko ran up with the rifle. Ken grasped it and threw it to his shoulder.

Crack, crack, crack! rang the Winchester. Three bullets pitted the woodwork of the veranda round the Ou'ua trader. Horn was seen to leap up, drop his rifle, and plunge back into the shelter of the building.

More bullets tore through the flimsy walls of the trader's bungalow, searching the building from front to back.

"Give him jip, old bean!" chuckled Hudson.

Ken's face was grim over the rifle. He was not seeking to hit the trader, but was giving him a lesson. And if

Horn remained in the building he had to take his chance.

But the trader did not remain in the building, which offered little protection from hot lead. As another bullet tore through the flimsy walls he was seen to run from the back of the bungalow, heading for the bush.

"There he goes," grinned Hudson. Ken fired again, and the bullet struck up earth and stones a foot from the running trader. It was intended to scare him, and it had that effect. Horn ran desperately, bounding away towards the shelter of the bush, and presently vanished from sight.

"The rabbit's gone to earth, Ken!" chuckled Hudson, as the scuttling figure of the badly scared trader disappeared.

Ken dropped the rifle-butt to the deck.

we'd be doing our ten knots now, old man, and walking away from Horn and his island."

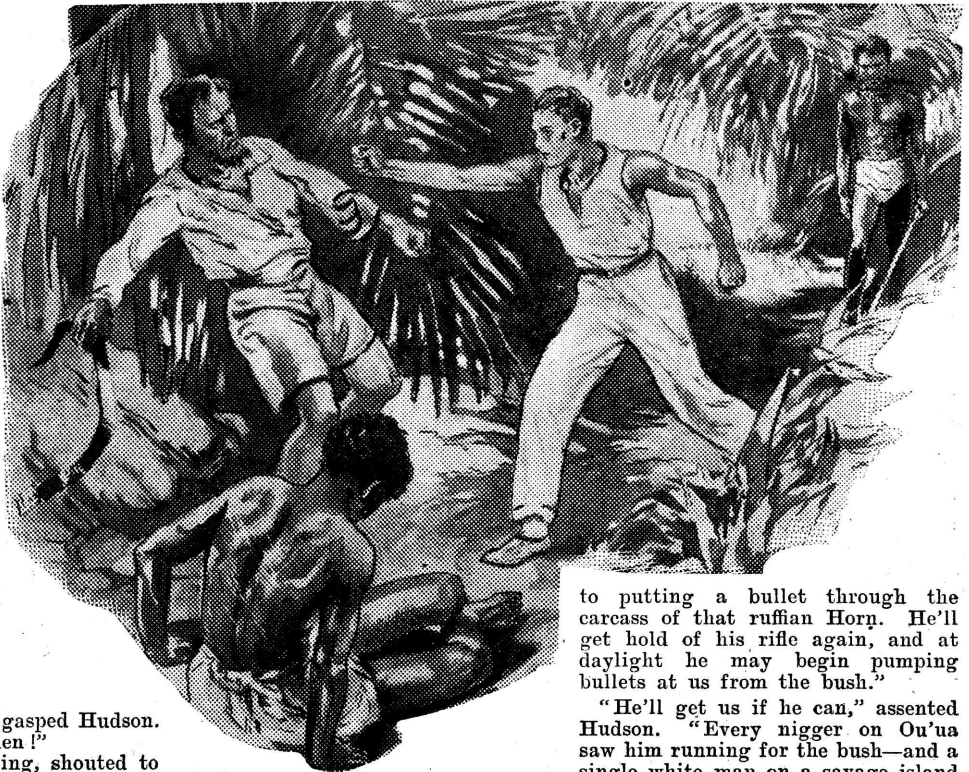
"Rubbish!"

It was an old controversy between the shipmates of the Dawn. A calm never fell on the Pacific without an allusion from Hudson to the "Lizzie" he hoped some day to see installed in the ketch. But King of the Islands was satisfied with wind-jamming, though in a dead calm there was no doubt that he had the worst of the argument.

"You're crusty to-night, old bean," laughed Hudson.

King of the Islands laughed, too. He was rarely ill-humoured, and when he was it was still more rare for ill-humour to last.

"I don't mean to be, old chap," he answered. "But I want to get shut of Ou'ua—I don't want to be driven



to putting a bullet through the carcass of that ruffian Horn. He'll get hold of his rifle again, and at daylight he may begin pumping bullets at us from the bush."

"He'll get us if he can," assented Hudson. "Every nigger on Ou'ua saw him running for the bush—and a single white man on a savage island can't afford to lose prestige. He may have trouble with the natives if he lets the affair rest where it is."

"Well, he asked for it!" growled Ken. "I couldn't leave that Lu'u boy to be cut to pieces by the brute, and I can't refuse him a passage on the ketch to the next island."

"Not by a hatful," agreed Hudson, "though I dare say the Lu'u boy would be glad to testify his gratitude by hooking your head off your shoulders and smoking it over a wood fire!"

"I shouldn't wonder," said Ken, laughing.

He walked forward to look at the Lu'u boy. Loloo lay on a tapa mat. Kaio-lalulalonga, at Ken's order, had rubbed his raw back with a native ointment, which relieved the pain and comforted the victim of the Yankee trader's cruelty.



## The Solomon Islander

Koko never dreamed of disputing an order from his white master, but he did not pretend to understand why he was to take so much trouble about a mere black man whom he despised with the pride of a man who was only brown. However, he had done as he was told, and the relief to the wretched Lu'u boy was great.

Loloo was still suffering, and he looked spent and exhausted as he lay on the mat. His rolling black eyes turned up at Ken apprehensively. Loloo's experience of "feller white masters" had not been a happy one. He had swum out to the ketch encouraged by the fact that Ken had intervened between him and his master. But he would not have been surprised had he been handed over again to Horn, or tossed into the lagoon to swim back to the beach.

Ken understood the doubts in the black man's mind, and gave him a reassuring smile.

"Name belong you Loloo?" he asked.

"Yes, sar! Feller name belong me Loloo," the other answered, in the queer "English" of the South Seas. "You no sendee this feller along that feller Melican, sar?" he asked anxiously. "This feller belong Lu'u, sar—no belong Ou'ua. That feller Melican plenty kill this feller along stick, along belt, along foot belong him, sar. He too much kill this poor Kanaka, sar."

"We sail at dawn, if there's a wind," said Ken, "and I'll give you a passage to Tova—that's the next island. You'll be safe from Horn there. You feller boy stop along Tova, new day he come!" he added. "You no see feller Horn any more altogether, eye belong you."

"Oh, sar, you plenty too much good along this feller, sar!" faltered Loloo, his black face lighting up. "Me plenty fiald along that fellar Horn, sar. He kill this poor Kanaka too much, sar. This feller plenty too much glad altogether, sar."

Ken nodded and turned away. He smiled as he met the expressive eyes of Kaio-lalulalonga.

"White master too much good along that black feller, sar," muttered the brown boatswain of the Dawn. "He Lu'u feller, sar—Solomon Island feller—plenty much no good! Makee kai-kai along feller white master, s'posee can."

Ken laughed. He did not, as a matter of fact, look for gratitude from a savage black of the Solomon Islands. But there had been a deep and heartfelt thankfulness in the expression of Loloo's face that had touched the boy trader.

"Look after him, Koko," he said tersely, "and see that he gets his rations. He stop along Tova, new day he come."

"Me plenty glad, sar! No likee along this hooker, sar," said Kaio-lalulalonga. "This feller no likee black feller, sar!"

Kaio-lalulalonga carried out Ken's instructions meticulously. But he

made it clear that he, Kaio-lalulalonga, with his dark hair and golden-brown skin, was of a different clay from the fuzzy-mopped, sooty-skinned native of the Solomon Islands, and the Hiva-Oa boys fully shared his lofty scorn.

Loloo, however, appeared indifferent to the natives on the ketch. He was only too thankful to be allowed to remain there, safe out of the clutches of a cruel master. He gave little heed to the crew, lying on his mat after he had fed, his eyes watching King of the Islands aft.

And Koko, had he been less prejudiced, might have discerned that the kindness of the boy trader had touched even the savage heart and unthinking mind of the black man from the Solomons.

Having seen that the escaped black had the care he needed, Ken gave him no further thought as the sun dipped below the rim of the Pacific and the sudden darkness of the tropics rushed over sea and land.

The fall of night was a relief, for Ken would not have been surprised at any moment to hear a shot ring out from the bush. The anchored ketch made an easy target so long as the light lasted. But the starry night light was of no use to a marksman—especially such a marksman as the trader of Ou'ua.

Ken hoped that with the dawn of a new day the wind would come, to carry him away from Ou'ua. But he was not yet done with Ezekiel Horn, as the events of the night were to show.

### Out of the Lagoon.

**E**IGHT bells tinkled on board the Dawn. Midnight gloomed over the Pacific and the atoll of Ou'ua. Still as a painted ship on painted waters, the ketch lay on the starry surface of the lagoon, her cable dropping straight as a bar of iron to the sandy coral bed sixty feet below.

Darkness wrapped the native huts sprawled along the back of the beach, and hid the trader's bungalow and warehouse. No sound came from the beach of Ou'ua, and hardly a sound from the lagoon—only occasionally a light splash from some finny denizen of the deep waters.

Kaio-lalulalonga had struck eight bells, and he went down to his berth on the lockers in the cabin. He gave the Lu'u boy a glance of suspicion and dislike as he passed him. Loloo was not sleeping. In spite of the soothing ointment, his back was raw and painful, and he lay sleepless and motionless on his tapa mat, a black shadow among shadows, only the restless glitter of his eyes telling that he was wakeful.

Kit Hudson paced the deck, yawning, till King of the Islands came up to relieve him. Then the young Australian went down to his bunk in the state-room.

King of the Islands leaned on the rail and watched the glimmering lagoon. No lights burned on the Dawn. There was no other vessel in the lagoon, and no vessel could enter

by the tortuous reef passage in the night. Lights on the ketch might have guided pot-shots from the revengeful ruffian on shore, and Ken did not want to hear bullets humming over the deck.

Soon after midnight he saw a light glimmer for a few minutes on the beach and knew that it was in Horn's bungalow. It went out very quickly, but it told that the trader was there. And Ken wondered whether the ruffian had gone to bed, or whether he was wakeful and meditating vengeance.

The boy trader watched for a long time the spot where the light had twinkled. But it did not gleam again—all remained dark, silent, still. Thinking that the ruffian of Ou'ua had gone to bed, Ken dismissed him from his mind.

He glanced down at the sound of a faint splash. A black fin glided into view in the glimmer of starshine on the water, and disappeared again. There were sharks in the lagoon, and they had been drawn round the ketch by garbage flung overboard by Danny at sunset. Hours had passed since then, but some of the monsters were still haunting the vicinity.

Ken watched the black triangular fin till it disappeared. He was too accustomed to the sight to give it much heed. He left the rail at last, and paced the little after-deck of the Dawn.

Forward, the Hiva-Oa crew were sleeping. Lompo, supposed to be on watch, had chewed betel-nut till he was drowsy, and then gone to sleep as peacefully as if at home in the island of Hiva-Oa.

Loloo, motionless in the darkness on his mat, was as still and silent as the Polynesian sailors. If he waked it was only because the Yankee trader's lashes made him sleepless. Ken had almost forgotten his existence.

The boy trader ceased pacing at last and leaned on the teak rail of the ketch, watching the stars mirrored in the depths of the lagoon. The night was hot, not a breath of wind stirring. Like a glimmering mirror, the lagoon reflected countless stars that glittered overhead. Ken's thoughts were of bags of copra and sacks of pearl-shell, on the time he was losing at Ou'ua, and the prospect of a wind at dawn.

He did not stir at the sound of a faint splash at a little distance. If he noted it, he attributed it to another shark gliding round the anchored ketch in the hope of garbage. And the sound was not repeated. But a swimmer, almost in silence, had reached the ketch, and was treading water under the dark shadow of the hull. A hand groped up for a hold, and a long-limbed form, glistening with water, drew up slowly and silently from the lagoon. The face that rose over the low starboard rail was that of Ezekiel Horn.

For a long minute Horn hung there, watching, his bloodshot eyes glittering under beetling brows.

He was clad in a loin-cloth, and a belt which supported a heavy revolver. The firearm, wet from the



lagoon, was useless for shooting. But he was not thinking of rousing the sleeping crew with a shot.

His eyes roved over the dark deck. Dimly he picked out two or three sleeping figures forward—the Hiva-Oa boys, sleeping on deck on their tapa mats. Then he picked out the figure in white drill that leaned on the taffrail.

The trader peered intently through the gloom. If it was Kit Hudson on deck, his task was not easy, for it was King of the Islands whom the revengeful ruffian sought. Easy or not, he was savagely determined to do what he had come to do.

As he watched the still figure leaning on the taffrail a grin came over his stubby face. It was King of the Islands. His task was easy, after all—if only the boy trader did not turn his head!

Slowly, silently, he drew up over the rail. Water ran down his bare limbs to the lagoon. There was the faintest tinkle of splashing; but it was too faint to reach the ears of the boy trader.

With teeth set hard and sunken eyes gleaming, Ezekiel Horn drew himself over the low rail. His bare feet touched the deck, still without a sound.

Taking the heavy revolver from his belt now, Horn grasped the barrel, and silently trod across the teak planks, closer and closer to King of the Islands. Behind the unconscious boy trader he stole, and the heavy metal butt of the revolver rose for a murderous blow!

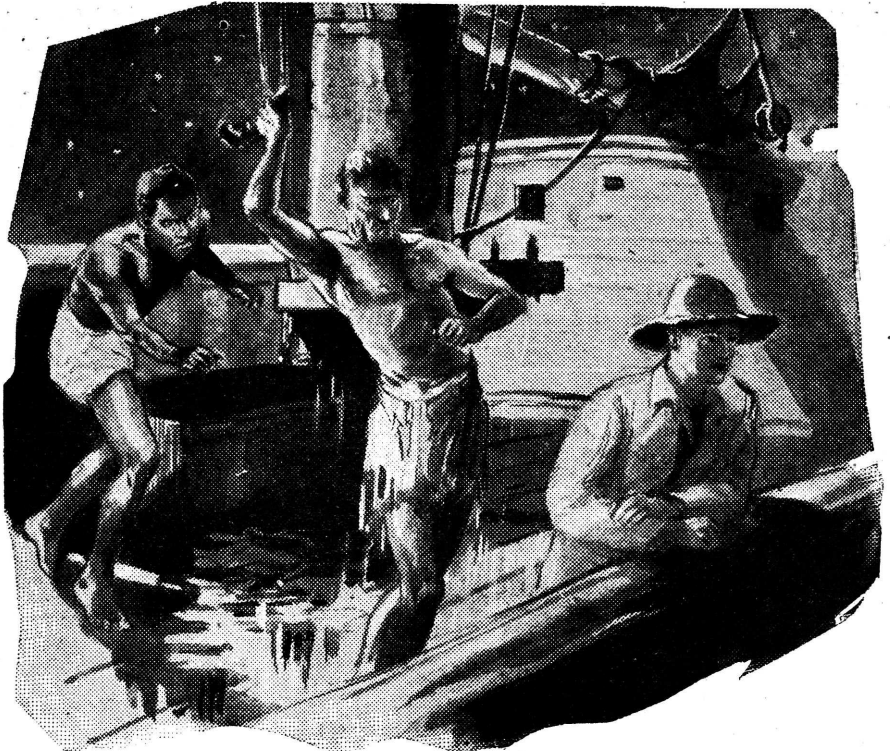
#### Gratitude!

**A**MONG the sleeping figures on the tapa mats forward, only the Lu'u boy was wakeful. Bitter pain in his raw back kept him from sleep, and his black eyes did not close while the Hiva-Oa boys slumbered round him.

The terror of death was on Loloo when the grim face of the Yankee trader rose over the rail. To Loloo it seemed that his master had come for him, and he shrank closer on his sleeping-mat, a quiver of fear running through his black limbs, his eyes dilated with terror.

His scared eyes never left the trader from the moment Horn's face rose over the rail. But he could hardly believe his eyes when he saw the ruffian turn his back on him and creep away aft. His fuzzy brain realised that Horn could not have known him, if he had seen him, in the darkness.

Loloo rose silently to his feet on the sleeping-mat, the thought in his mind of plunging back into the lagoon and escaping once more by desperate swimming.



Behind the boy trader a sliinking figure stole—and after him a lithe black figure came springing.

But he did not stir from the mat. His eyes, glued on the Yankee trader's back as he crept stealthily aft, gleamed with a new understanding. It was borne in on his mind that his terrors had misled him, and that it was not he that the ruffian of Ou'ua sought.

He watched Horn creep behind the boy trader and draw the revolver from his belt, gripping it by the barrel. Then he understood; but still freezing fear of the tyrant of Ou'ua chained him where he was standing.

But as the scoundrel's right arm swung up for the blow Loloo moved. A few seconds more and the heavy metal butt would have crashed on the boy trader's head.

In those seconds a lithe black figure came springing like a tiger. Black hands gripped the ruffian's throat from behind and tore him backwards. Taken by surprise, Horn uttered a hissing gasp and spun round on his unexpected assailant.

King of the Islands, startled, swung round. His eyes almost started from his head at the sight of Horn, revolver in hand, struggling in the grasp of the Lu'u boy.

"My sainted Sam!" gasped Ken, and sprang towards them. As he sprang a fierce blow was struck, and the pistol-butt crashed on Loloo's fuzzy head. With a groan the Lu'u boy dropped on the deck. He lay where he fell, without stirring.

Ken reached the ruffian a split second later. Horn swung at him, eyes blazing, his clubbed revolver lifted for a crashing blow. But King of the Islands side-stepped like lightning and eluded the blow as it swept down. Before Horn could lift

his weapon again the clenched fist of the boy trader caught him on the point of the jaw, and the ruffian of Ou'ua went crashing to the deck.

There was a startled cackle from the awakened Kanakas forward, and they came running aft. The crash of the falling trader had shaken the ketch and awakened both Hudson and Kaio-lalulalonga.

Horn scrambled to his feet. Right and left the fists of King of the Islands met him, crashing in the stubby face. Then Ken grasped him and tore the revolver from his hand, flinging it over the rail into the lagoon.

"Now, you scoundrel!" panted Ken.

Horn returned grasp for grasp, struggling furiously. There was a yell from Kaio-lalulalonga as he came running on deck, Kit Hudson a moment after him.

Ken hooked the leg of the struggling ruffian, and sent him sprawling on his back.

"Seize him, Koko!" he shouted.

He turned to the black boy, who still lay where he had been struck down by the pistol-butt. Kaio-lalulalonga grasped the sprawling trader, and Horn struggled in vain in the mighty grasp of the giant Kanaka.

Ken dropped on his knees beside the senseless Lu'u boy. Kit Hudson ran to him.

"Ken—what—" he panted.

"That swab must have swum out in the dark—he was behind me, with a gun in his hand, and Loloo chipped in!" gasped Ken. "He has saved my life—and that swab struck him down. If Loloo is killed, I'll hang him from my boom!"



