



and stared a moment. "And a white man's dog at that!"

Jerry beat the water with his paws and moved steadily along, straining his eyes at the growing yacht until suddenly warned by a sensing of immediate danger. The taboo smote him. This that moved toward him was the log awash that was not a log but a live thing of peril. Part of it he saw above the surface moving sluggishly, and ere that projecting part sank, he had an awareness that somehow it was different from a log awash.

Next, something brushed past him, and he encountered it with a snarl and a splashing of his forepaws. He was half-whirled about in the vortex of the thing's passage caused by the alarmed flirt of its tail. Shark it was, and not crocodile, and not so timidly would it have sheered clear but for the fact that it was fairly full with a recent feed of a huge sea turtle too feeble with age to escape.

Although he could not see it, Jerry sensed that the thing, the instrument of nothingness, lurked about him. Nor did he see the dorsal fin break surface and approach him from the rear. From the yacht he heard rifle-shots in quick succession. From the rear a panic splash came to his ears. That was all. The peril passed and was forgotten. Nor did he connect the rifle-shots with the passing of the peril. He did not know, and he was never to know, that one, known to men as Harley Kennan, but known as "Husband-Man" by the woman he called "Wife-Woman," who owned the three-topmast schooner yacht Ariel, had saved his life by sending a thirty-thirty Marlin bullet through the base of a shark's fin.

But Jerry was to know Harley Kennan, and quickly, for it was Harley Kennan, a bowline around his body under his arm-pits, lowered by a couple of seamen down the generous freeboard of the Ariel, who gathered in by the nape of the neck the smooth-coated Irish terrier that, treading water perpendicularly, had no eyes for him so eagerly did he gaze at the line of faces along the rail in quest of the one face.

No pause for thanks did he make when he was dropped down upon the deck. Instead, shaking himself instinctively as he ran, he scurried along the deck for Skipper. The man and his wife laughed at the spectacle.

"He acts as if he were demented with delight at being rescued," Mrs. Kennan observed.

And Mr. Kennan: "It's not that. He must have a screw loose somewhere. Perhaps he's one of those creatures who've slipped the ratchet off the motion cog. Maybe he can't stop running till he runs down."

In the meantime Jerry continued to run, up port side and down starboard side, from stern to bow and back again, wagging his stump tail and laughing friendliness to the many two-legged gods he encountered. Had he been able to think to such abstraction he would have been astounded at the number of white-gods. Thirty there were at least of them, not counting other gods that were neither black nor white, but that still, two-legged, upright and garmented, were beyond all peradventure gods. Likewise, had he been capable of such generalization, he would have decided that the white-gods had not yet all of them passed into the nothingness. As it was, he realized all this without being aware that he realized it.

But there was no Skipper. He sniffed down the forecastle hatch, sniffed into the galley where two Chinese cooks jabbered unintelligibly to him, sniffed down the cabin companionway, sniffed down the engine-room skylight and for the first time knew gasoline and engine oil; but sniff as he would, wherever he ran, no scent did he catch of Skipper.

Aft, at the wheel, he would have sat down and howled his heartbreak of disappointment, had not a white-god, evidently of command, in gold-decorated white duck cap and uniform, spoken to him. Instantly, always a gentleman, Jerry smiled with flattened ears of courtesy, wagged his tail, and approached. The hand of this high god had almost caressed his head when the woman's voice came down the deck in speech that Jerry did not understand. The words and terms of it were beyond him. But he sensed power of command in it, which was verified by the quick withdrawal of the hand of the god in white and gold who had almost caressed him. This god, stiffened electrically and pointed Jerry along the deck, and, with mouth encouragements and urgings the import of which Jerry could only guess, directed him toward the one who so commanded by saying:

"Send him, please, along to me, Captain Winters."

Jerry wriggled his body in delight of obeying, and would loyally have presented his head to her outreaching caress of hand, had not the strangeness and difference of her deterred him. He broke off in mid-approach and with a show of teeth snarled himself back and away from the windblown skirt of her. The only human females he had known were naked Marys. This skirt, flapping in the wind like a sail, reminded him of the menacing mainsail of the Arangi when it had jarred and crashed and swooped above his head. The noises her mouth made were gentle and ingratiating, but the fearsome skirt still flapped in the breeze.

"You ridiculous dog!" she laughed. "I'm not going to bite you."

But her husband thrust out a rough, sure hand and drew Jerry in to him. And Jerry wriggled in ecstasy under the god's caress, kissing the hand with a red flicker of tongue. Next, Harley Kennan directed him toward the woman sitting up in the deck-chair and bending forward, with hovering hands of greeting. Jerry obeyed. He advanced with flattened ears and laughing mouth: but, just ere she could touch him, the wind fluttered the skirt again and he backed away with a snarl.

"It's not you that he's afraid of, Villa," he said. "But of your skirt. Perhaps he's never seen a skirt before."

"You mean," Villa Kennan challenged, "that these head-hunting cannibals ashore here keep records of pedigrees and maintain kennels; for surely this absurd adventurer of a dog is as proper an Irish terrier as the Ariel is an Oregon-pine-planked schooner."

Harley Kennan laughed in acknowledgment. Villa Kennan laughed too; and Jerry knew that these were a pair of happy gods, and himself laughed with them.

Of his own initiative, he approached the lady god again, attracted by the talcum powder and other minor fragrances he had already identified as the strange scents encountered on the beach. But the unfortunate trade wind again fluttered her skirt, and again he backed away--not so far, this time, with much less of a bristle of his neck and shoulder hair, and with no more of a snarl than a mere half-baring of his fangs.

"He's afraid of your skirt," Harley insisted. "Look at him! He wants to come to you, but the skirt keeps him away. Tuck it under you so that it won't flutter, and see what happens."

Villa Kennan carried out the suggestion, and Jerry came circumspectly, bent his head to her hand and writhed his back under it, the while he sniffed her feet, stocking-clad and shoe-covered, and knew them as the feet which had trod uncovered the ruined ways of the village ashore.

"No doubt of it," Harley agreed. "He's white-man selected, white-man bred and born. He has a history. He knows adventure from the ground-roots up. If he could tell his story, we'd sit listening entranced for days. Depend on it, he's not known blacks all his life. Let's try him on Johnny."

Johnny, whom Kennan beckoned up to him, was a loan from the Resident Commissioner of the British Solomons at Tulagi, who had come along as pilot and guide to Kennan rather than as philosopher and friend. Johnny approached grinning, and Jerry's demeanour immediately changed. His body stiffened under Villa Kennan's hand as he drew away from her and stalked stiff-legged to the black. Jerry's ears did not flatten, nor did he laugh fellowship with his mouth, as he inspected Johnny and smelt his calves for future reference. Cavalier he was to the extreme, and, after the briefest of inspection, he turned back to Villa Kennan.

"What did I say?" her husband exulted. "He knows the colour line. He's a white man's dog that has been trained to it."

"My word," spoke up Johnny. "Me know 'm that fella dog. Me know 'm papa and mamma belong along him. Big fella white marster Mister Haggin stop along Meringe, mamma and papa stop along him that fella place."

Harley Kennan uttered a sharp exclamation.

"Of course," he cried. "The Commissioner told me all about it. The Arangi, that the Somo people captured, sailed last from Meringe Plantation. Johnny recognizes the dog as the same breed as the pair Haggin, of Meringe, must possess. But that was a long time ago. He must have been a little puppy. Of course he's a white man's dog."

"And yet you've overlooked the crowning proof of it," Villa Kennan teased. "The dog carries the evidence around with him."

Harley looked Jerry over carefully.

"Indisputable evidence," she insisted.

After another prolonged scrutiny, Kennan shook his head.

"Blamed if I can see anything so indisputable as to leave conjecture out."

"The tail," his wife gurgled. "Surely the natives do not bob the tails of their dogs.--Do they, Johnny? Do black man stop along Malaita chop 'm off tail along dog."

"No chop 'm off," Johnny agreed. "Mister Haggin along Meringe he chop 'm off. My word, he chop 'm that fella tail, you bet."

"Then he's the sole survivor of the Arangi," Villa Kennan concluded. "Don't you agree, Mr. Sherlock Holmes Kennan?"

"I salute you, Mrs. S. Holmes," her husband acknowledged gallantly. "And all that remains is for you to lead me directly to the head of La Perouse himself. The sailing directions record that he left it somewhere in these islands."

Little did they guess that Jerry had lived on intimate terms with one Bashti, not many miles away along the shore, who, in Somo, at that very moment, sat in his grass house pondering over a head on his withered knees that had once been the head of the great navigator, the history of which had been forgotten by the sons of the chief who had taken it.