

CHAPTER 2

“WELL, HERE WE ARE, MISS,” SAID ALLNUTT, AS HE WIPED the sweat from his brow. “Safe and sound. The question now is, what do we do next? I mean, we have enough tinned food and water for a few months... How long do you think this war will go on, miss?”

Rose, who was lost in her thoughts, said nothing. It was clear that Allnutt wanted to remain hidden in the backwater until the war was over. But Rose had other ideas. She wanted revenge. She wanted the Germans to pay for what they had done.

“I suppose it all depends on how soon the British soldiers find us,” Allnutt continued. “There are British troops based in the Congo, but they can’t cross the lake into German Central Africa. Not with the Queen Louisa there.”

“The Queen Louisa?” Rose repeated.

“Yes,” said Allnutt. “The Queen Louisa is the hundred-ton German steamship that patrols the lake. The Germans keep a huge gun on board called a six-pounder. It looks a bit like a small cannon. If it wasn’t for the Queen Louisa, von Hanneken, the leader of the German army, wouldn’t last a month here.”

“We have to help the British defeat the Germans!” said Rose suddenly.

Allnutt looked surprised. “What do you mean, miss?”

Rose thought for a moment. “Allnutt, this river, the Ulanga, runs into the lake, doesn’t it?”

“Well, yes, miss, it does,” replied Allnutt. “But there’s no way we can get to the lake in this boat, if that’s what you’re thinking.”

“Why not?” wondered Rose.

“Rapids, miss. Rapids, rocks and cataracts. There are 160 kilometres of rapids separating us from the lake. Even if we managed to get past the rapids, we’d have to cross the Bora Delta to enter the lake. We’d never make it in this boat.”

“But we have to do something!” said Rose. She looked around the boat and her gaze fell on a stack of red boxes. “What’s in those boxes?”



"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



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.

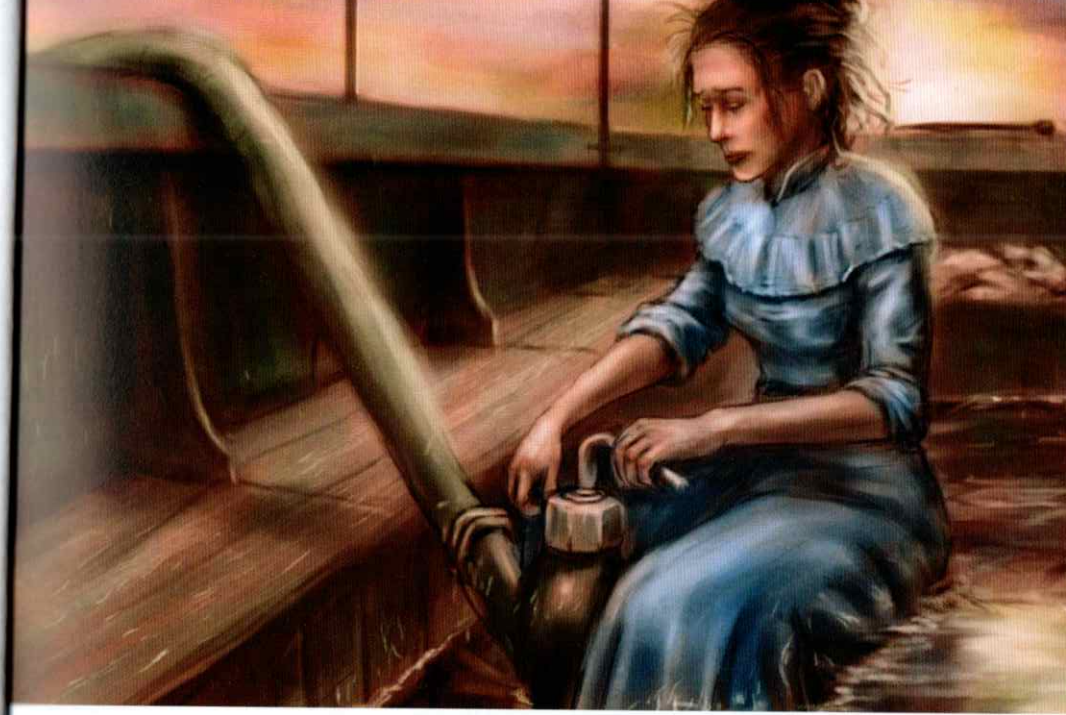
Learning to steer the boat was challenging for Rose, but soon she began to enjoy her task.

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.

CHAPTER 2

Comprehension

1 Read the sentences and decide if they are True or False. Write T or F in the boxes.

- Allnutt was worried about their supplies.
- Rose didn't want to go to the lake to fight the Germans.
- Allnutt explained that blasting gelatine was an explosive.
- There were some torpedoes on the African Queen.
- Allnutt taught Rose how to control the boat.
- Rose was too cold to sleep during her first night on the boat.

2 Complete the following sentences with the names in the box.

Rose Allnutt von Hanneken the Queen Louisa

- _____ was a German leader, who controlled Central Africa.
- _____ wanted revenge for her brother's death.
- _____ was a ship on patrol on the lake.
- _____ didn't believe that the African Queen could get to the lake.
- _____ and _____ decided they should use the blasting gelatine to attack the Germans.

Vocabulary

3 Choose a, b or c to answer the following questions.

- The _____ on this river make it difficult to navigate.
a. rapids b. flies c. edges
- She _____ with disappointment when she realised she would miss her flight to Paris.
a. wiped b. sighed c. attached
- The ship dropped _____ in the deep blue waters of the lake.
a. brow b. cylinder c. anchor

4. Cats like to sleep on _____.

- a. detonators b. tasks c. rugs

4 Complete the following sentences with the correct form of the words in capitals.

- Learning three languages at the same time is very _____. **CHALLENGE**
- The truck was carrying several boxes of _____. **EXPLODE**
- The bomb is useless without a _____. **DETONATE**
- John is very stubborn. It is _____ to try and change his mind. **POINT**
- Children need a lot of love and _____ to be happy. **ATTEND**
- I don't like fresh tomatoes in the winter, so I use _____ ones for my cooking. **TIN**

Follow-up activities

5 Discuss

- Do you agree with Rose's decision to want revenge? Why?/Why not?
- Allnutt thought Rose's plan was crazy and impossible to do. Should people who have dreams be supported or stopped? Why?
- Rose's life has become very different. Do you prefer your life to be always the same or have lots of changes? Why?
- If Allnutt decides to take the African Queen towards the Germans, what dangers do you think that Rose and Allnutt will face?

6 Imagine you are Rose. Write your story expressing your thoughts and feelings, beginning with the words: 'The only thing in my mind was revenge!' (100 - 120 words)