

The MODERN BOY 2!

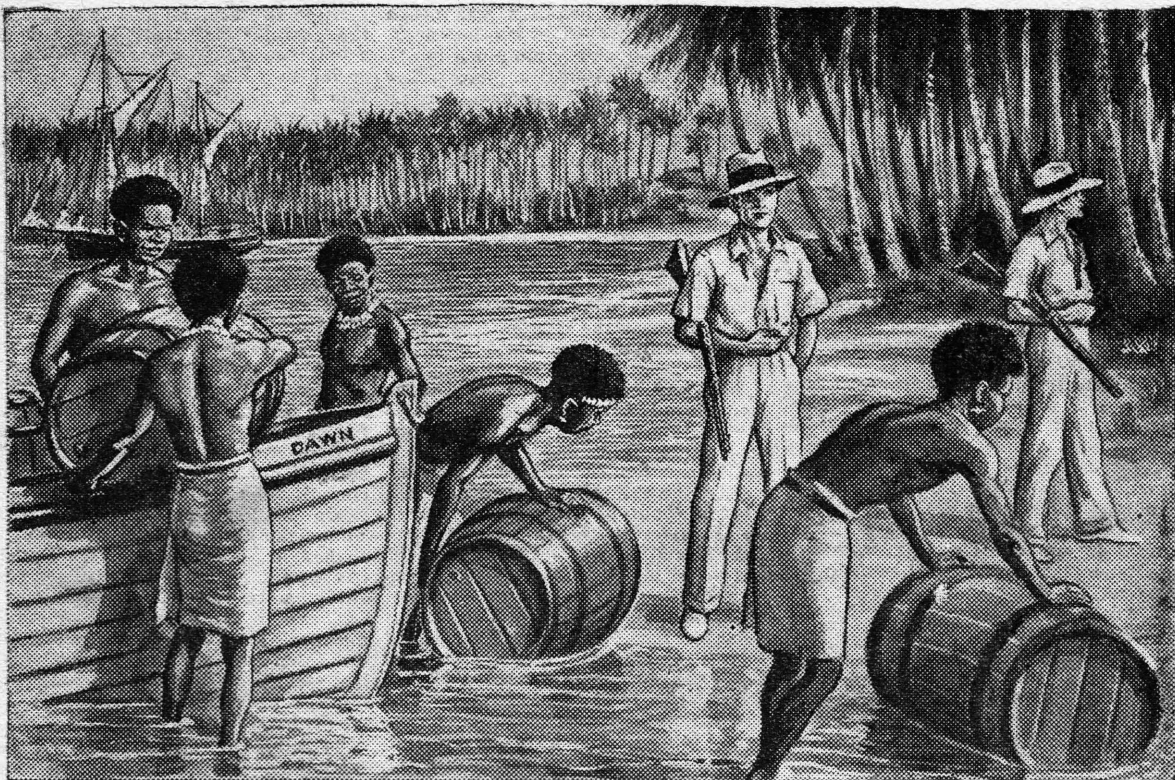
EVERY SATURDAY.
Week Ending January 23th, 1934.
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10 COLOURED
PICTURES



*The Boy
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JACKIE COOPER
Tells Us How He Does It!



The whaleboat bumped on the sand, and the Kanakas rolled the casks ashore, Ken and Kit on guard with watchful eyes.

The SECRET MEN of TUNAVIVA!

Of all the islands in the tropic South Seas, Tunaviva—said to be packed with pink coral worth a big fortune—is the loneliest, yet the most dangerous, as **KEN KING**, boy skipper of the ketch *Dawn*, discovers when the bullets suddenly start to fly! **By CHARLES HAMILTON**

Billy's Swim for Life!

NO feller stop along this island!" declared Koko, the brown boatswain of Ken King's South Seas trading ketch, *Dawn*.

King of the Islands, the boy owner and skipper, made no reply. Standing by the taffrail of the anchored ketch, in the solitary lagoon of Tunaviva, he looked round at the circling beach in the crimson glow of the setting sun. Many a lonely isle had Ken King raised in his voyages as a trader in the South Seas, but none more lonely than Tunaviva looked.

From the ketch's deck almost the whole of the little island could be seen. It was nothing but a ring of coral surrounding the lagoon, bearing tall palm-trees, with feathery fronds and clusters of nuts. Close by the reef passage great coral rocks were piled to a height of sixty or seventy feet. But most of Tunaviva was low. All round it the blue Pacific could be seen, rolling and breaking in creamy surf on the outer reef.

Over the reef the gulls were calling. On the shelving beach of the lagoon, land-crabs crawled. Other sign of life there was none. And yet

Ken knew there were men on Tunaviva—out of sight, hiding from the ketch that had sailed into the lagoon. Why? For the hundredth time Ken King asked himself what was the secret of Tunaviva, and could find no answer.

"There must be somebody!" said King of the Islands, to Kit Hudson, his Australian mate. "Yesterday we spotted a boat in the lagoon, from far out at sea. That boat's still here! There were four men in it, so there must be four men, at least, on Tunaviva!"

"And it's pretty certain that the half-caste pearl-trader, Jam, had come from Tunaviva when we picked him off the wrecked lugger, and took him into Tahiti," he went on. "He left somebody here—who, and why, goodness knows! It's an island of mystery, Kit."

Billy the Beachcomber came shuffling up. The human derelict, to whom Ken had given a passage when he was kicked out of Tahiti, looked all the better for the days he had spent on the *Dawn*. Billy had not enjoyed the trip. He had had to shave, wash, and work—none of which agreed with the bone-idle loafer of tropical beaches. But he was at

Tunaviva, and his face gleamed with excitement. If the tale told him by the Kanaka at Apia was true, there was precious pink coral on Tunaviva, and Billy was eager to get his hands on it. It was worth five pounds an ounce at Sydney, if it was there! And the outcast of Tahiti believed that it was!

"You'll be sending the boat ashore, skipper!" said Billy. "You ain't come here to stand on deck and stare at the beach, I reckon. I want to get ashore."

"The daylight will be gone soon," Ken answered. "Leave it till dawn. We don't know who may be watching us this very minute—and we don't want to run into danger in the dark."

"Who's here to hurt us?" snapped the beachcomber. "That nigger Jam ain't—we left him days back stranded in the schooner on the Mangarova reef. Who else would be here?"

"I tell you I picked up a boat with the binoculars yesterday, afloat on this lagoon!" retorted Ken. "Men are here, and they're keeping out of sight."

"Burn my timbers!" grunted the beachcomber. "If they're here, I ain't afeared of 'em! I've come here to

Billy emerged into view. He glanced towards the ketch, then moved off along the beach, his head bent, his eyes scanning the sand and powdered coral and sea-shells and tangled seaweed left by the tide. Kit Hudson grinned.

"Looking for his precious pink coral," he remarked. "That Kanaka at Apia told him he picked up a lump on the beach here. I'll lend him a thimble to pack away all he finds on Tunaviva."

Ken laughed. Neither of the shipmates believed in the tale of pink coral on Tunaviva, and they had little doubt that there was a disappointment in store for the outcast of Tahiti.

Breakfast finished, the whaleboat was lowered, and the water-casks taken ashore. The casks needed replenishing, and Ken had decided to get the job done before trouble started on the island.

THE whaleboat bumped on the sand, and the Kanakas rolled the casks ashore. A shallow stream flowed down the beach into the lagoon, and it was there that the casks were landed. Singing at their task, the Hiva-Oa boys rolled the casks up the stream to where the water was deeper, and fresh. Only Danny the cooky-boy had been left on the ketch, but the anchored vessel was within easy rifle shot, and the shipmates had their rifles under their arms. But danger seemed like a dream in the calm sunny morning.

The brown crew filled the casks and ferried them back to the ketch. They brought the whaleboat back again for a load of island produce—coconuts, bananas, plantains, wild yams. More than once their glances turned on the two white men, armed and watchful. To the Hiva-Oa boys, the silence and solitude of Tunaviva told its own tale. They did not believe that there was a human being on the island, outside the ship's company of the Dawn.

Ken sent the whaleboat back to the ketch with its cargo, with orders to the Kanakas to stay on board. Only the boatswain remained on shore with the white masters. At a little distance from the stream they came on the burnt-out embers of the beachcomber's camp-fire. But nothing was to be seen of Billy. He had disappeared along the beach, hunting for his pink coral. Following the beach, the shipmates went along the lagoon, their eyes open for possible enemies, and for signs of human habitation. But there was no sign of either. Here and there, the woods were thick, and might have concealed huts; but if so, the shipmates saw nothing of them. Neither, so far as they could see, was there cultivation on the island—no fields of yams, such as might have been expected if men dwelt there.

"Here's the swab!" said Hudson suddenly.

Stretched in the sand, in the shadow of a rock, they came on Billy, resting in the heat of the tropic day. Coconut shells and banana-skins lay in a heap beside him. He did not rise as the shipmates came up, but blinked at them from under his bushy brows, half-defiantly.

"Any luck?" asked Hudson, with a grin.

"A man don't expect to find a fortune lying under his nose," grunted the beachcomber. "I reckon I've got to look for it! There's pink coral here—I tell you that Kanaka at Apia picked up a lump of it worth twenty pounds!"

"Well, you've got plenty of time to look!" said King of the Islands. "We're not pulling out till we know something more about Tunaviva. You've seen nobody?"

"There's nobody to see!" grunted Billy. "We've got Tunaviva to ourselves—till that scum Jam comes along, and that won't be yet."

"I tell you there are men on Tunaviva!" snapped Ken. "And as soon as they see that we're not pulling out we shall see something of them. Come back to the Dawn at sundown."

"I ain't stepping off this beach till I've found pink coral," answered the outcast of Tahiti stubbornly. "I'm at your orders on board your packet, skipper; but on shore I'm my own man. And I ain't going without what I've come for—not even if you pull out and leave me marooned here."

"I'm speaking for your own sake, you lubber," said Ken. "I tell you you'll be in danger when the men of Tunaviva see that we're not sailing. They won't keep in hiding after they know we've come to stay."

"There ain't men on Tunaviva, skipper," the beachcomber laughed mockingly. "But men or not, I'm taking my chance."

"You're your own man ashore, as you say, and you can take your chance," said Ken. "But I reckon you'll be sorry for it!"

Billy shrugged his shoulders, and the shipmates went on their way and left him.

A Desperate Yell!

WIND ruffled the surface of the lagoon, and waved the fronds of the tall palms on the circling shore. It came strongly out of the south—the wind that Ken King wanted, if he was pulling out of Tunaviva and making sail for his regular beat in the islands. But the boy trader was not thinking of pulling out as he paced the deck of his ketch in the glowing sunset. The mystery of Tunaviva intrigued him deeply, and he was resolved to solve it. Before the Dawn spread her canvas to the winds again, he was going to know why the half-caste, Jam, had been ready to sink him at sea to keep him away from that island of secrets.

During the long hot day the shipmates had explored the island—in vain. Not even a footprint had been picked up on the beach. Almost the whole island was open to the eye, yet not a glimpse had been obtained of the secret men or their dwelling—and surely, if men lived on Tunaviva, they had a dwelling of some kind.

King of the Islands, his heart beating in great throbs, stared up after the climbing Koko, and caught a fleeting glimpse of a black face glaring down over the top of the cliff.



The Secret Men of: Tunaviva!

Ken began to wonder whether the boat he had spotted had pulled out before the Dawn arrived. Yet if that was the case, what had the boat's crew been doing there—why had they come, and why had they gone? There was no other land, even an atoll, for a hundred miles, and that was a long trip for an open boat. And why had the half-caste pearl-trader been so desperately determined to keep men away from Tunaviva if there was nothing on the island?

"We're losing time and trade," said Ken. "But we're bound to give that swab a chance of finding his pink coral. And I reckon we shan't have to wait long, either! If we don't pull out before sundown they'll know we mean to stay, and then— Kit, we shall hear or see something of them before the next night's through."

As the sun went down King of the Islands spotted the beachcomber once more, rooting along the beach. Before coming back to the Dawn, Ken had given the man a revolver—a gift Billy received with a shrug of the shoulders. He did not believe for a moment that there were men on Tunaviva, or the remotest danger, unless and until Mr. Jam appeared in the offing. But Ken, convinced of danger, would not leave the man unarmed.

The boy trader watched him tramp on the beach till the fall of darkness hid him from sight. A little later the glow of a camp-fire was seen through the palms. Billy had camped back of the beach, as he had done the night before, ready to turn out again and resume his quest at the first gleam of dawn.

The Kanakas stretched on their sleeping-mats. But neither the skipper nor the mate of the Dawn was thinking of sleep that night. What might happen, if foes were watching the ship, they did not know—it might be a night attack on the ketch. The man ashore, at all events, was at the mercy of the secret men of Tunaviva, and many times Ken's eyes turned uneasily towards the ruddy glow of the fire beside which the beachcomber was sleeping—defenceless, if an enemy came on him in the dark hours.

At midnight, Hudson stretched himself in a Madeira chair and half dozed. But King of the Islands had never been wider awake. All his nerves were tensed, with the certainty that the dreamy quiet of the tropical night was deceptive.

Suddenly—crack! The ring of a revolver crashed on the silence of the night like a cannon shot. Hudson was out of the Madeira chair with a bound. Koko leaped from his tapa mat, and the Hiva-Oa boys raised sleepy heads.

"What—" gasped Hudson. He ran to the rail, where King of the Islands stood staring shoreward. They stared hard through the gloom. The ruddy glow of the distant camp-fire was still seen. Suddenly it vanished into blackness.

"Trodden out!" muttered Hudson. "Not by Billy!" said Ken.

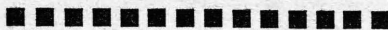
They listened intently. If the out-cast was in the hands of enemies, they

could not help him. The struggle, if he was resisting, would be over long before they could land and reach his camp. It seemed to them that sounds came down the wind from the distance—sounds of a distant scuffle. Then, sharply and unmistakably, came the yell of a man struggling desperately. It broke off suddenly, and they could picture a hand clapped over a mouth, or gripping a throat.

Ken made a stride towards the whaleboat, but stopped. He knew that it was useless. Listening intently, no ear on the anchored ketch could pick up a sound. There had been a struggle, but it was over. Overpowered or dead, the outcast of Tahiti was in the hands of the secret men of Tunaviva!

"It's over!" said Hudson, at last, in a low voice. "Whatever they've done to him, it's over."

Ken nodded without speaking. The Hiva-Oa boys were all up, staring shoreward with wondering eyes. They could not doubt now that their white master had been right, and that



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there were men on Tunaviva. The silence that followed the sudden, brief outbreak was oppressive, almost terrifying.

"Our turn next, Ken!" said Hudson.

"We're ready if that is so," said King of the Islands grimly. "I'd be glad to see the swabs show up."

No eye was likely to close again on the ketch that night. Even Danny's snore was silent. The secret men of Tunaviva had seized, or slain, the man ashore—that was a certainty. They had waited for the ship to sail, and as it had not sailed they had struck. All they had wanted was to see the ketch pull out and leave them alone on the island. Now that they knew that the newcomers had come to stay, they had struck the first blow. Obviously, other blows would follow, now that the gauntlet had been thrown down.

But the night, which seemed endless, wore away at last, without a sound or a sign of the enemy. Never had Ken King and his crew been so glad to see the golden gleam of sunrise.

As the shadows lifted, eager eyes

scanned the circling shores of the lagoon, the nodding palms, the glistening stream, the dark patches of bush. Crabs and lizards crawled on the beach, birds of gorgeous plumage fluttered over the trees, and the eternal calling of the gulls echoed from the reef. But of other signs of life there was none, and King of the Islands could almost have believed that what had happened in the night was only a dream.

A Shark's-Tooth Knife!

"PLENTY feller stop along this place!" said Koko, his keen eyes scanning the tracks round and about the dead embers of the beachcomber's camp-fire.

King of the Islands stood, rifle in hand, watchful and wary. He had landed with the boatswain, leaving his mate in charge of the ketch. Now that the expected trouble had started, it was necessary for one of the white men to remain on the ketch in case of a sudden attack from the mysterious enemy. Hudson had remained unwillingly, while Ken went ashore to learn if he could what had happened to Billy.

In the daylight, it was easy to find the spot where Billy had camped. Ken had dreaded to find the outcast of Tahiti lifeless there, but Billy was not to be seen, though there were ample signs of him and of the men who had attacked him. The fire had been stamped out, and footprints showed among the ashes.

Koko's keen eyes picked up track after track.

"Black feller stop, white feller stop!" said the boatswain. "One white feller stop, sar, two-three black feller stop."

Ken nodded. The tracks told him the same tale. There were the prints of one pair of booted feet—the feet of a white man. The rest of the tracks showed the toes of naked native feet. Had all the tracks been of native feet Ken might have concluded that the men on Tunaviva were some savage native crew, and that the beachcomber had been carried away for "kai-kai." But the presence of a white man showed that that was not the case. There had been three blacks, led by a white—and Ken remembered the four figures he had seen in the boat on the lagoon, from far out at sea, when Tunaviva was first sighted.

Hitherto, in their search of the mysterious island, the shipmates had found no sign of footprints, and Ken knew that every sign of habitation must have been carefully removed before the ketch sailed into the lagoon. It was clear that the men of Tunaviva had believed that the ketch came by chance, and would pull out again, and were content to remain in hiding till it was gone. But now that they had struck, there was no need for further concealment of their signs. The men themselves had vanished, but now that their presence was no longer a secret they had taken no trouble to hide their traces.

"You feller Koko, you look, eye belong you, along way that feller go, along takee feller Billee!" said King of the Islands.

"Me see close-up, eye belong me," answered Koko confidently. With his head bent, his keen dark eyes scanning the ground, the boatswain moved away from the camp. He was a seaman, but he was at home in the bush.

Kit Hudson, watching from the ketch, glimpsed them as they moved among the trees. But they were soon out of his anxious sight, for the trail of the secret men led towards the outer shore of the island—the ring of coral reefs that fronted the Pacific—and it seemed that the enemy had taken no trouble whatever to hide the way they went.

The sea burst suddenly on Ken's eyes as they came through the last of the trees and stood on the outer rim of Tunaviva—a wilderness of rock and cliff. Right and left stretched rocky reefs, with patches of sand and inlets of sea running up into the coral. Koko stopped where the water lapped between two jagged coral spurs.

"Feller boat stop along this place, along night he stop!" said Koko.

Ken stared at the traces in the sand. Plain to the eye were the marks where a boat had been dragged from the water and feet had tramped up from the sea.

The enemy had come from the sea in a boat. There was no land near Tunaviva, so they could not have come from another island. The boat must have put off from some spot on the outer shore of the ring of coral that formed Tunaviva. It was perplexing and puzzling. But it was clearly im-

possible to follow farther—the reefs and the sea told no tale even to Koko. Billy had been carried down to the boat, and the boat had put off and vanished. It was the end of the trail!

Ken drew a deep breath.

"Back to the Dawn!" he said. They turned from the reef and tramped up the rocky shore again. The outer shore of Tunaviva was wild and desolate, a strange contrast to the fertile interior. Suddenly, as they passed by the base of a huge basaltic rock, towering thirty feet over their heads, Koko grasped his white master by the arm and dragged him away from the cliff.

"Black feller stop!" panted Koko. Then—crash! From the summit of the basaltic cliff, a great lump of coral came crashing down, smashing on the shore where King of the Islands had stood a second before.

"Black feller stop!" hissed Koko. "Me see um, eye belong me, along he threw feller rock! This feller Koko kill that black feller plenty too quick!" Bush-knife in hand, the boatswain clambered like a cat up the rugged face of the cliff. The narrow escape of his white master excited him to fury, and his eyes blazed as he climbed.

King of the Islands, his heart beating in great throbs, stared up after the clambering Kanaka. He had a glimpse of a black face and a fuzzy head glaring over the top of the basaltic cliff, then it vanished. The sight of Koko's infuriated brown face had been enough for the black man. Koko disappeared over the top, and

Ken heard his shout of rage as he found that the assailant was gone.

For the moment the boy trader was off his guard, his eyes fixed on the rugged cliff over which the brown boatswain had disappeared. Then sinewy hands suddenly closed on him from behind, and he was dragged over on his back. He went down with a crash before he realised what was happening, his rifle clattering from his hand. He made a desperate clutch at the revolver in his belt, but he had no chance of pulling it. Two strong black arms were round him with a strength that was twice his own, sturdy as he was.

He twisted round, his face almost touching the face of the man in whose powerful grasp he was held almost helpless. It was a black face, with rolling, fierce eyes, and a mop of fuzzy hair. Coral combs were stuck in the mop, a brass ring in the broad nose, and cartridge-clips dangled from the heavy ears. There was a savage grin on the black face, showing teeth that flashed white.

The bear-like grip of the black man crushed the boy trader down, and the black released his right hand to grab a shark's-tooth knife from his loincloth. Only just in time King of the Islands caught desperately at the brawny wrist, and stopped the blow that would have ended his life at one stroke. But so powerful was the muscular black arm that he could not hold it back. He succeeded only in diverting the blow, so that it missed him by a couple of inches. The

(Continued on next page)



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The Secret Men of Tunaviva!

black dragged his arm up again for another blow. The boy trader clung desperately to the thick, strong wrist.

"Koko!" he shouted. He knew then, as he struggled with death before his eyes, that the secret men of Tunaviva had not all gone in the boat with their prisoner. Some of the blacks had been left hidden in the rocks to watch for a possible pursuit, and they had watched Ken and his boatswain go down to the sea, and had laid in wait for them as they returned up the shore!

At the shout, the brown face of the boatswain looked over the edge of the basaltic cliff, thirty feet above the struggling boy trader and his enemy. Koko's eyes bulged. He was about to swing himself down the cliff, but he could see at a glance that he would never reach his white master in time.

With a furious wrench, the black man tore his wrist free from Ken's grasp, and threw up the shark's-tooth knife to strike. Leaping from the rugged top of the basalt, Koko's hand, with the heavy bush-knife in it, moved like lightning.

Whiz! It seemed a flash of light that shot down the cliff. It was the knife of the Kanaka—thrown with an aim as unerring, as deadly as any white man's aim with rifle or revolver. Even as the black man's hand was lifted to strike, the bush-knife struck him in his broad, bare back, and drove deep.

King of the Islands felt the black man above him sink down. The black hand with the shark's-tooth knife sagged helplessly, and the knife clattered on the sand. Koko came clambering like a cat down the cliff. But before he reached his white master, King of the Islands had thrown aside a dead man, and scrambled to his feet.

Under Fire!

KING OF THE ISLANDS leaned on the rugged basalt, panting for breath. Koko dropped at his side from the cliff, caught up the rifle, and glared round, finger on trigger. But no enemy appeared. A clinking of tumbling stones in the distance hinted of someone in flight, but the sound lasted only a few moments, and then there was silence.

Ken wiped a stream of perspiration from his brow, and took the rifle from the Kanaka's hands. He shuddered as he looked down at the inert figure. The thrown bush-knife had saved his life, and only that could have saved it. Koko recovered his knife.

"Black feller go finish!" he said. "Plenty too much glad white master no go finish, my word! Tinkee go finish close-up, along me see black feller along knife, eye belong me!"

"What island that feller belong, Koko?" asked Ken.

"Belong Santa Cruz, sar!" answered the boatswain. King of the Islands had thought so, but there was no doubt after Koko had spoken. Koko could have picked out, at a glance, a man of any of the hundred races of the Pacific, black or brown.

Evidently the men on Tunaviva did not belong to that part of the Pacific, for the Santa Cruz Islands were many hundred miles from the Society Group, to which Tunaviva belonged. The man who lay dead on the sand belonged to the Black Islands, a thousand miles away—the Society Group, Tahiti, and the rest were islands of the brown race. The white man of Tunaviva, whoever he might be, had a Santa Cruz crew—good seamen and fierce fighting men.

The beachcomber had been taken prisoner, perhaps to question him—to learn why the ketch was there. But the black men who had lurked in the rocks had not sought to make King of the Islands a prisoner. They had ambushed him on that wild shore to take his life!

He signed to Koko, and they turned away and tramped up the rocky shore to the interior. The man who had hurled the coral rock from the cliff had vanished. But every rock, every hollow of the cliffs, might have hidden an enemy, and the skipper and boatswain of the Dawn were wary as they went on their way. They followed their own trail back to the deserted camp of the beachcomber, and then to the beach of the lagoon. Ken waved his hand to Hudson, looking over the rail of the anchored ketch.

Hudson shouted to the Hiva-Oa boys, and Lompo and Tomoo dropped into the whaleboat to pull to the beach for the skipper. Hudson came in the boat with the two Kanakas.

"Any luck?" he called, as the boat's nose grounded on the shelving sand.

"They've got him!" said Ken. "A prisoner, I reckon. They came and went in a boat along the outer reef—a white man and a crew of Santa Cruz blacks!" And in a few words he told his shipmate what had happened on the outer shore. Hudson whistled.

"Good old coffee-bean!" he said, smacking Koko on a brawny shoulder. "They mean business, Ken, whatever their game is on Tunaviva. But we've won the first round, and Mr. Jam's confederate here has a man

(Continued on opposite page)

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the less. We'll raise their hiding-place sooner or later, and get that swab Billy out of their clutches!"

"We're not sailing without him, at all events," replied Ken. He stepped into the whaleboat. "Washy-washy along ketch, you feller boy!"

Koko shoved the boat off, and Lompo and Tomoo put out the oars and pulled towards the ketch. Half-way from the beach to the ketch there was a sudden splash in the water close by the gunwale. Lompo jumped, and missed his stroke.

"Suffering cats!" yelled Hudson, as a rifle report, rolling over the silent island, followed the splash of the bullet.

King of the Islands leaped to his feet and stared back at the beach. It was bare and deserted. The shot had not come from there. Another bullet whizzed an inch from his shoulder and struck the water beyond the boat.

"Pull, you feller boy!" Ken shouted to the Kanakas. "Washy-washy debblish quick along ketch!"

From the ketch came an excited babble from Lufu, Kolulo, and Danny, lining the rail and watching.

Ken and Kit, grasping their rifles, glared shoreward as the Kanakas pulled, searching for the enemy. From the high cliff near the reef passage, seventy feet up, Ken's keen eyes caught a glimmer of white smoke against the rock. It was from the height of the cliff that the unseen enemy was shooting. The range was long, but the bullets had pitched terribly close. Splash came another

bullet, grazing the gunwale before it dashed into the water.

The Kanakas drove madly at the oars. A few minutes more, and the boat shot past the Dawn, to pull in on the sheltered side of the ketch.

King of the Islands stepped on deck, followed by his mate. The Kanakas scrambled over the rail. There was a yell from Danny: the cooky-boy as a bullet gashed the teak deck only a yard from his bare feet. The boat's crew had escaped the fire, so the hidden marksman had turned his rifle on the ketch itself!

Ken roared orders to his crew, the anchor came up, and the ketch rapidly shifted her anchorage farther across the wide lagoon. Shot after shot rang from the towering cliff, but the lead dropped into the water. Out of range, the cable ran out again, and the Dawn anchored.

King of the Islands clenched his hands as he stared with gleaming eyes towards the distant cliff. He could hardly have sailed from Tunaiva now if he had wished, for the reef passage lay under the high cliff, under the rifle of the hidden marksman. But no such thought was in his mind. It was open war now—and King of the Islands was not the man to retreat!

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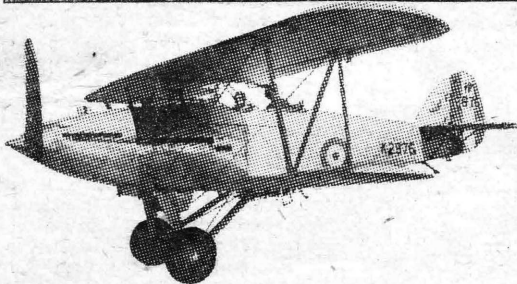
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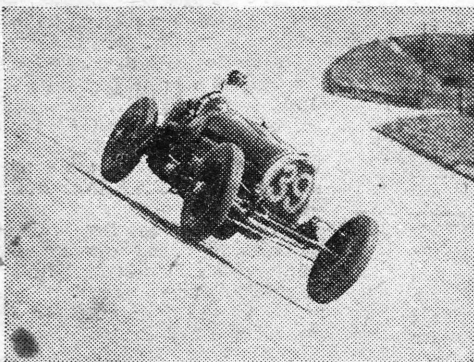
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