

SIR MALCOLM CAMPBELL'S GREAT STORY *Inside!*

# *The* **MODERN BOY**

EVERY SATURDAY  
No 321 VOL 13

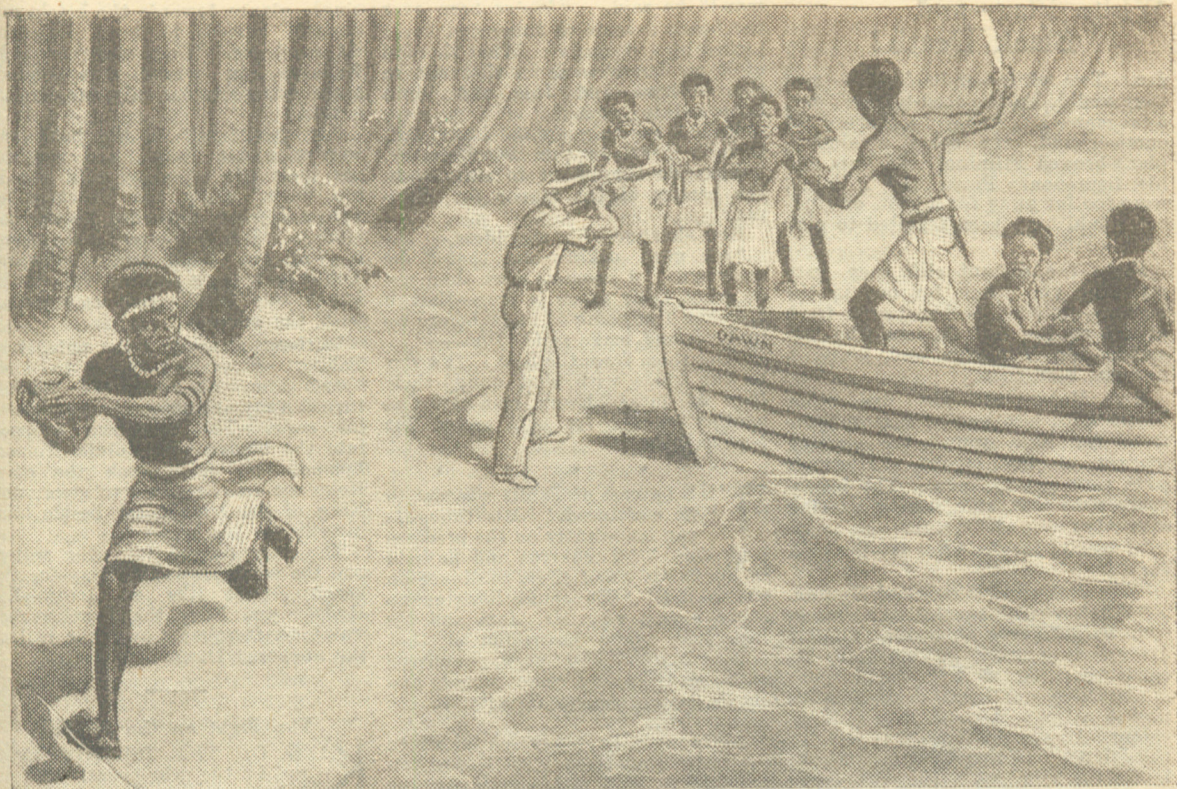
WEEK ENDING  
MARCH 31st  
1934

2<sup>D</sup>



*The*  
**FIGHT**  
*for the*  
**ATLANTIC!**





Tokoloo, with the coconut-shell held before him, ran like the wind. King of the Islands leaped ashore from the whaleboat and held up the other black boys.

# WHITE FLAG—and BLACK DEATH!

**COMPLETE** . . . A Horror lies hidden aboard Ken King's ketch—a tiny thing, black as night, with a single crimson spot. Its bite is terrible death. And that death is meant for **KING OF THE ISLANDS!** **By CHARLES HAMILTON**

## The Foes of Tunaviva!

**T**HE swabs!  
Billy the Beachcomber gripped the teak rail of the Dawn, and stared across the South Seas lagoon at the distant beach. His tanned, stubby face was dark with rage.

Bright tropical sunlight streamed down on the lonely island of Tunaviva. A sky of cloudless blue stretched over the shining lagoon, the circling island, and the boundless Pacific, rolling to infinity. It was yet early in the day, but it was hot already. On board Ken King's ketch, the Dawn, Billy the Beachcomber's hands were the only ones that were idle.

King of the Islands and his Australian mate, Kit Hudson, and the Hiva-Oa crew were all busy repairing the damage that had been done in the attack by the secret men of Tunaviva the previous night. The Dawn had had a narrow escape of being burned at her anchorage by the fire-ship sent floating down on her by Mr. Jam, the half-caste trader in false pearls—the mysterious master

of Tunaviva and of the men who dwelt in secret on that solitary speck in the Pacific. Spars had been scorched, rigging burnt or charred; and there was plenty of work for all hands.

Captain and mate and crew were busy, as well as the three Easter Islanders taken on board from the sunken lugger. And Kit Hudson, noting the beachcomber standing at the rail staring beachward, made a stride towards him with a frowning brow. When all others were hard at work there was no reason, so far as the mate of the Dawn could see, why Billy the Beachcomber, the outcast of Tahiti, should remain idle.

"The swabs!" repeated the beachcomber, his eyes fixed on a number of moving figures on the shelving beach that glistened white in the blaze of the sun. "They're after it—they—" Hudson caught him by the shoulder. With a jerk of his sinewy arm he swung the beachcomber from the rail.

"Turn to!" he rapped. "Do you reckon you're the only man on board who isn't going to earn his rations?"

Billy the Beachcomber eyed him evilly.

"Hands off!" he muttered savagely. "I reckon you've got enough niggers to splice ropes and swab decks—"

"That's enough from you!" interrupted the mate of the Dawn. "Turn to, and look lively!"

"S'pose white master likee, this feller Koko give that feller Billy plenty too much lawyer-cane!" said the brown-skinned boatswain of the Dawn.

"Belay it, you durned nigger!" growled the beachcomber. "Look yonder, Mister Mate—look at those swabs on the beach! What do you reckon they're after?"

Hudson glanced at the beach. Five or six black Santa Cruz boys were visible there, apparently engaged in a search along the sands. One of them the mate of the Dawn recognised—a brawny black "boy" named Ko'oo. He gazed at them rather puzzled. Why they were scanning the hot sands, groping along the beach in the blaze of the tropical sun, was rather a mystery to him.

He glanced round at the high, basaltic cliff by the reef passage, where in a cavern on the rock-terrace the men of Tunaviva had their



## White Flag—and Black Death!

den. Two white—or half-white—men were visible on the rock-terrace; one, a fat man—Mr. Jam—in a glaring red cummerbund, the other a sinewy, black-browed Filipino. Mr. Jam and his lieutenant, Pinto, the Filipino, were too far away for a shot, or Hudson would have been tempted to pick up his rifle.

From the distant cliff they were watching the ketch far out in the lagoon—plotting, perhaps, some fresh attack on the boy traders who had sailed into Tunaviva and found a hornets' nest there!

But Ko'oo and the five other blacks with him were a mile or more from the cliff, round the circling margin of the lagoon. Hudson's gaze returned to them. The beachcomber by his side was muttering savagely:

"I reckon they're after it—the pink coral!"

"The pink coral!" repeated Hudson. "What else?" snarled the beachcomber. "Think them lazy niggers are crawling about in this blaze because they like work?"

The outcast of Tahiti drew from his pocket a lump of coral—rose-pink in colour. It was the lump that King of the Islands had found in the sea-cave below the cliff, when the enemy had cornered him there. It was proof that the precious "pink" coral did exist on Tunaviva—that lump alone which the beachcomber held in his horny hands was worth forty or fifty pounds in a white man's port.

It was to give the wretched outcast a chance to hunt for the pink coral that King of the Islands had sailed to that far-flung speck of the Society Group, set solitary in the midst of boundless seas. But it was Ken himself who had found it by sheer chance in the dark den under the basaltic cliff.

"Look at it!" snarled the beachcomber. "Where there's one lump, there's more, and you can lay to that! That Kanaka at Apia told me he picked up a lump on the beach here—years ago, that was! Long before that crew raised Tunaviva, or he'd never have got away alive, I reckon. But they know it's here—and they're after it—and we're letting them!" Billy shook a clenched fist at the distant figures on the beach.

"What is it, Kit?" asked King of the Islands, stepping across to the rail.

"Some of Pinto's niggers on the beach," Hudson laughed, "and this swab fancies they're after his precious pink coral."

"What else are they after?" snarled Billy. "And us standing idle here! Look here, skipper, they're out of range from the ketch—but you could get them with a rifle from the whaleboat—"

Ken looked at the blacks on the beach. It was evident they were making a search for something; though what, it was difficult to guess. But he shook his head.

"They're not after your coral, my

man!" he said. "We've been over the beach a score of times and never picked up a sign of it. What there is of it on Tunaviva is in that rift in the sea-cave—and Jam and Pinto know nothing of it!"

"What are they on the island for, then?" snarled the beachcomber. "What do they want to sink us to the bottom of the lagoon for, skipper?"

Ken shrugged his shoulders. "No good asking me that!" he answered. "I know no more than you do what their game is here—though I reckon I'm going to know before we up-hook and make sail! But—"

"Get them from the boat! It's war to the knife with that gang—their lives or ours! Every man down is another chance for us!" urged the beachcomber.

THE outcast of Tahiti was not to be convinced. His thoughts ran incessantly on the precious pink coral of Tunaviva; and he held in his hands proof of its existence on the island. He could imagine no other reason why Mr. Jam and his men had taken possession of that lonely, uninhabited atoll, hundreds of miles from any other island, and shown such ruthless ferocity to the new arrivals.

Every hour on the ketch added to his bitter impatience; yet it was impossible to land and search for the fortune he had come to find with savage enemies watching and waiting. He laid a horny hand on the boy trader's arm, and with the other pointed to the blacks groping and searching on the blazing beach.

"We've got to come to a finish, King of the Islands! They've got us trapped in the lagoon—I reckon if you tried to pull out by the reef passage, they'd drop dynamite on you from the cliff! They don't mean to let you sail and report to the French at Tahiti that there's a gang on Tunaviva picking up a fortune! We've got to beat that gang, or they'll get us—as they nearly did last night! Get them niggers while you've got the chance!"

King of the Islands shook off the grimy hand. But there was a thoughtful expression on his face, and he nodded slowly. Billy was right—it had to come to a death-grapple between the boy traders and the men of Tunaviva. Some of the black crew had fallen in the fighting already; how many were left the shipmates did not know; but there was little doubt that the odds were still against them.

A swift pull in the whaleboat, and the blacks on the beach would be under fire—it was a chance of cutting off half a dozen of the enemy. Ken's eyes met Hudson's—and the mate of the Dawn gave a nod.

"They're after something—though I reckon it's not pink coral," said Hudson. "They're not even giving us a look! I reckon they'll run fast enough when they see us coming, but—it's a chance, Ken!"

For a minute King of the Islands remained silent, his eyes fixed on the groping figures on the distant beach. Engrossed in their search, whatever it was for, the blacks did not cast a

single glance towards the ketch, and seemed, indeed, to have forgotten its existence. That was very like Kanakas, in whose fuzzy minds there was room for only one idea at a time.

"A quick pull in the boat and they're within range, and you can pot them like so many wild pig in the bush," Billy the Beachcomber was muttering, unheeded by the boy trader. "Running won't save them, if you get them under rifle-fire! You'll get every black thief in the bunch, and that'll give us a chance with the rest—"

Without answering the outcast of Tahiti, or even seeming to have heard him, King of the Islands turned away and rapped out orders to his crew. The whaleboat dropped into the lagoon, and Kolulo, Tomoo, Lompo, and Lufu took the oars. Koko sat in the stern to steer, and King of the Islands sat beside him, his rifle on his knees.

The oars dashed into the water, and the whaleboat shot away for the beach almost like an arrow—Kit Hudson and Billy the Beachcomber watching it eagerly over the rail of the anchored Dawn.

### The Fight on the Beach!

KING OF THE ISLANDS stood up in the whaleboat, rifle in hand, as it raced to the beach, his eyes fixed on the group of blacks. He was aiming to reach the shore at a point between them and the basaltic cliff, so as to cut off their retreat, if they ran—as he fully expected them to do at the sight of the approaching boat. But Ko'oo and his companions did not even look towards the boat. And if they heard the sweep of the oars in the water, they did not heed it.

The half-dozen blacks had been scattered up and down the beach when Ken had watched from the ketch. Now they had gathered in a group, kneeling on the sand in a circle and intently regarding something—Ken could not even guess what—that was in the centre of the circle. Apparently they had found whatever it was they had been in search of, and their attention was concentrated on it. Not an eye was turned towards the boat.

"That feller no see this feller boat, eye belong him!" murmured Koko. "He no hear, ear belong him! We catchee that feller Santa Cruz boy altogether too much."

"Looks like it!" muttered Ken. He was puzzled.

Faintly the report of a rifle rolled over the lagoon from the direction of the distant cliff at the reef passage. Ken glanced round. He had a glimpse of crimson in the bright sunshine on the rock-terrace, and knew that it was Mr. Jam's cummerbund that he saw. The half-caste was watching, and he had seen the boat making for the beach.

The distance was too great for shooting; but Ken guessed that either Mr. Jam or the Filipino had loosed off a rifle as a warning to the blacks on the beach of danger. But



the faint report from the distance either did not reach the Santa Cruz boys, or they were too keen on what they had discovered to heed it. Not a head was turned.

The whaleboat rushed on, driven by four oars in sinewy hands. Ken stood watching the men on the beach.

One of them—the black boy named Tokoloo—detached himself from the group. Ken was near enough now to see that he held a coconut-shell in his hand. Carrying it with great care, Tokoloo started along the beach round the curve of the lagoon in the direction of the cliff. He went at a trot. The other blacks stood in a chattering, grinning group for a minute or so, and then started at a walk in the same direction.

"Washy-washy too quick, you feller boy!" breathed Ken.

The four Kanakas strained at the oars, and the whaleboat fairly flew. There was a sudden startled howl from the Santa Cruz boys as they sighted it, now that their attention was no longer fixed on their strange search in the sand. Tokoloo, already at a little distance from the rest, gave the boat a startled glance and broke into a desperate run, his bare black feet hardly touching the sand as he flew. Yet even as he raced at a desperate speed, he was still holding the coconut-shell with care in his black hand.

The whaleboat bumped into the shelving sand. But Tokoloo, running like the wind, was already past, and he tore on without a pause. Ko'oo and his companions were following; but King of the Islands leaped ashore in time to intercept them.

He ran into the path of the Santa Cruz boys, his rifle to his shoulder, his eye gleaming along the barrel.

"You stop, you feller boy!" he shouted. "You no stop, you go finish, along rifle belong me!"

The five black boys came to a sudden halt. Koko jumped ashore after his white master, his long bush-knife gleaming in his brown hand, the light of battle in his eyes.

Ko'oo and his companions backed away from the levelled rifle, grasping their knives. King of the Islands cut them off from retreat to the cliff, in which direction Tokoloo was speeding like a hunted hare. Tokoloo had escaped, but the rest were at the mercy of the boy trader's rifle.

Ken's voice rapped out sharply.

"You feller boy! You hear me, ear belong you? You drop that feller knife along beach, you no wantee go finish along rifle belong me. You feller prisoner along this white master!"

The Santa Cruz boys eyed him like wolves. The blacks of Santa Cruz were fighting-men, fierce and savage. For a moment or two they hung in doubt, and then, with a fierce howl, they came on at a savage rush.

Crack! rang the boy trader's rifle. He had given them the chance to surrender, and now he had to pull trigger to save his own life. One of

the blacks rolled over on the sand like a rabbit. Crack! again, and another black man went spinning with a fearful yell. At the same moment Koko leaped on Ko'oo with brandished bush-knife. Ko'oo caught his wrist and stopped the blow, and they closed in a desperate struggle.

The other two blacks, swerving in their rush, dashed up the beach into the palm-trees.

"You stop, you feller boy!" roared Ken.

He could have shot them both down as they ran. It was a fight to the death on Tunaviva, and the odds were heavy against the shipmates of the Dawn. But King of the Islands could not shoot them down like wild pig in the bush as Billy the Beach-comber expressed it. The two blacks ran on among the palms, heedless of his shout, and Ken lowered his rifle. He could not do it, and that was that!

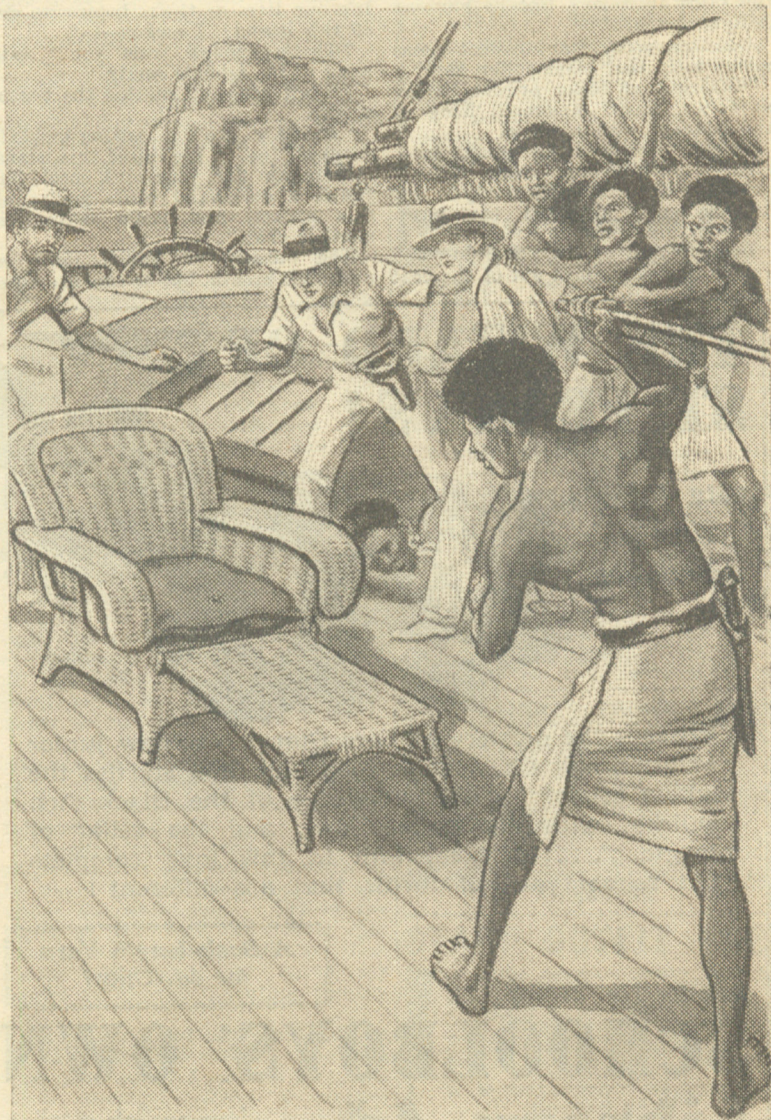
In a few moments more they were gone. Somewhere among the palms and flowering hibiscus they hunted

cover to lie low, till the terrible white master had gone back to his ship.

Ken, with a knitted brow, turned to Koko and Ko'oo, who were rolling over on the sand, kicking it up in clouds in a fierce and desperate hand-to-hand struggle. Koko had dropped his bush-knife, and Ko'oo also had lost his weapon; they gripped at one another with fierce hands and fought like tigers.

Black man and brown rolled over and over like fighting cats, changing their position every instant, and Ken could not have fired without equal risk of hitting the boatswain of the Dawn. But Koko did not need aid.

Ko'oo was a powerful Santa Cruz boy, but he was not nearly so powerful as the giant brown man. The struggle ceased suddenly as Koko came uppermost, and his bare brown knee was planted like iron on a bare black chest. Ko'oo, struggling and panting, tore and clutched and wrenched, but Koko had him pinned,



Koko beat the cushion with a cane. In silence the shipmates watched. Suddenly, from a crevice where it had lain hidden, a tiny thing scuttled, and with gasps of alarm the Hiva-Oa boys crowded back.



## White Flag—and Black Death!

and he grinned down a ruthless grin at the black man as he reached for the fallen bush-knife.

"My word, you go finish altogether too quick, you feller black boy!" grinned Koko. "This feller Koko tinkee you go finish close-up!"

The bush-knife was grasped in the sinewy brown hand, and flashed in the sun as Koko threw it up to strike. Another second, and Ko'oo would have been pinned to the beach with a two-foot blade, keen as a razor, through his black body. King of the Islands sprang forward and grasped the descending brown arm. Koko stared up at him in amazement.

"What name you catchee arm belong me, sar?" he panted. "This feller Koko killy that black feller along knife, sar!"

"Belay it!" said Ken.

The boy trader's word was law to the faithful Koko. But he gave an indignant snort.

"Me no savvy, sar! What name me no killy that black feller, sar?"

"Makee that feller prisoner along us feller, Koko," answered King of the Islands, with a smile.

"Feller prisoner no good, sar—plenty much better dead feller!" grunted Koko discontentedly. But he obediently returned the bush-knife to his belt.

Lompó and Lufu, Kolulo and Tomoo had scrambled out of the boat

too late to take part in the brief conflict. They gathered round the prisoner and grasped him; and Ko'oo, still struggling, was dragged down to the whaleboat and tossed in like a sack of yams by the grinning Hiva-Oa boys.

A length of rope was knotted round his black wrists, and he ceased to struggle and lay huddled in the boat, scowling savagely and showing his teeth like an untamed dog, as the whaleboat pulled back to the Dawn.

### The White Flag!

**K**IT HUDSON grinned cheerily as his shipmate stepped on the Dawn.

"Our win!" he remarked.

Ken nodded.

"I had to burn powder," he said. "I'd rather have bagged them as prisoners—savage brutes as they are! We've got one man."

There was an angry growl from Billy the Beachcomber.

"What do you want with prisoners? It's our lives or theirs before we get off this island! I reckon—"

"That's enough from you!" said King of the Islands curtly.

"I tell you—" snarled the beachcomber.

"Belay your jawing-tackle!" snapped Ken. "We raised this island to help you find your pink coral, but you're a deck-hand while you're on this packet, and you'd better remember that."

The outcast of Tahiti muttered under his breath, but he said no more,

only casting a malevolent look at the black prisoner in the boat. The Hiva-Oa boys passed Ko'oo up the side. Danny the cooky-boy came to help him on board, grasping Ko'oo's fuzzy mop of hair with a brown hand, and grinning from ear to ear as the black boy landed on the deck with a loud howl.

"I've seen that swab before," said Hudson. "He's the black boy who was keeping watch the night we tackled them on the cliff. Name belong you Ko'oo?" he added, addressing the prisoner.

"Yes, sar!" growled the Santa Cruz boy.

He stood on the deck in a circle of grinning brown men, his fierce eyes darting glances from side to side. It was clear that he would have made a desperate attempt to jump overboard but for the fact that his wrists were bound together. Ken fixed his eyes on the sullen, savage, black face.

"You hear me, ear belong you, you feller Ko'oo!" he said quietly. "You stop prisoner along this ship, you savvy? S'pose you makee run along lagoon, you go finish along bullet along gun, you savvy?"

"Me savvy, sar!" muttered Ko'oo.

"S'pose you good boy along me, you no kill-dead, you stop along ship all same brown boy belong me," said King of the Islands.

"This feller Ko'oo plenty good boy along you, sar!" said the prisoner, though his restless, savage looks belied his words.

"Ask him what they were hunting for on the beach, skipper!" said Billy the Beachcomber. "One of them got away, and I saw something in his hand! I reckon you'll find it was pink coral they were hunting."

"May as well question him, Ken!" said the mate of the Dawn. "It beats me what they were hunting for."

"Pink coral!" muttered the outcast of Tahiti. The fortune he was seeking on Tunaviva was something like an obsession in his mind.

Ko'oo's black eyes gleamed strangely as he heard what was said. But his sullen, black face gave no clue to his thoughts.

"You speak mouth belong you, Ko'oo," said King of the Islands. "This feller wantee savvy what thing you look-see along beach?"

The black boy did not speak.

"You hear, ear belong you, you plenty bad feller black boy!" exclaimed Koko angrily. "What name you no speakee, along white master belong me give order along you?"

Ko'oo gave the brown boatswain a look of hate, but he kept silent. Ken knitted his brows.

"A couple of dozen with a lawyer-cane, Ken!" said the mate of the Dawn.

Koko took the stout lawyer-cane, which he frequently used on the back of Danny for the cooky-boy's good. He looked at his white master, and Ken gave him a nod.

There was a yell from Ko'oo as the thick cane lashed across his back.

"Now you speakee!" grinned Koko. "Plenty too much lawyer-cane stop along back belong you, along you no speakee along white master belong me!"

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Ko'oo showed his gleaming white teeth in a snarl.

"Me speakee!" he panted. "This feller look-see along beach, along findee feller pearl, sar! Big feller white master Mister Jam lose big feller pearl along beach. This feller look findee."

"He's lying!" growled Billy the Beachcomber. "Give him the lawyer-cane till the skin comes off his back and you'll get the truth out of him."

"Me talk good talk along you, sar!" said Ko'oo. "Feller Tokoloo take that feller pearl along white master Mister Jam, along us feller findee."

Ken eyed the black boy's face intently. The tale was plausible enough, and accounted for all that the shipmates had seen on the beach. Yet he had an impression that the Santa Cruz boy was lying—though why he should lie about such a matter was difficult to determine.

"Cut the skin off his back!" snarled the beachcomber.

"Oh, belay it!" snapped Ken. "Whatever they were after, it was not your precious pink coral. You've got that on the brain! Koko, put that man forward—and if he tries to get away, knock him on the head."

"Yes, sar!" said Koko.

The prisoner was hustled away, and left with his hands bound. Then the work on the Dawn was resumed. Billy the Beachcomber, leaning on the rail, stared towards the beach at the spot where the Santa Cruz boys had been making their strange search. There, the outcast was convinced, they had found pink coral, and he had no doubt that it was a lump of pink coral that Tokoloo had carried in his hand as he fled. But the idler of Tahiti beach was not left long in idleness. Kit Hudson swung him away from the rail.

"Turn to!" said the mate of the Dawn briefly.

For a moment the beachcomber's hand slid towards his belt, where he carried a revolver. Every man on the Dawn went armed night and day. Kit Hudson's eyes gleamed, and the derelict of the Tahiti beach thought better of it. With a sullen scowl he joined the Kanaka crew in their work, and the mate of the Dawn, who had no pity to waste on idlers, saw to it that Billy did his fair share.

It was a couple of hours later that a canoe slipped out from the sea-cave under the cliff. Koko's watchful eye spotted it the moment it appeared on the lagoon.

"Feller canoe stop along lagoon, sar!" called out the boatswain of the Dawn. "Fat feller Jam stop along canoe!"

"Suffering cats!" exclaimed Hudson, in astonishment, as he fixed his eyes on the canoe. "What's this game, Ken?"

King of the Islands watched the canoe in equal surprise.

There was only one man in it, and that man was Mr. Jam, the fat trader in false pearls. He wielded a double-bladed paddle with considerable skill and activity for so unwieldy a man. The canoe shot out from the bulging basaltic cliff, and headed direct for the Dawn across the shining waters of

the lagoon. Under the shady brim of his hat Mr. Jam's fat olive-skinned face could be seen, bedewed with perspiration from his exertions.

The bitter, ruthless enemy of the captain and crew of the Dawn was coming out to the anchored ketch—alone! But in the stern of the canoe a tall bamboo had been fixed upright, and from the top of it floated a white strip of tapa! Mr. Jam was coming under a flag of truce.

"Flag of truce!" said King of the Islands as the white strip blew out in the wind.

"Treachery!" said Kit Hudson.

"I reckon so!"

Work ceased on the ketch. Every eye was turned on the approaching canoe. Slowly the fat Eurasian paddled out to the Dawn. The shipmates watched him grimly. It was possible that defeat after defeat had tired the master of Tunaviva of the contest, and that he was coming to make terms. But neither Ken nor Kit believed so for a moment.

Whatever was the secret of Tunaviva it was the one that Mr. Jam was desperately determined to keep from the knowledge of the outside world, as his actions, both at Tahiti and on Tunaviva itself, had plainly shown. Neither of the shipmates doubted that the white flag covered some attempt at treachery, and they were prepared for it, and prepared to drive lead through Mr. Jam's podgy carcass at the first sign of it.

**Y**ET, coward as they knew the fat man to be, he paddled composedly under the rifles of the Dawn, covered by the white flag which white men were bound to respect.

The Hiva-Oa boys stood grinning at the fat man labouring in the canoe. Mr. Jam's exertions were telling on him—he streamed with perspiration, and he puffed and blew like a grampus.

Ko'oo, the black prisoner, stared over the rail at the approaching Mr. Jam, with a strange gleam in his eyes. Ko'oo, perhaps, had some idea of Mr. Jam's objects and intentions in taking the risk of coming out alone to the ketch. But his black face expressed nothing, even if an eye had been turned on him. And all eyes were fixed on the fat man panting as he paddled the canoe under the rail of the Dawn.

King of the Islands picked up his rifle and rested the barrel on the teak rail. The muzzle bore full on Mr. Jam. The fat man was only a few fathoms distant now.

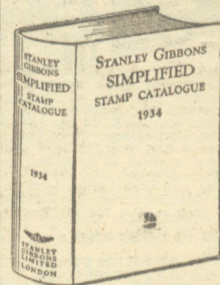
His trust in the good faith of the shipmates was evidently complete, or he would not have been there at all, under the white flag. Yet at the sight of the rifle the black eyes dilated with alarm, and Mr. Jam ceased paddling, and waved his paddle in the air, shouting frantically:

"Admirable and respectable Mister Captain, please to abstract obnoxious and unnecessary firearm with immediate velocity! Please to observe flag of truce in manner of honourable dealing!"

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## White Flag—and Black Death!

The absurd English contrasted strangely with the fat man's scared excitement. Ken could not help grinning over the rifle.

Hudson chuckled at his side.

"Mister Jam must be fearfully anxious for a 'gam' with us," he remarked. "I reckon he knows we shouldn't fire on the white flag, unless he shows the cloven hoof. But he's afraid of his own shadow! What does he want?"

"Trickery of some kind!" said Ken. "I can't guess what—but he means treachery!"

"You can bank on that!" agreed the Australian.

"Honourable and respectable mister!" panted the fat trader. "Please to allow this Mr. Jam to approximate to estimable ketch, in peace and with excessive and unlimited friendly intentions."

"You can come alongside!" answered King of the Islands. "I warn you that if any trickery is attempted, I shall shoot you dead, white flag or no white flag!"

"Trickery is removed to immense distance from the thoughts and intentions of yours truly!" panted Mr. Jam. "I come alone and without arms, to indulge in amicable and urgent discussion of peace."

"If that's the truth, you need not fear my rifle!" said Ken dryly. And the canoe slipped under the rail, the fat man caught a line thrown by Koko, and made fast—and then, panting with exertion, he clambered over the low rail, and stood gasping for breath on the deck of the Dawn.

### Mr. Jam Makes Terms!

MR. JAM panted and wiped streams of perspiration from his fat brow. With his podgy figure almost bursting from his white ducks, and the crimson cummerbund wound round his immense waist, Mr. Jam's aspect was calculated to excite a smile rather than any feeling of alarm. But the shipmates well knew the ruthless and murderous ferocity that was hidden under the absurd exterior.

The Kanakas were grinning, even Koko showing his white teeth in a grin. But King of the Islands and his mate kept their eyes keenly on the fat trader; and Billy the Beach-comber watched him like a cat, his hand very near his revolver. Yet all

three of the white men were puzzled. Mr. Jam had come alone, trusting to the white flag—he was evidently unarmed, and if he was meditating treachery, it was difficult to see what form it was intended to take.

"Excessive exertion in paddling canoe has deprived this Mister Jam of necessary breath!" gasped the fat man. "Please to excuse momentary and essential rest before commencement of pleasurable conversation with respectable captain."

King of the Islands pointed to the Madeira chair, placed near the binnacle, for his own use. Mr. Jam's eye was already on it.

"You can sit down!" said the boy trader.

"Thanks for extreme kindness are excessive!" said Mr. Jam, and he waddled to the chair.

It was a large and comfortable chair, with a cushion of tapa cloth stuffed with kapoc. Mr. Jam, with evident relief, sank into it; and the big chair, strong as it was, creaked and groaned as if in protest.

"Tinkee that feller chair go finish, along too much fat feller sit along that chair!" murmured Danny; and the Kanakas cackled.

Sitting in the Madeira chair, Mr. Jam mopped his brow again, and put away the silk handkerchief. His laboured breathing grew calmer. Ken and Kit stood waiting for him to speak, with very keen curiosity to hear what he had to say.

The fat man took a cigarette case from his pocket. He extended it to the shipmates, who shook their heads. Then he extracted a cigarette from it and placed it in his mouth. Slipping the cigarette case back into his pocket, he took out a silver matchbox.

At that moment Ken's glance chanced to fall on Ko'oo, the black prisoner. Ko'oo was staring at Mr. Jam, who had taken no notice whatever of his presence on the deck. Except that his hands remained bound, the black boy was left loose—he was not likely to jump overboard without a chance of being able to swim; and he had been warned that he would be fired on if he attempted to escape.

Ko'oo stood at a little distance, his eyes on the fat trader; and now, as Ken chanced to notice him, he was gazing at the silver matchbox in Mr. Jam's hand with an intent and, it seemed to Ken, a startled gaze. What that change in the black boy's expression meant was a mystery to Ken, if he had given it any heed.

But Ko'oo, as he found Ken's eyes

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on him, moved back and dropped his own gaze to the deck. The next moment Mr. Jam was speaking, and King of the Islands forgot the black prisoner.

"You will not smoke?" said Mr. Jam. "You distrust peaceful and amiable intentions of this Mr. Jam! Yess! Nevertheless, intentions of this humble person are of benevolent description."

"Get on with it!" grunted Hudson. "Come to the point, my man!" said King of the Islands. "We do not trust you an inch, and you know it; but we're ready to hear what you have to say. Heave ahead! And cut it short."

"Such is businesslike custom of respectable English!" assented Mr. Jam. "This Mr. Jam has absorbed instruction of businesslike dealing, from constant approximation to venerated English! Yess! I will proceed to talk business with excessive brevity. Unhappy conflict which has arisen has turned out to disadvantage of yours truly. This Mr. Jam is what you call fed-up, in honourable English language. Let there be termination, on terms to be named by honourable Captain King!"

"Suffering cats!" murmured Hudson, staring at him.

"If you mean that—" said Ken. "Meaning is explicit, and in deadly earnest," said Mr. Jam, with a wave of the fat hand holding the silver matchbox. He had not opened the box; the cigarette in his mouth was still unlighted, and now, as he

talked, it dropped unheeded to the deck. "This Mr. Jam is person of some intelligence, and knows when he is beaten! The game, as you would say, is upward! Yess!"

"If you please to depart from Tunaviva, not a hand will be elevated to restrain you. In proof of good faith, all my men shall approximate to other side of island, leaving no person within great distance of reef passage."

"You swab!" broke in Billy the Beachcomber, before either of the shipmates could speak. "And leave you and your gang to pick up the pink coral!"

Mr. Jam turned his gaze from Ken to the beachcomber. There was sheer astonishment in his face. Cunning actor as he was, it was easy for the shipmates to see that that astonishment was genuine, and it confirmed them in their belief that the secret men of Tunaviva knew nothing of the pink coral.

"What do you say?" ejaculated Mr. Jam blankly. "Of pink coral I have no knowledge! So far as this person is aware, no such thing has existence on island."

"You lying swab!" growled the beachcomber. "What else are you on Tunaviva for?"

Mr. Jam turned his gaze on King of the Islands again. There was amusement as well as surprise in his look.

"Estimable captain, does possibility exist that you arrive at Tunaviva in belief that there is existence

of precious coral?" he exclaimed. "During sojourn of many years, no such thing has come to knowledge of this Mr. Jam! It is egregious mistake and baseless dream. You run into nest of hornets without, as you say in English, a rhyme or a reason."

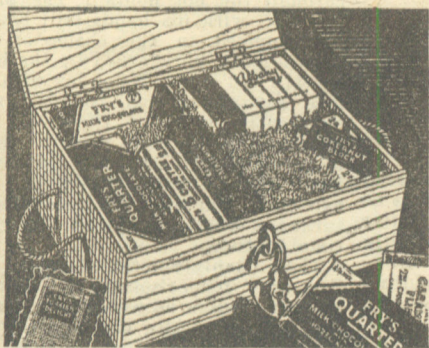
"We're aware of that," answered Ken quietly. "You know, now, that we came to hunt for pink coral. You did not know that, but you tried to keep us away from the island. And when we raised Tunaviva, we found your gang here, in possession of the island, and they started the trouble. I don't know what your game is on Tunaviva, and you'll tell me nothing but lies if I ask."

"But whatever it is, you dare not let it be reported at Tahiti that you've got the island—and your offer to give me a free passage out of the lagoon is a trick. You dare not let me sail, if you can help it, and report to the French governor at Papeete what has been going on here!"

"But in present posture of affairs, this Mr. Jam acknowledges defeat!" said the fat man, with another wave of the podgy hand holding the matchbox. "You shall take all measures that seem to you in accordance with dictates of prudence, and I will agree to everything. All is fair play and above board!"

"I speak plainly," said King of the Islands. "Even if I trusted you, I should not sail from Tunaviva till I've learned what is going on here. Neither should I sail without hunting for the pink coral. I'll make my

*(Continued on next page)*



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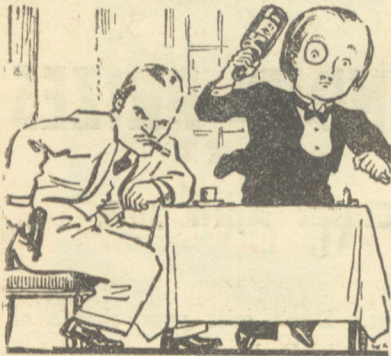


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## White Flag—and Black Death!

own terms with you—if you mean business, pack your crew into your boats and quit the island, leaving me in possession."

"Done!" said Mr. Jam.

"Wha-a-t?" ejaculated the boy trader.

"This Mr. Jam agrees profoundly to terms as dictated by honourable captain. Island shall be left in possession of respected sir. You will not molest us in departing, and tomorrow we shall make exit in boats, under your watching eye." Mr. Jam rose from the Madeira chair. As he did so the silver matchbox slipped from his hand and dropped into the chair.

The shipmates stared at him in blank astonishment. Mr. Jam smiled and waved his fat hands.

"All is agreed," he said. "Within measurable distance of time, you will acknowledge good faith of this Mr. Jam! Now I will return to my men to give orders for packing up of personal belongings."

"My sainted Sam!"

Mr. Jam turned to the Madeira chair and groped over the cushion for the fallen matchbox. His podgy back was turned to the shipmates. He remained stooping over the chair for a few moments and then rose again, with the matchbox in his hand, and slipped it into his pocket. Taking off his hat, he made a bow to the astonished shipmates, so low that his fat nose almost tapped on his cummerbund, and then stepped to the side.

The canoe rocked as it received Mr. Jam's weight. The paddle flashed in the sun, and the fat trader glided away towards the cliff.

### The Death Trap!

**K**ING OF THE ISLANDS stared blankly after the fat man as he went. Hudson stared after him in equal astonishment. Billy the Beachcomber wrinkled his brows in perplexity. Mr. Jam, padding back to the sea cave under the cliff, left the three in a state of utter astonishment. That the desperate rascal really intended to give up the conflict, and in doing so to give up possession of Tunaviva, they could not believe.

Yet if he was not in earnest, it was difficult to imagine why he had come out to the ketch at all.

"Suffering cats!" said Hudson, at last. "What does it mean, Ken? We've beaten them so far, but—that scoundrel is not the man to throw up his hand like that!"

Ken shook his head.

"I don't get it!" he confessed. "We shall know to-morrow—if we see them man their boats and pull out of Tunaviva. I shall believe it when I see it, not before!"

"Is another night attack coming, and is this a trick to throw us off our guard?" said Hudson. "He's not fool enough to think that we shall have the wool pulled over our eyes so easily as all that."

Ken shook his head again.

"No!" he said. "He knows well enough that he will not catch us napping, at the cost of a few lies."

"Then why the suffering cats did he come at all? He was scared all the time for his fat skin, in spite of the white flag."

"I can't make it out!" confessed Ken. "I suppose it's possible that they're fed up with the tussle—they've had the worst of it, so far, Kit! Unless the rascal's in earnest, I can't make out his game. But—we shall know to-morrow—and in the meantime we shall not close our eyes."

"No fear!" agreed the mate of the Dawn.

"I reckon it's a trick, but I don't get it!" muttered the beachcomber.

"That half-aste is a fiend, and as full of treachery as a turtle's egg is of meat. But—" Billy shook his head. No more than the shipmates could he guess the pearl trader's motive in agreeing to abandon the struggle and quit the island, unless he was in earnest. Certainly Mr. Jam could not have hoped to throw the shipmates off their guard by a promise of peace.

They were doubly on the watch now, and Mr. Jam could not have failed to be aware of it. In spite of their doubts, the shipmates began to wonder whether, after all, the fat trader's resolution had failed him, and he meant to leave them in peaceable possession of Tunaviva. At all events, they would know on the morrow.

Meanwhile, the work of making the Dawn ship-shape again went on, through the hot hours. The black prisoner, with his hands still bound, lay slumped in the shade of the mizzen-mast, unregarded by the busy captain and crew. Ko'oo lay with his face resting on his bound hands, apparently asleep. King of the Islands and his mate were too busy to give him any heed, and the Kanakas had almost forgotten his existence. But Billy the Beachcomber turned a suspicious eye on him from time to time.

The ruffianly outcast of Tahiti had "no use" for prisoners, and left to his own devices he would have tossed the black man into the lagoon without compunction. That he dared not do, against the orders of King of the Islands, but he would not have been sorry to see Ko'oo attempt to escape, as an excuse for "pulling a gun" on him.

And as it happened the beachcomber's was the only eye on Ko'oo when the black man raised his head, at last, from his apparent slumber. One quick, vigilant glance Ko'oo gave, then he leaped to his feet and bounded to the rail. His hands were free now! Unnoticed by the busy crew as he lay with his black face resting on his bound hands, the cunning black had gnawed through the tapa cord.

With a single bound he reached the rail. In another instant he would have leaped into the lagoon and dived deep, to swim under water to safety. But in that instant the sharp crack of a revolver rang over the deck of the Dawn.

There was a shrill yell as Ko'oo



