

15 COLOURED PICTURES FREE *Inside!*

The **MODERN BOY**

EVERY SATURDAY
WEEK ENDING
20th JAN. 1934
No 311
VOL. 12

2^d



GIVEN FREE *Next Week!*

THIS SPLENDID LONG-FLYING
MODEL PLANE
FREE *TO ALL*
READERS!

SEE INSIDE

The South Seas have never known a pluckier youngster than KING OF THE ISLANDS—but Luck doesn't always go hand in hand with Pluck. In this thrilling story he is up against the most hair-raising experience of his life!

KEN KING'S DEFEAT!

By

CHARLES HAMILTON

The Night Attack!

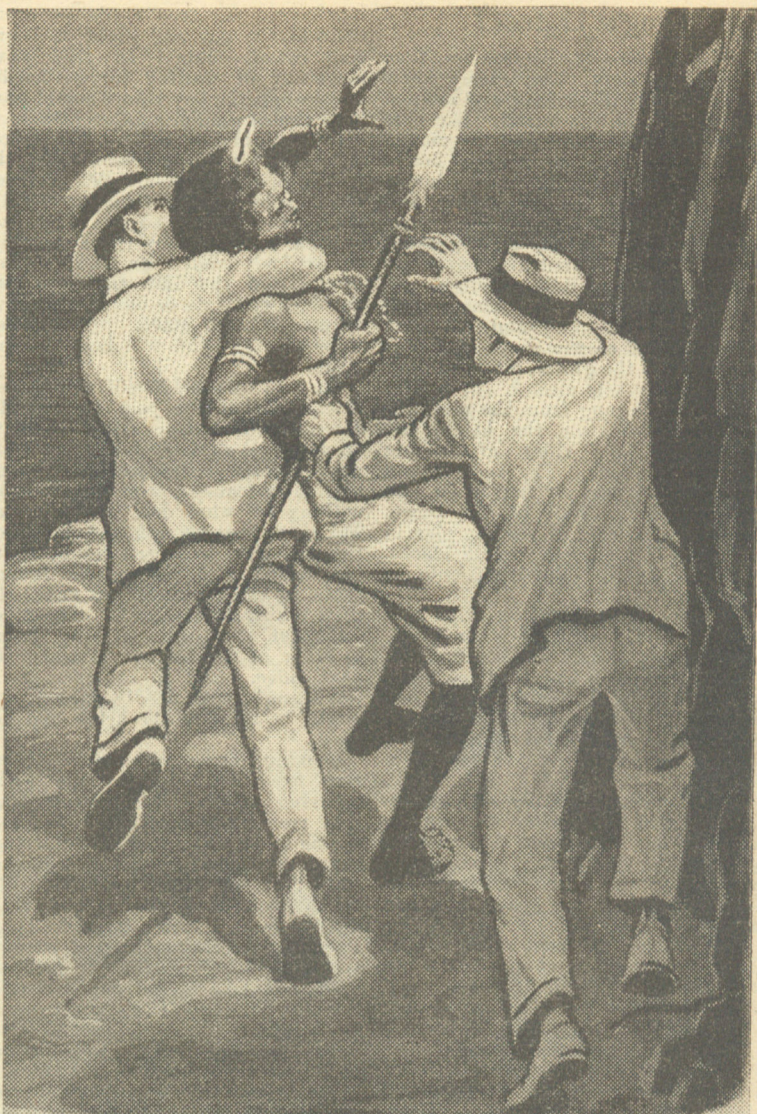
"DID you hear?" King of the Islands, the boy trader of the South Seas and owner of the ketch Dawn, strained his eyes into the darkness, his ear bent to listen. Kit Hudson, the mate of the Dawn, stepped to his side, and together they listened intently.

Koko, the brown boatswain, rose from his sleeping-mat on the deck; he had not been asleep. Not an eye on the ketch had closed that night. The Hiva-Oa crew lay on their mats, but their eyes were wide open, their ears alert. Even the snore of Danny the cooky-boy was not heard. Nerves were tense on board the ketch anchored in the lagoon of Lonely Tunaviva!

The hours since sunset had been silent. From the circling beach, hidden in darkness, came no sound. If a fish splashed in the starlit lagoon it was sufficient to cause the crew of the Dawn to start and listen. Danger lurked in the shadows, and Ken King could hardly believe that the night would pass without an attack from the unknown, mysterious enemies who lurked on the island.

A tiny speck in the Pacific, Tunaviva was supposed to be uninhabited. Ken had run down to the island to please Billy the Beachcomber—a waster to whom he had given passage when the man was kicked out of Tahiti—who declared that pink coral, worth five pounds an ounce, was to be found there. Billy had gone ashore and been captured by mysterious men on the island, and the Dawn had been fired on. Now the shipmates were on the alert against further attack.

It was the darkest hour of the night—the hour before sunrise. A dim shimmer of starlight lay on the lagoon. It gave little aid to the eye,



The black man had no suspicion the comrades were there—till Kit Hudson's arm was flung round his neck.

rather serving to make the darkness visible. Faintly from the night came an almost inaudible splash.

"Tinkee feller boat stop along lagoon, sar!" whispered Koko.

"Muffled oars, then!" muttered Hudson. King of the Islands nodded. His face set grimly. He slipped his rifle from under his arm, and rested it across the teak rail, bearing in the direction of that faint sound. His finger was on the trigger, and his eye gleamed along the barrel, as he waited for a repetition of the sound to guide a shot.

Stealthily, the enemy were coming in the darkest hour. Where they hid themselves and their boat on Tunaviva, the shipmates did not know. They had explored the island without finding a trace of the secret den of the men. But they discovered with whom they had to deal—they knew that there was a white man, with a crew of Santa Cruz blacks, somewhere on the island.

They could guess that the men were confederates of Mr. Jam, the trader in false pearls, but why they were foes, and what was the secret of the island, they were as far as ever from guess-

ing. But one thing was certain—since the ketch had not sailed, the men had realised that Ken had some object at the island. Now they were determined that the boy trader never should sail.

DEEP silence reigned. If a boat was approaching, it came stealthily, with muffled oars. It was a surprise attack that was intended. Ken listened hard. Suddenly he caught another sound—the creak of a thole-pin. And as it reached his ears, he pulled trigger.

The crack of his rifle seemed to roar like thunder. Then from the darkness came a sharp, ringing cry. Evidently the bullet from the ketch had found the unseen boat!

"Feller bullet stop along some feller belong that boat!" chuckled Koko.

"Good shot!" grinned Hudson. Following the cry came a harsh, angry

Ken King's Defeat!

shout—the voice of a white man, then the dash of oars. The enemy knew that they were discovered, and caution was thrown to the winds. Six oars splashed in the water, and the unseen boat shot towards the anchored ketch.

"Fire!" roared King of the Islands. His rifle rang as he spoke, and Hudson's cracked at the same moment. The native crew grasped their rifles and blazed away over the rail. There was wild shooting, and the bullets flew in almost all directions. But Ken and Kit fired with sure aim as the shape of a boat loomed up in the gloom, pitching their lead into it.

Loud howls rang from the night, as lead showered from the ketch, the flashing of the rifles glimmering through the dark. The boat surged on, and there was a bump as its bow knocked on the hull of the Dawn. Ken had a glimpse of a white man in the midst of a crew of excited blacks, of flashing knives. But it was only for a moment.

Instead of hooking on, the boat receded, and surged past the ketch, and the dash of oars was heard again. The hot reception had been too much for the men of Tunaviva. They had planned to take the ketch by surprise in the dark, and had failed. Almost as soon as they were seen, they were in retreat.

The Kanakas, cackling with excitement, blazed away after the boat as it pulled on. Ken and Kit pitched bullets after it. But it was swiftly gone, howling voices telling that more than one of the boat's crew had been hit.

Ken dropped the butt of his rifle to the deck as the dash of oars died away into silence. The firing ceased, and silence fell once more on Tunaviva.

"Well," said Ken. "They've come!" "And gone!" grinned Hudson.

"No likee stop along this feller ketch," chuckled Koko. "S'pose stop along this feller ketch, all feller along that boat go finish." And the boatswain of the Dawn returned to his sleeping-mat. The Hiva-Oa boys followed his example. They could sleep now!

But there was no sleep for King of the Islands or his shipmate. The enemy had gone, but if they returned they were not going to take the boy trader by surprise. It was barely an hour to dawn, but it seemed long to the watching skipper and mate. They were glad when a gleam of sunrise came over the lagoon.

When the sun came up they scanned the shining lagoon and the circling, sandy shore. There was no sign of a living man on the strange island. But Kit Hudson tapped his shipmate on the arm, and pointed to a dark object that floated on the lagoon, bobbing on the tide. One at least of the secret men of Tunaviva had paid for the attack with his life!

Ken's Bold Move!

THREE days had passed. The Dawn rode at her anchor, idle. Not another sign had come from the men of Tunaviva. Watch

was kept, with keen vigilance, every hour of the day and night on board Ken King's ship. In the heavy monotony of waiting for he hardly knew what, the boy trader would have been almost glad of another attack.

But it did not come. The secret men had learned a lesson from the failure of the night attack. Nothing was seen or heard of them, or of Billy the Beachcomber, who was a prisoner in their hands. Many times the shipmates had landed on the circling beach, and the Hiva-Oa boys had gathered coconuts or bananas without an attack being made. The enemy were waiting—and watching! For what?

For two reasons, Ken King guessed. One was that the pearl-trader, Mr. Jam, who had done all he could to keep the Dawn away from Tunaviva, was expected to return to the island by his associates, who could know nothing of what had happened at Tahiti, or that the schooner in which the half-caste had been returning to the island had run on to hidden rocks in the sea and been sunk, the crew taking to the boats. The other was that they were putting it up to King of the Islands to make the next move. And if he made it, it was fraught with deadly danger, and might be fatal to the ketch and her crew.

Looking across the sunny lagoon, Ken fixed his eyes on the great towering cliff of basalt and coral that rose sentry-like beside the reef passage. It was from that cliff that the sniping had come a few days ago, and there, he could not doubt, the secret men of Tunaviva had their hiding-place. And if the ketch attempted to make the reef passage and get out to sea, every man on board could be picked off by a rifleman on the cliff. If they were waiting for him to make the attempt, they had to wait long. Ken was not thinking of sailing from Tunaviva.

Yet to wait while the days passed in weary inactivity was not only irksome, but it could not go on indefinitely. Time was money to a trader, and Ken had already thrown away more time than he could afford. If the next move did not come from the enemy, he would be driven into action—and that was what they wanted. Meanwhile, the shipmates were prisoners in the lagoon.

"It's got to finish, Kit," said King of the Islands. "We had no idea of this when we came to Tunaviva to give Billy the Beachcomber a chance to hunt for his precious pink coral. I dare say we were fools to give him the chance—he wasn't worth it! But now they've got him, we can't sail without him!"

"No," agreed Hudson. "Billy or no Billy, we can't sail, Ken. We've beaten the rascals off, but they've got us in a cleft stick. They're waiting till we lose patience, and try to get out of the lagoon, and then—"

"Then they've got us where they want us—under their fire, without a chance to hit back!" said Ken. "But we're not quite playing their game to that extent. They dare not let us escape now. A word of this at

Tahiti, and a French gunboat would be sent down to Tunaviva to investigate. Whatever their game is, it would be all up then. But—what is their game?" Ken wrinkled his brows in hopeless perplexity.

"We can't guess that," said the mate of the Dawn. "But this has got to come to an end, Ken. If they won't stir, we must!"

"That's where we've got to deal with them." Ken made a gesture towards the basaltic cliff. "We can't go by the reef passage—that's asking for destruction. We can get at them on the land side, by taking our lives in our hands, Kit. They're watching us this minute. Look!"

There was a gleam from a cliff high up the distant cliff. It was the gleam of glasses turned on the ketch from some hidden watcher. For a moment the binoculars flashed back the sun. The ketch was anchored out of rifle range well across the lagoon, otherwise, as the shipmates well knew, lead would have been flying.

Back of the great cliff masses of broken rock sloped down to the island, basalt and coral mingled in some ancient volcanic convulsion. Hudson whistled as he followed Ken's glance. Clambering up that steep and rugged way, with riflemen perched on the cliff above, looked rather like suicide. Yet, if there was anything to be done, that was all that could be done. The alternative was to wait, day after day, prisoners in the lagoon.

"Suffering cats!" murmured Hudson. "It will be asking for it, Ken!"

"There will be a moon to-night," said King of the Islands. "We can leave Koko in charge of the ketch, Kit, and try it on. We're not afraid of that skulking scoundrel and his black crew, if we can get at them!"

"Hardly! Looks as if we've got to take the chance," agreed Hudson.

IN the hot afternoon the whaleboat was lowered, and pulled for the beach opposite to the cliff. King of the Islands and his mate landed with Koko, Lompo, and Tomoo. As usual, coconuts and bananas were gathered, and stacked in the boat. But—not as usual—the whaleboat remained on the beach till after sunset. That they were watched from the cliff across the lagoon, the shipmates knew, but the fall of dark left the watchers guessing.

As the dusk deepened, and darkness fell on Tunaviva, Ken gave his orders to the brown boatswain.

"You washy-washy along ketch, Koko," he said. "Us feller stop along beach."

"Koko stop along beach, along white master," said Koko.

"You stop along ketch, Koko," Ken ordered, "along you keep feller eye wide open, watchee along feller belong Tunaviva. S'pose you see that feller, you shoot along gun, plenty too quick. All feller along ketch shoot. You savvy? You no shut eye belong you, all same common Kanaka!"

"Feller eye belong me no shut, sar!" said Koko. "Me no common

Kanaka, sar! This feller keep eye belong him open, plenty too much!" The Kanakas stepped into the boat and pulled for the ketch, invisible from the beach in the darkness. Ken and Kit stood gazing after it, till they heard it reach the Dawn. Leaving the ketch to the Kanakas was taking a big risk, but there was no help for it. Koko, at least, could be trusted to keep watch and ward. And in the event of an attack the firing would warn the shipmates of what was going on.

"Now for it!" said King of the Islands. And they started along the beach, having to make half the circuit of the lagoon to reach their objective. The moon was not due for two hours yet, which gave them plenty of time. The lagoon of Tunaviva was oval in form, the island itself being nothing but a ring of land surrounding it—the inner beach of shelving sand, the outer shore a wilderness of rock and reef fronting the surf of the Pacific.

Tramping over sand and powdered shell and seaweed left by the tide, the shipmates kept steadily on till they reached the eastern side of the atoll where the reef passage lay. They hoped that their stratagem had deceived the men of Tunaviva. Certainly, as yet, the men on the cliff could not know that they were on shore. In the dark they could not have seen that the two white men were missing from the boat when it pulled back to the ketch. There was a chance, at least, of taking the enemy off their guard.

From the blue vault of the sky a crescent of moon peeped out from fleecy clouds. The light was not bright, but it was enough for two keen-eyed sailormen. Half a mile of tumbled rocks lay between the level of Tunaviva and the summit of the basaltic cliff. It looked too wild and broken for any human foot to tread. But that, as they knew, must be the way that the men of Tunaviva came and went, and the ascent was practicable. The shipmates set themselves to the task with the activity of men accustomed to swinging on spars and rigging.

The moon rose higher, glimmering down on the rugged rocks. Looking towards the lagoon, they could now see the Dawn at anchor, her graceful spars outlined in the moon-glimmer. Round them was nothing but rugged, shapeless rock, piled as it had been flung by the convulsion long ago, which had forced the cliff up out of the sea. No doubt there was a path upward, known to the men of Tunaviva, but of that the shipmates knew nothing, and they had to clamber from rock to rock and from jutting spur to spur in the growing moonlight. Not a word was spoken as they climbed—it was likely that there were wary ears to hear.

Far up the great cliff they came on a kind of natural terrace, a broad ledge almost level, extending round the face of the cliff. There they stopped for rest and breath. Above them the cliff rose almost like a wall to its summit. So far, they had seen no sign of the enemy—heard no sound of them.

Suddenly King of the Islands grasped his comrade by the arm. Faintly in the silence came the sound of a footfall—the bare foot of a native.

Silently, but swiftly, the shipmates crouched in the shadow of a jutting boulder. They glimpsed a brawny black figure in the glimmer of the moon—a black Santa Cruz boy, clad in a loincloth, with a spear in his hand and a knife in his girdle. He came round the cliff into view, and they guessed he was a sentry patrolling the terrace. Possibly he had heard some sound, for he was peering suspiciously into the shadows as he came along, his spear held in readiness for a thrust.

Ken set his teeth. To clamber farther up the cliff with the black sentry pacing the rock terrace behind them was impossible. The man had to be dealt with before they could go on.

Ken pressed Hudson's arm. Hudson understood. Crouching in the deep shadow of the boulder, they waited for the black man to pass. Their hearts were beating fast. One cry from the Santa Cruz boy might bring a swarm of enemies rushing on them.

The bare feet pattered by. The broad back was towards the shipmates, the skin glistening in the moonlight. He had not seen them, and had no remote suspicion that they were there—till they sprang on him from behind!

Hudson's arm was flung round the

thick black neck, dragging the black man backwards, and choking back the cry he would have uttered in his surprise and alarm. Ken tore away the spear from his grasp, and as Hudson dragged the Santa Cruz boy down, pressed the sharp point to the bare black chest. His fierce whisper reached the startled ears of the Santa Cruz boy.

"You shut up mouth belong you, you feller boy, you no want go finish close-up!"

And the black man lay silent, his eyes rolling in startled fright at the two white men who had so suddenly appeared from nowhere.

The Secret Headquarters!

KEN'S eyes gleamed down at the startled black. Little as he would have liked the deed, he would have driven home the spear had the Santa Cruz boy striven to give the alarm. But the pressure of the sharp spear and the deadly glint in the boy trader's eyes were enough for the black man. He lay like a log in Hudson's grip, only his staring eyes rolling in terror. And the mate of the Dawn, dragging his brawny wrists together, knotted them with the end of the native's own loincloth.

Ken listened. There was no sound of alarm. Higher up the cliff were the mysterious white man and his crew, but they knew nothing of what was passing on the rocky terrace. Ken drew a deep breath of relief. He made a sign to Hudson, and the Santa



DROPPING a LOCO'S WHEELS

EVERY loco has to go into the "shops" from time to time so that its wheels can be overhauled. The wheel tyres get worn unevenly, and they have to be trued up in a big lathe, but that can only be done if the wheels and axles are taken right out.

ONCE upon a time it was necessary to sling the engine right up in the air, having first disconnected all the axle boxes and motion (driving) gear. Then the wheels would all be left behind as the loco was drawn up by the crane. We don't do it that way now but as shown in the sketch.

THE loco is run over a pit sunk in the ground, and the wheels that are going to be taken off—in this case the bogie wheels—are exactly over the pit. Then the sections of rails on the pit are lowered by a very powerful hydraulic ram (that's water-power), and the whole bogie goes down with it. When it is clear, two lengths of rail slide in from either side, to make good the track across the pit, and the loco is towed out of the way.

THE hydraulic ram then lifts up the bogie again, pushing these short rails out of the track. Tow away the bogie to the lathe, true up the wheels, reverse the whole process, and there you are.

It hardly takes much longer to take out the wheels than it does to write about it. A very real labour-saver. This one is used on the L.M.S., but all the railways have them now.

