

PRIZES OFFERED IN THOUSANDS! See Page 19

MODERN BOY

EVERY SATURDAY

2^D

No. 15. New Series
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EIGHT STORIES

including—

THE DUDE SHERIFF

Fun and Thrills in the Wild West

By GEO. E. ROCHESTER
(Cover illustration by C. P. SHILTON)

THE X WAVE SPY

Greatest Adventure of Jagers, Sky Detective

By JOHN TEMPLER

Fine Speed Story

SMASH-AND-GRAB SPEEDMAN

By CLIFFORD CAMERON

Beginning—

CHAMPION OF THE MAIN

By Flying-Officer JOHNS

King of the Islands in

RESCUE UNDER FIRE!

By CHARLES HAMILTON

FUN, NEWS, HOBBIES,
TRUE ADVENTURE





Ken pulled for all he was worth as Van Duck sent bullets crashing into the boat.

**News
for
Hudson**

FELLER boat, sar, belong Barney Hall!" said Koko.

Kit Hudson shaded his eyes with his hand and stared across the blue water. The whaleboat, under sail, surged through the Pacific rollers. The mate of the Dawn had been watching the sea southward, longing for a sight of Kohu, when from the direction of the distant island the boat danced into view.

The Dawn's whaleboat was packed. Left behind at Lu'uo when the Dutchman had fled with the stolen ketch, and Ken King a prisoner on board, Hudson had no doubt that Van Duck was making Kohu to seek the pearls and had lost no time in following. He had no craft but the whaleboat, and it was a long and dangerous trip for a boat, but the mate of the Dawn did not think of hesitating. Packed with provisions and water for the trip, with the whole crew aboard, the Dawn's whaleboat sailed out of Lu'uo.

There were seven in the boat—the mate, the boatswain, Lufu and Lompo, Tomoo and Kolu, the Hiva-Oa seamen, and Danny the cooky-boy. What luck they would have when they reached Kohu and encountered Van Duck and his cannibal crew was on the knees of the gods but not a man in Ken King's crew hesitated to follow Hudson to the rescue of their skipper and his ship.

But that the brutal Dutchman's prisoner would be found alive, Kit had little hope. To rescue him if alive—to avenge him if dead—that was the fixed determination of the mate as the whaleboat drew slowly nearer and nearer to distant Kohu.

"You tinkee Barney Hall stop along that feller boat, Koko?" asked Hudson, as he fixed his eyes on the tiny craft in the distance.

It was a lugger's dinghy, and there were four men in it. But Hudson's eyes, keen as they were, could not pick them out.

"Me savvy, sar," said Koko confidently. "That feller Barney Hall, sar, along Tonga boy belong lugger belong him."

Hudson's eyes remained fixed on the dinghy as the whaleboat drew nearer. He made out that one of the four was a white man, though burned by the sun almost as dark as a Kanaka. If it was Barney Hall, the trader of Tonga, he was an enemy—but Hudson would be glad enough to see him, if it meant news from Kohu.

The dinghy carried no sail. Two of the brown boys were pulling, and the white man stood up, his eyes fastened eagerly on the sail of the whaleboat. If Barney Hall had been on Kohu, he seemed to have lost his lugger there; and he must have been in desperate case to put to sea in a small dinghy, with a hundred miles' run to the nearest land. Likely enough, Hudson guessed, he had fallen foul of the other gang of pearl-poachers, and had had the worst of it.

"It's Hall," said Hudson. He recognized, at last, the Tonga trader.

Barney Hall was waving his hand to the whaleboat, and the dinghy pulled directly towards it. Barney wanted a meeting, as well as Hudson.

Hudson saw the surprise that leaped into Hall's face as the Tonga trader recognized him. But the dinghy came on. The last time they had met, it had been as foes; and Koko had flung the ruffian of Tonga headlong into the sea. But Barney was not thinking of that now—he was surprised, but evidently glad, to see the mate of the Dawn; and the dinghy at last rocked alongside the whaleboat, and the Tonga boys held on.

"Hudson, by hokey!" said Barney Hall, staring at Kit. "Ken King's mate, by hokey! We had trouble last time we met, skipmate—but I reckon you'll spare a keg of water for a distressed skipper—"

"Is that what you want?" grunted Hudson.

"I ain't stopped you jest to give you a hail, and you can lay to that," Hall answered gruffly. "If I'm to make land in this cockleshell, I ain't got a lot of time to waste."

"You're from Kohu?"

"You've guessed it," growled Hall, "and you're making Kohu, from your course. Mebbe you'll have better luck with Van Duck than I had."

"Is the Dawn at Kohu?" exclaimed Hudson.

"Ay, ay, she's there, in the lagoon. I reckoned it was your crowd coming when she sailed in, but it was that Dutch swab and his cannibal crew on board her. They've taken my lugger—"

"King of the Islands?" asked Hudson. "If you can give me news of my shipmate, you can ask for anything I can give."

"That's easy," grunted Hall. "King of the Islands is on Kohu."

"He lives?" said Hudson, with a deep breath.

"Ay, ay, unless he's gone down since

Rescue Under Fire

No method would be too ruthless for Van Duck to get the secret of the pearls of Kohu out of the boy Peter. Somehow, King of the Islands had to effect a rescue before it was too late!

By CHARLES HAMILTON

RIFLE in hand, Ken King stood by the starboard rail of the Dawn, and watched the beach of Kohu. There was no sign of life on the lagoon, or on the white beach that circled it, dazzling to the eye.

The pearl-er's hut, at the back of the beach, was silent and deserted. Beyond lay the thick, high bush, over-topped by nodding palms. That, too, was silent.

King of the Islands might have fancied himself alone on that solitary atoll, lost in the watery waste of the Pacific. But the bush, as he knew only too well, hid his enemies and the prisoner who had fallen into their hands.

Why Peter had left his safe refuge in the coral cavern on the outer reef Ken did not know. But he had, and had fallen into the hands of Van Duck and his savage crew. From the anchored ketch, Ken had seen him dragged into the bush. Where was he now? What was happening in the shadows of the high bush?

The boy had saved his life when the Dutch freebooter had left him bound to the coral, to perish in the rising tide. He could not leave him to his fate. But what could he do? To swim off from the Dawn, under the Dutchman's fire, would not save Peter—he would never reach the beach alive.

He cast a look towards the reef channel beyond which he could glimpse the outer reef and the wide-rolling Pacific. The immensity of the Pacific rolled and glimmered in the sunshine, unbroken by a sail or a sign of any craft. Not a speck on the sea to hint that the Dawn's whaleboat was coming, with Kit Hudson and his crew.

By almost miraculous good fortune, Ken had recaptured his ketch, but on the island, the Dutchman was master. He was helpless, till Hudson arrived with his crew. And there was no sign of their coming.

A stirring in the bush, near the pearl-er's hut, caught his eye. One of Van Duck's fuzzy-headed Solomon Islanders emerged, with a watchful eye on the ketch. Ken half-raised his rifle, and the black boy dodged into the wooden veranda in front of the pearl-er's hut.

Ken, as he watched over the Dawn's rail, was keeping in cover. Those ashore could see only his hat. He drew a deck-chair towards him, leaned his rifle against it, and shifted his hat to the muzzle of the rifle, crouching low out of sight.

The hat showed over the rail. To the eyes ashore, it looked as if King of the Islands was still there. That that was the case, he soon had proof, for a shot rang, and a bullet whizzed by the crown of his hat. Undoubtedly Van Duck believed that the head was in the hat.

On his hands and knees, Ken reached the companion and slipped below. In the state-room he fastened his revolver in a waterproof case and strapped it to his belt. Then he crept back to the deck and slid away to the port side of the ketch.

Another shot rang from the bush. It grazed the hat, twisting it a little on the muzzle of the rifle.

Keeping the mainmast between him and the beach, Ken drew himself swiftly over the port rail. He hung by his hands for a moment, then dropped into the water, the ketch between him and the shore, and swam out into the lagoon, keeping the ketch between him and his enemies.

Not till he was safe from sight of the keenest eyes ashore did he turn and head for the circling beach, far round the lagoon from the pearl-er's hut.

It was a long swim. But King of the Islands was a good swimmer, and it was little to him. The water was lukewarm, and in the ordinary way, Ken would have welcomed the dip. But now there was too much at stake. Not by the slightest splash must he reveal his presence, for what Van Duck missed, he knew that the hawk-eyed Solomon Island boys would pick out quickly enough.

At last, he drew himself out on the powdery sand and coral and shook the water from him in showers. Across the lagoon came echoing distant shots. The Dutchman was still loosing off bullets at the ketch.

But King of the Islands was ashore now. With his revolver gripped in his hand he plunged into the bush—to thread his way under cover round the lagoon, and reach the spot where the Dutchman and his crew lurked—to save Peter of Kohu, or fall in a last and desperate fight.

RESCUE UNDER FIRE

I pulled out," Hall shrugged his shoulders. "There was firing on the island in the night, and I heard shots at sunrise—I reckon Van Duck's crew wasn't potting one another! From what the boy said, King of the Islands was after getting his packet back from the Dutchman. No good asking me how it's ended, for I can't tell you."

"The boy?" repeated Hudson. "Do you mean Peter?"

"Peter—Black Tom Daly's son!" growled Hall. "If he'd stood in with me, as I offered him, fair and square, I'd have brought him off and the pearls with him." He spat an oath. "The young swab! Last I saw of him, he was scuttling into the bush, with the niggers after him. I reckon Van Duck's got him, and he'll make him talk, if a sting-rat tail can do it. I reckon Van Duck will sail away from Kohu with Black Tom's pearls under his hatches."

"Not if I can stop him!" said Hudson, between his teeth. "He was still on Kohu when you pulled out—when was that?"

"At sunrise!" answered Hall. "Van Duck's niggers would have kai-kai'd me, I reckon, but my crew got away in the dinghy, and I picked me off the reef. We had to run with no rations in the boat but a pile of coconuts. I reckon I was stopping with a crew of Malaita blacks at my heels! You'll let me have a keg of water, and mebbe a bag of biscuits?"

Hudson nodded. His face was brighter for the Tonga trader's news. He signed to Koko to pass a keg of water and a couple of bags of biscuits over the side. More he could not spare, for rations were far from ample for a crew of seven in the whaleboat.

"That's all I can do for you, Hall," he said. "Cast off!"

But Barney Hall's hands still held on the gunwale of the whaleboat. He had not finished yet.

"Hold on, shipmate!" he said. "There was an eager note in his voice. 'I reckon I was running you down to get rations if I could, never guessing that it was Ken King's mate, and Ken King's boat. But you'll be fighting with Van Duck and his crew the minute you set foot on Kohu. Some of his niggers went under when they seized my lugger, but he's got a crew to back him. Give me a tow back to Kohu, and I'll stand in with you. I've got three boys here—'

"Cast off!" snapped Hudson.

"I'll stand in with you and you'll be glad to help," said Barney Hall eagerly.

"Together, we'll beat Van Duck—and if King of the Islands is still alive, save him. And the pearls—"

"The pearls belong to Black Tom Daly, who lies sick at Ululo!" snapped Hudson. "Cast off, you swab!"

"You fool!" breathed Hall. "I tell you—"

"That's enough from you, Hall! Koko, fend that boat off."

Koko shoved out an oar and sent the dinghy rocking away. Barney Hall let go, narrowly escaping a fall into the sea.

The whaleboat glided on, the sail filling again. The trader of Tonga shook a savage fist after it.

The arrival of Hudson and the Dawn's crew had revived his hope of getting his greedy hands on the pearls of Kohu, but the mate of the Dawn was not likely to ally himself with the pearl-poaching ruffian of Tonga.

Barney stood shaking his fist and cursing as the whaleboat glided away, making the most of a fitful wind.

The Tonga boys dipped their oars again. With what Hudson had supplied, they had a chance of making land, and they were anxious to go. But at the dip of the oars Barney Hall made them a savage gesture to stop.

"The Tonga boys eyed him in wondering uneasiness.

"What name we stop along this place, sar?" asked Soo.

Barney Hall did not answer him. He stood in the rocking dinghy staring with knitted brows after the whaleboat, unable to make up his mind. He made it up at last.

"You feller boy, you washywasly back along Kohu!" he snapped.

"Oh, sar!" gasped Soo. "Solomon Island feller stop along Kohu—makee kai-kai along this feller Tonga boy."

"Feller Hudson and crew belong him plenty kill Solomon Island feller," said Barney. "You no fright along Solomon Island feller."

"Too much fright, sar, along Solomon Island feller," faltered Soo. "No wantee washee-washee along Kohu any more altogether, sar."

The next moment, the boat-steerer was stretched in the dinghy, under the crash of Barney Hall's heavy knuckles.

"You washy-wasly along Kohu!" roared Barney Hall. "My word, me knock seven bells outter you, souse you no washy-wasly plenty too quick."

And the Tonga boys, under the

menacing glare and brawny fist of Barney Hall, pulled in the wake of the disappearing whaleboat.

In Merciless Hands!

VAN DUCK fired a last shot at the Dawn, muttered a curse in Dutch, and tramped back into the bush. At a little distance from the beach there was an open space under a group of tall palm trunks, Peter was leaning. His hands were tied with a tapa cord, and three of the black crew squatted round him.

His face was pale, almost haggard, his dark eyes full of despair. King of the Islands could not help him as he had helped him before. And Black Tom Daly, for whose return he had waited and watched, was far away: a sick man in the trader's bungalow at Ululo. There was no help—and no hope!

Leaning on the palm, a prey to despair, the boy heard the firing as the Dutchman loosed off his revolver at the Dawn. But the rifle on the ketch had long ceased to reply. That did not surprise the Dutchman, who had fired stealthily from cover, without showing as much as a finger-tip to draw a return shot; but the boy wondered, with a heavy heart, whether King of the Islands lay wounded or dead on the deck of the ketch he had recaptured single-handed.

A shiver ran through him as the Dutchman emerged into the clearing.

The three Solomon Islanders looked inquiringly at their master. At a sign from him, the boy would have fallen under a bush-knife. But Peter did not fear the savage blacks so much as he feared the brutal, red-bearded Dutchman. The gleaming glint in the little piggy eyes, deep-set in the fat face, sent a chill of terror to his very soul.

"Ach!" said the Dutchman, standing before him. "I have found you on Kohu. Now you will tell me where Black Tom cached the pearls!"

Van Duck grinned. He was intensely elated by the capture of Peter. He had searched the pearly's hut, and hunted over Kohu, as Barney Hall had searched and hunted before him, but without discovering a trace of the cache of pearls which he knew that Tom Daly had left on Kohu when he pulled out for Lukwe. Not for a moment had he dreamed that the pearly's son was on the island—until, that morning, he had seen him fleeing from the blacks—fleeing in vain!

He had lost the Dawn—he had lost half his crew in attempting to re-take it—but he cared little now. The boy who knew the secret of the pearls was in his hands—and he should tell the secret! Let Ken King keep the ketch he had recaptured, it mattered little, if he laid his hands on the pearls! He could pull out of Kohu in Barney Hall's lugger, with what was left of his crew, once the treasure was in his hands. The capture of Peter made all the difference.

"You will speak!" he grinned. "You are the son of Tom Daly—he did not keep the cache a secret from his son. Speak, and you shall live!"

"I told you, on the Sunda, that I was not Tom Daly's son," replied the boy. "It was the truth! I am not his son."

The grin faded from the Dutchman's face, and an evil, threatening look took its place. The boy spoke so earnestly that it seemed impossible that he was not telling the truth. A doubt crept into Van Duck's mind.

"You say again that you are not his son?" he muttered.

"I am not—I am not!" panted the boy.

"Ach! If you are his son, you know the secret—if you are not his son, he would not have trusted you with it," said the Dutchman slowly. "But"—his evil eyes scanned the pale face more closely—"you lie, you young swab, you lie! I can trace his features in yours—you lie!"

In the youthful features of the boy there could be little resemblance to the rough, black-bearded pearly and beach-comber, Tom Daly. Yet the Dutchman was certain, as Barney Hall had been certain, that he traced a likeness.

"You lie!" he repeated. "Tell me the truth!"

"I have told you the truth—I am not Tom Daly's son! I cannot help it if you do not believe me—but it is the truth!"

Again the Dutchman, doubted. He stood for some moments in savage silence. Then he glanced round at the watching blacks.

"You feller Koyo!" he grunted and one of the squatting Solomon Islanders lunged to his feet. "You makee feller knife stop along neck belong that white feller! Along me sing out, you cuttee off head belong that feller."

Koyo stepped towards the boy, the long, heavy bush-knife in his hand. Peter gave a cry and shrank from him.

The black's brawny left hand grasped his shoulder and held him as helpless as an infant. Then the keen bush-knife, in Koyo's right hand, was pressed to his

shrinking neck. Half-fainting, the boy sagged in the Solomon Islander's brawny grasp.

"Now tell me the truth!" said Van Duck. "The truth, before your head rolls from your shoulders."

The boy's face was as white as the powdered coral of the beach. But his answer came clearly.

"It is the truth! I am not the son of Tom Daly! He would tell you so, if he were here! It is the truth."

Van Duck clenched his hands with rage. In the very shadow of death, the boy persisted in his denial.

It needed but a word for the savage to strike, and in his rage and disappointment, the freebooter was tempted to give that word. But he did not give it.

"Ach!" he said, grinding his teeth. "If it is the truth, if you are not, as I would have sworn, the pearly's son, then you are of no use to me. But I do not believe you—I will not believe you!"

He signed to Koyo to put away the knife, and snarled savage orders to the blacks. Peter's wrists were loosened. As he stood leaning against the palms, his hands were drawn back on either side of the slender trunk and bound together again behind it.

His eyes sought the Dutchman's brutal face. Van Duck gave him a black and bitter scowl.

"Ach!" he growled. "If you are not Tom Daly's son, if you have nothing to tell me, stick there till you perish! If you can tell me the secret of the pearls, you shall ransom your life with it! If you cannot, you shall pay with your life! Have you anything to say now?"

The boy did not speak, and with a muttered curse in Dutch, Van Duck turned and tramped away through the bush towards the lagoon.

Two of the blacks followed him, but Koyo remained watching the prisoner. There was no chance of his escaping from the cord that was cruelly knotted, fastening him to the palm, but the Dutchman was taking no risks. Koyo squatted by an adjacent palm, and chewed betel-nut, only casting an occasional indifferent glance at the prisoner.

The sun, burning from a cloudless sky, poured down tropic heat. Insects settled in clouds on the boy. He could make no movement to shake them off.

From the edge of the bush towards the lagoon came the sound of a barking revolver. The Dutchman was firing on the Dawn again. Probably he expected, before an hour had passed, to hear the voice of the boy calling, calling to be released, at any cost, from the torture of burning heat and stinging flies. But when a sound came, at last, to his ears, it was not the calling voice of the boy of Kohu that he heard.

Peter's Secret

KING of the Islands paused and listened. From the thickness of the dark tangle of bush round him, a low, strange sound came to the boy trader's ears.

He could not, at first, make out what it was. But as he realized that it was a moaning sound of pain, his brows knitted and his eyes gleamed. He could guess that it came from the Dutchman's prisoner.

King of the Islands pushed on through the bush more swiftly and less cautiously. Whether life or death awaited him, he could not delay now, with that sound in his ears.

Suddenly, through the tangle, he looked into a clearing, where a bunch of palms nodded against the burning sky. And had the Dutchman been in sight at that moment, he would have shot him down like a wild beast.

But the Dutchman was not to be seen. Under a palm, a brawny black man sprawled, chewing betel-nut, lazily spitting out juice. Near him, the boy of Kohu hung, overcome with heat and weariness, on the trunk of a slender palm. His back was to it, his arms drawn behind it and tied, and his weight hung on them. A buzzing cloud of bush flies hummed round him. From his parched lips came a low moan.

Only for a moment King of the Islands looked—then he leaped into the clearing. There was a startled howl from Koyo, and he bounded to his feet, staring blankly at the unexpected sight of the white man, snatching at his bush-knife.

King of the Islands fired at him point-blank.

He was only just in time, for the knife would have whizzed in another moment. Koyo yelled again as the bullet struck, and rolled over, the knife falling to the ground. The Solomon Islander did not stir again.

Ken thrust the revolver into his belt and leaped to the boy, his knife in his hand.

Peter's dazed eyes stared at him dizzily. He was only half-conscious. A slash of the knife, and he was free. Then, from the direction of the lagoon,

came a yelling and the roar of the Dutchman. The shot had given the alarm. One of the boy trader's foes lay like a log on the earth, but a crashing in the bush told that the others were coming. He grasped Peter's arm.

"Quick!" he breathed.

The boy sagged helplessly against him, utterly exhausted, half-fainting. There was no moment to lose. Ken swung the boy across his shoulder like a sack of copra and rushed into the bush.

Hardly a minute later, Van Duck was on the scene, spluttering rage and amazement at the sight of Koyo dead on the ground, and the cut cord lying at the foot of the palm—and his prisoner gone.

In bewildered rage, the Dutchman stared round him.

His only enemy on Kohu was King of the Islands. Though the ruffian's dull brain did not work quickly, he realised that Ken King must somehow have left the ketch—that he had been here!

From a distance came a crashing sound—more than a sufficient guide to the Dutchman. He dashed in savage pursuit, three or four blacks following.

King of the Islands heard them as he panted on with his burden. He was heading for the open beach. There was no hope of escape by flight in the bush, burdened as he was.

He emerged from the bush into the blaze of sunlight, the lagoon before him. For a second he paused, his swift glance flashing up and down the beach. No foe was in sight. They were behind him, and following fast.

He raced down the beach to where the Dutchman's boat lay at the water's edge, opposite the anchorage of the Dawn. From the boy, slung over his shoulder, came no word, no sound. He dropped him into the boat, and, exerting all his strength, shoved it into the water, and clambered over the rocking gunwale as it shot out into the lagoon.

Ken sprawled in it, but he picked himself up in a moment and grasped the oars. Lightning was hardly swifter than his movements as he jammed the oars into the rowlocks and pulled.

Peter raised his arm on his elbow, staring at him dizzily. Ken did not heed him. Looking back as he pulled with fierce strength, he saw the Dutchman and the blacks breaking out of the bush to the beach. He saw them staring up and down the beach in search of him—not, for the moment, looking out at the lagoon, where he was already almost a cable's length out.

But the Dutchman saw that the boat was missing. His piggy eyes glared out over the lagoon. He gave a roar of fury at a wave he saw, and came thundering down the beach, loosing off his revolver at the boat.

A bullet splashed into the water alongside; a second crashed on the boat, tearing away a splinter.

But the boat had reached the Dawn. It shot past the stern of the ketch as a third bullet from the Dutchman whipped a lock of hair from the head of the boy trader. But another moment, and the boat had shot round the ketch and the bulk of the Dawn interposed between King of the Islands and the fire from the beach.

Panting, the boy trader grasped the low freeboard of the Dawn, and held on. The Dutchman was still firing, the bullets whipping over the ketch. But he was safe now.

For a long minute King of the Islands stood there, holding on to the ketch while he recovered his breath after that desperate effort. Then he made fast the boat's painter to the rail.

"Get aboard," he said, and stooped and helped the tottering boy to his feet. "Take care of the barbed wire."

The boy nodded—he could not speak. Ken pulled aside the strand of barbed wire, and the boy climbed on board the ketch. King of the Islands followed him.

A bullet came humming over the opposite rail. Ken half carried the boy below into the state-room, and lifted him to one of the bunks.

"Safe now!" said Ken reassuringly, as the boy lay panting. "We've had luck, Peter. Pull yourself together!" he added, as a sob shook the exhausted figure in the bunk. "You're safe from Van Duck now. He cannot get at you here—dare not try!"

The boy did not speak. His face was covered with his hands, and tears trickled through his fingers.

Ken stood looking at him, hardly knowing what to say or to do. The boy had shown courage and determination more than once, yet at the same time he seemed timid. And now that the stress of danger was over, he crumpled up and wept like a girl.

A girl! And at that thought a strange and startling suspicion shot into the mind of King of the Islands. He caught his breath.

"My sainted Sam!" he breathed. In that moment he knew Peter's secret. He said no more. Quietly he left the state-room, shut the door after him, and went back to the deck.

Next Week:
FLAMING ARROWS