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NO SURRENDER!

A KING OF THE ISLANDS STORY.

By CHARLES HAMILTON.

A prisoner in the hands of the Secret Men of Tunaviva, King of the Islands boldly defies death and refuses to order Koko, his loyal Kanaka boatswain, to hand over the Dawn to his captors!

"Help Me Get Loose!"

KING OF THE ISLANDS stirred and groaned. He half-raised himself on his elbow, staring about him dizzily in the dim light. The movement brought a bitter pang of pain, and he sank back again.

Where was he, and what had happened to him? He lay half-conscious, his dazed brain trying to puzzle it out. He was not in his bunk on his South Seas trading ketch the Dawn—it was hard, rough rock on which he lay. The dim light that came to his eyes flickered from the embers of a fire. He stirred again, and again that burning pang shot through his bruised head. Then he lay still, while his stunned brain slowly cleared.

Memory came back to him. He recalled the sudden, savage blow from behind that had struck him down at the mouth of the cave high up on the cliff of Tunaviva. He had left his ketch anchored in the lagoon in charge of Koko and the Kanakas, and landed with his mate, Kit Hudson, to seek out his enemies—the secret men of the uninhabited island. And he had found them—but not as he had hoped! The fortune of war had gone against him.

Kit Hudson had been at his side when he was so suddenly struck down. Where was Hudson now? Again the

boy trader of the Pacific raised himself on his elbow and stared round him. He was lying on the rocky floor of a small cave, a mere fissure in the wall of a larger cavern. It was in the latter that the fire burned, casting a dim light as far as where he lay. And now he made the discovery that his feet were bound together and his wrists tied. He was a prisoner. He had fallen senseless under that stunning blow—fallen helplessly into the hands of his enemies! But what had happened to his shipmate?

By the fire of the cavern he made out a couple of figures—black Santa Cruz boys in dingy loincloths, sprawling on mats, dozing. Was it still night, or had a new day dawned on that lonely island lost in the wastes of the South Pacific? He could not tell.

"Kit!" The name came from him huskily. There was a stirring near him. He stared round and made out a figure dimly, sitting propped against the rock wall.

"Kit! You're here!" For the moment, he did not doubt that it was his shipmate who shared his imprisonment.

But the voice that answered quickly undeceived him. It was a voice he knew, though he had not heard it since the day of his arrival at Tunaviva. The dim figure in the shadows was that of Billy the Beach-

comber, the outcast on Tahiti to whom he had given a passage on the Dawn to Tunaviva, there to search for the precious pink coral the man believed to be there.

"That you, King of the Islands?" came the hoarse voice of the beachcomber.

"Ay, ay! Where's Hudson?" "Ask me another!" grunted the beachcomber. "I ain't seen him. Was he with you when they got you?"

"Yes. We landed together and climbed the cliff to hunt for those scoundrels. He was at my side when some villain struck me down from behind," replied Ken.

"Then I reckon he go finish, as the Kanakas say. They pitched you in here an hour ago, but he wasn't with you."

Ken gave a groan. It was not the throbbing pain in his head that caused it. It was the thought of his shipmate, the stalwart, true-hearted Australian. Hudson was not the man to surrender. He would never have abandoned his fallen comrade. He had fought—till he fell! The boy trader could not doubt it.

FOR minutes Ken King lay without speaking. He heard, without heeding, the voice of the beachcomber mumbling on.

(Continued on page 28)

No Surrender!

(Continued from page 26)

"I've been here ever since they got me! I reckoned you'd never sail without me—I reckoned you'd get me out of this. Now they got you, and the game's up! They've got you, and they've killed Hudson—and now I reckon they've gone for your ketch. The niggers won't stop them long."

Ken gave a sudden start. Echoing faintly into the cavern from without came the sound of distant rifle-fire. He saw the two black men start up on their mats in the outer cave and listen. Shot on shot sounded from the night.

"I reckon your niggers are putting up a scrap," grunted the outcast of Tahiti, "but they won't stop that crew long! That black-jowled Filipino Pinto will get your ketch."

King of the Islands wrenched at the ropes that shackled hands and feet. But he wrenched in vain, and the effort made him dizzy with pain.

The firing in the distance died away. There was a long interval of silence, then the ring of rifles was heard again. It was faint and afar, and Ken knew that it came from the ketch anchored across the lagoon. The white man of Tunaviva and his Santa Cruz crew were attacking the Dawn. How had the fight gone? Koko, the giant Kanaka boatswain, would defend the ship left in his charge to his last breath, and there were five Hiva-Oa boys to back him up. But half a dozen natives against a white man leading a numerous black crew, what was the outcome likely to be? Ken groaned in misery.

The mysterious men who had taken possession of uninhabited Tunaviva had beaten him. Failing to capture the Dawn by direct attack, they had taken up position on this cliff commanding the entrance to the lagoon and made it impossible for the Dawn to sail, even had Ken King wished to do so without first rescuing Billy the Beachcomber. Ken had been driven into attacking the men in their hidden cave high up the cliff—there was no other move open to him—and Ken had failed.

"Help me to get loose!" said Ken, between his teeth.

"My hands are tied, like yours," grunted the beachcomber. "They let me loose to eat, then tie me up again! Burn my timbers! I reckon that swab Pinto doesn't take chances." He gave a harsh laugh.

"They'd have chucked me from the cliff, I reckon, but Pinto's keeping me till that half-caste pearl-trading skunk Jam comes to the island. They expect him every day. Pinto's under his orders—Jam is boss of the show. They don't know that his schooner went down on the reef by Mangareva, and I reckon I ain't told them. But he'll get here from Mangareva, you can lay to that—and then it's the finish!"

"Try your teeth on this rope!" breathed Ken.

"What's the good?" Billy the Beachcomber grunted. "The niggers'll see us—"

"They've gone to the mouth of the

cave! Lose no time! If I had my hands free I'd ask nothing better than for that Filipino swab to come back, with his whole crew at his heels," said King of the Islands fiercely.

Billy the Beachcomber hesitated. His fear for his own skin was much deeper than his concern for the boy trader who had befriended him with such disastrous results. He blinked uneasily into the outer cavern. The two blacks had gone along to the mouth of the cave, where it opened on the rock-terrace on the face of the cliff. Probably they were outside the cavern, staring towards the lagoon and the ketch.

"Quick, you swab!" hissed King of the Islands.

The beachcomber rolled over towards him. Tapa cords, tightly twisted and knotted, fastened Ken King's wrists together behind him. He shifted his position, to bring the cord within Billy's reach, and the beachcomber made the attempt with his teeth. It was hard and slow work, but, given time, the attempt might have succeeded. But suddenly there was the sound of excited voices, a pattering and trampling of feet from the direction of the cavern.

Billy the Beachcomber instantly rolled back to his former position.

"They're coming!" he muttered.

And King of the Islands, wrenching vainly at the knots, was still a helpless prisoner as the men of Tunaviva crowded into the cavern.

Kit Hudson's Close Call!

KIT HUDSON lifted his head from the water and stared round him over the glimmering sea with despairing eyes. The moon, paling towards dawn, glimmered from fleecy clouds, silvering the vast surface of the Pacific. The island of Tunaviva had vanished, and how many miles he might be from that island of mystery and peril, the mate of the Dawn could not even guess. Tossed from the high basaltic cliff by the yelling blacks while his shipmate lay senseless on the rocky terrace, Hudson had been swept out to sea on the tide, his struggles unavailing against the rush of wild waters. Tunaviva, his comrade, the ketch, the mysterious men of the island were far away now, and death in the deep sea was all that remained for the mate of the Dawn when his strength was spent and he could swim no longer.

From the position of the moon and the stars, he knew that the current was drifting him to the north. In that direction there was no land for two hundred miles, and in such solitary seas little chance of a ship. He was lost, and he knew it. But the instinct of life was strong in the stalwart Australian, and while an ounce of strength was left he struggled on.

His despairing glance swept the sea. Only the swell of the great Pacific, rolling endlessly, glimmering silver in the rays of the moon, met his haggard eyes. Yet he fought on, keeping himself afloat while his

strength ebbed and the murmur of the sea sang strangely in his ears.

The moon disappeared behind banks of clouds. A myriad stars were reflected in the sea, gleaming down on the white face that was upturned from the waves. Could he last till dawn? And if he did, what chance was there of help—of rescue? None! No ship ever sailed those waters save the lugger in which the half-caste pearl-trader had come and gone from Tunaviva—and from the wreck of which the shipmates had picked up Mr. Jam after a hurricane in far-away Tahiti waters. No sail was likely to break the solitude of that watery horizon till the Eurasian came from Mangareva—if he came at all. There was no help—no hope! Still the mate of the Dawn lived and floated on the unending Pacific, and longed for sunrise at least to come.

His strength was ebbing, his mind growing dizzy with the long, vain struggle. He went under, and the sea rolled over him—but he struggled up again. The end was near now—very near! And it was in that moment that it seemed to Hudson that a sound came to him from the sea that was not the eternal murmur of the rolling waters.

Were his senses leaving him, or had he heard the creak of a block or of a spar—a sound so familiar to his ears? Was it possible that, against all probability, there was a ship in that solitary sea? Surely he was dreaming! Treading water, he listened, trying to pick out a sound from the singing of the sea in his ears.

The moon was gone, the sky banked with clouds—with stars dim-twinkling through—and he could see nothing but the heaving sea. Or did he see something that glanced like a shadow on the waters?

"A sail!" The words came in a husky whisper from his salty lips.

Louder and clearer came the sounds of straining rigging and spars. Familiar sounds to the mate of the Dawn, they told him of a ship struggling with an adverse wind—of a ship that was beating down to Tunaviva against the wind that came out of the south. It was no dream—fancy of a fevered brain—it was a ship!

He tried to shout. But his voice was gone, and he could only gasp huskily. If the ship came within a biscuit's toss of him, he could not call for the help he needed to save his life. No longer swimming, he drifted, keeping himself afloat, while a sail loomed against the darkness, swooping down on him like an albatross on its prey. Even in the dark he could make out that it was a lug-sail, and that the vessel was a small one. A lugger beating down from the north to Tunaviva! Hudson could have groaned. He knew it could only mean the return of Mr. Jam, the olive-skinned trader in false pearls—his and Ken King's bitter enemy. Even if he could have called for help, he would have received none!

In utter despair, he floated and watched, caring little if the cut-water came on him and drove him

under for the last plunge. Sweeping on a wide tack, with creaking of blocks and straining of ropes, the lugger bore down on him, and he thought he caught sound of a voice calling orders on board. But no eye looked over the rail at him—no eye could have seen him on the dark sea if it had looked.

The wash of the lugger rocked him in the sea. It was passing him, and again he tried to shout. But no sound came from his lips but a whisper, and he felt himself sucked into the wake of the passing ship.

His hand struck something—a rope. He thought he must be delirious. For how could his hand strike a rope in the sea? Yet, while he doubted the evidence of his senses, instinct closed his grasp on the rope.

It slacked, and he sank with it. Then it tautened and dragged him up over the surface of the Pacific. Hanging to the rope, he tossed like a cork in the water. His senses were dizzy, and he could not seize with his mind what was happening—yet his grip on the rope never relaxed. Instinct survived when reason was going.

THEN suddenly he understood. If his brain had been clear, he would have known at once. What had seemed a fantastic impossibility was a simple and natural thing. It was a tow-rope he had grasped. The lugger was too small to carry a boat on davits. Like most of the small craft in the Pacific, she towed her dinghy.

The tow-rope trailed over the lugger's stern, connected with the bow of a dinghy trailing astern. When the dinghy neared the ship the rope slacked and he dipped under. When the pull of the lugger tautened the tow-rope, up he came again.

His weary, worn-out limbs had rest now. Hanging to the rope, he was supported in the sea; and with rest and renewed strength came

clearer thoughts and hope—though he had little to hope for if the lugger belonged to the savage half-caste! But while there was life there was hope—and this was life in the place of death!

From the darkness came the dim loom of the hull and the sail, and the creaking of straining spars. As his strength revived, he could have clambered along the dipping rope and up the low stern of the lugger. But he was not thinking of that. The chances were a hundred to one that he would have found foes on board and been tossed back into the sea without compunction. Another thought was working in Kit Hudson's mind. He worked back along the rope to the towed boat.

It loomed dimly over him—a ten-foot dinghy. His grasp passed from the rope to the gunwale, and he dragged himself in. In the darkness he knew that no eye could see him from the lugger.

Dripping, panting, he rolled into the boat on to a tarpaulin sheet cleated to the sides that covered it from the weather. It was sheer joy to him to find himself out of the water, with something solid beneath his weary limbs. He lay there, his panting breathing gradually growing more regular, till a long hour had passed. It was a pale glimmer in the sky that warned him to stir. Dawn was at hand.

Hudson was himself again now. His strength had come back; his brain was cool and clear. He knew what he was going to do. When daylight came he would know whether foes were on the lugger; and if they were foes, they were not to learn that he was there. The lugger, if it belonged to Mr. Jam, could only be going to Tunaviva, and the olive-skinned scoundrel should take him there—unconsciously—as a passenger. He unloosed one side of the tarpaulin cover, crawled under it, and cleated it again over him. Now he was in-

visible from the lugger. And there, unseen, he lay, while the stars paled towards sunrise.

Ken Gives Orders!

KEN KING looked up with glinting eyes as the white man of Tunaviva came striding across the great cavern towards the recess where the prisoners lay, a crowd of jabbering blacks at his heels. He was helpless in his bonds, but there was no fear, only fierce anger, in his face. He had little or no doubt that his capture had been followed by an attack on his ketch, and that with only natives on board the Dawn, it had fallen into Pinto's hands.

The Hiva-Oa boys were faithful, but against a horde of Santa Cruz blacks, led by a white man, what could they do? Only in Koko, the stout-hearted brown boatswain, had he any hope. Koko, at least, would die before he yielded his white master's ship to the enemy. But it was only too likely that Koko had died at his post, and that the Dawn was a capture. King of the Islands would have given all the treasures of the Pacific for his hands to be free, to fasten them on the throat of the dark-skinned ruffian who came striding towards him.

One of the blacks carried a torch, from the camp-fire in the great basaltic cavern. Its ruddy light danced into the little cave. Billy the Beachcomber had rolled over on his mat and affected sleep. It was evident that he was in deep fear of the men of Tunaviva. King of the Islands sat upright against the rugged rock, and fixed his eyes on the man from Mindanao.

And as he saw him more clearly, it came into his mind that the attack on the ketch had not, after all, been the success that Pinto had counted on and that the boy trader had feared. Pinto was soaking wet, and his face

(Continued on next page.)

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No Surrender!

was bleeding. His dark features were almost convulsed with rage. He looked like a man fresh from a defeat, not a victory. His dark eyes glittered down at Ken King.

"You've come to your senses, hombre!" he snarled.

"Captain King, to you, you scum!" answered the boy trader contemptuously.

The Filipino showed his white teeth in a snarl.

"Do you know where your mate has gone? Flung into the reef passage, to drown like a dog, with the tide running out to sea."

"You villain!" breathed Ken. He had feared that Hudson had been slain; for he knew that the Australian would never surrender. But the certainty came like a crushing blow.

"Do you want to follow him, Captain King, as you choose to be called?" demanded Pinto, with savage mockery.

"You dog!" answered King of the Islands. "Do you fancy that I will ask you for mercy?"

"You will get little if you do not jump to orders, senor!" The man from Mindanao snapped at the blacks. "You feller boy, you takee that white feller along hand belong you."

Two of the blacks stooped and lifted Ken to his feet. He recognised one of them as Ko'oo, the sentry whom he and Hudson had come upon, and left bound and gagged on the rock-terrace. Evidently he had been found and released. At a sign from Pinto, Ko'oo released Ken's ankles so that he could walk. His hands remained tightly bound. Apparently he was to be taken somewhere—he could not guess where, unless he was to be hurled from the precipice, as Hudson had been. Leaving Billy the Beach-comber still affecting sleep, unregarded by either Pinto or the blacks, they led him into the outer cave. But they did not turn towards the opening on the rock-terrace overlooking the reef passage. They turned in the opposite direction, leading him deeper into the great cavern, the man with the torch going on ahead to light the way.

With a black man grasping either arm, King of the Islands walked on. The torchlight gleamed and glared on rugged walls of rock, narrowing as they advanced deeper into the cliff. Ahead, the torch-bearer's head dipped suddenly lower, and next moment Ken found himself on the edge of a rock step. The blacks jerked him down it.

In the flare of the torch he made out step after step, huge and irregular. He could guess that this was the way

down to the sea. It was a huge natural fissure that split the cliff—the irregular rocks had been hewn to form that rugged staircase. Some of the steps were only a foot in extent, others seven or eight feet; some had a drop of only inches, others of three or four feet, so that it was necessary to jump from one to another. Lower and lower went the glaring torch, and after the torch-bearer went King of the Islands between his two guards, Pinto following with the rest of the Santa Cruz crew. It was a rough and risky descent for a man with his hands bound. More than once Ken King stumbled, and would have gone rolling down but for the grasp of the blacks on his arms.

Why they were taking him down the rock staircase he could not begin to guess. Behind him he could hear the savage voice of the Filipino muttering from time to time, and he gathered that Pinto's attack on the ketch had been defeated. Koko had been true to his trust—the faithful Kanaka yet lived, and held the Dawn for his master.

The wash of water reached his ears. Black darkness surrounded him where the torchlight did not fall; but he knew that he was in a lower cavern that opened on either the sea or the lagoon. He could hear the dash of the running tide on the rocks—the tide that had carried his shipmate out to death in the boundless Pacific.

But it was not on the reef passage that the lower cavern opened. Where the great basaltic cliff fronted the lagoon, there was an opening into which the waters of the lagoon washed. Probably there was more than one outlet to the hollow in the base of the high cliff. Ken found himself treading on soft wet sand. At high tide, the water came deeper in. A muttered word from Pinto, and the torch was dashed out, and all was dark. But the darkness now was a dim twilight of the stars—and dimly, a rocky opening loomed before Ken. Beyond, he could see the glimmer of the lagoon of Tunaviva, and his heart beat as he glimpsed in the distance tall spars black against the sky. It was the ketch at anchor.

HE heard the sound of a boat dragged down from some dark recess, and launched in the water. He was tumbled into the sternsheets, where Pinto sat at his side. Six of the blacks followed them in and took the oars, pushing off from the rocks into the lagoon. To Ken's astonishment they began to pull towards the ketch. He turned his glance on the man at his side, and met the glittering eyes of the Filipino.

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"No savvy?" sneered the man from Mindanao. "Your niggers have beaten me off from your ketch. And that's why I'm taking you there." From his belt the Filipino drew a long knife, and the point of it touched the ribs of the boy trader beside him. "Your life is in my hands, King of the Islands. One thrust, and you are a dead man! We are going to your ketch! You are going to sing out to the Kanakas to let us on board, and order them to hand over the ketch! Remember, my knife is at your ribs!"

"So that's your game?" Ken understood now. He did not speak again as the boat pulled across the lagoon. Not for a moment did he dream of carrying out the order of the Filipino. He had little to hope for if he did. Even if this rascal spared his life, it would only be till Mr. Jam arrived at Tunaviva—the half-caste would not spare him. But not to save a thousand lives would King of the Islands have handed his ship over to the enemy.

The ketch loomed nearer and clearer. There was a sudden crack of a rifle, showing that the crew had seen the boat. A bullet dashed up the water a couple of yards away. From the darkness came the fierce roar of Koko.

"You comey back along this hooker, you plenty too much bad white feller. Me plenty glad you comey close-up, my word!"

Bang, bang! came the rifles, the lead flying wild in the way of Kanaka shooting. At hailing distance the Santa Cruz boys lay on their oars.

"You black feller along ketch!" Pinto shouted. "You hear me sing

out, ear belong you! White feller King of the Islands stop along this boat!"

There was an excited outburst of voices on the ketch. The firing ceased at once. Koko's powerful voice rang out.

"S'pose white master stop, white master sing out along this feller."

"Speak!" hissed Pinto.

"Koko! I am here—this feller King of the Islands stop along boat!" called out Ken.

"Me savvy, sar!" came back the voice of Koko. "Me plenty glad hear little white master sing out."

The knife pressed harder on Ken King's ribs.

"Order him to let us aboard!" snarled Pinto. "Sing out—I'm waiting!"

"Koko!" Ken's voice rang clearly. "You hear me, ear belong you?"

"Me hear, sar!"

"You obey order, Koko, along me sing out." Sharp and clear the boy trader's voice rang. "You stop along ketch, you keepee ketch, you kill dead all Tunaviva feller comey along ketch! S'pose Tunaviva feller comey, you kill dead all that feller altogether. Now you shootee along gun, all feller along ketch!"

"Yes, sar!" rang back the voice of the brown boatswain, and from the shadowy ketch came a burst of rifle-fire. Bullets splashed in the lagoon round the boat.

In his rage and disappointment the man from Mindanao would have stabbed Ken to the heart, but he checked the savage impulse. Without

King of the Islands, he could not take the ketch—he dared not a second time face the bush-knife in the hand of Koko—and still less did his crew dare. Koko had put the fear of death into the hearts of the Santa Cruz boys, and Pinto doubted whether they would have obeyed had he ordered them to pull on to the attack. Ken, steady as a rock, waited for death, but the death blow did not come.

Wild as the firing of the Hiva-Oa boys was, some of the bullets splashed close. Pinto snarled an order, and the black boat's crew pulled away. Lead dashed up the water astern as they went. Not till the boat glided into the hidden channel under the cliff did the man from Mindanao speak.

"You think to beat me, fool?" he snarled. "I tell you, I will take your ketch, throw your boatswain to the sharks, and make your crew serve me as slaves on this island! You live till to-morrow! In the daylight you shall stand in their sight, with a rope round your neck—and they shall see you hanged from the rock-terrace if they do not surrender the ship!"

Then his clenched fist struck King of the Islands in the face, and the boy trader fell in the boat. Dazed by the blow, he was dragged ashore in the lower cavern by the grinning blacks!

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*Ken King is given but a few brief hours to live, but much is to happen in that short while, as told in Next Saturday's gripping story of South Seas Adventure!*

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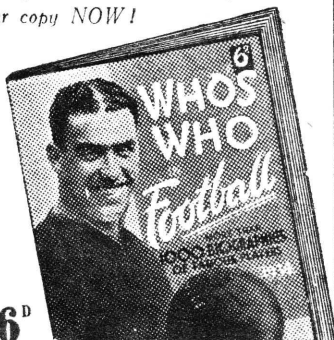
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