

Motor-Racing Story by Alfred Edgar!

The MODERN BOY

EVERY SATURDAY.
Week Ending February 1st, 1936.

No. 417.
Vol. 17.

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WHERE THE CARS ROAR!

Thrilling Story Inside

To make a MAN of the Scallywag deck-hand is proving a mighty tough job for KING OF THE ISLANDS. It's tougher still when the Scallywag gets into the clutches of the biggest—

ROGUE of the SOUTH SEAS



Ken King's Old Enemy

THAT'S Barney Hall's lugger!" declared Kit Hudson, the young Australian mate of the South Seas trading ketch, the Dawn.

Ken King, the equally young owner and skipper of the ketch, whom men called King of the Islands, glanced at the brown patched sail sagging over the dirtiest craft in the Pacific.

The Dawn was doing hardly three knots, with a light, shifting wind. Running westward, the ketch was giving a wide berth to a long low reef that barred the sea like a wall of coral, mile on mile from east to west. Here and there the coral jutted up in tiny islets. Between them lines of creamy foam showed where the sharp teeth of the rocks lay hidden just below the surface. It was the Albatross Reef—as dangerous as any in the wide Pacific in rough weather. Even on a calm day, with a fair wind, Ken King preferred to steer well clear of it.

The tattered lug-sail glimmered from the sea on the other side of the low reef—the northern side. Less than half a sea mile separated the two vessels, but the reef was between, and there was no passage through it for

With blazing eyes, Paget grasped at Koo's wrist, gave it a sudden swing, and sent him rolling on his back. "You rascally thief!" yelled Paget, scrambling to his feet.

the lightest craft. The ketch and the lugger were as effectually separated as if a thousand miles of space had lain between them. Which was by no means unsatisfactory to the skipper and mate of the Dawn. No honest trader was anxious to encounter Barney Hall, the trader of Tonga, in lonely waters.

"Feller Hall look along this craft, eye belong him," remarked Koko, the Kanaka boatswain of the Dawn. And Kit Hudson grinned.

Tiny in the distance, the brawny figure of Barney Hall could be made

out, standing in the lugger, staring across the sea and the low reef, his eyes shaded under an immense grass hat. In addition to that enormous hat, Barney Hall wore only a pair of cotton shorts. The rest of him was as bare as the brown limbs of his Tonga crew, and burned almost as brown by tropic suns. Big, brawny, shaggy-bearded, Barney Hall looked as rough and tough a skipper as any in the South Seas—as, indeed, he was. His rugged, shaggy brows were knitted in a scowl as he stared at the graceful ketch—a contrast in its neat and natty cleanliness to his own dirty and ill-kept craft.

"Barney would like to run us alongside, I fancy," remarked Hudson. "He's sixty miles from anywhere, and we know that when he's short of stores he asks lonely traders for them with a gun in his fist."

"Just as well that the Albatross Reef's between us," Ken said, "though I don't think Barney Hall would get much change out of us, if he tried that game with the Dawn."

"What the dickens is he up to?" exclaimed Hudson suddenly. "Feller rifle along hand belong Barney Hall!" exclaimed Koko.

"My hat!" ejaculated King of the Islands. "Here, Paget, fetch

By
**CHARLES
HAMILTON**

Rogue of the South Seas

up my binoculars from the cabin—quick!"

Ray Paget was at work in the hot sun, scraping the whaleboat, which swung from the davits. He was working neither hard nor fast; but he was working. The lazy scallywag was learning to work, on Ken's ketch.

He glanced round with a scowl as Ken called to him. His face was dark and sullen; but he obeyed the order of the boy trader without hesitation. That was another lesson he was learning on the Dawn.

He came back with the glasses, and Ken turned them on the lugger. Tiny in the distance, the lugger rushed into clear view in the powerful glasses. Every line and wrinkle on Hall's scowling, sun-scorched face came clear, and the hostile glare in his sunken eyes. Four or five brown faces peered from the lugger towards the ketch, grinning. Barney Hall had clamped a rifle to his shoulder, aimed at the Dawn.

The whiz of the bullet through the air was followed by the report of the rifle rolling across the sea and the low reef. A thousand sea-birds rose, wheeling and screaming, startled by the shot.

"Feller Hall shoot along this packet along gun belong him!" gasped Koko. "The impudent hound!" muttered Ken, setting his lips.

A round hole in the white canvas of the Dawn's mainsail showed where the bullet had gone through.

Through the glasses Ken could see the ruffian grinning over his rifle. Another shot came, splitting a rope.

Then Barney Hall dropped the butt of his rifle and stood staring and grinning.

RAY PAGET caught his breath. The South Seas, and the ways of rough skippers in solitary waters, were new to the fellow almost fresh out from Home.

"Is that fellow firing at us?" he exclaimed.

Ken shook his head.

"No—only at the canvas. It's just pure impudence! I'd like to give him the end of my boot in return for his cheek."

"What about sending a few back?" asked Hudson, his eyes gleaming.

"We don't want to risk hitting his niggers. The brute knows that!" growled Ken. "If we could get at him—"

"Why can't you?" asked Paget. In his interest in this startling episode, the unwilling recruit on the Dawn forgot his hatred of the boy skipper and his mate. "You could run that lugger down easily enough."

"A run of fifty miles," said Ken.

Paget stared at him.

"Fifty miles! The lugger's within rifle-shot! What do you mean?"

"Can't you see the reef?" said Ken good-humouredly. "We should have to round it at the western end and come back on the other side to get at Barney Hall. He knows that, or he wouldn't be checking us."

"Looks to me as if it's easy enough to steer through those little islands," said Paget.

"Lucky you're not in charge of this craft, then," Kit Hudson chuckled. "There's hardly draught for a native canoe anywhere along this reef. The Dawn would be piled up in ten minutes if we bore down on Barney Hall."

"Oh!" said Paget. He stood staring at jutting islets connected by lines of creaming foam on the starboard side of the ketch. A gleam came into his eyes. "That man's an enemy of yours?" he asked.

"We've had trouble at one time and another," answered King of the Islands. "And, by gum, we'd have some more now if I could get at him."

Ray Paget went back to his work on the whaleboat. He was breathing quickly, his eyes gleaming.

It was his chance of escape at last. Evidently, from his actions, that rough-bearded skipper was an enemy of Ken King. He would not be likely to hand back a deserter who got away to his lugger. Besides, Paget had money; and Hall was a trader, and clearly not a prosperous one. If he could reach the lugger— It was only a short swim to the reef, and he knew now that the Dawn could not follow.

The whaleboat might; but Paget could take care of that! He gave a stealthy glance round as he scraped at the wood. The shipmates were watching Barney Hall; Koko, at the wheel, was watching him; Lompo, Lufu, Kolulo, Tomoo, and Danny, the cooky-boy, all had their eyes on the lugger. No one was paying any attention to Paget; no one observed him as he drew out a pocket-knife and opened it. The keen blade sawed swiftly through rope.

Paget, with beating heart, moved to the rail on the port side. Every eye on the Dawn was turned to starboard. Silently, swiftly, the scallywag of Lalinge slipped over the rail into the sea. He struck out hard, to get clear of the ketch, and in a minute more his head was bobbing in the white wake left behind by the gliding Dawn.

Over the Reef!

LOKO!" roared Hudson. He pointed.

"That feller Paget stop along sea!" shouted Koko.

King of the Islands turned his eyes on the swimmer in amazement. Ray Paget was swimming for the reef with swift and desperate strokes.

"My hat! Is that fool at his tricks again?" Ken exclaimed. "He was let off last time, but, by gum, he shall have the lawyer-cane this time, and plenty of it."

Ken shouted orders to the Hiva-Oa crew. The grinning, impudent face of Barney Hall was still watching the ketch. But Ken dismissed the trader of Tonga from his mind. This was the third time the scallywag had attempted to desert from the Dawn. He was not getting away if King of the Islands could help it.

Paget's uncle, the Pacific Company's manager at Lalinge, had placed him in Ken's charge—to be made a man of, if there was the stuff in him of which a man could be

made! Lazy, sullen, selfish, vindictive, he did not seem very promising material. But Ken was going to do his best and keep his promise to Mr. Belnap if he could.

Swiftly the ketch was hove-to. Paget was swimming strongly, heading for the reef. He knew that the ketch could not follow him near the sunken rocks. He was a good swimmer, and, with all his faults, he had determination and pluck. He was taking a desperate chance, for he could not be assured that the Tonga trader would stop to pick him up when he got across the reef. But the wilful, reckless scallywag was ready to take the most desperate of chances to get away from the Dawn.

"Lower the whaleboat!" shouted Ken.

"We'll get him easily enough, old man," said Hudson. "The fool is banking on the reef—but the boat will run him down before he can make it. He's forgotten the boat."

But Paget had not forgotten the boat, as the shipmates were to discover. The Hiva-Oa boys rushed to lower it.

The davits were swung out; and as the boat swung on the falls the rope parted at the bow, and the whaleboat hung by the stern, the bows dipping into the Pacific.

"That feller rope no stop!" exclaimed Koko, in rage and astonishment. "My word, that feller rope he cut along knife!"

Ken gritted his teeth with rage. Every moment of delay was one more chance to the deserter. Paget, swimming hard, was drawing close to the reef.

Barney Hall, from his lugger, was watching. Probably he had not seen the swimmer at the distance, but he could see that something was wrong with the Dawn.

One of the Tonga boys handed him his binoculars, and the brawny trader jammed them to his eyes. Then he grinned as he picked up the swimmer in the sea, and watched the Dawn's crew struggling with the up-ended boat.

King of the Islands lost no time, and the Hiva-Oa boys jumped to his snapped orders. But it was full five minutes before the whaleboat was righted on the water and the Kanakas sat to the oars.

"Washy-washy along that white feller!" snapped Ken. And the whaleboat, once it was under way, fairly flew.

Ken, standing in the stern, watched the swimmer. Hard as the Kanakas rowed, Paget had gained too long a start.

His head bobbed in the surf by the reef, and he disappeared from sight. Then he was seen again, scrambling breathlessly out of the water, landing on a rugged mass of coral that jutted a foot or two above the Pacific.

There he stood, streaming with water, panting for breath, staring back at the pursuing whaleboat. He shook a dripping fist at King of the Islands, turned, and ran across the reef.

"Washy-washy!" yelled Ken savagely. "Pull—pull!"

The whaleboat surged on swiftly.

Ken still had a faint hope of rounding up the deserter before he could take to the water again. But that hope was faint, and it was soon gone.

Paget ran across the coral swiftly, and on the farther side stopped for a moment to wave his hand to Barney Hall, who was watching him curiously from the crawling lugger.

Then, without hesitation, he plunged into the sea on the farther side of the reef, and swam for the lugger with rapid strokes.

Barney Hall stood staring at him, lowering the glasses. He could see, of course, that the desperate swimmer was a deserter from Ken King's ship—his action could mean nothing else. He rapped a word to the Tonga boys, and the lugger hove-to. Barney Hall was going to pick up the deserter, if only to serve his old enemy an ill turn.

Close to the reef, King of the Islands unwillingly gave his boat's crew the order to cease pulling. It was too late to overhaul the deserter, and it was dangerous to approach closer to the reef in the boat. The boy trader's anger was deep and bitter.

But there was nothing to be done. The scallywag was safe out of his reach, and Barney Hall was standing by to pick him up.

"Washy-washy a long ketch!" rapped Ken. And the whaleboat pulled back to the Dawn.

"He's done us this time, old man," remarked Hudson, as King of the Islands came up the side.

"He's done us!" agreed Ken, breathing hard. "But we may drop on Barney Hall later." He took the binoculars and turned them on the craft across the reef. He saw a grinning Tonga boy throw a rope to the swimmer, and saw Paget, exhausted by the long swim, dragged over the low side and landed on the lugger.

Barney Hall waved a mocking hand

at the boy trader. King of the Islands gave him no further heed. The ruffianly trader of Tonga was far out of his reach. The scallywag had escaped, and that was that!

The Dawn was put before the wind again. The ketch sailed three knots to the lugger's one, and in a very short time Barney Hall disappeared from sight, and his lugger was only a speck on the sea beyond the reef.

Bargaining for a Passage!

PAGET stood dripping in a pool of water that formed round him on the lugger's dirty, sun-cracked deck. The Tonga boys eyed him with grinning curiosity. Barney Hall sat on the gunwale, his long bare legs stretched out, knotted with muscle, burnt brown by the sun. He eyed the deserter from the Dawn with a rather grim curiosity. The fact that King of the Islands did not want the man to get away was reason enough for Barney to lend him a helping hand to do so. But how any man, however discontented, could want to exchange the Dawn for a foul old lugger, crawling with cockroaches, was more than Hall could fathom.

The scallywag, no doubt, realised at once that the change was for the worse, as he looked at his new surroundings. But he cared nothing for that. He was free—and he hoped, at least, that he would not have to remain long on this foul-looking craft.

Barney crammed his pipe with tobacco and lighted it, watching the dripping, panting deserter the while.

As Ken King stood in the stern, Paget scrambled breathlessly out of the water on to a rugged mass of coral, and shook a dripping fist at King of the Islands. "Pull—pull!" yelled Ken, and the whaleboat surged on.

The lugger was moving on again before the light wind, sailing slowly and heavily. The Tonga trader could see at a glance that Paget was no seaman, and he wondered what he had been doing on Ken King's craft at all. He knew that Ken sailed with a native crew, the only other white man on the ketch being Kit Hudson, the mate.

"Who the thunder are you?" asked Hall.

"My name's Paget," the scallywag panted. "You'll help me keep clear of King of the Islands?"

"You can bank on that!" grinned Barney. "I owe the swab too many grudges not to be glad of the chance of paying something off the score. What were you doing on his packet?"

"I was signed on as one of the crew."

"He must have been hard up for a hand!" said Barney Hall.

Paget flushed angrily.

"You're no seaman," went on Hall, eyeing him. "A gentleman of sorts, I suppose—I've seen plenty of flotsam and jetsam of your kidney on the beaches. Did King of the Islands pick you off a beach?"

"I was taken on the Dawn against my will, and I've cleared off," said Paget sullenly. "I'm not asking you to do anything but give me a passage to your next port."

"You don't want to join my crew?" asked Hall banteringly.

"No!" snapped Paget.

"You fancy I've got room on this craft for a lazy lubber sitting around doing nothing but twiddle his thumbs?" grinned Hall.

"I can pay my passage."

Barney scanned him more closely. On Lalinge, the scapegrace had been well and expensively dressed and a dandy. But rough sailing on a trading ketch had made a great deal of difference. Paget certainly did not look like a paying passenger.

"I don't reckon on making Kulua



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under ten days from now," said the Tonga trader slowly.

Paget glanced round the dirty lugger. Cockroaches were crawling in the blazing sunshine. From the tiny cabin came a noisome odour of stale spirits and tobacco, with the scent of bilge.

The thought of ten days passed on such a craft made the scallywag shudder. On board the Dawn he had had to jump to orders; to work and keep a civil tongue in his head. But on the Dawn there was order, cleanliness—all was neat and clean as a new pin. He could not repress a shudder of disgust which did not escape Barney Hall's eyes. Into those deep-sunken eyes came an ominous glitter. This conceited-looking fellow had butted in, unasked, on Hall's craft and was turning up his nose at it! That was not the way to get on the right side of Barney Hall.

"Perhaps my packet ain't good enough for you, Mister Paget," said the Tonga trader, with grim banter.

"Beggars can't be choosers, I suppose," said Paget bitterly. "Look here—your name's Hall, I think—"

"Captain Hall to you," said Barney grimly.

The scallywag barely repressed an exclamation of contemptuous impatience. His haughty pride had been subdued on board the Dawn, but very far from eradicated. In his eyes Barney Hall was simply a rough, unkempt trader in a dirty little lugger—a fellow to be made use of and paid for his services—that, and nothing more.

"Well, look here," said Paget. "As I said, I'll pay my passage—anything in reason. If you can make any port nearer than Kulua, I'll pay extra. I want to get ashore."

"Got the money about you?" asked Hall, with a sneer. "I know your sort, and I'm not the man to be paid in promises."

"How much do you want?"

"Five pounds would see you to Kulua." Hall spoke a little more civilly, eyeing the scallywag very intently. "Twice as much, and I could land you under a week."

"Done!" said Paget at once.

"Words are cheap!" Hall grinned.

Paget gave him a disdainful look and groped inside the waistband of his trousers. From a hidden pocket there he drew a leather purse. Hall's eyes fastened on it.

THE scallywag jerked a five-pound Bank-of-England note from the purse and passed it to the Tonga trader.

Barney Hall's keen eyes did not fail to see that there were other bank-notes and a gleam of gold in the leather purse.

"That's half," said Paget. "I'll pay you the other five when you've landed me—under the week."

"You're pretty well fixed for a foremast hand deserting his ship," said Barney Hall.

"That needn't concern you," said Paget coolly. "I'm paying you, and all you've got to do is get me to land

as soon as you can. Can you fix me up with a change of clothes?"

"You can strip and spread your rags in the sun to dry, if you like," answered Hall. "That's the best I can do for you."

"Where am I going to berth?"

Hall pointed to the tiny cabin. "I sleep on deck most nights," he answered. "You can have the cabin."

Paget gave him a nod and turned away. He stood looking across the sea and the reef for some minutes. Far in the distance, southward, the tall sails of the Dawn were sinking out of view.

The scallywag smiled with satisfaction as he watched them sinking to the sea. He was done with the Dawn now—done with King of the Islands and his mate. When they made Lalinge again they could tell his uncle, the Pacific Company's manager, that he had gone his own way.

In the hidden pocket in the waistband of his trousers he had forty pounds, in gold and notes. That, he considered, was more than enough to give him a start. And as soon as he could raise Lukwe he was going to join up with Dandy Peter Parsons. The future looked good enough to the scallywag, full of self-confidence, and elated at his escape. It did not occur to his mind how very doubtful the future was, to a fellow on board Barney Hall's lugger, with forty pounds about him! Barney seldom made as much as that on a trading trip, and Barney had done things for half as much that would have made the scallywag open his eyes wide had he known of them.

His clothes were soon dry in the blaze of the tropical sun. Barney Hall, sitting on the gunwale, smoking his pipe, had a thoughtful frown on his rugged brow. But he took no further notice of the scallywag, neither was Paget keen to talk to him.

He went down the step into the tiny cabin—a foul-smelling place not much larger than a cupboard, lighted only by a single porthole. One look round it was enough for Paget. He came back into the open air.

Hall gave him a sneering grin.

"You don't like my quarters?" he jeered.

"No," answered Paget briefly.

"You can sleep on a mat on deck, if you choose."

"I will!"

Paget looked over the sea again. Far to the south-west a speck on the Pacific marked where the Dawn was disappearing. The lugger was crawling almost at a snail's pace, the long, low Albatross Reef still in sight.

Five days on that crawling craft! It seemed an endless prospect to the scallywag. But he had escaped from the Dawn and, as he had said to Barney, beggars could not be choosers. He ate the rough rations handed to him by a Tonga boy, and when the sun dipped into the sea and the stars came out over the Pacific, he stretched himself on a tapa mat to sleep.

Hall, sitting with one sinewy arm thrown over the tiller, was speaking in a low tone to Koo, his boat-steerer. The Tonga boy grinned and nodded

with a flash of white teeth. Paget did not notice him as he sank into slumber, his head pillowed on his arm.

On Albatross Reef!

THE scallywag of Lalinge stirred in his sleep and awoke. He had been dreaming that he was back on the Dawn, and that the grasp of Koko, the boatswain, was on him. But it was not wholly a dream. As he started into wakefulness he realised that a hand was touching him. His eyes opened wide and he stared.

The lugger was rocking to the motion of the sea. Stars glittered down from a sky of deep, dark blue. The smell of the foul craft, of close-packed copra, of stale tobacco, and bilge and cockroaches, was in his nostrils. Dim against the stars, rising and falling to the motion of the lugger, he made out the brawny figure of Barney Hall, sitting at the tiller, at a little distance from him.

But who was bending over him, touching him? He had a glimpse of a dark face in the dimness of the stars, of two bright eyes that glittered—and with a startled cry he caught at a thievish hand that was groping to the secret pocket where his money was kept. It was Koo, the boat-steerer, and in another moment or two Paget's purse and all his store of wealth would have been in the Tonga boy's thievish hand.

With a blaze in his eyes Paget grasped at the Kanaka's wrist, gripped it, and with a sudden swing sent Koo rolling over on his back!

He leaped to his feet as the Tonga boy rolled, gasping. There was an immediate outbreak of cackling voices from the rest of the Tonga crew. They were all awake, and had been watching.

"You rascally thief!" shouted Paget savagely, made a stride at the sprawling boat-steerer, and kicked him in his bare brown ribs.

Koo yelled, scrambled away, and leaped up and dodged aft. Barney Hall's deep voice came from the shadows:

"Belay, there! What's that row?"

"One of your niggers trying to pick my pocket while I was asleep!" Paget snapped savagely.

Hall peered at him in the gloom. There was a strange expression on the rugged, bearded face of the Tonga trader.

"I reckon I don't allow any man but me to kick my niggers!" said the trader, with a threatening growl.

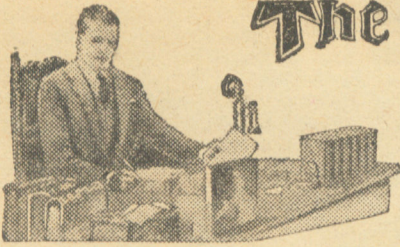
"You'd better teach them not to pilfer then!" snarled Paget. "I'll kick him from one end of this craft to the other if he comes near me again!"

Hall gave a grunt, but he did not answer. And silence settled on the lugger.

Paget threw himself down on the mat. After what had happened he did not feel inclined to close his eyes again.

A little later, as he lay half-dozing, he was conscious of movements among

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The Editor Talks

Address your letters to:
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COULDN'T BE BETTER, SAYS YOU!—And that's going to be all the world's verdict about "Where the Cars Roar!"

Alfred Edgar has beaten all his own previous splendid records with this high-speed thrill-series. I know you're quivering to read the next.

You've only got to wait until next Saturday for it—the "Crash That Made a Driver!"

YOU CAN'T KEEP A GOOD CAT DOWN.—Felix—page 32, this week—is going to catch on wherever MODERN BOY finds its way. And that's EVERYWHERE.

A fellow who doesn't get his weekly laughs at the great little cat's antics is going to be out in the cold—behind the times.

If you see a chap looking mournful, dig him in the ribs and put him on to Felix—world's finest remedy for fed-

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(Continued from page 28)

the crew, in response to orders growled by the Tonga trader. The lugger was changing her course. At sunset Barney Hall had turned northward from the Albatross reef, but on the new tack it seemed to Paget, little as he knew of seamanship, that the lugger would be making the reef again.

But he gave little attention to the matter. Towards dawn, overcome by drowsiness, he fell asleep, with his hand in the pocket where his little store of wealth was hidden. It could hardly be touched without awakening him again. But there was no further attempt on it during the remainder of the night.

The cackling voices and tramping feet of the Tonga boys awakened him at daybreak. He rose from the tapa mat, rubbing his eyes, and glanced over the sea. In the sunrise, he saw seabirds in myriads wheeling over a long, low reef, directly ahead of the lugger. He stared at it in surprise.

There was the rugged mass of coral, jutting a couple of feet from the sea, across which he had run after his swim from the Dawn. Hall, for some reason, after leaving it far behind, had sailed back to the very spot where he had picked up the deserter from the Dawn!

There was no mistake about it—it was the very spot! He tramped aft to the Tonga trader.

up-ness, to be taken in regular weekly doses.

FIVE SHILLINGS A SECOND!—The first of a New Series that will be appearing next Saturday will be about the man who started with five shillings a week and worked up to five shillings a SECOND. Everyone knows his name—but everyone doesn't know about his intensely interesting early days. We put you wise to all that next week. And there will be more TRUE revelations to follow, about others who fit themselves into the title, "These Boys Made Good!"

SEE YOU AGAIN NEXT SATURDAY.

"What the dickens does this mean?" he exclaimed.

Hall looked at him, almost furtively, under lowering brows.

"What's biting you now?" he asked.

"What are we wasting time like this for?" demanded Paget hotly. "I'm paying you for a passage on this lugger. What's the idea of hanging about this reef?"

"Who's skipper on this packet, you or me?" demanded the Tonga trader, in a bullying tone.

"Look here—"

"Belay it!" growled Hall. "You'll see soon enough—sooner than you want, I reckon. Belay your jawing-tackle."

Paget's angry temper blazed out. "If you think I'm paying you to keep me hanging about in this filthy lugger—" he began.

"I reckon," said Barney Hall, slowly and deliberately, "that you'll pay—and pay high—to hang on to this lugger, young feller-me-lad! I reckon you'll pay all you've got in that belt of yours, Mister Paget, and I'm telling you now to hand it over. And I'm advising you to do it smiling."

Paget stared at him. He caught the derisive grins on the faces of the Tonga boys. The truth suddenly flashed into his mind.

"You—you rascal!" he panted. "That nigger was acting under your orders—and if I hadn't woke up—"

Hall's bearded lip curved in a sneer.

"You'd have done better to stay asleep, I reckon!" he retorted. "I'll give you a passage on my craft; and it will cost you exactly as much as you've got in that belt of yours. No more and no less."

Paget clenched his hands hard. He knew now that it was by Hall's order that the boat-steerer had attempted to rob him while he slept. Brute and ruffian as he was, the Tonga trader would have preferred to get away with his plunder without violence.

That device having failed, he was driven into the open, as it were, and had thrown off all disguise.

"You—you rotten rascal!" panted Paget. "I'll pay you exactly what I've promised—not a cent more!"

"You're not handing it over!" grinned Hall.

"Never!" roared Paget.

Hall made a sign to his crew. Four Tonga boys advanced on the hapless scallywag. He leaped back from them, and stared round wildly for a weapon. To be robbed of all he had—to be thrown penniless on the beach of some island—not if he could help it! He grabbed up a belaying-pin, and whirled it over his head as the four natives closed on him.

"Stand back!" panted Paget. "Stand back or—"

There was an angry roar from Hall as the Tonga boys seemed to hesitate.

"You feller boy! You get that white feller hand belong you! Look alive, you black scum, along you no wantee this fellow knock seven bells outer you!"

The Tonga crew hesitated no longer. They leaped at Paget, grasping at him.

Down came the belaying-pin, with a crash on the head of Koo. The boat-steerer rolled over in the lugger with a yell.

Next moment the weapon was torn from Paget's hand, and he was rolling over in the fierce grasp of three pairs of hands.

He struggled frantically, though he knew it was in vain. Gasping with rage, he struggled till the Tonga boys pinned him down, helpless.

Hall rose and bent over him.

"You thief!" yelled Paget, as the Tonga trader drew the leather purse from the hidden pocket and transferred it to his own.

Hall shrugged his brawny shoulders, and sat by the tiller again. The Tonga boys released Paget, who staggered breathlessly to his feet.

Having recovered his breath, Paget approached the ruffianly trader, his eyes flashing.

"You hound!" He choked with rage. "You've robbed me!" Hall stared at him, without replying; and the scallywag barely restrained himself from springing at the ruffian. But, enraged as he was, he knew that he could not deal with Hall alone. He would have been little more than an infant in the burly ruffian's grasp.

"Do you think you'll get away with this?" he panted.

"I reckon so!" Hall watched the crimson, excited face of the scallywag with ironic curiosity. "Take my

advice! Forget that you ever had any money in your pocket when you stepped on this hooker!"

"Forget it? As soon as I step ashore, I'll make the place ring with it!" Paget exclaimed furiously.

"I reckoned that was the kind of fool you was!" Hall remarked. "That's why I'm making the reef." He gave the tiller a twist, and the lugger ranged up to a flat coral bank, like a natural quay. "Jump!" he said.

Paget stared at him, not understanding the Tonga trader's terrible meaning for a moment.

"What do you mean?" he demanded.

"Don't I speak plain?" jeered Barney. "I said jump and I mean jump. That's where you're landing. You're marooned—marooned on the

Albatross reef, and that's the long and the short of it. Jump!"

Paget stood quite still. He understood now. He stared at the ruthless ruffian with starting eyes. Marooned on a low reef, lost in the boundless wastes of the Pacific; left to his fate—solitude, hunger, thirst—till the end came.

He set his teeth and made a desperate spring—not at the coral, but at the throat of Barney Hall.

There was a roar from the enraged ruffian; a howl from the Tonga boys. They sprang at the scallywag like cats, and dragged him off their half-throttled master. Hall staggered up.

"You feller boy, you throw that white feller along reef!" he yelled.

Paget went spinning over the lugger's side.

Before he could gain his feet, the Tonga boys had pushed off, with the long sweeps, the lug-sail was shaken out in the wind, and the lugger rocked away.

Paget gazed round him, with eyes dulled by despair. The low reef, the calling gulls, the eternal Pacific, the blue blazing of the sky—solitude and death! He threw himself on the coral, and lay like a log, overcome by horror and despair!

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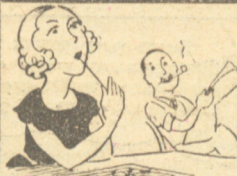
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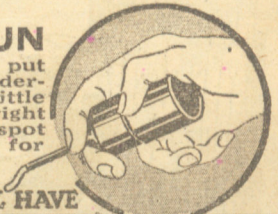
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