

You Can Start
It To-day—

PERCY F. WESTERMAN'S NEW STORY

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MYSTERIOUS UNKNOWNNS MAKE AN ATTEMPT ON SCOTTY'S
LIFE! THRILLING INCIDENT FROM—

TIME BOMB!

KING of the ISLANDS

Laughs and jeers were all that Danny the cooky-boy got when he reported a "debble" aboard the Dawn. Then his superstitious fear took hold of the other natives—drove them to mutiny!

—By—

**CHARLES
HAMILTON**

"What's the Game?"

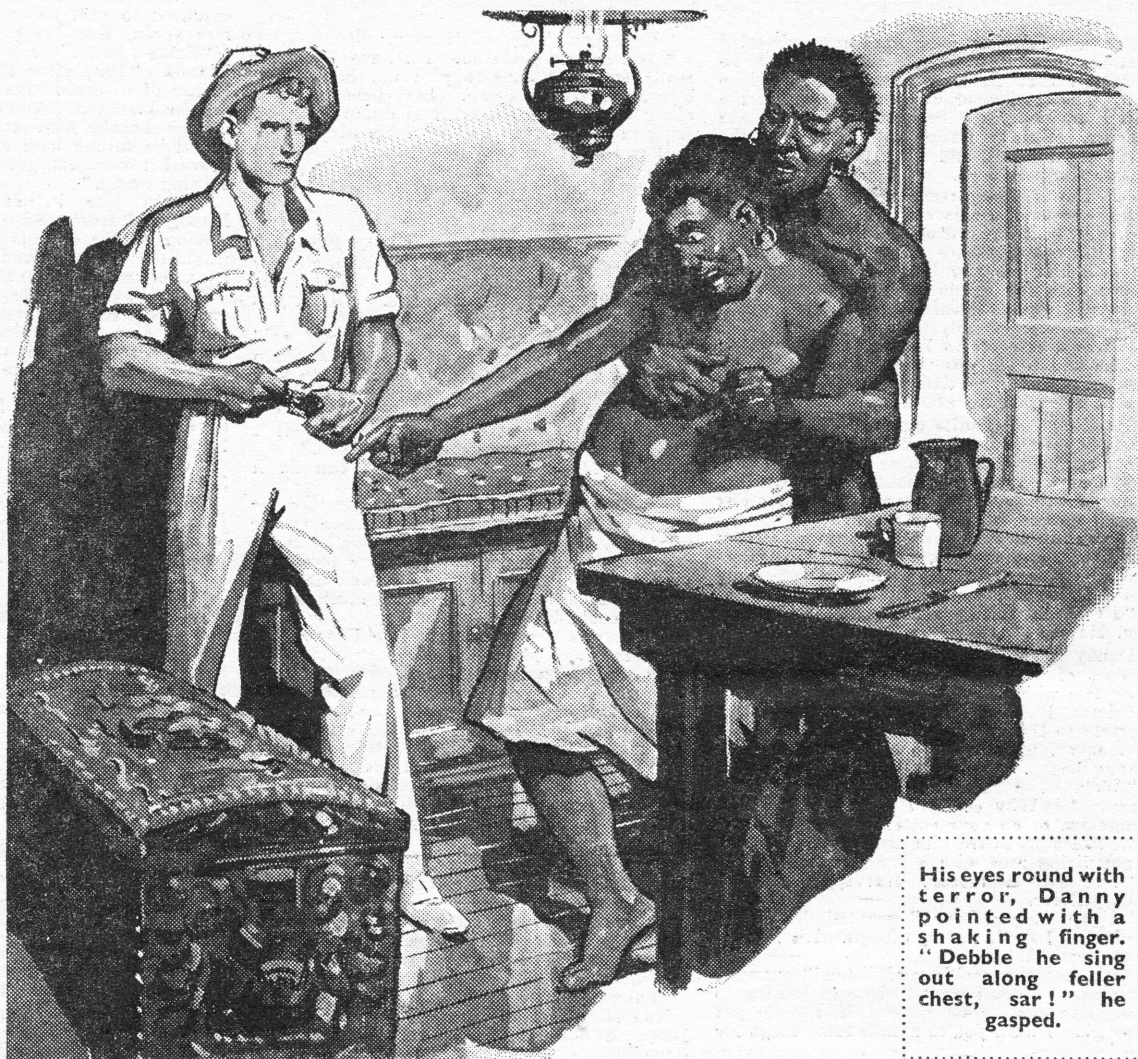
DANNY, the cooky-boy of the Dawn, was sprawling under the shade of the palms at the back of the beach on the island of Lukwe. From where he lay he could see the white beach, the shining lagoon, and the Dawn lying at anchor. Ken King, otherwise King of the Islands, the boy skipper and owner, was visible on deck. With him was Kit Hudson, his young Australian mate and partner.

It was a blazing tropical day, the sun burning down on the beach and the lagoon; but where Danny lay under the nodding palms it was shady, and the cooky-boy was happy and comfortable, chewing betel-nut, squirting out the red juice, and thinking of nothing at all.

A grin wreathed his fat brown face as a dapper figure in spotless white ducks and pipe-clayed shoes came swinging up from the beach. Dandy Peter Parsons, the sea-lawyer of Lukwe, scowled at him. The fat cooky-boy was inoffensive enough, but Peter Parsons' hatred of the shipmates of the Dawn was deep and bitter, and extended to all the crew. And perhaps Danny's fat grin irritated him. Dandy Peter's foot was small and shapely, but it had a lot of driving force, and it landed on the cooky-boy with a heavy thud.

Danny howled and bounded up. Fat and lazy as he was, he could move quickly enough with a white man's foot to help him! He covered about seven feet with a backward jump.

"You plenty bad white feller!" gasped Danny. "What name you kill this feller Danny, foot belong you?"



His eyes round with terror, Danny pointed with a shaking finger. "Debble he sing out along feller chest, sar!" he gasped.

"You seum!" snarled Dandy Peter, following him up and delivering another kick before Danny could dodge.

"Me sing out along master belong me, sar!" howled Danny. "You no flaid along this cooky-boy—you plenty too much flaid along white master King of the Islands. Me savvy too much that feller white master plenty kill you along lawyer-cane, along bungalow belong you."

Dandy Peter was about the last man in the Islands to take a taunt from a native. And that scene in the veranda of his bungalow was a black and bitter memory to him. That he had robbed the shipmates, and that they had only come to claim their own when they forced him to disgorge his loot, mattered nothing to Dandy Peter. His defeat rankled bitterly, and still more bitterly the lashes of the lawyer-cane. He made a rush at Danny.

Danny promptly dodged round a palm-trunk. He was not letting the dapper desperado get within reach again if he could help it. Parsons rushed after him. But Danny dodged round trunk after trunk, and he was rather better at that game than the sea-lawyer. Peter Parsons pursued him in vain.

He stopped at last, panting for breath.

Danny grinned at him impudently from behind a palm.

"You plenty bad white feller!" he jeered. "You no kill this cooky-boy, foot belong you, s'pose white master King of the Islands stop along this place. Me savvy you plenty too much fright along that feller. You plenty too much fright along feller Hudson. Me savvy too much."

The grin vanished off his fat brown face as Dandy Peter's hand suddenly shot to his hip and whipped out a revolver. Even on a lawless island like Lukwe, and even in dealing with a desperado like Parsons, he had not expected that, and with terror in his face he made a sudden bolt into the palm-grove.

Bang! The bullet barely missed a leaping brown bare foot as Danny ran. Dandy Peter was shooting at the whisking fat brown legs, and the cooky-boy felt the whip of the bullet on his skin as it grazed.

Danny's frightened howl rang through the palms. He ran like the wind, and vanished among the slanting palms. He was gone from sight before Peter Parsons could pull trigger a second time.

Through the palm-trees Danny ran, and on into the bush that clothed the slopes of the hill beyond. He followed a runway through the bush, and came to a halt at last where a

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many-stemmed banyan-tree towered over the bush. Under this he dived.

Its many trunks circled him, and the thick masses of foliage overhead shut off the sunlight, making the spot deeply dusky. In that deep cover he intended to remain till he was sure that it would be safe to scuttle down to the beach and get back to the Dawn. But he trembled at the glimmer of the white ducks coming along the runway, and his heart almost died within him as the dapper figure came to a halt.

For a terrifying moment Danny dreaded that he was discovered; but the next he discerned that Parsons' back was turned to him. The sea-lawyer was standing under the vast branches of the banyan, looking up the runway. Silently Danny sank down on the earth and lay still and silent, waiting for the Lukwe skipper to go.

But Dandy Peter remained where he was, and the scent of a cigarette reached the cooky-boy. Slowly it dawned on Danny's fuzzy brain that Parsons' presence there had nothing to do with him. Dandy Peter had some reason of his own for stopping under the banyan, and probably had dismissed the cooky-boy and his impudence entirely from his mind.

It was a comfort to Danny to realise that, all he had to do was to wait in silence, unseen. He was in no danger from Parsons unless he attracted his attention.

Standing there, quite unaware of the scared cooky-boy hardly a dozen feet away, Dandy Peter smoked cigarette after cigarette. Every now and then an impatient mutter reached Danny's ears. The skipper of the Sea-Cat was, it seemed, waiting for somebody.

It was full twenty minutes before a footstep was heard, and a rustle, which told that someone else was arriving. Then the cooky-boy heard Parsons' sharp, irritated voice.

"I've been waiting a dickens of a time for you, Harvey!"

Danny knew the name—that of one of the traders of Lukwe. He was lost in wonder. Why two white men should meet in secret in the bush, like two plotting Kanakas, was a mystery to Danny. It seemed to be a mystery to Harvey, too, to judge by the answer that Danny heard.

"Well, I'm here! What's the game, Parsons? Why couldn't I see you at your bungalow, or on your cutter, or at Danagan's store?" Danny heard him grunt, as he mopped a perspiring face with a handkerchief.

"I've got a reason, Harvey!" snapped Dandy Peter.

"I suppose you have!" grunted the Lukwe trader. "I don't get it, though. It's like an oven here. Why—"

"Oh, cut the cackle and listen!" snapped Parsons. "I don't want to be seen talking to you. I've got to be careful if I'm to get through. I want you to handle some cargo for me."

"You could have told me that at Danagan's—"

"I couldn't. I suppose you've noticed that King of the Islands' ketch is in the lagoon?"

Danny gave a little start at the mention of his master. He heard Harvey give a gruff chuckle.

"Ay! From what I hear you've had trouble with him. He—"

"Cut that out!" snarled Parsons. "The Dawn's pulling out at sun-up, from what I hear."

"That's so," answered Harvey. He chuckled again. "I've heard that it was on your account that King of the Islands put in here, but he's not the man to lose a chance of picking up freight, if there's any going. That mate of his has been drumming round for cargo. I believe they've picked up a few tons."

"I've got a spot of cargo for the Dawn."

"Oh!" said Harvey. "That's a new line for you, Parsons—I shouldn't have thought you'd put cargo in King of the Islands' way. But what about it? No need to drag me here to tell me that."

"I want you to handle it! I can't deal personally with that swab," growled Peter Parsons. "I reckon that if I stepped on his ketch, we shouldn't keep our hands off one another. And he wouldn't accept cargo from

me. He may be keen on freights, but he'd touch nothing from me. You know that."

"That's so. But I don't get you," said Harvey. "There's other craft in the lagoon."

"The Dawn's making Suta from here. I've got a chest of sandalwood samples for Milsom at Suta. It's only a spot of cargo, not worth any skipper's while unless he happens to be making Suta. King of the Islands would refuse to touch anything from me—but he'd be glad to pick up a sack of copra from any other trader. I'm going to make use of him and his rotten ketch without his knowing it. Got that?"

"I get you!" agreed Harvey. "You handle the stuff. I'll have the chest ready for your boys to pick up, behind my bungalow, before dawn. Let them carry it along to your warehouse, and dump it there. King of the Islands will send his niggers for it if you fix it up with him. But, understand—it's your cargo. If those swabs got the slightest hint that it was mine, they'd refuse to touch it. We're on fighting terms, and they'd not be made use of if they knew it."

"I can manage that all right, Parsons," said Harvey. "Hudson's asked me already if there's anything going. I've told him no; but I can easily put that right. I'll let you know."

"Don't come up to my bungalow," said Parsons hastily. "If you're seen in touch with me, they might tumble to it. That's why I sent you a chit to see me here to-day. If you can't fix it with King of the Islands, you can come and tell me so—if I don't see you, I'll take it that it's fixed."

"Right!" yawned Harvey. "I can fix it all right. Leave it to me!"

The two men remained talking together for a few minutes more, then the Lukwe trader went back along the runway. Dandy Peter stayed on smoking, giving Harvey plenty of time to get clear before he followed down to the beach. But at last he went, much to the hidden cooky-boy's relief.

But it was a good hour before Danny ventured to leave his hiding-place and take his wary way down to the beach. By that time his fuzzy head was no longer retaining the talk he had heard between the two men under the banyan-tree. It had, in fact, gone in at one fat ear, and out at the other. Danny, glad to get back to the Dawn without further trouble, forgot all about Dandy Peter—the pots and pans in his galley being quite sufficient to occupy his fuzzy mind.

Danny's Probing Knife

It was dawn on Lukwe, the lagoon rippling brightly in the sunrise. Natives were to be seen on the beach, but the white men were not yet stirring in their bungalows.

Ken King was sitting on the taffrail of the Dawn, a book on his knee, going through some items of cargo.

"All aboard except Harvey's chest," said Hudson. "We've got to send for that before we get the hook up, Ken."

"Ay, ay!" answered Ken. "If Harvey's not up, his boys will hand it over. Koko, old coffee-bean, you go along Mr. Harvey's warehouse along beach, along you fetch feller chest along this packet."

"Yessar!" Koko, the brawny boatswain, pulled away in the whaleboat, with Lompo and Kolulo. Danny brought breakfast along from the galley for the shipmates on the after deck. The comrades of the Dawn had bright and cheerful faces that sunny morning.

They had wondered whether they would pull off of Lukwe without further trouble with Dandy Peter. Neither of the shipmates would have been surprised by some desperate attempt on the part of Dandy Peter to avenge the thrashing they'd given him. Only too well they knew his bitter animosity, and how he would be thirsting for revenge. But they had seen nothing of him, save an occasional glimpse on the beach; and though they were quite ready for trouble if it came, they were glad enough to avoid it. If Dandy Peter chose to let the matter drop, they were more than willing.

As the sun rose higher, white men ashore began to appear in their verandas, and

the shipmates glanced at Dandy Peter's bungalow, which faced the lagoon, at the back of the beach. But there was no sign of stirring there. Hudson gave a little laugh.

"Dandy Peter's letting it drop, Ken!" he remarked.

"Looks like it," agreed Ken. "I'm glad. We don't want any more trouble with the swab."

"But it rather beats me," said the mate of the Dawn. "That sea-lawyer's as packed with malice as a tiger-shark, and nobody can say that he's wanting in courage. I never expected to pull clear without hearing from him again, Ken."

"Same here!" admitted King of the Islands. "But, after all, what could he do? Either of us could knock him out in a scrap, and he knows it. And if he started a brawl on the beach, with a gun in his hand, he would be taking long chances. I reckon he's chewed it over, and got down to it that there's nothing doing."

"Looks like it, at any rate," agreed Hudson. "Here comes Koko."

King of the Islands looked down into the whaleboat as it rocked under the rail. A long, bulky chest of teakwood lay in the boat.

Tomoo and Lufu helped the others get it on board. It was extremely heavy, as well as bulky. Ken and Kit looked at it curiously as it lay on the deck. It was six feet long, more than two wide, and the lid was fastened with a strong-looking lock. A label stuck on the lid bore the name of Milsom, the trader at Suta. The box was wholly of teak, a very hard and very heavy wood.

"What the dickens is Harvey sending to Suta in that?" said Hudson.

"Sandalwood carvings, he said," answered Ken. "He seems to be taking enough care of 'em, packing 'em in a teak chest of that left. You put that feller chest along trade-room, Koko."

"Yessar."

Koko and Lompo carried the long chest down to the cabin, grunting under its weight, hefty Kanakas as they were. It was dumped down below, and they came back on deck, breathing hard.

That was the last spot of cargo to come on board. The anchor was lifted, sail shaken out, and the Dawn glided away to the reef passage. Kit Hudson took a last glance at Dandy Peter's bungalow as the ketch made the reef; but the building was still shut; there was no sign of the sea-lawyer of Lukwe to be seen. The mate of the Dawn shrugged his shoulders, but he wondered. It was not like Dandy Peter to leave his enemies to sail in peace from Lukwe without at least an attempt at vengeance.

But that, it seemed, was how the matter stood, and as the ketch left the reef astern and spread her sails to the wind on the Pacific he dismissed Dandy Peter from mind.

Meanwhile, Danny was below, swabbing the cabin floor. And every now and then he glanced at the long teak chest that lay by the doorway of the lazarette where it had been dumped by Koko and Lompo. In his fuzzy-headed way Danny had forgotten the talk he had heard between Parsons and Harvey the previous day. It had not even occurred to his dense brain to mention it to his white master. But it was recalled to his mind by the sight of the chest.

Dandy Peter, from what he had heard, was making use of his old enemy to get that chest conveyed to Suta. It was certainly true that King of the Islands would have refused to have any dealings whatsoever with the sea-lawyer of Lukwe. Had he been aware that that teak chest belonged to Peter Parsons he would never have allowed it to come on board the Dawn. It had been consigned by Harvey, and Ken naturally supposed it to belong to the Lukwe trader.

The sea-lawyer's trickery in the matter did not worry Danny at all; he was himself as full of trickery as a monkey. Moreover, the affairs of white masters, whether friends or foes, were nothing to Danny. Even had he thought of it, he would not have intervened. His interest in the teak chest was purely due to the fact that he knew that it belonged to Peter Parsons and that Peter Parsons had kicked him and scared him almost out of his wits with a pistol-shot.

Had it been a small case that could have

been lifted and tipped out of a porthole, Danny would have done exactly that. He would have grinned with glee at the idea of such a blow back at the Lukwe skipper who had booted him.

But the chest was too heavy even for Danny to shift, let alone lift. He gave it inimical looks as he swabbed the floor. Presently he stood his mop against a locker, stepped to the companion, and looked up and listened. There was a pad of bare brown feet on the deck above, and he heard the voice of Koko calling to one of the seamen. Assured that no one was, for the moment, coming below, Danny cut across to the chest, bent over it, and examined the lock. His black eyes gleamed from his fat face.

Sandalwood carvings, which the chest was said to contain, might be valuable, and from the fact that they were consigned in a teak chest of such strength it looked as if they were very valuable indeed. But if Danny could have opened the chest the contents would not have been of much value after he had finished with them! Dandy Peter would have paid for those kicks to the exact value of the contents of the chest.

But Danny quickly discovered that the lock was beyond his powers. He took a knife from his mop of hair and tried the blade on the lock, in the hope of being able to force it open. The knife scratched the metal, but had no other result.

Danny gave an angry grunt and tried forcing the knife-blade under the lid. But it fitted too tightly for that.

"My word!" ejaculated Danny suddenly. He fixed his eyes on the end of the chest. He had not noticed before, but he saw now that several holes were bored in the wood at the end. They were small and some distance apart, not noticeable in the dark wood unless looked at closely. Danny would never have observed them had he not been examining the chest attentively. But he spotted them now, and they astonished him.

He stepped to the other end and looked at that also. There was the same arrangement of little round holes.

Why the ends of a chest, in which sandalwood was packed, were perforated was a mystery to Danny. Not that he gave it any thought. He was astonished, and he left it at that.

But it seemed to the cooky-boy that the existence of those perforations gave him a chance to carry out his desire—which was to damage the goods within as a retaliation on Parsons.

Kneeling at the end of the chest, he inserted the keen point of his knife in one of the perforations and began to work it. His idea was, if he could, to split the wood from one perforation to the next. Once a section was knocked out large enough to admit the handle of a mop, a few lunges would soon deteriorate the value of those sandalwood carvings!

But the wood was hard—very hard—and Danny made little progress. He scraped and scraped till he was able to push the blade of the knife through the perforation; but splitting the wood was quite another matter.

It was then that Danny had the surprise of his life! From within the teak chest came a sudden sound!

It was a sharp cry—a sharp, involuntary cry of pain, just as if the keen point of the knife had penetrated a human limb!

That cry was echoed by a howl of amazement and terror from Danny.

He leaped back as if he had been electrified. His eyes, rolling wildly, bulged from his fat face at the chest.

"Aitoo!" gasped Danny.

His brown face was as pale as a Kanaka's face could be. His jaw dropped, his teeth chattered.

He backed away from the chest, his eyes fixed on it, not daring to turn his back on it. Trembling in every limb, he backed to the companion.

No sound was repeated from the chest. It lay silent as before. But that sudden cry from within still rang in Danny's terrified ears.

A white man might have drawn very different conclusions from it, but to the Kanaka's fuzzy mind there was only one explanation—it was an "aitoo"—a devil in the chest.



THE EDITOR TALKS

Address your letters to:
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IT'S coming next week: the story you've all been waiting for—the latest Air-Ace Biggles adventure from the pen of Flying-Officer W. E. Johns! And what a story! It jumps into its exciting stride right from the starting gun, and thrill follows thrill in breathless succession. Picture to yourself Biggles and his comrades, Algy and Ginger, lazing on the deck of a cargo steamer. Biggles has been ordered a health cruise, and he's bored stiff. Nothing ever happens at sea, he says. And scarcely are the words out of his mouth than he's proved wrong—so wrong in fact, that before he really realises what is happening, he's battling for his life, pitchforked willy-nilly into the Spanish war. I won't spoil your enjoyment of the opening chapters by saying what happens next, but I assure you that "WINGS OVER SPAIN" is going to grip you right from the opening word. As you know, Flying-Officer Johns recently came top of the poll in a popularity contest, and this story is going to enhance his reputation—make him and his famous air-ace even more popular. And only in MODERN BOY will you be able to read "WINGS OVER SPAIN" for some time to come, so if you know any Biggles fans who are not readers, pass the word around about this new yarn. But before you do that, make sure of your future copies of MODERN BOY by giving your newsagent a standing order for them. It would be too bad to do your pals a good turn and then get left out in the cold!

Supporting Biggles will be four other top-of-the-tree stories—a grand assortment of fun and thrills on land and sea.

Charles Hamilton supplies the sea thrills in "THE CHEST OF TERROR." For the moment, King of the Islands has got the upper hand of his crew, who have been driven to rebellion by superstitious fear. Ken knows that there's more trouble ahead so soon as darkness settles over the Pacific, but even he does not dream what strange events the night is to bring—events that almost lead the boy trader himself to believe that his ketch is haunted!

Percy F. Westerman carries his story, "STANDISH AND THE SECRET SIGN," along at brisk pace. Below ground, the gangsters are hard at it, loading munitions into their submarine. Above ground, Courtney Mills, the Scotland Yard man, is racing through the night, carrying the news of his discovery, planning to capture the gangsters. Then comes the clash!

Yarn-spinner Goffin, in his own inimitable way, tells the story of "DUTCH JAKE'S TREASURE." His Uncle George is the fellow who goes after the hoard, and the most amazing things happen to him—things that will alternately set you agog with excitement and roaring with laughter!

George E. Rochester, continuing his stories of the Worst Squadron in France, packs action and surprises into "MARKED MAN!" To tell you more would spoil the story for you, so I'll just mention that Scotty is bang up against trouble with a capital "T," and leave it at that.

Your sincere friend,

THE EDITOR

"Debbles" of every variety were well known to Danny, as to all Kanakas; white men did not believe in them, but every Kanaka knew what innumerable debbles existed, haunting the footsteps of men. For a cry to come from a locked chest plainly told of the supernatural—and Danny would not have been much more surprised and horrified had some fearsome form emerged from the perforation in the end of the chest.

No such form did, but Danny watched the chest in almost palsied terror as he backed to the companion. Having reached it, he leaped for the steps and darted up to the deck, panting with relief when he jumped out into the fresh breeze and the open sunlight.

Not for his life would Danny have touched that mysterious chest again. Dandy Peter's spot of cargo, guarded by a hidden devil, was safe from the cooky-boy.

The Crew's Demand

KING OF THE ISLANDS, standing by the binnacle, glanced forward with a rather puzzled look.

The Dawn was bowling along before a six-knot breeze, and the island of Lukwe had dropped far astern. Brilliant sunshine streamed down from an almost cloudless sky.

For some little time there had been outbreaks of cackling among the native crew, and Ken's attention was drawn to it at last, and he wondered what was up forward. Lompo and Lufu, Kolulo and Tomoo, grinned at one another and chuckled. Koko joined them, and he was grinning, too. Only one brown face was serious—Danny the cooky-boy's.

Danny seemed to be in a state of alarm.

Every now and then, he cast a scared glance over a fat brown shoulder, as if in fear of seeing some hostile figure behind him. And every time he did so, the crew gave another amused cackle.

"What's up forward, Kit?" asked King of the Islands at last. Hudson was taking a trick at the wheel. He, too, had noticed what was going on.

"They seem to be making game of Danny," said the mate. "What's the matter with the boy? I've noticed that he looks as if he's going to be hanged."

"Koko!" called King of the Islands. The bo'sun, a broad grin on his face, came aft.

"What name all feller too much laugh along Danny?" asked Ken.

"That feller plenty too much fright, my word," grinned Koko. "Him tinkee debble stop along this ship, sar. Him tinkee voice belong debble sing out along cabin, sar."

"Send Danny aft," said Ken abruptly.

Hudson was laughing, but King of the Islands' face was grave. All the Kanakas were as superstitious as Danny, and though they were now cackling at the cooky-boy's terrors, there was no telling when their mood might change. If the belief got into their fuzzy heads that the Dawn was haunted, King of the Islands was booked for trouble. And the infantile Kanaka mind was liable to change with every passing moment.

"What on earth's got into that fat swab's head?" asked Hudson.

"Goodness knows," said Ken, frowning. "But whatever it is, the sooner he gets it out again the better. Look at him now."

Danny, instead of scuttling along the deck in his usual way, was coming slowly along the starboard rail, his eyes turned fearfully on the companion door. He had to pass the

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companion to reach the skipper and mate, but he was keeping as far away from it as he possibly could. He moved along with his back to the rail, stepping sideways so that his eyes were never off the door. And the fear in his fat brown face was not to be mistaken.

The crew chuckled as they watched him. So far, Danny's terrors seemed to be a joke to them. Yet it was probable that none would have been willing to go below and ascertain what grounds there were, if any, for those terrors. Koko had done so, but Koko was no common Kanaka!

"You feller Danny!" rapped King of the Islands sharply.

"Yessar!" gasped Danny.

He stood before his white master, with one eye on him, the other on the companion. He looked as if he dreaded to see some horrible hobgoblin emerge on deck.

"What name you tinkee debble stop along cabin?" demanded Ken.

Danny's teeth chattered.

"Me tinkee debble stop along cabin, along me hear him sing out, sar," he stammered. "Me hear that feller debble, sar, ear belong me. This feller plenty too much fright along that debble, sar." Danny's fat knees knocked together. "Tinkee this feller ship go walk about along bottom belong sea, sar, all us feller go finish."

Ken set his lips. The presence of a debble, like that of a Jonah, spelt destruction to any craft. Danny clearly had no doubt that the Dawn was doomed.

"You plenty too much fool, Danny!" exclaimed Ken angrily. "Debble no stop. You hear nothing, ear belong you, along cabin!"

"Me hear that feller debble sing out, sar," faltered Danny. "Me tinkee plenty too good, sar, you put back along Lukwe. No see Suta, eye belong you—this ship go finish, sar."

King of the Islands breathed hard. The depth of Danny's terror could be gauged by his suggestion that his skipper should put back to the port he had left, and abandon the trip. Only extreme fear of the unknown could have made Danny venture on such a suggestion.

"You hear me, Danny, ear belong you," said Ken. "This feller white master go along cabin. You comey along white master, you see, eye belong you, debble no stop."

"Oh, no, sar," gasped the terrified cooky-boy. "This feller too much fright, sar!"

"Follow me!" rapped Ken, and he stepped to the companion. But the cooky-boy did not follow him. He stood rooted to the deck, his eyes following his white master, but his fat form remaining where it was.

"You hear me, ear belong you?" roared Ken, glancing over his shoulder. But still the cooky-boy did not stir. "Koko! You bring that feller Danny along cabin."

"Yessar!" grinned Koko, and his mighty hand grasped the shrinking cooky-boy.

Danny gave a squeal of terror as the boatswain heaved him bodily towards the companion. To the amazement of the shipmates and the amusement of the crew, he attempted to resist. There was no man in the Dawn who could have made resistance good in Koko's grasp, Danny least of all. But the cooky-boy, squealing with fear, struggled desperately.

"You bad feller Danny!" roared Koko, in angry surprise. "You comey along cabin, all samee white master he say. My word, plenty too much lawyer-cane stop along back belong you."

But Danny's fears of the debble were greater than his fears of the lawyer-cane. He struggled wildly, till Koko, exerting his huge strength, carried him below like a bundle. A loud cackle from the Hiva-Oa boys followed them.

Once in the cabin, Danny ceased to struggle. He sagged in the boatswain's muscular grip, his eyes, round as saucers, fixed in terror on the teak chest.

Ken gave him a grim look.

"You plenty big fool, Danny!" he snapped. "You see, eye belong you, no debble stop! You no hear debble sing out, ear belong you. Where you tinkee you hear that debble sing out?"

Danny pointed with a shaking finger.

"He sing out along feller chest, sar!" he gasped.

King of the Islands glanced at the teak chest, then stared at Danny again.

"You tinkee debble stop along that chest?" he exclaimed.

"Yessar! He sing out along that feller chest," groaned Danny.

The cooky-boy did not explain how he had been occupied when the debble cried out. Meddling with cargo meant the lawyer-cane. And Danny's fuzzy mind saw no connection between the penetrating knife and the voice of the debble.

Had the cooky-boy told all he knew, King of the Islands would have been enlightened. As it was, he was only hopelessly puzzled and irritated. He noticed, with growing exasperation, that Koko was casting an uneasy eye towards the chest.

Superstitious terror was swift to communicate itself. On deck, Koko had laughed like the rest of the crew. But he was not laughing now. His grasp on the cooky-boy relaxed. Danny, with a sudden twist, tore himself loose. The next second he was scuttling up the ladder to the deck.

"Danny!" roared King of the Islands.

But again his voice was unheeded. Danny fled to the deck without an answer.

"Koko, you give that feller Danny five-one along lawyer-cane, along he talk bad feller talk!" snapped Ken.

"Yessar!" said Koko. And he followed Danny up to the deck—quickly.

Ken noted how glad the boatswain was to get out of the cabin, and, muttering angrily, he tramped up to the deck, where Koko was carrying out his order and giving the cooky-boy half a dozen of the lawyer-cane.

As the day wore on, Ken became more and more troubled as he watched the crew whispering together. Even Koko had joined them. Plainly he shared their fears.

Not one of them stepped near the companion. If a man had to pass it, he circled round it as far away as he could. Danny had duties to perform in the cabin, but he had not done them, and evidently did not intend to go below, preferring to face the wrath of his white master, rather than the terrors of the teak chest. Ken doubted whether even Koko would have gone below again at his order.

"Blessed if I make it out, Ken," said Hudson, after a long silence. "I rather wish we'd never picked up that spot of cargo from Harvey."

"It's that fat fool Danny!" snapped Ken. "I dare say he was meddling with the chest and fancied something—and he's passed the fancy on to Koko and the others. Once a yarn like that gets started in a native crew, their imagination will do the rest fast enough."

"We shall make Suta by to-morrow night, with this wind."

"Ay, ay! But we shall have to keep our eyes peeled to-night—those fools will see devils in every shadow as soon as the sun's gone!" said King of the Islands crossly.

There was a padding of bare feet on the deck. The whole crew, with the exception of Koko, were coming aft. Koko stood with a troubled face—his sympathy evidently with the Hiva-Oa boys, but his allegiance to his white master standing the strain. Kolulo, Lufu, and Lompo came, followed by Danny, exchanging signs with Tomoo, the steersman.

"What name you feller boy comey along this place?" demanded Ken.

The Kanakas exchanged uneasy looks, no one anxious to be spokesman. They looked at Koko again, but he gave no sign. Finally, Lompo took the plunge.

"Us feller boy, sar, tinkee this feller ship go along bottom sea, sar, along debble he stop!" said Lompo. "White master no likee go back along Lukwe. Us feller tinkee put that feller chest along sea, sar, along feller debble no stop along this ship any more!"

"Suffering cats!" murmured Hudson.

The proposal to jettison cargo was enough to take a white master's breath away. But that, apparently, had occurred to the fuzzy minds of the crew as the easiest way out of the difficulty. Launching the teak chest overboard,

with the debble in it, would undoubtedly get shut of the debble—if any!

"You talk fool feller talk!" snapped Ken angrily. "That chest belong white feller Milsom, along Suta. You go back along place belong you."

"Feller Milsom along Suta no see chest, sar, eye belong him, along this feller ship go along bottom sea," argued Lompo.

"One more day he come, this feller ship stop along Suta!" snapped Ken.

"No tinkee, sar."

"Oh, sar, you no savvy feller debble samee Kanaka boy!" squeaked Danny. "Us feller savvy too much, sar. We all go finish."

"White master sing out, put feller chest along sea?" asked Kolulo hopefully.

"No!" roared King of the Islands.

"Us feller too much fright, stop along ship along debble he stop!" said Lufu. "Us feller takee whaleboat, sar, go along Lukwe."

"Yessar!" chorused the crew. "Us feller go along Lukwe, along whaleboat, sar."

"Get back!" roared Ken.

He was really angry now. But for once the crew were not daunted by the anger of their white master. Fear of the demons of the dark was too strong for that. The approach of nightfall was turning terror into panic.

In a body they made a rush for the boat—Tomoo deserting the wheel to join them.

Kit Hudson jumped to the wheel and grasped the spokes in time to save the ketch from yawing. Ken, with flashing eyes, rushed after the crew.

In a twinkling, almost, the Kanakas had the whaleboat swung outboard, and swift, brown fingers handled the falls. But King of the Islands was among them in a moment. A clenched fist crashed on Lompo's brown ear, sending him spinning across the deck; the next second Lufu went whirling after him. Danny jumped away squealing. But Kolulo and Tomoo, in sheer desperation, grasped their white master and held him.

"Koko!" yelled Hudson. He could not leave the wheel. "Koko!"

Koko had not stirred. Lompo and Lufu scrambled up and rushed to the boat. King of the Islands struggled frantically. Kolulo and Tomoo reeled to and fro under his fierce efforts to break away.

"Koko!" shouted Ken.

Koko, like a man waking from a trance, leapt into sudden action. Debble or no debble, he was standing by his white master. He rushed into the struggle.

With a wrench of his powerful arms, he tore the two Kanakas away from the boat trader. They went spinning along the deck as he flung them away like sacks of copra. Then he closed on Lompo and Lufu.

King of the Islands, panting for breath, backed towards the boat and whipped the revolver from his hip pocket. Never before had he needed to pull a revolver on his crew.

Tomoo and Kolulo scrambled up and rushed back into the fray. Koko, mighty as he was, had his hands more than full with the four of them.

Crack! The revolver spat a warning bullet over the heads of the Kanakas. Danny, with a squeal of terror, bolted back to his galley. But the fierce struggle of the others, bunched together in a swaying mass, went on.

Crack! Tomoo gave a yell, as a bullet whipped a strip of skin from a brown leg. It was only a scratch; but it was enough. Yelling, he released the bo'sun and jumped away. The other three followed his example. "You bad feller too much!" roared King of the Islands, his eyes blazing. "You go forward, or me shootee along gun, plenty kill all feller along this deck!"

Crack! Another bullet, whizzing over the fuzzy heads, decided the panting Kanakas. They broke forward in a rush. Ken was left standing by the boat, still swinging from the davits.

The mutiny had been checked. But the night was still to come!

Next Week:
THE CHEST OF TERROR