

GRAND METAL MODEL of G.W.R. Crack KING GEORGE V Week!



Hudson heaved the yelling Ezra headlong into the water—and waited with upraised spanner for him to clamber aboard again.

# KIT HUDSON'S HUSTLE

There's a wave-smashed wreck on a cannibal island with £7,000 waiting to be picked out of her. KING OF THE ISLANDS' mate wants it. . . . So does the greatest rascal in the whole South Seas! By CHARLES HAMILTON

Peter Parsons' Rage!

ELLER Parsons comey!" said Koko, the big, brown-skinned Kanaka boatswain of Ken King's South Seas trading ketch, the Dawn.

Ken King stared round.

There was a flash in his eyes, a grim hardening of his mouth. King of the Islands was not in a good temper for once in a way. Kit Hudson, the young Australian mate of the Dawn, had flung ashore after high words with his shipmate and skinner. skipper.

He had not come back; but the ketch was booked to sail that day, and with or without his mate, King of the Islands was pulling out of the lagoon

of Lalinge at sundown.

He was angry and worried. Also, in Kit's absence, the whole work of preparing for sea fell on his shoulders, and he had plenty to do. The sight of the dapper figure of Peter Parsons, of Lukwe, on the wharf was the last straw. It had the effect on the boy

Panama tilted at a jaunty angle, the diamond pin in his tie catching the gleam of the sunshine. He came to the edge of the wharf and stared calmly at the busy scene on the deck of the Dawn. He gave a cool nod as he met Ken's angry stare.

It might have been supposed that Dandy Peter had forgotten that only a couple of hours ago King of the Islands had pitched him neck and crop out of John Chin's office on to the

Peter Parsons was not the man to forget such an episode; but he gave no sign of remembering it now.

"Pulling out?" he called to Ken.

"Ay, ay!" Ken King rapped back at him. He made a gesture towards the Lukwe cutter that rode at anchor at a little distance. "And my advice to you is to pull out, too, Peter Parsons. Two hours ago you tried to hold up John Chin in his office, and you're given till sundown to get straw. It had the effect on the boy and you're given till sundown to get trader of a red rag on a bull.

Dandy Peter of Lukwe strolled at dark you'll go to the clink."

along the coral, his hands in the pockets of his duck trousers, his the sun goes," answered Dandy Peter. Panama tilted at a jaunty angle, the "But I want a word with you first, King of the Islands. aboard?"
"No!" snapped Ken.

"Where's your mate?"
"Find out!"

Dandy Peter stared. The Lukwe skipper and the boy trader had never been friends. They had had trouble more than once, the latest that very afternoon. Still, it was not like Ken King to talk in this strain. Generally he had a civil word, at least, for

friend or foe.

"Well, I'll talk from here!" said
Parsons. "Keep your temper, man!
You had the best of that little shindy at John Chin's; what are you grous-ing about! You've heard of the

ing about! You've heard of the Crackerjack.—"
"Oh, cut it out!" shouted King of the Islands. "Hang the Crackerjack! I've heard of nothing else all day long. I've had all that from Hudson. And I don't care if there was seven the way a pounds or sownty the way and the sevent t thousand pounds, or seventy thousand,

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# Kit Hudson's Hustle!

(Continued from page 15)

in that rotten old brig's strong-box when she went down on Suna-Suna in the Solomons. Have you come here

to talk salvage, you swab?"
"Just that!" said Peter Rarsons.
"They're selling the wreck by auction

Lascelles to-morrow-

"I tell you I've had it all from Hudson! Belay your jawing-tackle, and don't bother a busy skipper."
"You're not going into the venture?" asked Dandy Peter, eyeing him

narrowly from the wharf.

"I'm not fool enough to buy a wreck that's pounding to pieces on the worst reef in the Pacific! You'd better look for Hudson and talk to him," snapped

for Hudson and talk to him, snapped Ken. "He's keen on it."

"Then he's got more horse-sense than his skipper!" said Dandy Peter coolly. "Keep your temper, and listen to me, King of the Islands. I've failed to raise a loan from John Chin, and there may be heavy bidding at the auction on Lascelles to-morrow. We're never been friends but business. We've never been friends, but business is business. If three of us went into the venture together-

"I'd as soon go into a venture with a tiger-shark as with you, Peter Parsons! I should feel safer." "If you'll listen—"

"I won't!"

King of the Islands turned his back on the dapper figure standing on the coral wharf. He rapped out orders to the Hiva-Oa crew of the Dawn. All hands were busy getting ready for sea, and the deck was cluttered with cargo not yet packed away below. The boy trader had no time to waste, and his temper was sore at

his shipmate's desertion.

Dandy Peter's eyes glittered at him.

Twice again he called to the boy trader, and received no answer. Then he jumped from the wharf to the deck of the Dawn. Ken, giving directions to Kolulo and Lufu to carry a heavy case of trade goods below, felt a tap

his arm.

He stared round at the sea-lawyer

of Lukwe.
"Look here, King," snapped Dandy
Peter. "You've got to listen to

Ken's eyes blazed. "Koko!" he roared.

The brown-skinned boatswain came up quickly. King of the Islands pointed to Dandy Peter.

"Throw that swab off the ship!" he

snapped.

"Yes, sar!" grinned Koko.

Dandy Peter jumped back, His
hand went instinctively to his belt for
his gun. He forgot for the moment that it had been taken away from him in the tussle at John Chin's office.
"Hands off, you nigger!"

"You feller Parsons no stop along this hooker!" grinned Koko, advancing on him. "You hear what feller white master belong me sing out? This feller Koko makee you go along shore plenty too quick!"

The singual brown hands of the

The sinewy brown hands of the giant boatswain grasped the Lukwe skipper. Strong and wiry as he was, Dandy Peter was little more than an infant in the hands of the Kanaka.

He struggled like a wildcat, but he his wide mouth, and listened. was whipped off the deck and swung in the air in Koko's powerful hands Like a sack of yams he was tossed off the ketch, and landed sprawling on the wharf. He rolled along the coral spluttering and panting.

There was a loud cackle of laughter from the Hiva-Oa boys, and from the native loafers on the wharf.

Peter Parsons scrambled up, red with rage. Koko waved a brown hand

at him and chuckled.

"No want feller Parsons along this hooker!" said Koko. "S'pose you comey along this hooker, you go along

lagoon, my word."

Dandy Peter stood trembling with rage. His eyes blazed at King of the Islands, but only at his back—Ken had turned away from him, and was occupied again with cargo, heedless of the sea-lawyer of Lukwe.

In mad fury, Peter Parsons came back to the edge of the wharf, as if with the intention of boarding the Dawn again. Koko, grinning, stepped Dandy to the rail to receive him. Peter changed his mind; he did not want to be pitched headlong into the

I'll remember this, King of the

Islands!" he yelled.

Ken did not even turn his head. The dandy of Lukwe turned away and tramped along the wharf to the beach. Forgetting his existence, the boy trader went on with his work of preparing for sea. And the native crew, lazy like all Kanakas, jumped to his orders as they had seldom jumped before.

In his present mood, King of the Islands was not to be trifled with. Even Danny, the cooky-boy, exerted himself, and there was no idle hand on

the ketch.

### "You Pie-Faced Polecat!"

ZRA HUNK, the storekeeper of Lalinge, sat on his counter, his bony legs dangling, his bony back resting against a case of cheese, a cigar sticking out of the corner of



KIT HUDSON—smiling young Australian
. . . no longer KING OF THE
ISLANDS' shipmate. . . The former
chums are heading their different ways to Adventure. And it's KIT'S hard-luck turn this week!

about ten minutes he had been listening to a tirade from Kit Hudson, the mate of the Dawn, and had not interrupted once

Ezra could talk tall talk himself when, as he would have expressed it, his "dander was riz." But the steady flow of insult from the mate of the Dawn exceeded his best efforts. He felt the admiration of an expert for good work. Chewing the butt of his cigar, spitting from moment to moment, Ezra listened till Kit's breath almost failed him. Then he spoke.

"I guess you can talk some! I'll say you can shoot off your mouth!
I'll sure say that! And if you'll cough up two hundred dollars, you can have my motor-boat for the run down to Lascelles. And if you won't,

you can't."
"You mean, skinny, pie-faced, crawling, unwashed son of a slush-bucket!" said Hudson. "You unclean apology for a scarecrow! You're asking me four times what a white man would ask, because you know I've got to hit Lascelles in time for the Crackerjack auction. And I wouldn't argue with a shore shark like you, only I want all I've got to bid at the sale. I'll give you a hundred dollars, which is twice too much."

"The nigger thrown in," said Ezra generously. "I'm not charging you extra for the nigger, and I guess I

have to pay that nigger."

Kit Hudson breathed hard. His cash resources were limited, and he was fearfully keen on the Crackerjack auction. He had quarrelled with his shipmate on that subject, so keen was he. But to attend the sale he had to get to Lascelles Island, and the wind was dead against any sailing craft getting out of Lalinge on the southern tack.

A canoe with a crew of sinewy paddlers might do it; still more surely, a motor-boat. There were several of those craft at Lalinge, but the owners had them out—probably come down to Laccellon. gone down to Lascelles, to see the auction, if not to bid at it.

That auction on Lascelles was the big bit of news in the Islands of late. Whatever price the hulk of the Crackerjack might fetch, at least there would be a numerous

attendance.

Only Ezra Hunk's motor-boat was available—a dingy old brute of a craft, which Hudson would never have stepped in if he could have helped it. But it was the only resource now. And the Yankee store-keeper, aware of that circumstance, was asking him a steep price for the

Hudson debated in his mind whether to jerk the bony store-keeper from his counter and jam his head into a butter-tub. That would have been satisfactory, but it would

not have got him to Lascelles.
"What about the juice?" he barked instead. If Ezra stood the petrol, it made a difference. Petrol was fearfully expensive on South Sca islands. But Ezra was not standing anything—except Hudson's eloquence. "I guess," said Mr. Hunk, "that gasolene costs money."

"You pie-faced polecat!" said Hudson. "A sand spider would be ashamed to own you for a relation. If you bathed, which you never do, you'd frighten away the sharks. A squid is a gentleman beside you. I've seen octopuses that would have seen octopuses that would have looked handsome with you in the offing! How do you keep from cheating yourself in your accounts?

Ezra grinned.

"I allow you can put it over when it comes to chin-wag!" he remarked. "What about that two hundred dollars and extry for the gas?"

"If it wouldn't soil my hands so badly I'd wring your neck!" said Hudson. "It's a go! Here's your money, and I'm sorry I can't hope that you'll ever meet a worse thief than yourself, and get it taken off

Hudson tramped out of the store when the transaction was completed, leaving Ezra Hunk grinning like a complacent ogre. The mate of the Dawn tramped down to the quay, followed by the "nigger" who was to sail with him at no extra charge.

But Mr. Hunk's state of happy satisfaction was going to be dashed. A quarter of an hour after Hudson was gone, a dapper figure, in white ducks and panama, sauntered into the store. Dandy Peter of Lukwe nodded to the Yankee storekeeper.

"I'm after a motor-boat for a run own to Lascelles," he said. "The down to Lascelles," he said. "The wind's against my cutter. If that old crock of yours can move, I'm hiring it. What's the figure?"

"I guess it can move," said Ezra.
"I calculate it's jest on the move,
Captain Parsons. It's hired already."
"Who's hired it?" yapped Peter

'That guy Hudson, of the Dawn. I guess he's pouring in the juice this very minute. He's in a hurry to get after the Crackerjack," grinned Ezra. "Say, I guess half the Islands is going to be at Lascelles for that auction."

Dandy Peter gritted his teeth.
"Wash it out!" he snapped.
"Whatever Hudson's offered you I'll tack fifty dollars to it."

"I guess I can't go back on Hudson and his two hundred dollars," said Ezra, shaking his head.

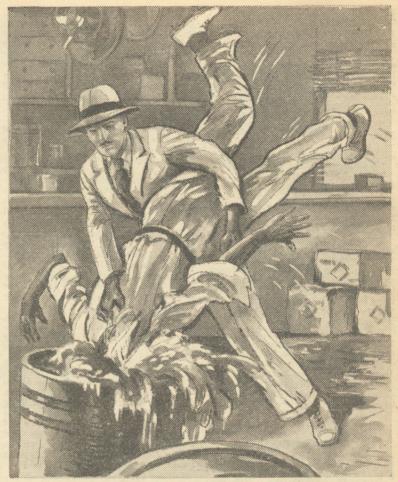
brother for ten cents!" sneered Dandy Peter. "Cut out the cackle! I've got to have that boat, or try it with a canoe of paddlers. Three hundred dollars—hard cash!"

Ezra Hunk slid from the counter. Fifteen minutes ago he had rejoiced over his bargain with Hudson. Now it was as dust and ashes in his mouth. He made a kangaroo-like hop

mouth. He made a kangaroo-like hop for the door.

"Hang on!" he gasped over his shoulder. And Ezra's long legs fairly flew down to the quay. Sand flew in showers from his feet as he raced down the beach. A grunting sound greeted his ears. Hudson was already getting the engine to cough, if not into action. Kiwe, the nigger, was in the boat with him, jumping to Hudson's snapped orders. Hudson's snapped orders.

The mate of the Dawn, pressed for time, angry and excited, oily and dirty from handling the uncared-for engine, turned a crimson, streaky



Dandy Peter grabbed the bony storekeeper and up-ended him in a tub of his own butter.

face towards the quay as a nasal voice bellowed to him.

"Say, you, Hudson! Hop out! I guess it's off! I'll say I'm sorry, but I can't let you have that shebang!" hooted Ezra Hunk.

Hudson gave him one look and turned to the engine again. It was coughing asthmatically and needed his attention, and he was done with Ezra.

"Say, you gone deaf?" exclaimed Mr. Hunk. "I'm telling you that you can't have that boat! You

feller boy, hop out!"

Kiwe made a movement to obey. Hudson had a big spanner in his hand. He gave the black boy a clip on his fuzzy head, and Kiwe sat in the bottom of the boat with a howl. "Stick there!" said Hudson grimly.

"Stick there!" said Hudson grimly.
"Say, you humping it out of my boat?" roared Mr. Hunk. "Don't I keep telling you that it's off, and you can't have the boat? You gone deaf?"

Apparently Kit Hudson had gone deaf, for he gave no more heed to the storekeeper's excited howl than to the south wind that was ruffling the surface of the lagoon. Ezra Hunk jumped down into the boat, which rocked wildly as he landed. He grabbed the mate of the Dawn by the shoulder with a bony hand like a

Hudson did not speak. He dropped the spanner and turned on Mr. Hunk. The next moment the bony store-keeper was crumpling in his grasp. Still without a word, he heaved the yelling Ezra to the side, and pitched him headlong into the water.

There was a terrific splash. Ezra disappeared for a moment. He came up spluttering, standing waist-deep in the shallows. His hat was gone, his scanty locks streamed water. He puffed and blew and gasped and gurgled. His bony hand clutched at the gunwale. There was a loud crack as Kit Hudson brought down the the gunwale. There was a loud crack as Kit Hudson brought down the

spanner on it. Ezra gave a fearful yell, floundered away, and clambered back on the quay, where he stood dripping and sucking his damaged fingers.

Chug, chug, chug! The engine began to talk. Hudson had a master's hand with an engine. He could get life even out of Ezra Hunk's old tin

Chug, chug, chug!

"Carry me home to die!" gasped Ezra Hunk. He was disinclined for any further argument with the mate of the Dawn. A bargain was a bargain in Kit's opinion, and Mr. Hunk had to stand for it. Dripping lagoon water, the storekeeper limped up the beach to his store, and went gasping

Sitting on the counter, smoking a cigarette, was Dandy Peter of Lukwe. His brows were knitted. He was cal-culating time and distance to

## Kit Hudson's Hustle!

Lascelles Island. He stared at Hunk

as the latter came gurgling in.
Ezra 'eaned on the counter and
spluttered for breath. Faintly from spluttered for breath. Faintly from the distance came the cheery chug of the motor. Peter Parsons caught the sound. He slid from the counter and grasped Hunk by the shoulder.

"I's it all right?" he rapped.

"I'll say it's all wrong!" groaned Ezra. "I'll say that guy Hudson won't hand over the boat, and he's gure handled me a few 1. Occord!"

sure handled me a few! Ooooogh!"
"You fool!" roared Parsons.

He rushed out of the store. He would have rushed down to the beach, but he stopped and stared. A black streak in the sunshine, the motor-boat was cutting across the lagoon to the reef passage. Hudson was going.

Dandy Peter stood for a minute, staring, and gritting his white teeth. Then he stamped back into the store, his eyes blazing with rage. was gone. Ezra Hunk, rather un-luckily for himself, wasn't. In deal-ing with Kit, Hunk had had a narrow escape from the butter-tub. Now he did not escape.

Dandy Peter grasped him and spun him over. There was a horrible gurgle from Ezra as his head and shoulders disappeared into butter. Dandy Peter strode out of the store in savage rage, leaving Mr. Hunk up-ended in the butter-tub, his long, bony legs thrashing the air wildly.

### Conked Out!

KOKO stared across the shining lagoon, a cloud on his usually sunny brown face. His keen eyes—almost as keen as an albatroes? followed a black streak that whipped through the ruffling water and sent back an echoing throb. The faithful Koko was sorely troubled by the dispute that had arisen between his white masters.

The native crew-though no doubt they wondered why Hudson was not on board—gave little heed. But Koko, as he often said, was no common Kanaka, and his heart was heavy. Gloomily his eyes followed the motor-boat streaking for the reef.

Koko!" Ken's voice rang sharply. "What name you stand looking along lagoon, eye belong you?" For once, the boy trader was impatient even with the faithful Koko.

"Feller Hudson go along sea, sar," said Koko.

'What?"

A brown finger pointed to the distancing motor-boat. Ken's eyes followed it blankly. He had believed, or at least hoped, that his mate would come back before the Dawn sailed, and he was ready to act as if nothing had happened.
"Hudson on that boat?" he ex-

"Yes, sar! That feller go along sea—along tick-tock boat belong Melican feller Hunk, sar!"

Ken set his lips. He gave a long look after the motor-boat, chugging into the passage through the reef to the open Pacific.

Hudson was gone—without a word. He had meant what he said when he had jumped ashore from the ketch. Ken's face hardened. He was angry-intensely angry. At the same time, he had a misgiving that, perhaps, some of the blame was his.

Hudson had been so keen-he had been so assured that it was a small fortune for both of them. After all, he had sailed in the old Crackerjack, and knew the brig, and was certain that she had not pounded to pieces Suna-Suna.

Ken wondered whether he might not, after all, have thrown himself into the venture, wild and visionary as it seemed to his cool head. It was too late now. Hudson was gone. As he stared, the black streak vanished in the reef.

With set face, Ken turned back to the work in hand. Once out of the Lalinge lagoon, his course lay northward. Hudson, if he was successful at Lascelles, would be bound west-ward to the Solomons. They were not likely to meet again for a very long time.

Hudson without his comrade, among the cannibals and headhunters of the Black Islands. Would they ever meet again? There was nothing to do now but to carry on,

at any rate.

Under the red sunset the Dawn left her moorings at last, and ran down to the reef passage. A long canoe, with six brawny paddlers, was in the passage, and in the stern sat a dapper figure in white ducks and Panama. Ken glanced at it, as the canoe rocked on the wash from the Dawn, and gave a curt laugh.

Dandy Peter of Lukwe was on the same course as Hudson, but with much less chance of getting down to Lascelles in time for the auction. The mate of the Dawn was knots ahead of him, and going on petrol.

And as he had failed to "raise the
wind" at Lalinge, Peter Parsons
could have had little hope of securing the price of the ing the prize, even if he got down to the island in time. But the sealawyer of Lukwe was a sticker.

Sighting Ken on the ketch, Dandy Peter shook a fist at him. The Dawn surged on, and stood out into the Pacific. As the sun sank lower, and the ketch stood to the north before the wind, King of the Islands, glancing back, had another glimpse of the canoe going all out southward, the six black boys paddling as if for their lives.

In a few minutes, Dandy Peter and his crew vanished from sight.

Far away to the south, unseen from the ketch, or from the canoe, a motor-boat cut the waves, leaving a long white wake behind on the blue. Standing up, shading his eyes with his hand, Kit Hudson stared across the intervening waters at a tall topsail that he knew well. Kiwe sat and watched him stolidly, perhaps wondering at the emotion that showed in the face of the white master.

Hudson watched that tall topsail. knowing that it was the canvas of the Dawn, and that his shipmate had sailed, leaving him to his own devices. It had been with anger in his heart that the mate of the Dawn had parted from King of the Islands. But there was no anger now.

He stood watching that tall sail dipping to the sea as the ketch fled northward before the wind, his own course almost forgotten. Like a white sea-bird it showed against the red of the sunset on the sea. Then, with the swiftness of the tropics, the dark came, and Kit Hudson, with a sigh, turned to his own task again. King of the Islands was gone, and Kit could have bitten off his tongue for the angry words he had uttered when they parted. But his own purpose remained steadfast.

The motor - boat, with many a cough and splutter, chugged on to the south, heading for distant Lascelles. Hudson had known that it was a rotten old tin can, but it was the only motor-craft available on Lalinge, and he had been glad to get

Now that he handled it, however, he found it worse than he had expected. A dismal doubt was in his mind whether it would see him through as far as Lascelles after all Ezra Hunk would not have lost much had he sold Hudson that tick-tock boat at the price he had charged for its hire. Ezra had bought it cheapmany years ago!

It had not improved with time and neglect. It was rotten from stem to stern, and the engine was one to make an engineer weep salt tears. Such as it was, Hudson had to coax it to keep it going.

Under a sky of dark velvet, spangled with glittering stars; the boat ran on ever southward. Kiwe dozed on his mat. But Hudson was not thinking of sleep. He would not have dreamed of trusting the boat to the black boy.

Towards midnight the engine coughed spasmodically and conked out. Hudson spent an hour on his knees, rocking to the Pacific rollers, giving the wretched thing first aid. Kiwe opened his eyes, stared at him, and closed them again.

Hudson, oily, and nearly as black as Kiwe when he had finished, got going again, and ate up the miles. There was one comforting memory in his mind—that of having pitched the owner of the craft into the lagoon. He was rather wishing he had not let him get out again!

The starry night gave place to golden dawn. Grim and grimy, Hudson nursed that maddening engine. Kiwe ate, and Hudson snatched a few mouthfuls of food, hardly noticing what it was. Was that putrid engine going to let him down after all?

He had quarrelled with his shipmate-parted in anger from a friend for whom he would willingly have laid down his life. Was it only to be left rocking to the rollers, while the auction of the Crackerjack took place without him down at Lascelles far below the sea-line?

When the engine, soon after dawn, conked out again, Hudson breathed fury, and the expression on his grimy face made Kiwe watch him

with scared eyes and scuttle like a frightened rabbit to carry out the orders of the fierce white master.

Chug, chug! Once more the brute was singing, and the boat ran on, and on, and on, shipping water from the surges that Hudson cut recklessly in his fierce desire for speed, and keeping Kiwe hard at work baling.

Higher soared the sun, streaming down a blaze of heat. Far away, across the deep indigo of the Pacific, Rudson spotted a mountain-top, and knew that Lascelles lay there below the horizon. But many a mile still separated him from the island, and every moment he dreaded to hear the engine give its last dying cough.

With the sun near the zenith, the motor-boat like an oven, reeking with the smell of petrol, and a blur on the sea telling where the beach of Lascelles Island lay, that last cough came. The engine came to a dead stop.

Grimy and oily, sick with the funes, streaming with perspiration, Kit Hudson wrestled with it, and wrestled in vain. The old tin pot had coughed its last cough!

"Feller tick-tock stop!" said Kiwe stolidly.

Hudson flung a spanner at him.

He gave up coaxing the dead engine. He stood up, scanning the wide-rolling sea. In a few hours now the auction would be held on Lascelles, and the old Crackerjack, with seven thousand pounds in her, would go to the highest hidden. would go to the highest bidder. And Kit Hudson rocked like a log on the sea, helpless as a windjammer in a dead calm.

He could not hope to sight a sail going down to Lascelles. The wind was dead from the south-east. He knew that there was no steamer. But he scanned the ocean desperately. A native cance might yet do the trick if he sighted one. A remote chance, perhaps—but a chance! If a cance showed up on the sea—
"Suffering cats!" panted Hudson

suddenly.

Down from the north—almost in the teeth of the wind—it came; a cance with six brawny paddlers, a white man in a Panama hat sitting in the stern. Hudson's eyes danced. Some planter going down to Lascelles for the auction. No man in the Islands would refuse him a passage! Hudson waved his hat.

The canoe came nearer and nearer. He saw the man in the Panama stand up, shade his eyes, and stare. The sunshine gleamed on a dark, handsome, wicked face.

Kit Hudson gave a groan. The white man in the canoe was the only white man in the Islands who would have refused him help-Dandy Peter of Lukwe!

Kit is wishing now he hadn't purted from his old shipmate, Ken King. But he's not beaten yet—and Ken is still very much alive and kicking. There's ruc-tions in store for Next Saturday!



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