

Thrilling Adventures For Our Young Readers

CHAO CHAHNG AND THE MAN-EATER



A STRANGE CRAFT

By RICHARD W. CHILD

FROM a boy's standpoint, Seattle is one of the most interesting ports on the Pacific coast. Robert Cole, whose father had lost all his fortune after the boom had ended, lived very near the waterfront, and used to spend many hours, when he was not in school, dangling his feet over the edge of a dock, and watching the interesting shipping in the busy Puget Sound port.

Bobby had a little craft himself. It was an old row-boat with a lug-o'-munt sail, but it did very well for a day's cruise. Charley Ruggles, who was the son of one of the harbor pilots, and who had taught Bobby all he knew about sailing and the winds and tides and currents, nearly always went with him on the daylight sails of exploration.

One day in August the boys had arranged to sail over to the western shore of the Sound to a fishing settlement of Siwash Indians. Bobby had come down to the dock where the *Ready*, as he called his sail-boat, was tied up; it was early morning, with a heavy mist over the bay. Bobby peered over the wharf-edge and saw Charley hauling out the boat. Beyond, there was the queerest-looking craft he had ever seen, fettling against the pines on the other side of the docks in the mist and against the dark surface of the water he could hardly see her, although she was only a few yards away. All along her thirty feet of thin, narrow length, she was painted a dull, neutral gray, the color of battleships in war-time. At her bow was a little black machine gun peeping out from a cover of gray canvas; she looked for all the world as if she were built for the use of pirates.

"Hello! Charley," cried Bob, "what boat is that?" "Don't you know?" answered the other. "that's the Smuggler's *Nightmare*, or at least that is what they call her."

"The smuggler's what?" exclaimed Bobby.

"Why you know how much smuggling of Chinamen and opium there is in the Sound. Well, that's the boat the government has built to catch the smugglers. She's gray and can't be seen any distance, and she has electric power and so is very fast and doesn't make any noise."

"She looks like a ferret," commented Bobby.

"We have had the wind at our back all the morning," said Bobby, about noon; "and unless it shifts we will have to beat our way every inch homeward."

Suddenly the breeze dropped altogether, as if it had been shut off by a curtain.

Charley scowled. "We're going to be becalmed," he said finally. "I thought so."

"What mean luck!" said Bobby, dipping his fingers in the water. "We've only got one oar, and we may not get any wind before to-morrow morning."

Charles nodded. "What time is full tide?" he asked.

"I don't know," said Robert. "It must be nearly full now. Are you wondering—

"Yes," interrupted Charles. "I'm wondering how far the tide will take us before morning."

The gray fog, damp and salty, had rolled up the bay and, growing heavier and thicker, shut off the sight of the opposite shore.

"Why, we are under way!" exclaimed Bob, as he felt the slight resistance of the helm. "And look at that seaweed go by!" He cast a glance at the sail; it was still lying limp against the mast.

"It's the tide!" said Charles. "It's running on."

Both boys sat dejected and helpless, preparing themselves for a long wait and a cold night on the water.

Suddenly Bob started. "Did you hear that?" he cried. The muffled sound of the explosive poundings of a naphtha-launch came to them over the waters.



THE SEARCH-LIGHT SUDDENLY SETTLED ON THE LAUNCH.

"Well, whoever they are—they're mean enough," said Bob indignantly.

Charles nodded. "I should say so," said he. "Now we have the problem of spending the whole night in this wet mist, and, what is more, no one can tell where we will be in the morning."

Suddenly the boat bumped over a rock and, with a slight shiver, turned half around. "Shallow water!" cried Robert.

"You're right!" said Charles. "And look there! Both the boys could make out black shadows against the moonlight."

"This is land, anyway," said Bob. He stopped suddenly, for not fifty yards away through the pines he saw the light of a lantern moving toward the beach. It was carried by a short, stocky man, who

Robert set his mouth in a determined manner. "See here, Charles," he said, "these men are law breakers. They're cheating the government. It would be cowardly to run."

"Well, what are you going to do?" inquired Charles.

"You can run a naphtha-launch."

"Yes."

"Then we haven't a second to lose. The men will be back in a minute. I'm going to take that launch and her cargo back to the revenue officers, and save those smugglers prisoners on this island."

"Whew!" exclaimed Charles. "Think of the danger!" And, besides, the men could escape in the *Ready*."

"No," said Bob, firmly. "I'll push the *Ready* out into the current."

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Any boy or girl who thinks the elephant is a slow, clumsy beast, has not heard of Chao Chahng, the largest and strongest and most docile of all the Brahades' elephants. Chao Chahng is a child, and a child who lives by the side of the Mekong River in Siam. There is at least one incident in the elephant's life that is worth the telling.

One morning the Brahades sighted a great man-eating tiger on a rock in the middle of the river. He had swum there in the night and been caught by the rising tide. In ten minutes, ten elephants with their drivers were deep in the pool, Chao Chahng leading. There had been a Randall somewhere in the river, and the muddy water was still slowly rising round the man-eater's rock in ripples. Two tropical heat-worms in surprise stood at an elevation, and the tiger turned from his besiegers minute by minute, to swim and growl. Very soon, two of the elephants floated about in their tracks and made for the shore. Only Chao Chahng was left.

Something defied past toward the rock, a great streak of red that the rising water had brought down from somewhere upstream. As it crept along the rock the tiger grinded upon it. The heavy log floating deep in the water, sank lower beneath his

teeth, but still went on flying into the water. It was a long time before the tiger was dead, and ended in an instant. In that instant the man-eater was dead, and the rising flow of water, whose Chao Chahng stalked shoreward after him, the blood with the air of having just discovered that the river was rising. The earth had been relieved of a terror to man. The elephant had shown its courage, and in its heavy plodding way seemed happy.

The Electric Fan By Peter Newell



Whene'er this stuffy, puffy scribe
Sets out to write a diatribe,
Or aught else that he pleases,

A busy, buzzy bumblebee,
Perched on his desk, sagaciously,
Supplies him cooling breezes.

Charles was enthused by the idea. "I'll do it!" said he. He ran back and pushed the little sail-boat into deep water; when he had waded beyond his waist he gave her a final push that sent her out into the channel.

As he came back to the beach he heard once more the voices of the men approaching. "It's too late," he whispered. "They're coming."

"It's our only chance to get off this island—now the *Ready* has gone," said Bob, his voice trembling with excitement. "Come on!"

The two boys started down the beach in a race for the launch. As they tugged away to get her into deep water, the lantern was coming nearer and nearer through the trees.

"Quid!" cried Bob. Both boys sprang over the side of the launch, which now floated in the deeper water. The three men were running down the beach, shouting hoarsely, and had nearly got to the water's edge when the propeller of the launch began to roar and foam boiled up in the broadening wake.

"Come back here!" shouted one of the men, frantically running into the water.

"Stop or I'll shoot!" cried another.

"Don't shoot!" cried the stocky man, knocking the other's hand into the air. "We're caught here like rats and we don't want to be taken for murder."

The launch plodded along over the black waters, and finally turned into the open Sound. Suddenly Charles stopped the engine. "I can't," said he.

"Behind them they would hear the pounding of a propeller in another boat." "They're chasing us!" cried Bob. "Start the engine again."

"Once more they were off. "We've got to race 'em now!" cried Charles. "They're after us. You see, they carry no lights."

The launch now plodded along at her topmost speed, but it soon became evident that the other was gaining.

Suddenly with a quick flash the beam of a search-light stretched out over the water like a long finger. It turned this way and that, and then suddenly settled on the launch with its two boys and its cargo of boxes.

"Oh, we've got 'em this time!" shouted a voice, and the blinding light began to come nearer.

"It's the Smuggler's *Nightmare*!" cried Bob.

"Why, they're nothing but boys!" exclaimed a bearded man in a tric blue uniform, more astonished than any one.

"Give us a hand, please," said Bob, "and I'll come aboard and explain."

To the revenue officer the boys told the whole story. He listened intently to all that they said. "This is splendid!" "I'll put a man into the launch with you so that you can go right home. Of course we will have to go to the island for the men."

"If you should happen to see our boat, I wish you'd pick it up, said Bob."

"Oh, I wouldn't worry about your boat," said the officer. "There is enough reward for the capture of these smugglers to buy you a very respectable little cruising yacht—cabin and all."

Both the boys and one of the sailors got into the launch. "Good night!" shouted the revenue officer.

Once more the naphtha-launch started on her journey toward the harbor, but this time instead of sneaking along she bore a light at her stern and carried two very tired and very happy passengers.

"It isn't so bad being becalmed, after all," said Charles, when they had climbed up on to the wharf and were saying good night.

"No, indeed!" Robert said heartily. "and we won't really lose the *Ready*, either, for I took the bearings of a little cave she drifted into as we were coming out with the launch."