

CHAPTER 7

SOON, ROSE AND ALLNUTT ENTERED ANOTHER CHANNEL OF THE delta. Unfortunately, this channel was filled with mangroves. These thick, weed-like plants made it almost impossible for the boat to move forward.

"We can't use the engine here, the propeller will get stuck again," said Allnutt. "I'll have to use the boat-hook."

"I wish we had two boat-hooks," said Rose, as she examined the mangroves that lay before them. "Do you think you'd be able to make one for me?"

"I can certainly try," replied Allnutt.

It didn't take the mechanic very long to beat a piece of iron into the shape of a hook. With both Rose and Allnutt using hooks to move the boat forward, they began to make steady progress. But the mangrove swamp was approximately twenty kilometres long, and Allnutt estimated that it would take at least two to three days to reach the end of it.

Rose and Allnutt encountered numerous obstacles in the swamp, including twisted tree roots, thick branches and even some snakes. Huge trees like fences were all around them and the heat was terrible. The worst part, though, was the swarms of mosquitoes, and it was not long before Rose and Allnutt began to show signs of malaria. They both experienced high fever, terrible thirst and muscle pain, which slowed down their progress. Fortunately, Allnutt had medication on board which offered some relief from the symptoms. Days passed slowly in the dark mangrove swamp.

Finally, the African Queen entered another channel. This one was wider than the one before, and it was some time before Rose and Allnutt realised that they had left the mangrove swamp behind.

"Do you think we're through yet, Rose?" asked Allnutt.

Rose stared into the distance. "Yes, Charlie, I think we are," she replied.

Too weak and tired to celebrate, all Rose and Allnutt could do was smile at each other. After days of suffering in the swamp, the pair looked terrible. Their hair was full of mud; their clothes were torn



and dirty and the malaria had turned their skin yellow.

Still, they were relieved to have reached this point; the lake could not be far away now.

"Do we have enough wood?" asked Rose.

"Enough for half a day," replied Allnutt.

"Then we should get some more," said Rose.

The pair tied the boat and gathered more wood before continuing their journey down the river. To their great surprise, it took just a couple of hours to reach the clear waters of the lake. The water shone like gold in the afternoon sun, and there was not a rock, cataract or mangrove to be seen. Allnutt anchored the boat and they decided to bathe in the refreshing water. Then, the pair washed their clothes and cleaned the boat.

Once Rose had finished her chores, she got down on her knees and prayed for the first time since leaving the mission, while Allnutt looked on quietly. Rose prayed for guidance and strength and courage, and when she was finished, she found she was filled with a renewed feeling of determination. Nothing would stop her from attacking the Queen Louisa now.

Later that evening, after Rose and Allnutt had eaten an early dinner, Rose noticed a white dot in the distance.

"Charlie!" she exclaimed, as she jumped to her feet. "Look over there!"

Allnutt looked in the direction in which Rose was pointing. "That's her, all right," he said. "The Queen Louisa."

"We found her!" said Rose excitedly. "Can you believe it, Charlie? We found her!"

Allnutt frowned. "I can't be sure, Rose, but it looks like she's coming this way."

"Do you think so?" asked Rose. "They mustn't see us, Charlie. We can't let them see us. We have to hide the boat."

Allnutt nodded.

It took thirty minutes for the capable crew of the African Queen to hide the boat in the reeds that grew against the riverbank. No one would be able to see the boat now, unless they were actually looking for it, and Rose was sure the Germans were unaware that the African Queen had reached the lake.

The Queen Louisa was truly impressive. She was painted in bright white, and Rose and Allnutt could see the flag of the Imperial German Navy flying proudly on the stern. The six-pounder gun on the deck was also clearly visible.

The Queen Louisa seemed to be getting closer and Allnutt was suddenly filled with dread.



CHAPTER 7

Comprehension

1 Answer the following questions.

1. How many days did Allnutt think it would take them to get through the mangrove swamp?

2. What were the symptoms of malaria?

3. What did Rose do after getting out of the mangrove swamp and getting herself clean?

4. Where did Rose and Charlie hide the African Queen?

5. What kind of gun could be seen on the Queen Louisa's deck?

2 Read the following statements. In each box write T if the sentence is True and F if the sentence is False.

1. The heat was the worst part of being in the swamp. ☐
2. When Rose and Allnutt reached the lake they found out that the water was very dirty. ☐
3. Charlie wanted to attack the Queen Louisa as soon as he saw it. ☐
4. Rose thought that the Germans were unaware of the position of the African Queen. ☐
5. The Queen Louisa sailed in the opposite direction to the African Queen. ☐

Vocabulary

3 Rose is reviewing recent events. Complete the sentences with words or phrases from Chapter 7.

My brother has been murdered, the village and the mission have been destroyed. But I must try and help my country. My plan is for the African Queen to attack the Queen Louisa. But Charlie and I are

both sick. We have had (1)_____ and the days in that dark, terrible swamp (2)_____. Luckily, we reached the lake and had the chance to (3)_____ in the refreshing water. After that, something really important happened. I saw a (4)_____ on the horizon and realised that it was the (5)_____. It is a very impressive ship, (6)_____ bright white and with a dangerous (7)_____ on its deck. We want to attack the Queen Louisa by surprise, so we found a safe place in some (8)_____ to hide the African Queen from the view of the Germans.

4 Complete the following sentences with the words in the box.

hooks chores determination capable visible dread

1. The idea of bungee-jumping fills me with _____.
2. Most modern couples share their household _____, such as the washing and the ironing.
3. The changing room in the gym has _____ on the walls for hanging clothes.
4. An athlete has to show a lot of _____ to become a champion.
5. Mr Jones is a very helpful and _____ head teacher.
6. Jane has a small but _____ tattoo on her neck.

Follow-up activities

5 Discuss.

1. Rose and Allnutt get sick in the mangrove swamp. How do you think this will affect their plan? What can they do to fight their illness?
2. Who shows the greater strength of character, Rose or Allnutt? Why?
3. How can everyday comforts, or the lack of them, affect our mood?
4. What do you think will happen to Rose and Allnutt if the Queen Louisa discovers the hiding place of the African Queen?

6 Imagine that you are Rose or Allnutt. Write a page in your diary describing the days in the mangrove swamp. (100 - 120 words)