

MODERN BOYS' ANNUAL NOW ON SALE!

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*Bumping off  
that Guy!*

## Will KING of the ISLANDS be TOO LATE to SAVE HIS SHIPMATE?



There was no sound from Kit, on the rock, as Parsons waded out to the dinghy.

Only fifty feet of water covers the Seven Thousand Pounds Salvage, but between it and KIT HUDSON are swarming sharks, head-hunting cannibals—and the treachery of his partner!

By

**CHARLES HAMILTON**

# GUARDIANS of SOUTH SEAS TREASURE!

### The Chinese Merchant!

**Y**OU clumsy swab!" roared King of the Islands, boy skipper and owner of the ketch Dawn, trading in the South Seas.

Danny, the fat cooky-boy, jumped back.

"Me solly, sar!" he stuttered.

Ken King leaped up from the long chair under the awning aft on the ketch, his eyes glinting with anger. On his white duck trousers was a long splash from the glass of lime-squash that had slipped off Danny's tray.

Danny was the best cook in the South Seas, but he was clumsy and careless. Ken seldom blazed out into anger, and Danny, in the Kanaka way, took full advantage of his master's patience.

Loading along the deck as the Dawn lay at anchor on the calm waters of Lalinge lagoon, with the tray balanced on one brown hand, Danny had slipped on a banana-peel, with disastrous results to the white ducks. He stared in almost ludicrous alarm at King of the Islands, so unaccustomed were the crew of the Dawn

to angry looks from their boy skipper.

"Too much plenty solly altogether, sar!" gasped Danny. "Me no savvy what name foot belong me walk about along deck, sar."

"Koko!" snapped King of the Islands.

The giant brown boatswain of the Dawn was tinkling a ukulele as he sat on the teak rail. His eyes were anxiously on the face of his white master. He rose at once as the boy trader called him.

"You takee that feller Danny, you givum seven bells along lawyer-cane!" rapped Ken.

Danny gave a howl! He knew what the lawyer-cane was like in Koko's hefty hand. Kolulo and Lufu, Lompo and Tomoo looked on with staring faces, as surprised as Danny by that outburst of irritable temper. There were few South Sea skippers who would not have rewarded Danny's clumsiness with at least a kick. But Ken King did not share the usual manners and customs of the islands in that respect.

"Yes, sar!" said Koko slowly.

Danny made a dive for his galley as Koko picked up a stout lawyer-

cane. But instead of following the culprit, he remained standing by his master's chair. King of the Islands sat down again, frowning, and gathered up the bills of lading and other papers that he had dropped when Danny upset the lime-squash over him. After a few moments he glanced up at the tall figure standing like a statue of bronze at his side.

"You no hear, ear belong you, Koko?" he snapped. "What name you no givum lawyer-cane along back belong that feller Danny?"

"This feller Koko givum plenty lawyer-cane along all back belong ketch, sar, s'pose white master sing out!" said the boatswain.

"You hear me sing out, ear belong you!" snapped Ken.

"Yes, sar," said Koko, but still he did not follow Danny. Ken stared at him in angry surprise. This was the first time the brawny boatswain had hesitated to carry out an order from his white master.

For many days—ever since the Dawn had pulled out of Lascelles—Ken's temper had not been so equable as of old. And Koko knew the

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## Guardians of South Seas Treasure!

(Continued from page 15)

reason—knew the deep trouble that was on the boy trader's mind.

"White master tinkee along feller Hudson," said Koko simply. "Along tinkee along feller Hudson, white master plenty too much mad along poor nigger."

Ken started. His face had been clouded, and his heart heavy, ever since he had parted with Kit Hudson, once mate of the Dawn, at Lascelles. Kit had left him, to carry on with the reckless attempt to recover seven thousand pounds from the wreck of the Crackerjack—sunk off the cannibal island of Suna-Suna, in the Solomons—in company with Dandy Peter Parsons. But Ken did not realise that his anxiety for his lost shipmate was souring his temper.

"You talk fool talk, mouth belong you, Koko!" he grunted.

"Yes, sar!" said Koko. "This feller plenty fool, along you tinkee this feller fool, sar! But this feller Koko no common Kanaka, sar. Him tinkee, head belong him."

**K**ING OF THE ISLANDS grunted, and gave his attention to his papers. But the brown boatswain went on:

"S'pose white master tinkee too much along feller Hudson, what name white master he no sail along Solomons, sar, look findee that feller?"

"No can!" snapped Ken. "You no savvy, Koko, head belong you. We're here to take on a cargo for John Chin, along Tahiti. Hudson's gone his own way—and I've got to go mine. You no savvy."

"Yes, sar; s'pose white master savvy!" said Koko. And, taking a grip on the lawyer-cane, he started along the deck towards the cooky-boy's galley.

Ken, laying his papers on his knees, stared after him. He was angry, dissatisfied, troubled. It had not needed the faithful Koko's suggestion to put the idea in his mind of throwing up his trade, breaking his contract with John Chin, the Chinese merchant of Lalinge, and sailing to the west.

Out there, in the wild Solomons, Kit Hudson was seeking salvage on the Suna-Suna reef; in danger from cannibals—in danger, as likely as not, from Dandy Peter Parsons, the sea-lawyer of Lukwe, who was his partner in the venture. Ken wondered what had happened since they had sailed in Dandy Peter's cutter. The vision of his shipmate's head smoking in a wood-fire in some canoe-house on Suna-Suna haunted the boy trader's thoughts, and would not be dismissed.

"Koko!" rapped Ken suddenly.

The boatswain turned his head.

"You no givum lawyer-cane along that feller Danny!"

"Yes, sar!" answered Koko; and there was a yelp of relief from the galley, where Danny had taken refuge among his pots and pans.

King of the Islands turned his

attention to his papers again. Danny's voice was heard singing from the galley. In about ten seconds, in the happy Kanaka way, he forgot his narrow escape from the lawyer-cane.

Ken rose at last, and stepped on the coral wharf. It was time to see John Chin at his office and fix up details of the cargo for Tahiti. Ezra Hunk, the storekeeper, hailed him from his doorway as he went along the beach.

"Any noos of your shipmate?" Hunk grinned as he asked the question. Nobody on Lalinge expected news of the salvage seekers at Suna-Suna.

"No!" snapped Ken.

"I guess he's kai-kai'd afore this!" remarked Ezra. "I'll say the niggers have got him, King of the Islands. What's your guess?"

Ken walked on without answering. He reached John Chin's place, and the Eurasian clerk showed him into the inner office, where the little old Chinaman sat. John Chin's sleepy-looking, slanting eyes scanned the boy trader's face as he greeted him. Sleepy as John Chin's eyes looked, there was little that escaped them, and he read the lines of trouble and anxiety in the handsome boyish face.

"You are ready to sail, Captain King?" he asked.

"As soon as the cargo's on board," answered Ken. He suppressed a sigh as he spoke. Tahiti lay to the south-east, the Solomons to the west. With every knot that reeled off he would be sailing farther and farther from his lost shipmate. If the cargo had been for San Cristobal or Santa Cruz—

John Chin's quiet, soft voice went on:

"The wind is not fair for Tahiti, Captain King. Neither is the tally yet complete. You will excuse me if I change my intention and send my goods to Papeete by another ship."

Ken stared at him. It was unlike John Chin to break a contract once made. He could not help feeling displeased.

"The Dawn can wait!" he said, rather tartly.

"That is a waste of time, and time is money to a trader," said the Chinaman. "I have a cargo for Santa Cruz, and if you are not bent on making Tahiti this trip, Captain King—"

Ken's face suddenly brightened, like the sun coming out from clouds. Santa Cruz was but a step from the Solomons for a fast ketch like the Dawn. A faint smile dawned for a moment on the Chinaman's ivory face.

"If you will make Santa Cruz this trip, Captain King, it will be a great service to me!" he said.

"I'd rather make Santa Cruz than any other port in the Pacific!" said King of the Islands.

"You have business of your own there, perhaps?" asked John Chin, his ivory face inscrutable.

"No, but my shipmate's at Suna-Suna, and I may pick up news at Santa Cruz—ten to one Parsons put in there in his cutter. And from Santa Cruz it's only a short run to Suna-Suna if the wind's fair." Ken's eyes were dancing.

The little old Chinaman bent over the papers on his desk to hide a smile. Ken did not seem to remember, but John Chin had not forgotten how the boy trader had saved him from Dandy Peter's attempted "hold-up" in that very office. John Chin had his own way of repaying an obligation.

"Then this trip will be of service to both of us, Captain King," said the Chinese merchant, his face inscrutable again as he looked up from the papers. "Let us settle the details of the freight, sir."

And Ken came down to business. When he left John Chin's office an hour later his heart was lighter, his step elastic. In the hot hours of the afternoon John Chin's coolies and the Hiva-Oa crew of the Dawn were busy loading cargo. At sunset the ketch towed out of the lagoon, and King of the Islands set the course for the west. Koko, at the wheel, grinned and showed all his gleaming teeth.

"This Kanaka feller plenty too glad to go along Santa Cruz, sar!" he remarked. "Tinkee white master likee too much go along Solomon Islands!"

"Ay, ay," said Ken. "We'll pick up news of Hudson on this trip, Koko. I'd have hated to make Tahiti. It's real luck that John Chin had a consignment on hand for Santa Cruz!"

"John Chin plenty good feller along white master belong me!" said Koko.

But it was not till the Dawn had been days at sea, and Lalinge was hundreds of miles astern, that it came into Ken King's mind that John Chin had fixed up that consignment for Santa Cruz to give him a chance of looking in at the Solomons and picking up news of his lost shipmate.

**"We're Not Dead Yet!"**  
**S**EVEN THOUSAND POUNDS—and the cooking-oven!" said Dandy Peter Parsons through his gritting teeth.

Kit Hudson shrugged his shoulders. The sun was sinking behind the bushy island of Suna-Suna. On one of the innumerable little rocky islets that cropped up from the long reef a mile out from shore the two white men stood watching the sea. There was no sign of Dandy Peter's cutter, the Sea-Cat, in the offing. Through that blazing day Peter Parsons and Kit Hudson had watched and watched for it till their eyes ached.

Once when an albatross skimmed the distant blue, they had hoped for a few moments that it was the tall sail of the Sea-Cat. But the sun was setting now, and they knew that the cutter was gone—for good!

Toto and Koo, left in charge of the cutter while the white men landed for the salvage of the sunken Crackerjack, had fled before the wind with three packed war-canoes in pursuit. Whether Komo-omo and his bucks had run down the cutter or not, Dandy Peter little cared. Whether or not, he never expected to see his craft again.

Abandoned on that patch of rock on

the Suna-Suna reef, the sea-lawyer of Lukwe knew that the game was up. In seeking the salvage of the old brig Crackerjack, the adventurers had staked their lives on a cast—and the hazard had gone against them.

Dandy Peter tramped round and round on the little flat islet, barely more than fifty feet across, reviling his luck. Kit Hudson said hardly a word, but his thoughts were bitter. He had parted with his comrade, King of the Islands, and thrown in his fortunes with Dandy Peter—for this! Below the water, on the edge of the reef, lay the old Crackerjack, with seven thousand sovereigns on board. But seven times seven thousand would not buy their lives when the cannibals came again.

The dinghy lay on the rock; beside it, the pile of provisions and the big package containing the diving-suit. Neither had touched them since they had seen the cutter fleeing across the sea to vanish in the east. Long ago they should have been at work—one of them in the diving-suit, the other in the dinghy above—rooting for the lost gold. But they gave it hardly a thought now. Every moment they expected to see the war-canoes of the salt-water men of Suna-Suna.

On the cutter they had beaten off the savages in an attack. There was little chance of beating them off on the rocky outcrop of the reef. Even if they did it counted for little. They had provisions and water for a week. To put to sea in the tiny dinghy was hopeless. No sail was likely to be raised; only wild weather would have driven any ship near that deadly reef.

There was one hope—a remote one—that Toto and Koo, in the cutter, would escape the pursuing savages

and return. But as the sun sank behind the bushy island, they had to forget that last faint hope. Toto and Koo, if they escaped, would not return. Indeed, once out of sight of the reef, it was very doubtful whether the fuzzy-headed Lukwe boys could have picked it up again, if they had tried.

"Seven thousand sovereigns!" Dandy Peter stared over the edge of the reef, where the sunken brig could be made out under fifty feet of clear water. He laughed bitterly, savagely, mockingly. "Your ship-mate was right, Hudson. It was a fool's game! We've found the wreck—and the niggers will find us! They'll be smoking our heads on Suna-Suna before another sun sets—unless they keep us for their next feast!"

Peter Parsons shook his fist in the direction in which his cutter had vanished.

"By James," he cried, "I hope they've got those black scoundrels who ran in the cutter! I hope they've kai-kai'ed them!"

"Little good that would do us!" snapped Hudson. "We've taken a long chance, Parsons, and we've lost on it! They'll get us! But we'll make some of the brutes howl before they get us to the cooking-ovens!"

"I'm with you there!" snarled Dandy Peter. "And I reckon we'll hide the dunnage before they come along. They can't get at the Crackerjack by naked diving; but some of those niggers know how to handle a diving-suit. If we're not getting the

salvage, it can stay in Davy Jones' locker--those niggers aren't getting it!"

Hudson nodded. He pointed to three dark specks on the distant sea to the east. The shape of them could not be made out. But he knew that they were the war-canoes returning from the chase of the cutter. Dandy Peter's eyes followed his pointing finger, and he laughed bitterly.

"Coming for us!" he said. "Well, they won't raise the reef for an hour yet. Get going with the dunnage!"

The diving-suit had never been unpacked since it had been taken aboard at Lalinge. Still in its packings, they dragged it away from the inlet where the dinghy lay to a hollow in the reef. There it was dropped, covered with loose rocks, and a pile of evil-smelling seaweed dragged over it.

If, against all probability, the adventurers pulled out of their terrible peril alive, it was there for them to find again. At all events, it was hidden from the savages of Suna-Suna, and the gold of the Crackerjack was safe from their thievish hands.

Rifles in hand, Hudson and Dandy Peter waited for the canoes to draw closer. The three long, dark craft took shape and form as the swift paddles flashed, and they drew nearer to the reef. There was nothing left for the white men but to sell their lives dearly, and that they were grimly determined to do.

Standing up in the middle canoe was a brawny black figure, a polished coffee-can gleaming on his chest. It was Komo-omo, the chief, watching the rocky isle and the two figures on it with fierce eyes. Dandy Peter

**Peter Parsons' whirling oar struck madly at clutching black hands and fuzzy heads, but he knew there was no hope for him!**



## Guardians of South Seas Treasure!

dropped on one knee, and levelled his rifle across a boulder. There were more than a dozen blacks in each of the canoes, and the conflict looked hopeless. But the white men's deadly weapons would take their toll before the finish came.

Crack! The sudden report of the rifle rolled like thunder along the reef, startling countless sea-birds that rose screaming. Dandy Peter grinned with savage satisfaction as the tall figure of Komo-omo pitched backwards in the canoe among the legs of the paddlers. A yell from all three canoes followed the shot, and the paddles flashed faster.

"They've not taken the cutter!" said Hudson. "I reckon they'd have towed her back to strip her on the beach of Suna-Suna. And if they'd cleared her out at sea, the canoes would be packed with plunder. They've not got her, Parsons! The Sea-Cat had the heels of them!"

Dandy Peter did not answer. The fate of the cutter, now that he had lost her, did not interest him. He loosed off another shot, and a black man rolled over in the middle canoe.

"Fire, you fool!" he snarled. "They're near enough for picking off. Shoot!"

Hudson joined in with his Winchester. The coffee-can was seen to gleam in the sun again as Komo-omo rose to view for a moment. The chief of Suna-Suna had only been wounded. He glared fiercely at his enemies, and then was lost to sight behind the towering prow of his canoe.

The three craft separated to approach the isle from different directions. One of them headed for the little inlet where the dinghy lay; one for the flat ledge below which the Crackerjack lay sunk, and the third for another point. And they moved so swiftly that shooting was difficult even for good marksmen.

"They're making sure of us!" said Dandy Peter coolly. "But we're not dead yet, Hudson."

"Not yet!" said Kit Hudson, between his teeth. He fired again, and a black man dropped his paddle with a yell.

Spears whizzed from the canoes, but they dropped short of the white men on the rock. Standing on the highest point of the rocky isle, back to back, Hudson and Dandy Peter pumped bullets from the repeating-rifles, giving each canoe a turn. And as the Solomon Islanders came closer, the fire grew more deadly. Yells and howls rang from the three craft converging on the rock, and black man after black man pitched over under the bullets.

There was a sudden crash as one of the canoes struck a sunken edge of the reef and heeled over. The sea rushed into her, leaving her crew struggling in the water. Snouts and black fins rose among the swimmers—the sharks of Suna-Suna were watching for their prey! White bellies gleamed, reddened by the sinking sun, as the tiger-sharks turned to shear at bare limbs with their fearful jaws.

One canoe gone, Hudson and Dandy Peter concentrated their fire on the other two. The canoes were almost touching the rock, when sudden panic set in. In a moment the tall prows were turned seaward, and the cannibals of Suna-Suna were fleeing from the deadly bullets. Crack, crack, crack, the rifles roared, pumping lead into the canoes as they fled, howls of rage and terror answering till the blacks were out of range.

### Deserter's Luck!

**B**LACKNESS lay like a cloak on land and sea. The island of Suna-Suna was swallowed up in the night. Not a sign had been seen or a sound heard from the cannibals since they had fled. The two white men on the lonely rock might have been the sole inhabitants of a world of water.

Till midnight, Kit Hudson had watched. Then he slept, and Dandy Peter watched—with strange and terrible thoughts working in his dark and ruthless mind. Every few moments his glance turned on his sleeping shipmate, and his handsome, wicked face was pale. Sea-lawyer, sometimes pirate, always scoundrel, as he was, Dandy Peter Parsons hesitated. But while he hesitated, he knew what he was going to do.

At last he rose from a boulder where he was seated, stepping as softly and stealthily as a cat. Hudson was sleeping soundly, the sleep of utter weariness. Dandy Peter's eyes glittered at him in a last backward glance as he went; and his hand was on the butt of the revolver in his belt. Had Kit Hudson wakened then, and seen his intention—

But Kit Hudson did not awaken. Leaving him fast asleep, the sea-lawyer of Lukwe crept silently down to the inlet where the dinghy lay. What Kit Hudson would think when he woke and found himself deserted mattered little—he would never live to tell the tale on the beaches.

With a new day, Komo-omo and his bucks would return in irresistible

force—that was certain. The lives of the two white men on the rock would be worth little then. But one might be saved, if he abandoned the other like a villain and a dastard. The supply of food and water could never have held out for two men in the little dinghy, if they had taken the chance of putting to sea.

It was unlikely that it would hold out for one man till he could get into the track of the trading ships going through the Malaita Strait. But one man had twice the chances of two! And Dandy Peter was going to be the one!

Silently, moving like a cat in the dark, Peter Parsons packed the keg of water and sack of provisions in the dinghy. As silently he slid the little craft into the water. He waded out till the water was up to his shoulders before he climbed in. Then, dripping in the dinghy, he listened with deep intentness.

There was no sound from Kit Hudson on the rock. Stealthily, Parsons slipped the oars into the rowlocks, and pulled. The black mass of the rock faded into the darkness behind him, and the mate of the Dawn still slept.

The glimmering stars in the dark canopy above were guide enough for Peter Parsons. He sat to the oars, and rowed steadily. By dawn he reckoned he would be far out of the ken of the men of Suna-Suna.

Adrift on the Pacific, in a craft that was no more than a cockleshell, short of food and short of water, he was taking a wild chance; but the wildest of chances was better than the certainty of death. And he was making the most of the chance by taking it alone, and abandoning his comrade to his fate. It was the blackest act of a life that had known many black deeds.

The glimmer of the stars gave him his course—south-eastward for the distant strait that divided Malaita from San Christobal. If he lived to get into the track of ships there was a chance of being picked up.

Suddenly there was a crash, and the silence was broken by a babel of startled voices.

The glimmering stars had not shown Dandy Peter the dark shape of a canoe on the sea!

And as the dinghy crashed, and the startled yells of the blacks rang out, he knew that the savages had not gone back to Suna-Suna, as he had believed, but were lying off the reef, watching; watching, perhaps, for that very attempt at escape that the sea-lawyer was making.

Madly, desperately, he backed water; but black hands were clutching at the boat, and the second canoe came up.

He whirled round an oar and struck at black hands and fuzzy heads. But many fingers grappled the dinghy, and the blacks swarmed into it till it almost capsized under their weight. Dandy Peter dropped the oar as it was grasped by an unseen hand, clutched the revolver from his belt, and fired right and left.

He knew that there was no hope. He had deserted his comrade, abandoned him treacherously, only to fall

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into the hands of the watching savages, without a chance of pulling through. But villain as the sea-lawyer was, he was game to the marrow of his bones.

Grasped and clutched on every side, with yelling demons all round him, he fired and fired till the revolver was empty and dead men and wounded cumbered the rocking dinghy. And as the grasping hands dragged him down, he clubbed the revolver and crashed it on black, fuzzy heads, snarling with fury as he struck.

But the weapon was torn away, he crumpled up in the savage hands, and was dragged bodily into a canoe. The glimmer of a polished coffee-can caught his eyes as the chief of Suna-Suna bent over him, grinning, and showing his teeth. Cords of tapa were knotted round his arms and legs. He would rather have chosen the thrust of a spear, for only too well he knew the fate of a prisoner in the hands of the blacks of Suna-Suna.

"White feller tinkee go along sea, along boat belong him!" chuckled Komo-omo. "White feller no likee cooking-oven belong Komo-omo, along Suna-Suna he stop. You stop along cooking-oven plenty too soon, you feller white master. Head belong you smoke along canoe-house belong this feller Komo-omo!"

Dandy Peter lay among the legs of the blacks overwhelmed with despair. Komo-omo shouted to the other canoe in his own tongue. Then he gave an order to his crew, the paddles dipped, and the canoe shot away towards the shore of Suna-Suna.

The evil smell of the mangroves came to Dandy Peter's nostrils. By a muddy, reeking channel the canoe wound into the swamp, among rotting stems and foul vegetation. He was on Suna-Suna, the black island which no white man had trodden and lived to tell of it!

Kit Hudson, sleeping out on the reef, might or might not share his fate. But Dandy Peter's fate was certain.

In the dim darkness the canoe grounded, and hands grasped the bound sea-lawyer and lifted him ashore. In a babble of savage voices he was carried into the foul canoe-house, where a wood fire burned and the heads of dead men, hanging from tapa cords, turned and turned in the smoke.

There he was flung down and left, unable to stir a limb, to lie with wide-open, desperate eyes watching the dead men's heads as they turned and turned in the pungent smoke of the smouldering fire!

*Ken King is on the way, as fast as wind and sails can carry him—but the cannibals are on the spot, and whilst the treacherous Dandy is being dealt with Ken's old shipmate lies asleep, in appalling peril! . . . Sorry you must wait until Next Saturday to see what happens, but ORDER YOUR NEXT WEEK'S copy of MODERN BOY now—to-day—and so make CERTAIN you get the thrills that are coming to you!*

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