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# BOY

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No. 6. New Series  
MARCH 26th, 1938

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Sunset on the Pacific . . . the ketch Dawn lying becalmed off the uninhabited island of Kohu. Before the wind came there was sudden action; shots rang out. The whisper of the magic word "Pearls" promised exciting adventure to—

# KING of the ISLANDS

By CHARLES HAMILTON

Running for Life!

**T**HAT feller go finish close-up!" remarked Koko, the big, brown-skinned boatswain of the Dawn.

"Plenty soon that feller no stop!" agreed Dauny, the cooky-boy.

The Kanaka crew of Ken King's South Seas trading ketch, Dawn, loading by the rail and chewing betel-nut, gazed across the reef with idle interest.

That they were looking upon a scene in which life and death were about equally balanced did not cause even a faint ripple of excitement. With the Kanaka's infinite capacity for minding his own business and utter indifference to the affairs of others, they watched as they might have witnessed a native dance on the beach at Lalinge.

The sunset was red on the Pacific. The Dawn lay in a narrow channel of the Kohu reef. So still she lay, that the shadow of masts and spars on the blue water hardly stirred.

Ken King, the young owner and skipper, who was known throughout the South Seas as King of the Islands, was waiting for the wind. Always, at sunset, the off-shore breeze blew from Kohu. But it had died away, and the boy trader had to wait.

It was not for trade that Ken had put in at Kohu. It was one of the thousand tiny uninhabited atolls of the Pacific Ocean. He had put in to fill his water-casks, and the wind had failed him before he was clear of the reef again.

Kohu was hot. Hardly a breath stirred the air.

Kit Hudson, the Australian mate, was stretched in a deckchair under the awning aft, lazily fanning a perspiring face with a pandanus leaf. Ken, in another deckchair, had a book of accounts open on one knee, a pencil in his hand. As he jotted down details of cargo and trade, he passed his left hand every now and then across his forehead, wiping away clots of perspiration. He heard without heeding the cackle of the Hiva-Oa boys loafing at the rail. Had he looked up, the scene on the reef would have produced an effect on him very different from that on the native crew.

A figure had appeared on the lonely reef, coming into sight from beyond a headland at a distance. It looked like that of a boy of about sixteen; white, though with skin browned by tropic suns.

As Kohu was an uninhabited island, the sight of anyone there, and especially a white, was surprising. It looked as if there must be some other vessel at Kohu, hidden from sight by the high, jutting headland.

And the boy was running and leaping on the reef, which was still more surprising in the deadly heat. He was not heading for the becalmed ketch—did not once glance in its direction. Evidently he did not know that the Dawn was there, though a single glance round would have revealed her tall cedar masts standing up from the reef.

He was heading for the lagoon within the circling reef. He could only have come from some ship anchored beyond the headland, and his object clearly was to gain the island by swimming the lagoon. But to do so he had to cross the reef, and that was not easy. It lay wide and rugged and broken—sharp coral cut by an infinite number of narrow channels and gaps and crevices, irregular, uneven, submerged in some places, jutting high and sharp in others.

From rock to rock the boy leaped like a goat. Once he slipped on wet coral and plunged into a deep pool left by the tide, at which there was a ripple of merriment from the watching crew. But he clambered out again, dripping, and leaped on with failing strength but momentary effort.

"That feller go finish!" repeated Koko. "Plenty too soon he break feller leg belong him."

"Break feller neck belong him," said Lompo. "He go finish altogether too quick."

Tomoo and Lufu and Kolulo did not take the trouble to speak. They watched, lazily chewing betel-nut.

"Nother white feller he stop!" remarked Danny.

From the rugged mass of coral rocks at the foot of the jutting headland, a man ran into view—a white man in duck trousers and cotton shirt, with a broad-brimmed grass-hat. A rough, red beard jutted from his square chin. Like the boy, he leaped from one rock to another, but less swiftly and much more clumsily. Clearly in pursuit of the running boy, he had little or no chance of overtaking him.

Koko betrayed a faint interest at the sight of the big, brawny, red-bearded man.

"Me savvy that feller too much," he remarked. "That feller belong him Sunda!"

"Him feller nigger-stealer," said Danny. "Me savvy that feller altogether bad feller."

The running boy looked round over his shoulder, and the watching Kanakas could read the terror in his face. But he did not look towards the ketch. He looked at the brawny Dutchman for a fleeting second, then raced on again. In his wild haste he slipped once more, slid down a slope of coral, and splashed in water.

"That feller no walk about any more!" remarked Tomoo.

But Tomoo was mistaken. Again the panting boy clambered out and leaped on. For several minutes the big Dutchman lumbered on his track, but it was clear that he had no chance of overtaking, and he stopped and drew a revolver from the belt buckled round his bulky waist.

"That feller go shoot, along gun belong him, my word!" remarked Kolulo.

Crack! The report of the revolver rang like a whip-lash through the still air. King of the Islands started to his feet, the account book falling to the deck, and stared round him with startled eyes. Kit Hudson was out of his deck-chair a second later.

"What—" exclaimed Ken.

"Feller Dussman follow along feller desert ship belong him, me think, sar," said Koko. "He shootee, along he no catchee."

"My sainted Sam!" exclaimed Ken, as his eyes fixed on the startling scene on the reef. He leaped to the rail and shouted: "Captain Van Duck, hold on! If you fire again, I'll fire on you!"

He whipped the revolver from his belt as he shouted. If the Dutchman heard, he did not heed. His first shot had missed the running boy by a yard—perhaps fired only to scare him into stopping. But as the boy ran on he fired again.

The next instant King of the Islands fired at the Dutchman.

What the trouble was, whether the Dutch skipper of the Sunda was in pursuit of a deserter, or whatever it might be, Ken King was not the man to see a panting fugitive shot down under his eyes. He knew Van Duck by reputation—pearl-poacher, slave-dealer, more of a freebooter than a trader.

Ken's bullet struck the man's uplifted arm, and it sagged down to the Dutchman's side, the revolver dropping on the reef. A roar of rage, like that of an infuriated bull, pealed from the Dutchman as he clasped his right arm with his left hand and stood staggering.

The running boy stared round. Perhaps he realized that it was no longer any use running from the burly figure behind him. Bruised, soaked, and obviously scared out of his wits, he paused. Ken, on the Dawn, saw the amazement on his face, as for the first time he saw the ketch. Instantly he changed

direction and came bounding across the reef towards the Dawn.

Van Duck's Demand

**K**ING OF THE ISLANDS watched the Dutchman grimly, his revolver ready for another shot, if needed. But for the moment the Dutchman stood staggering and yelling, clutching at his injured arm. The boy, with eager hope in his face, was racing across the reef to the ketch.

"Koko, give that boy a hand on board," ordered Ken.

The big boatswain jumped from the rail to the reef—lightly as a cat, gigantic as he was in stature—and ran to meet the boy as he came panting across the reef, stumbling with exhaustion.

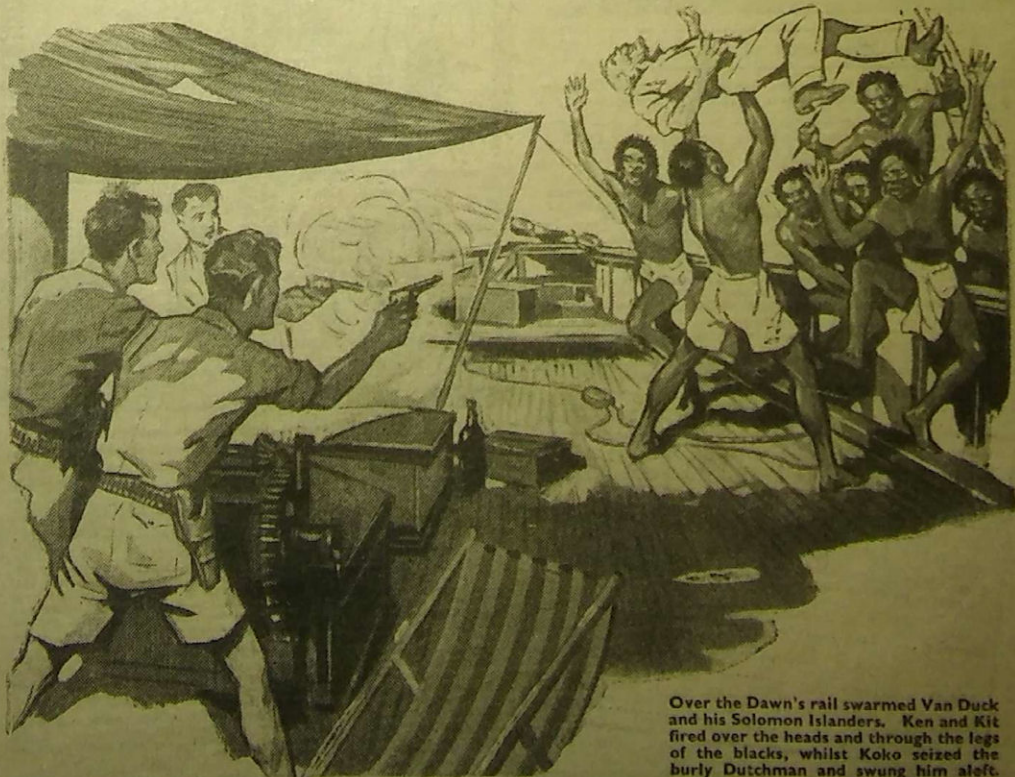
Koko reached him as once more he slipped and fell. Tossing the boy on his shoulder as easily as a bag of copra, Koko strode back to the Dawn, and passed him up the side to Tomoo and Lompo. Koko followed him on board.

The boy stood unsteadily, panting for breath. He was spent by his wild race across the rugged reef. He put a hand on the mast to steady himself, his dark, dilated eyes turning on Ken and Kit. He panted and panted, trying to speak.

Kit Hudson took him by the arm, led him to his deckchair, and sat him down.

"I reckon you're all in, kid!" said the young Australian kindly. "Take time to get your breath. You're safe here. If Mister Van Duck comes along and asks for trouble, we'll hand him all he wants, and a little over."

The crimson glow of exertion faded out of the boy's face, leaving him pale and white. He looked, to the mate, about the softest case he had ever struck. He could only wonder what such a lad had been doing on Van Duck's ship. Van Duck sailed with a black crew of Malaita boys, and even if he had shanghaied a white seaman, it was amazing that he



Over the Dawn's rail swarmed Van Duck and his Solomon Islanders. Ken and Kit fired over the heads and through the legs of the blacks, whilst Koko seized the burly Dutchman and swung him aloft.

# KING OF THE ISLANDS

had taken the trouble over such a useless hand as this.

The boy found his voice. It came in gasps:

"Save me—save me from him!"  
"Bank on that, kid!" said Hudson cheerily.

He gave a start. Tears were gathering in the boy's eyes. Hudson was hard as hickory himself, but there was nothing of the "bucko mate" about him. He was all kindness to the hapless lad who had fled from the bully of the Sunda. But the sight of tears in his eyes was too much for him.

"Stow that!" he ordered. "D'you want to set the Kanakas cackling? Take a bite on it, kid!"

He turned away and joined Ken. The Dutchman was standing and glaring at the ketch in astonishment and rage. Clearly he had not expected to see a vessel at Kohu. He poured out a stream of oaths, which reached all ears on the Dawn, and set the Kanaka crew grinning.

"My word, that feller talk strong-feller talk!" remarked Danny. "Plenty strong-feller talk belong mouth belong him."

The shipmates watched Van Duck

grimly. His revolver was gone, lost in some crevice of the coral, and his right arm was useless. But they did not think that the trouble was over yet.

"Here come his crew!" said Hudson.

From the mass of rocks at the headland, several running figures appeared—black, fuzzy-headed Solomon Islanders of Malaita. With a jabber of excitement, they joined their captain on the reef. One of them proceeded to bind a tapa cloth round the Dutchman's wounded arm.

"What the dickens is Van Duck doing at Kohu, Ken?" remarked Kit.

"Water, the same as ourselves, I suppose," said Ken. "There's no trade here—the island has always been uninhabited. Pearlers have settled here at times, but they've never stayed. There's another channel in the reef, the other side of that headland. He must have put in for water, the same as we did."

"And waiting for a wind to get away again," said Hudson. "Lucky for that kid he had to wait."

A deserter, I suppose," Ken made a grimace. As a skipper himself, he had no love for deserters, who left a captain in the lurch, especially at a lonely island where hands were unobtainable. "Can't be helped, Kit. We can't hand over a kid

like that to a brute like Van Duck, even if he belonged to the Dutchman's crew."  
"No, no!" a panting voice came from the deckchair. "It is not that! I was a prisoner on the Sunda. Don't let him take me back!"

Ken stared round.  
"A prisoner?" he repeated. "Do you mean that you were shanghaied?"

"No, no!"  
"He doesn't look much of a sailor," grinned Hudson. "A week before the mast on the Sunda would have killed him. Van Duck wouldn't have let him off more lightly for crying. Goodness knows what the brute wanted him for. Perhaps he'll tell us—he's coming!"

"Get your gun, Kit!"

"You bet!"  
The Dutchman, his right arm in a sling, was tramping across the reef towards the Dawn, his blacks at his heels. More blacks were appearing from beyond the headland, where evidently the schooner was becalmed. Ken raised his revolver.

"Stop!" he shouted.  
"You swab!" roared back Van Duck.  
"You fired on me—"

"I'll fire again if you come a step nearer with that crew!" called back Ken contemptuously. "You're not going to

have a chance of rushing this packet with a crew of Solomon Island cannibals, Van Duck! If you want to speak, you can come on alone. Order your boys back, or I'll fire!"

The Dutchman gave him a glare of sheer evil—but he stopped. He was unarmed, and the black boys had empty hands. He had no chance in a struggle, but it was clear that it went sorely against the grain with him to obey the boy trader. He stood hesitating, but at last he rapped out savagely to his crew:

"You feller boy stop along reef!"

Leaving the Malaita boys in a jabbering bunch, he tramped on towards the ketch. He stopped on a level shelf of coral almost under the rail, and fixed his small, glittering eyes on the shipmates.

"You've winged me!" he muttered savagely.

"I called to you first," answered King of the Islands. "Do you think I would let you shoot down that boy under my eyes?"

"You fool! I was going to get him in the leg to stop him. That boy's worth too much to shoot!" snarled the Dutchman. "Hand him over, King of the Islands!"

"What's your claim to him?" asked the boy trader coolly. "He says he's not a member of your crew."

"That soft swab!" The Dutchman gave a scoffing laugh. "Not likely! But I want him. Will you hand him over? I'm looking for no trouble with you—though you've asked for it, interfering in what doesn't concern you. But I'm going to have that boy Peter if I have to send every man on your ten-cent yawl to Davy Jones to get him!"

"And why?" asked Ken.

He had no intention whatever of handing Peter—if Peter was the boy's name—over to the Dutchman. But he was puzzled to guess why the ruffian wanted him. Obviously he was of no use on a vessel like the Sunda. He was not worth his rations as one of the crew. It was not for that that the Dutchman wanted him. But why he wanted him at all was a mystery.

"Why?" repeated Van Duck, with his scoffing laugh. "You don't know?"

"I'm no magician," said Ken, staring at him. "I've never seen the boy before and know nothing about him. How should I know?"

"Why are you on Kohu, then?"

"Water—the same as yourself, I suppose."

The little piggy eyes searched Ken's face intently and suspiciously. Plainly it was not for water that the Dutchman was at Kohu, and he did not believe that that was Ken's reason, either.

"You're not after the pearls, then?" he asked at last.

"Pearls!" Ken laughed. "Are there pearls on Kohu? I know they've been looked for here, but it's news to me if they've been found."

"If you're lying—" began Van Duck. "Stop right there!" interrupted Ken. "Any more of that, Van Duck, and you'll go back to your schooner with a boot to help."

The Dutchman ground his teeth under his red beard.

"After all, you might have come in for water," he admitted grudgingly. "Let it go at that! You're meddling in what's not your business, King of the Islands. Hand over that boy, or—"

"Or what?" asked Ken contemptuously.

"Will you hand him over?"

"No!"

"Then I'll take him!" roared the Dutchman, his savage temper breaking out in a burst of fury. He roared to the Malaita boys—more than a dozen of them by this time. "You feller boys, you come plenty quick!"

And, big and heavy as he was, he leaped at the teak rail, grasped it with his left hand, and swung himself up. With a yell, the mob of Solomon Islanders rushed after him.

"SHOOT!" rapped King of the Islands.

After a Pearler's Secret

Crack - crack - crack - crack! Over the heads and among the bare black legs of the Solomon Island boys the shots rattled like

mail. Van Duck with his sudden rush, had swung himself on board the ketch. The boy in the deckchair started to his feet with a cry of fear. But Ken and Kit did not even look at the bully of the Sunda. Koko grasped him as he swung to the deck, and big and powerful as the

# LAST WEEK OF OUR NOVEL FILM CONTEST!

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THIS is the third and final week of MODERN BOY'S Great Film Mystery Competition—if you want to be in the running for a prize, send in your entry now.

TO ENTER, you have to complete a Film Story which is given in three parts. The first two parts have already appeared, and here is PART III. The eight pictures form the third and last instalment of the film, only they are all out of order. Can you find the proper order to fit the next part of the story, which is:

Tex Wilson, who has been trying to trace Silas Stone, a cameraman captured by Redskins, found his man but was himself captured and thrown into the same wigwam as Stone, where they planned to escape.

Now the story carries on with this week's pictures. Luckily, the Redskins had not searched their captives thoroughly, and they soon got free. Once away from the Indian encampment, they took precautions to throw any pursuers off their track, and before long they met up with other Mounties. They rode back to headquarters with them, and Tex told his story to the colonel, who congratulated him, and told him that an order for his promotion had just come through from headquarters.

Now try to place the eight pictures in the order of the story, either by looking over them, or by cutting them out and trying them in different arrangements. There is a correct order which can be found by close examination.

Fill in (IN LINK) the key letters of the pictures under the numbers on the coupon in what you think is the right order. Add your name and full address to the coupon and cut it out whole. Send in as directed in the next column.

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17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
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I agree to accept the Editor's decision as final and legally binding.

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How To Send In: Find the first two coupons which you have been keeping and pin all three together in order so as to form one complete entry. Post in a properly stamped envelope to:

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so as to reach there not later than THURSDAY, MARCH 31st, 1938, the closing date.

Rules (to be strictly adhered to) The First Prize of the Cinema Projector and £5 in Cash will be awarded to the reader who places the three sets of pictures in their correct order, or most nearly so, and the other prizes in order of merit. In the case of ties, the value of the prize or prizes may be divided.

Each entry must consist of the coupons 1 to 3 filled in in ink. No allowance made for any entry lost or delayed in the post or otherwise, nor proof of posting taken as proof of delivery. Any entry arriving after the closing date (March 31st), or with coupons mutilated or bearing alterations or more than one key letter in each space, will be disqualified.

No correspondence allowed, and acceptance of the published result, and of the Editor's decision in all other matters in the contest, as final and legally binding is a definite condition of entry. Employees (or their families) of the proprietors of MODERN BOY must not compete.

Dutchman was, he crumpled in the mighty grasp of the boy's sun. The wound in his arm was slight, but for the time it disabled the limb—but even with the use of both arms he would have been no match for Koko.

The boatswain swung him off his feet and flung him with a crash to the deck, where he sprawled, spluttering. A bare brown knee pinned him down, and the long knife from Koko's belt gleamed at his throat.

The Solomon Islanders had rushed in a yelling mob at the Dutchman's order. A few gained the deck, but as the Dutchman went down in Koko's mighty grip they dropped back to the coral.

Ken waved his smoking revolver at them.

"You feller Solomon Island boy, you go stop along ship belong you!" he shouted. "S'pose you stop along this place, you kill-dead close-up."

Two more bullets decided the matter for the black crew. They scampered away across the reef, disappearing round the rocky point of the headland.

Koko, with his long knife at the Dutchman's throat, looked to his white master for orders. On his own account, the boatswain would have cut off the Dutchman's head as coolly and cheerfully as any Solomon Islander in the bush. But the word of King of the Islands was law on the Dawn.

"S'pose you sing out, sar, me cut off head belong this feller Dussman, sar!" said Koko. "Tinkee plenty too good, cut off head belong this bad feller Dussman, sar, all samee Solomon Island boy."

"Feller head belong Dussman stop along Dussman, Koko," said Ken. "Stick the brute on his feet."

Koko put away the long Malaita knife rather reluctantly; he grasped the Dutchman with his brown hands, and heaved him to his feet. Van Duck stood panting, his little piggy eyes glittering at the boy Peter, who, with a white face, backed behind the shipmates. Powerless as he was at the mercy of the Dawn's crew, the ruffian seemed scarcely able to restrain himself from springing at the frightened boy.

Ken looked at him with cool contempt. "Now, Van Duck, the sooner you get after your black boys, the better," he said. "Peter—if his name's Peter—stops here. I'm going to give him a passage away from Kohu."

"I'm not going without the boy!" growled the Dutchman. "You've got the upper hand now, Ken King, but you'll sing a different tune when the calm breaks and I lay you aboard in my schooner. How long do you reckon your boys will stand against my crew, with arms in their hands?"

"Piracy on the high seas, what?" asked Kit Hudson, with a grin. "I fancy we can take care of ourselves, if it comes to that."

But Ken's face set hard. The Dutch trader's threat was no idle one. The schooner Sunda was more than twice the size of his ketch, and manned by a crew of two dozen savage and brawny black men from the Solomons. Fast as the Dawn was, the schooner, with her greater spread of canvas, was at least as fast—it would be a doubtful race if the Dutchman followed him when the wind came. And at close quarters, if Van Duck was desperate enough to carry out his threat, the force on his side would be overwhelming. And Kohu was in lonely waters—no other land rose from the Pacific for a hundred miles or more. Only the sea-birds would see what happened.

"You mean that, Van Duck?" asked Ken, his voice curt, his eyes glinting.

"Every word!" snarled the Dutchman. "Hand over the boy, or I'll lay you aboard when the wind rises and leave not a man, white or black, alive on this hooker! I'll send you and your ketch to the bottom together, King of the Islands."

"There was a cry from the boy behind the shipmates. A hand touched Ken's arm.

"You will not—you will not—" stammered the boy.

Ken glanced round at him.

"You're safe here!" he said curtly. He turned back to Van Duck. "I can't guess why you want this boy, but I believe you're lawless villain enough to play the pirate in lonely waters. You're not getting the chance! Koko, rope that man up—makee feller rope stop along hand, along foot, belong that feller Dussman."

Van Duck, with a splutter of fury, made a leap for the side. But the grasp of the boatswain was on him instantly, and he went crashing to the deck.

Lompo and Lufu brought a rope, and,

while Koko pinned down the struggling, cursing Dutchman, they bound him hand and foot.

In a few minutes the skipper of the Sunda was helpless as an upturned turtle.

Kit Hudson chuckled.

"You're not running him out to sea, Ken, when the wind comes?" he asked.

"No! We'll leave him on the reef. His boys can come after him. We shall be clear of Kohu by the time he gets back to his schooner."

Ken glanced shoreward. The fronds of the palms were stirring in the first breath of the wind. The round red ball of the sun was dipping to the sea-rim in the west. It would not be long before the ketch was under way.

"You feller boy, you put that feller Dussman along reef!" ordered Ken.

Van Duck swung up from the deck in the grasp of the Kanakas. He panted with fury. Left on the reef, to be picked up later by his black crew, he had little chance of carrying out his threat when the Dawn spread her white wings before the wind.

"King of the Islands!" he panted. "One word—listen to me—give me a minute's hearing before it's too late."

Ken signed to the Kanakas to stop. They stood grasping the Dutchman.

"Cut it short!" snapped Ken.

"I'll share with you!" breathed Van Duck. "It's a fortune, King of the Islands, and I'll share! That boy is the son of Black Tom Daly, the pearler, and he can tell where to lay hands on a sack of pearls. I tell you they have found pearls on Kohu—Black Tom put in at Lukwe in his lugger and sold a bag of pearls there. He found them on Kohu. That boy is his son, whom he left on the island!"

The shipmates stared at the Dutchman. That he believed what he said was clear; but they did not believe a word of it.

"Old Tom Daly," said Hudson. "The most unsuccessful pearler ever seen on Pacific beaches. You dreamed this over a bottle of square-face, Van Duck."

Ken laughed.

"I've seen old Daly more than once," he said. "Last time I saw him he was trying to borrow a few dollars on the beach at Lalinge, to get stores for his lugger. You're drunk or dreaming, Van Duck."

"It's true, you fool!" hissed the Dutchman. "Ask the boy—he knows!"

Ken glanced at the boy Peter, smiling.

"Are you the son of Black Tom Daly, the pearler?" he asked.

"No!" came the answer.

"It's false!" yelled Van Duck. "I tell you I found him here, at Daly's hut, and heaps of shells on the beach where they had rotted out the pearls. I tell you he is Daly's son and he knows—"

"True or false, you sea-thief, it doesn't interest me!" broke in Ken. "Do you fancy I'm a piratical swab like yourself, to rob a man of his pearls?"

"It's a fortune, you fool!" roared Van Duck. "There will be others after it when the news spreads. I'm the first here, that's all. I'll take you in, in shares."

"Put that feller Dussman along reef, you feller boy!" was Ken King's rejoinder.

"Yesser!" grinned Koko.

Spluttering with rage, the burly Dutchman was swung over the rail and dropped on the coral, a cable's length from the ketch. He lay there struggling and writhing in the ropes, heedless of the pain in his wounded arm, in frantic efforts to free himself.

But his struggling ceased at last and he lay panting, breathless, spitting oaths, while the wind came up over Kohu and the becalmed ketch got into motion.

Ken and Kit gave him no further heed. Neither did the Hiva-Oa crew as they jumped to the orders of skipper and mate. The Dawn began to move through the water. Only the dark eyes of the boy Peter remained fixed on the panting Dutchman, as if he still feared him, powerless as he was. But as the ketch glided down the coral channel and ran out to sea, the figure stretched on the reef was lost to view.

The Dutchman dragged himself to a sitting position and watched the tall sails of the Dawn, red in the sunset, as the ketch ran lightly before the wind. Long after he was lost to sight of those on board, the tall sails remained in his view, growing dimmer and dimmer in the blue distance.

King of the Islands was gone from Kohu—and with him was gone the boy who, as Van Duck believed, had the



# THE EDITOR TALKS

Address your letters to:  
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**S**OMETHING strange is happening in the South Seas where Ken King trades with his ketch. The long-deserted island of Kohu is the centre of amazing rumours. If pearls are really there, it is still one man's secret. And what has the boy Peter to do with it; how much does he know—who is he? The mystery grows, more startling incidents occur in next week's story: "THE BOY WITHOUT A NAME."

On next Saturday's cover you will see a fine illustration of a plane taking off from an aircraft carrier. In the plane are two heroes of the Japan-America war, Kit Connaught and Driggs Dennison. The aircraft carrier is crippled, her eighty planes unable to take off. It is left to the two adventurers to act as EYES OF THE FLEET; fight a lonely battle in a part of the world where all radio communication has been wiped out by the enemy.

In Ludwig Steinach, Justice has a rival who tests his powers to the utmost, and even now hasn't shown all his tricks. There are mighty big things behind the activities of Steinach. What they are you will learn soon, but the immediate shock for Justice is the appearance of a new and more powerful type of Globe, with a deadly weapon that is neither gun, death ray, nor gas, and in next week's story Midge and O'Mally are kidnapped—taken off into space!

Next on the programme is "SCREAMING TYRES," and the tyres are those of the Staunch Truck, with Steve Chivers at the wheel, carrying on in a thrill-a-minute chase—train versus truck. On the train are men, taking deadly aim at Steve's tyres. You know what one hit at high speed would mean!

Biggles on the Treasure Trail continues with a fine story "CURTAIN OF FIRE," and shows Biggles, in a tight corner, taking a desperate chance. But the lives of the Treasure Party are at stake!

Quick-fire adventure in the London of long ago brings Bob Eccles to the end of his career as a boy highwayman, and there are some astounding revelations.

Flying-Officer Johns carries on his "True Tales of Treasure" with some pretty exciting stories of Bolivia, where there is yet to be recovered the WORLD'S GREATEST HIDDEN WEALTH. He gives you some fine chapters from the past history of this amazing country. The film story is of the big production HIDEAWAY.

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secret of a fortune in pearls. His eyes turned in haggard rage on the headland, beyond which his schooner lay. It was in the last glimmer of the sunset that dusky figures appeared in sight there—his black boys coming at last.

But the Dawn had vanished and night lay like a velvet cloak on the Pacific before Captain Van Duck trod once more the deck of the Sunda.

## Van Duck Opens Hostilities!

"SHE'S come!" grinned Kit Hudson. He was speaking of the wind. For long and weary hours the Dawn had lain in the coral channel at Kohu, waiting for the wind.

It had come at last, and the ketch was far out at sea. But the wind, which had come as a breeze, had strengthened to a gale, and the gale was blowing harder. Round the ketch, the Pacific rollers were lashed into foaming hills of water. Mainmast and mizzen strained under the wind and King of the Islands unwillingly had his mainsail taken in. Under the foresail and jib, the Dawn fled through the tossing waters. Koko, at the wheel, grinned with a brown face wet with spindrift.

"Plenty strong-feller wind," he remarked. "Too much strong-feller wind, my word, sar!"

All the crew were on deck, even Danny having come out of his galley to lend a hand if needed. The Dawn, for her size, was well manned; but in rough weather all hands were wanted. And the weather, already rough, was going to be rougher as the night wore on.

Unheeded by skipper, mate, or crew, the fugitive held on to a stanchion, his white face glimmering in the darkness. So long as his ship required his care, Ken had no time or attention to give to the boy he had saved from the brutal skipper of the Sunda. Whether he was, or not, the son of the unlucky pearler who had been known for years on all the beaches of the Pacific, whether he knew or not the secret of a fortune, Ken did not know or care—it was no concern of his. But the boy had said that he was not the son of Black Tom Daly, and Ken concluded that the Dutchman, in his lawless greed, had made some strange mistake. The whole matter was dismissed from Ken's

mind now. He had forgotten the boy's existence as his craft struggled and strained in the fierce wind.

Hudson had forgotten him, too, but he was reminded of him as the ketch gave a sudden lurch. Something crashed on him in the dark, and there was a sharp cry. He grasped at the "something" as it rolled, and caught the boy by the shoulder.

"Suffering cats!" exclaimed Hudson. "Is that the kid? Haven't you sense enough to hold on in a blow, you young fool?"

"I—I lost my hold!" came a gasp. The mate lifted him into the companion, the slim figure sagging in his grip. In the rolling of the ketch on the mountainous waves, the boy would have pitched helplessly down the steps had Hudson relaxed his hold. The mate half-led and half-carried him down to the cabin.

"Stick there, you clumsy swab!" he muttered.

He heard a sob in the darkness. It gave the finishing touch to his angry impatience. The boy looked at least sixteen, and was probably older, and the mate of the Dawn had no use for sob-stuff from man or boy. He gave a snort of contempt and tramped up the companion again, leaving the fugitive huddled on the lockers.

"We've picked up a packet of soft stuff!" he growled, as he rejoined King of the Islands by the binnacle.

Ken did not answer, even if he heard. His eyes were on his sticks, straining under the blow. And in a moment more the mate had again forgotten the existence of the boy.

"Feller light he stop along sea!" exclaimed Koko suddenly.

Skipper and mate started and stared round in the murk. In those lonely waters, far from all land but Kohu, they had not thought of seeing a ship's lights gleaming through the stormy night.

"Van Duck!" yelled Kit Hudson, shouting to make his voice audible above the roar of the wind, and Ken nodded. In those waters it was only the Sunda that was likely to be at hand.

Ken knifed his brows. He had cleared Kohu long before the Dutchman could make sail. He had hoped that he was done with the bully of the Sunda. Evidently Van Duck had put to sea as soon as he reached his schooner.

(Continued on page 10)

## TEN-MILE VOICE!

beggars have a trick of suddenly stopping in flight, to allow you to ram yourselves to bits. They must climb again, and keep climbing, so let 'em alone. We can wait!"

Miles apart, the cheery "O.K." signals flickered; and the battleplanes scattered wider before climbing again. It was the irony of Fate that Justice, after issuing his warning, should go blinding into peril within the minute.

For instead of stopping dead, inviting collision amid the smoke, the lower Globe plunged back through the air like a cannon-ball.

Barely in time did Justice glimpse a monstrous, black, swelling mass come plunging down on him as his plane skirted the under edge of the smoke-screen. As quick as lightning he banked the plane on a wing-tip to avoid collision by a matter of feet.

As he completed the turn and swung back, Len Connor made a lunge for the synchronised machine-guns.

Before the youngster could get there, however, a skinny yellow hand darted into the cabin and tripped the master-trigger. There came a tearing rattle from all six muzzles, spitting fire and tracer in a scouring broadside.

"Ham Chow!" exclaimed Len. "Good shooting, China!"

An expression that might have been defiance, disgust, or pure indifference flickered across Ham Chow's wizened face.

"Vellie bad blightahs! No likee!" he exclaimed, thrust two thick sandwiches into Len's hand, then vanished as abruptly as he had entered.

Out of the swirling blackness surged the Flying Globe, and his ruse having failed, the pirate commander apparently settled to a desperate battle for height without more delay.

Again Justice ordered his battleplanes to keep clear—which, doubtless, puzzled the pirates considerably. But the captain had his plans cut and dried. He intended to scuttle and destroy both those stratomachines in time, but only when all danger of the hulks crashing in American towns was past.

"How are we below, Connor?"

Len opened a window-slide, the better to stare down.

"We're well away from New York, but still over the coast," he reported.

Justice nodded and glanced at the altimeter. Thirty thousand feet now—increasing by hundreds with almost every breath he drew.

Pursued and pursuers were shooting steadily towards the limit of the eight-mile layer of the Earth's atmosphere, with the stratospheric void beyond. Under the dual power of air and rotors, the Flying Globes were increasing speed gradually as the atmospheric pressure lessened.

But Justice & Co., doggedly trailing, matched the enemy foot by foot. Len Connor readjusted the heating manifold as the air chilled, then studied the grey-black Globes ahead with critically thoughtful eyes.

You know, skipper, these stratomachines of Steinach's aren't so hot really," he announced at last, through a mouthful of sandwich. "I mean—well, they're tremendously powerful, ultra-revolutionary, and impregnable to ordinary shell-fire and so forth, but what can they do at the pinch but climb?"

"And we've never had the chance to see how high they can climb—we've always stopped 'em at it! The point I'm making is that, for all their fearsomeness, they can be beaten pretty handily by the machine we've got—as we'll demonstrate presently."

Len took another comfortable bite. "Anyhow, we've scuppered three of the big canisters so far," he mumbled. "And if we don't get a couple more now, it'll be our own fault. I think Steinach's a false alarm compared to Plaznagel—he'd have invented some means of smacking us down by now. At the rate we're going, we'll mop up this pirate outfit as fast as we catch 'em!"

Captain Justice smiled at the confident speech, shot another look aloft, then solemnly tapped Len's head.

"Touch wood," he replied quietly. "We'll nail these beggars for certain, but I've a strong hunch that Steinach's world-piracy campaign isn't nearly torpedoed yet! How do we know that he isn't learning from painful experience? Improving his machines, or the strength of the ray and general armament? And where the devil has he got his base and workshops?"

"That's something we simply can't discover, Len, so don't underrate Ludwig Steinach yet. I'd never put it past him to pull an ace from his sleeve, you know. As an inventor, the fellow could be in the same class as old Flaznagel if he weren't such an infernal crook!"

"H'm!" Len nodded reluctant agreement. The brief discussion ceased, and he stretched himself, feeling the back of the seat pressing against his shoulder-blades as the upward drive continued.

Suddenly the electric engines developed a thin, rhythmic whine as the plane shot into the stratosphere. An ice-cold breath filled the plane until the heating apparatus counteracted the freezing drop in temperature. Ham Chow, blinking his almond eyes rapidly, crawled into the control compartment, as if to be on hand for the finish.

And suddenly, Captain Justice smiled, though his eyes were like glinting steel points.

"Some of our fellows have had a long wait, but it's worth it, Connor," he drawled, pointing aloft. High over the ascending Globes, thousands of feet above, circled the six battleplanes that had detached themselves from the squadron before the rush on New York.

It was the closing of a patient trap at last. Justice had hustled the pirates clear of land and sea into an ambush high in the limitless stratosphere.

That the pirates had spotted their peril became obvious in another second or two. The monsters separated swiftly, rotors whirring at furious speed as if to crash wildly through the aerial net spread to ensnare them.

A hopeless effort! Like warring eagles, the battleplanes darted down on them with bullet and bomb, while Justice and the others spurted up from below. Uttering a breathless chuckle, Len Connor stationed himself at the machine-gun battery.

"We'll chop 'em to bits now! Squeeze 'em between the nutcrackers, with plenty of room to chuck the shells around!" he cried. Justice measured the fast-diminishing range; even he felt a thrill as the strange battle drew to its tempestuous crisis, miles above Earth. He sized up the situation with a final glance, and was about to signal the order for general attack when—

"CAPTAIN—JUSTICE!"

It was a voice out of the skies that literally crashed upon all ears and brains with the effect of a shell explosion. It was the harsh, thunderous challenge of a Titan, bellowing through space.

"Justice! Steinach is calling you!" it roared on, as the captain's hands went limp on the controls. "You have tried to trap my men once too often—now try to escape the counter-trap! This is your last fight, Captain Justice! Make the most of it, while the world listens-in!"

### Crashing to Earth!

FOR a full minute neither Justice nor Len could stir or speak.

They sat petrified; stunned and deafened by that blaring, brutal voice, which boomed out as if a giant radio had been turned up to the full extent of its volume. Every roaring word had come as a thunderclap that numbed the eardrums. The very interior of the cabin still quivered to its reverberating echoes.

And whence had it come? Justice looked dazedly at Len the youngster stared with blank eyes at his instruments. Certainly that mighty bellow had not been picked up and amplified to that extent and, expert in radio and acoustics as he was, Len sat open-mouthed and gasping, his fingers sliding from his ears.

"Well, Justice! Ready?"

Again the stentorian voice, seeming to thunder through all space. A peal of booming, demonic laughter followed, twisting the listener's faces with the pain of throbbing eardrums, making them shrink in their seats as from the blows of a club. White as a sheet, Len stumbled to his feet.

"What the—Where—" he cried hoarsely, then caught his breath when he saw the frozen expression on Justice's face. The captain was leaning across the control wheel, craning his neck upwards.

"Connor! Look! Up there—above our planes!"

Husky with consternation, Justice's cry sent the youngster spinning round to the bow windows. He peered upwards—and remained there, staring with bulging eyes.

Directly above the circling Globes and planes, two more of Steinach's amazing monsters were dropping swiftly down from an immeasurable height into space!

But there was something vastly different in style about these reinforcements, though Len only realised it vaguely at first. They were larger, they were faster, and—yes, by thunder, that was it! They looked as if they were rotorless!

"Suffering cats, you were right, skipper! Steinach has worked out a new stunt!" gasped Len, clawing at his binoculars. The descending machines seemed to leap down on him, huge and awe-inspiring, but he could see no trace of any rotors or lateral drive of any kind. Suddenly, the gleaming giants separated, changing course with astounding speed as they whirled to the attack in eccentric spirals.

For a minute or so, the machines looked like nothing else than enormous footballs, kicked aimlessly about the sky by invisible feet. But their terrific acceleration, the ominous rapidity of the descent, dispelled any illusions as to lack of control.

"Bigger and better Globes, eh?" Len gritted, swinging his glasses hurriedly to keep the swerving, twisting machines in focus. "And what's that?" he exclaimed suddenly as, on the underside of each colossal sphere, he made out a huge circular grille, formed of open metal bars. Once again, Steinach's voice bawled down the heavens, seeming to bellow right at the youngster's shoulder. It was then that instinct or training told Len that the voice was issuing from the strange grilles—amplified to an unheard-of volume by some new type of sound-apparatus.

"Jingo, this doesn't look so good, skipper," he muttered, but an impatient hand pulled him clear of the window. Captain Justice had recovered, his iron nerve resisting the shock. His bearded jaw thrust out, hard and truculent.

"To blazes with Steinach! He can't beat us by shouting at us!" Justice snapped. "Whatever new stunt he's got up there, I'll have these rotor-machines first! Snap into it, Connor! Back to your guns!"

"Your last fight, Justice!"

Hoarse and derisive, Steinach's laughter rolled again, infuriating the Gentleman Adventurer to fighting-pitch as he whirled the plane in a tight circle. His finger jabbed a radio-buzzer—General Attack! Great wings scythed the sky, as the battleplanes hurtled to destroy their victims before help could take effect.

And in the next breath, Justice felt himself hurled half-round in his swivel-seat—stupefied, stunned into a limp grogginess, as by the punch of a giant fist!

What happened, he did not know—only that, at the instant of attack, his multi-engined plane had reared up, actually stopped for a split-second, then reeled away, falling back as though it had crashed head-on into an unseen wall. It was dropping over on its left wing, shaking, shuddering from nose to tail. The cabin-windows whirled, crash upon echoing crash dinned in his ears. Above all rose a piercing, rasping drone that set red-hot fingers plucking at the nerves of his spine.

Fiercely, blindly, Justice grabbed at the controls, and the drone increased. There came another terrific jolting recoil, an uncanny impact that flung the huge machine half-over on its back. Justice's head jerked on his shoulders, a trickle of blood ran from his nose. His body, arms and legs were shaking as with an ague, to the thrill of agonising vibrations.

In a daze, he glimpsed Len Connor go shooting suddenly across the cabin, to crash against the hull and collapse in a heap. There was a thin, tremulous screech from Ham Chow which ended abruptly in a wail, a dull thud. Something appeared to have seized the plane, shaking it viciously as a gorilla might shake a child's rattle. It was twisting down through space in a mad, uncontrollable spin, losing height by hundreds of feet a second.

"Great James! The tricky hound—I'll smash him!"

Justice hardly recognised that hoarse, thick voice for his own. The weird drone seemed to penetrate into his brain, and he shook his head in torment. Goaded by sheer combative instinct, he clutched at the wheel again, centralising all controls to let the plane fly itself out of the spin. The lights on the dashboard were dead and dull. With sick dismay,

he knew that all his engines had been "killed."

Then again that smashing, unknown force, horrible and inexplicable, struck the machine, kicking its tail up, hurling it nose forward into another spin. Justice was thrown across his seat, Len Connor rolled loosely along the floor, an ugly cut above his closed eyes. As he fought the controls again the captain flung a desperate glance upwards.

A groan escaped him, the groan of a brave man overwhelmed by impossible odds. All four Globes were thousands of feet above him now—and his squadron had been destroyed! The droning, invisible force had flung his men out of the battle. All over the sky, great planes were spinning and falling, like leaves at the mercy of a gale.

Justice could make no further effort—yet. He could do nothing save brace himself despairingly as the maddening spin continued, threatening to tear the wings off the plane. His limbs jerked and twitched under the fearful vibration that still flowed through them. His mind clogged.

All he knew as he whirled through emptiness was that victory had been snatched from his grasp at the moment of seizing it. That the battle against the pirates of the Flying Globe must start all over again, with the odds heavy against him now. Somehow, somewhere, Ludwig Steinach had discovered a new and overwhelmingly powerful weapon that might yet make the criminal scientist master of the world.

It was triumph for Ludwig Steinach!

## Next Week: CAPTIVES OF THE COLOSSUS KING OF THE ISLANDS

(Continued from page 7)

He must have carried canvas recklessly in such a wind to be so near the Dawn after so long a lag.

But the boy trader shrugged his shoulders indifferently.

The light gleamed on the port quarter. If the Dutchman had seen him, it could only be the lights of the Dawn that revealed the ketch.

There was a sudden sharp yell from Koko. His brown hands almost released the spokes of the wheel for a second—but his grasp closed again on the instant.

Following that cry came a whiplike crack down the wind. King of the Islands uttered an exclamation of rage.

"They're firing! My saluted Sam! Koko!" He made a swift step towards the boatswain.

"All right, sar!" gasped Koko. "Feller shot go plenty too much close along head behind this feller, sar. Altogether too much close he stop. Makee losee feller come bang hair belong me, sar."

The rifle-shot could only have been fired at random, but it had gone close by chance, cutting a coral comb from the thick, dark hair of the Kanaka. Ken's hand went for a moment to the butt of the revolver in his belt. But he did not draw it.

Another whiplike crack was heard on the wind. The bullet tore through straining canvas overhead.

"Suffering cats!" muttered Hudson. "Van Duck means business, Ken! We've got a packet of trouble coming from that Dutch swab."

Ken King stepped to the wheel and took the spokes from Koko's brown hands.

"Douse the gilm, Koko!" he rapped. "You see, eye belong you, feller light he no stop!"

"Yessar!"

A minute more, and the Dawn was in darkness. Ken, at the wheel, stared back. Far away on the sea, falling farther behind, twinkled the dancing light of the Sunda. Once, twice, he fancied he heard the crack of the rifle, borne on the wind, but if the Dutchman was still firing, his shots came nowhere near the Dawn, lost in the darkness.

The light dipped and disappeared. Through the long, dark, stormy hours, through the racing, rolling seas the Dawn rode out the storm. When, at the glimmer of sunrise, the gale dropped, the shipmates scanned the tossing waste of waters and saw no sail. The Dutchman had lost them in the darkness and the Dawn rode alone on the wild waste of the Pacific.

## Next Week: BOY WITHOUT A NAME