

"Blasting gelatine, miss," answered Allnutt. "It's a kind of explosive. We used it at the mine all the time."

"Is it dangerous?" asked Rose.

"No," replied the mechanic. "You can wet it or set fire to it and nothing will happen. The only thing that can set it off is a detonator. I can throw it overboard if you want."

"No, don't do that," said Rose, "we might need it later. And what are those?"

"They're cylinders," replied Allnutt. "One is filled with oxygen and the other is filled with hydrogen. I doubt we'll be needing those."

"We might," said Rose. "You know, those cylinders remind me of torpedoes... Allnutt, would you be able to make a torpedo?"

Allnutt laughed. "A torpedo, miss? Are you joking? That would be impossible."

"But I'm sure it can be done!" Rose insisted. "I remember reading something about torpedoes in a book once... Perhaps we could take those cylinders, fill them with explosives and position them so that they stick out over the edge of the boat. Then we could attach detonators to them, and drive the boat into the Queen Louisa. The cylinders would explode, just like torpedoes."

Allnutt looked at Rose. "Yes, miss, I suppose they would. But what would happen to us? We'd get killed, too."

"Obviously we'd jump off before the explosion," said Rose.

Allnutt sighed. He knew that the African Queen moved too slowly to take any ship by surprise. It was pointless trying to explain all this to Rose, but the mechanic felt that there would be no harm in agreeing with her.

"It's not a bad idea..." said Allnutt.

"So you agree that these cylinders would make good torpedoes?" asked Rose.

"Yes, they probably would," said Allnutt.

"All right," said Rose, "then we'll go to the lake and torpedo the Queen Louisa!"

Allnutt gasped. "Don't be silly, miss!" he said. "You can't do that. I told you already, we can't get down the river."

"We can try!" said Rose. "Let's get moving!"

"What, now?" exclaimed Allnutt. "There are just two hours of

