

daylight left.”

“We can go a long way in two hours,” said Rose.

Allnutt sighed. There was no point in trying to argue with Rose, so he decided to do what she wanted. The mechanic pulled up the anchor, gave Rose a brief lesson on how to turn the tiller, then turned his attention to the engine.

Learning to steer the boat was challenging for Rose, but soon she began to enjoy her task.

As she took the boat around the many small islands in the river, Rose thought about her brother and the life she had left behind. All she had now was her plan to sink the Queen Louisa.

A few hours later, Allnutt found a suitable spot to drop anchor for the night, and the pair decided to have supper. Allnutt boiled some water and offered Rose a cup of tea, which she gratefully accepted. They dined on bread and tinned meat, swatting flies and mosquitoes as they ate. When it was time to go to sleep, Allnutt made a bed for himself on top of the boxes of blasting gelatine, while Rose lay down on some rugs on the deck.

“You cover up well,” said Allnutt. “It gets cold on the river at night.”

“I will,” said Rose. And with that, she fell asleep.



CHAPTER 3

SHORTLY BEFORE DAWN THE FOLLOWING MORNING, ROSE WAS awakened by loud thunder. A sudden, fierce wind caused the African Queen to rock from side to side, and soon Rose felt warm raindrops on her face. “What can we do?” she called out to Allnutt, who had also woken up. “We have nowhere to take shelter!”

“I know,” Allnutt shouted back. “We can’t do anything. We just have to wait for it to pass. It probably won’t last long.”

Allnutt was right. The storm was over almost as quickly as it had begun. Unfortunately, the boat was full of water and now the pair had to pump the water out manually, otherwise they were in danger of sinking. Allnutt showed Rose how to use the hand pump, then went ashore to collect more wood for the furnace.

Allnutt’s instructions seemed easy, but Rose soon discovered that it was very hard work. She had to move the handle of the pump up and down forcefully to return the water into the river. But the pump was old and rusty, and it pinched Rose’s fingers; she very quickly grew to hate it.

When Allnutt finally returned, the pair ate breakfast and drank several cups of tea. The African Queen set sail a few hours later, with Rose at the tiller and Allnutt at the engine.

In the days that followed, Rose became an expert at steering the boat, which was fortunate because the pair encountered many obstacles on their journey down the Ulanga River. Most of the channels of the river were filled with lilies and thick weeds which caused the propeller to get stuck; Allnutt had to dive down several times to cut the weeds away. There were occasional thunderstorms which almost flooded the African Queen, and Rose and Allnutt spent hours pumping water out of the boat. The heat was unbearable and there were always a lot of mosquitoes and insects.

Despite the difficulties, Rose soon realised that she was happier than she'd ever been in her life. Sailing down the river, on an important mission to torpedo the Queen Louisa, was much more exciting than doing housework at the village. And she was thoroughly enjoying the company of her new friend, Charlie Allnutt.

Unfortunately, Rose was unaware of Allnutt's true feelings about their plan to attack the German steamer and there came an evening when the mechanic could no longer hide his thoughts. Rose noticed that Allnutt's mood had changed when they dropped anchor in a backwater.

"Please tell me what's wrong," Rose pleaded over and over again, but Allnutt said nothing.

Finally, after a dinner eaten in silence, Allnutt told Rose how he really felt about the plan. "We're not going any further down the river," he said. "We've gone far enough. I'm not going to go to the lake."

"What?" exclaimed Rose. "But we have to go!"

"No, we don't!" shouted Allnutt. "You don't understand how dangerous this plan of yours is, Rose. If we carry on, we'll pass Shona village next. The German troops there will open fire on us right away. If, by some miracle, we manage to pass Shona, we'll hit the rapids. There's no way this boat will get through the rapids in one piece. We just can't go on, Rose, we can't."

"But Charlie, we have to do something for England!" Rose begged.



"Not if it costs us our lives," said Allnutt. "You have to get this crazy idea out of your head, Rose, it's just too dangerous."

Rose was disappointed. She tried to talk to Allnutt, but he refused to listen to anything she had to say. Allnutt went to sleep soon after, but Rose stayed awake all night, thinking. She was absolutely furious with Allnutt for standing in the way of her plan to get revenge on the Germans. She had to convince him to go on, but how?

The only solution was to make Allnutt's life as difficult as possible.

And so, the next morning the Great Silence started. Rose decided not to say a single word to Allnutt until he changed his mind about going down the river. Allnutt didn't say much to Rose the next day either, and only seemed to notice that Rose was angry with him at around midday. He tried to make conversation with her, but she simply ignored him.

"We could do with some rain," said Allnutt at one point.

Rose said nothing.

"Aren't you speaking to me, Rose?" asked the mechanic.

Rose took a needle and thread out of her sewing kit and began to sew one of her dresses. She didn't even look in Allnutt's direction.

"Look, if you're upset about what I said last night, I'm sorry," said Allnutt. "But I'm making this decision for our safety, can't you see that?"

Rose continued to sew in silence.

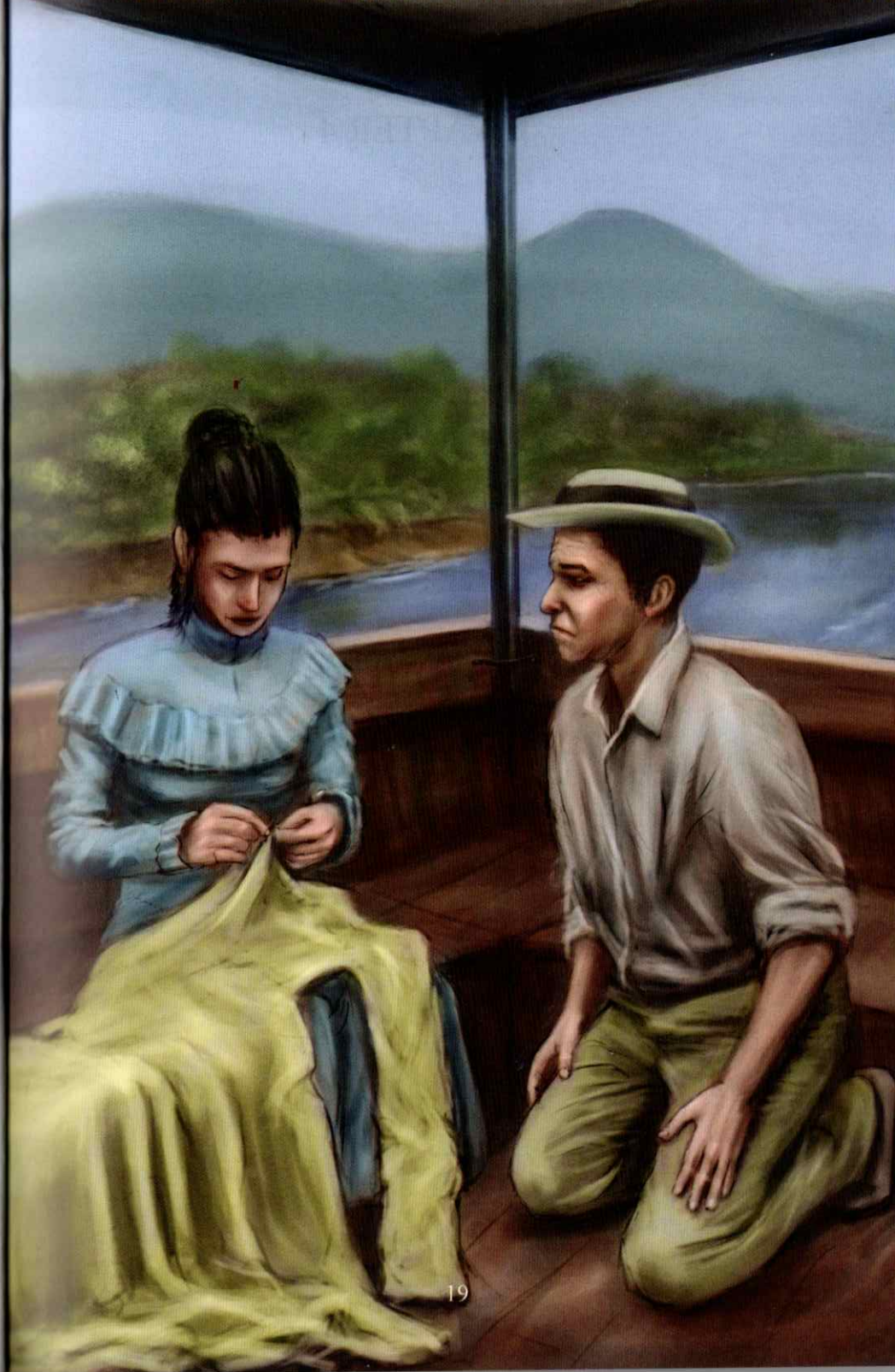
Allnutt shook his head. He turned his attention to the engine, then decided to shave. The day passed slowly, as did the day after that.

The silence almost drove Allnutt mad. Finally, he asked Rose what it was she wanted from him.

"I want to go down the river," said Rose simply.

Allnutt thought of the dangerous rapids and the Germans with their rifles. He was afraid, but he couldn't stand the silence any more, and felt he had no choice but to obey Rose's wishes. "All right, Rose," he said. "Let's go."

Sometime later, the African Queen moved out of the backwater and into the main river.



CHAPTER 3

Comprehension

1 Complete the following paragraph with the sentences a-e.

- a. The silence made Allnutt restless.
- b. The boat was in danger of sinking.
- c. The African Queen slowly started its voyage back to the main river.
- d. However, after a while, Rose realised that Allnutt was worried.
- e. Rose strongly disagreed with what Allnutt said.

A rainstorm woke Rose. The heavy rain filled the African Queen with water. (1)_____ Rose pumped out the water, while Allnutt collected wood for the boiler. During the next few days, Rose learnt how to steer the boat. Allnutt and Rose spent the time chatting and Rose felt happy. (2)_____ He explained that he thought the plan to get to the lake was impossible. (3)_____ She decided to stop being friendly in order to make Allnutt change his mind. Rose refused to answer his questions or talk to him in any way. (4)_____ Finally, he gave up his opposition to the plan of attacking the Germans. (5)_____ After that it would be the lake and then the fight with the Germans.

2 Answer the following questions.

1. Why was the pump hard for Rose to use?

2. Where was the place that Allnutt expected the Germans to start firing at them?

3. What name is given to the time when Rose refused to speak to Allnutt?

4. Why didn't Allnutt want to go to the lake?

5. Why did he finally agree to Rose's wishes?

Vocabulary

3 Complete the following sentences using the words in the box.

dawn manually thoroughly unbearable unaware

1. I was _____ that it was her birthday until I saw the presents.
2. As the electricity was off, I had to operate the machine _____.
3. We _____ enjoyed last night at the theatre.
4. My mum likes to wake up at _____ and hear the birds singing.
5. When the pain became _____ Tim went to the dentist.

4 Choose a, b or c to complete the sentences.

1. If it snows, you should try to find a dry place to take _____.
a. revenge b. shelter c. thunder
2. My father is busy this afternoon getting rid of the _____ in our garden.
a. troops b. needles c. weeds
3. I am _____ at him for cheating during the exam.
a. furious b. fortunate c. fierce
4. The strong wind caused the motorbike to _____ from side to side.
a. pinch b. pump c. rock
5. Boats and planes have _____ that help them move.
a. propellers b. obstacles c. channels

Follow-up activities

5 Discuss.

1. Allnutt and Rose face a terrible storm at the beginning of Chapter 3. What do you think is the worst type of weather to survive in? Why?
2. Rose finds steering a boat exciting. Would you like to try an extreme sport, such as rafting through rapids or windsurfing? Why? / Why not?
3. Rose feels proud of her country and she attempts to do something to help it. What other examples can you think of when people have done something similar?
4. Why did Rose stop talking to Allnutt? Do you think she was right? Why? / Why not?
5. Do you think the pair will succeed in their mission?

6 Imagine that you have had a bad quarrel with one of your closest friends and he/she has stopped talking to you. Write a letter to a magazine describing the situation and how you feel about it. Ask for advice. (100 - 120 words)