

CHAPTER 8

"DO YOU THINK THEY'RE LOOKING FOR US?" ASKED ALLNUTT AS he watched the boat coming closer.

"No," said Rose. "I'm sure they're just patrolling the lake."

"I hope you're right," said Allnutt, struggling to look calm.

Just then, the Queen Louisa began to move in the opposite direction.

"She's changing course!" exclaimed Rose.

"She can't have seen us, then," said Allnutt. He sounded relieved.

The pair watched as the Queen Louisa moved slowly in the direction of a nearby group of islands.

"She's going to anchor there for the night," said Allnutt. "They'll probably move on down the river in the morning."

Rose was suddenly disappointed. "We should have been ready for them," she complained. "What if they don't come back?"

Allnutt laughed. "They'll be back, Rose, don't you worry."

"How can you be so sure?" she asked.

"Because the Germans are predictable," replied Allnutt. "Surely they patrol the lake according to a schedule. I have no doubt they'll be back in a few days."

Rose thought for a moment. "Charlie, how long will it take you to make the torpedoes?"

"A couple of days, I suppose," said Allnutt. "It won't take very long to put the blasting gelatine in the cylinders; the detonators might take a while, though, because I'm still not sure how I'm going to make them."

"I see," said Rose.

"I suppose you want us to be ready to attack the Queen Louisa as soon as she returns?" asked Allnutt, though he already knew the answer.

Rose nodded. "Yes, I do," she said.

"You know, Rosie," said Allnutt as he took Rose's hands in his, "you don't have to put yourself in any further danger. I can carry out the plan on my own."



Rose was touched but refused. "No," she said, "that wouldn't be fair, I'm definitely going to come with you. Besides, one person has to steer the boat, while the other person looks after the engine."

Allnutt smiled. Rose was a stubborn woman and he knew that it would be impossible to change her mind. "All right, Rose," said Allnutt. "But when we're at least half a kilometre away from the ship, I want you to put on the lifebuoy and jump into the water, all right?"

Rose argued briefly with Allnutt – she felt he should be the one to put on the lifebuoy. In the end, she agreed to Allnutt's terms.

They went to sleep a short while later, and Rose spent most of the night dreaming of the Queen Louisa.

After breakfast the next morning, Rose and Allnutt set to work preparing the torpedoes. First, Allnutt turned on the taps of both cylinders so that the gas could pour out. Then, he opened the boxes of blasting gelatine. In Rose's mind, the explosives resembled thick, yellow candles. Slowly, Allnutt placed the explosives in the cylinders and filled the spaces between them with mud, so that they were as tightly packed as possible.

Rose helped Allnutt by bringing mud from the riverbed onto the boat.

"That should do it," said Allnutt finally. "Now it's time to make the detonators. I worked out how to make them last night."

He got to work immediately. He used a cartridge of bullets in order to make the detonators that would trigger an explosion and then nailed them to the bow of the boat. Allnutt worked hard for hours until finally he presented his invention to Rose.

Rose was impressed. "I'm sure that will work," she said. "Good thinking, Charlie."

The torpedoes were finally ready, but the hardest part was yet to come – Rose and Allnutt still had to wait for the Queen Louisa to return.

Those days of waiting were the greatest torture of all. To pass his time, Allnutt cleaned out the engine, while Rose busied herself with



washing and mending their clothes. A week went by, and Rose began to doubt that the ship would ever come back. She feared that her plan would fail.

Then, one morning, Rose and Allnut saw black smoke and a small, white dot in the distance. The Queen Louisa had finally returned.

"Rosie," said Allnut. "I think we should wait until the early hours of the morning to attack. What do you say?"

"Yes," answered Rose. "Let's surprise them. They won't know what hit them."

Towards evening, the ship dropped anchor at a nearby island. The pair had much to prepare and stayed up the whole night to ensure their plan went smoothly.

Allnut dived down into the water to cut away the reeds that surrounded the propeller. Then, once the boat had been tied to a bundle of reeds, only one thing remained. Allnut dived again and attached the detonators to the cylinders. It was a difficult and dangerous job – one slip of the hand and the boat would have been blown to pieces.

Allnut climbed back onto the boat and filled the furnace with wood, while Rose took up her position at the tiller. The boat entered the dark water, moving slowly in the direction of the dim lights of the Queen Louisa.

At that very moment, a powerful wind blew across the lake. High waves crashed against the African Queen and the boat began to rock from side to side.

Suddenly, there was a flash of lightning followed by a loud boom of thunder. Then, it started to rain. The rain caused the water to swirl violently, tossing the little boat about like a toy. Rose desperately tried to keep the boat on course, but it was no use. Within minutes, Allnut was by Rose's side, putting the lifebuoy over her head. The African Queen was sinking fast. Allnut was gone, and it was a matter of seconds before Rose, too, was swallowed up by the water.



CHAPTER 8

Comprehension

1 Match the two halves to form true sentences.

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| 1. Allnutt asked Rose if she thought that | a. could make torpedoes. |
| 2. Rose asked Allnutt if he | b. looked like candles. |
| 3. To Rose's mind the explosives | c. attack in the morning. |
| 4. Rose and Allnutt agreed to | d. the boat to sink. |
| 5. The storm caused | e. the Germans had seen them. |

2 Put the following events in the order in which they happened. Write 1-6 in the boxes.

- The African Queen was tossed about in the water like a toy.
- Rose and Charlie saw the Queen Louisa return.
- The German ship changed the direction in which it was travelling.
- A sudden storm broke out on the lake.
- Charlie explained that he could carry out the attack by himself.
- Charlie finished making the torpedoes.

Vocabulary

3 Find words or phrases in Chapter 8 which mean the opposite from:

- | | | |
|--------------------------|-------|-----------|
| 1. far away | _____ | (page 40) |
| 2. with other people | _____ | (page 40) |
| 3. thin | _____ | (page 42) |
| 4. a pleasant experience | _____ | (page 42) |
| 5. jump out of | _____ | (page 44) |
| 6. bright | _____ | (page 44) |

4 Match the words 1-8 with their definitions a-h.

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| 1. predictable | a. look similar to another person or thing |
| 2. cylinder | b. to twist and turn in different directions |
| 3. touched | c. something which helps someone float in water |
| 4. lifebuoy | d. feeling happy and grateful because of something somebody has done |
| 5. resemble | e. a tube with round ends and long straight sides |
| 6. invention | f. something you expected |
| 7. mend | g. something that has been designed or made for the first time |
| 8. swirl | h. to repair something that has been broken |

Follow-up activities

5 Discuss.

- Charlie and Rose hid from the Queen Louisa because they were planning a surprise attack. Do you like surprises? Why? / Why not?
- Charlie says that the Germans were predictable and followed routines. Why do you think the Germans kept to the same routine?
- Charlie knew that it would be very dangerous to attack the Germans. Should he have made Rose wait for him in a safe place on the bank of the lake? Why? / Why not?
- Charlie and Rose had to wait patiently for the return of the Queen Louisa. How do you feel when you have to wait a long time for something important to happen? What can you do to stay calm and not get nervous?
- What will happen to Rose and Charlie? Will they drown? Who could rescue them?

6 Imagine that you are Rose rescued from the boat that sank in a storm. Make a poster and write a description of the missing Allnutt, who fell overboard during the bad weather. (80 - 100 words)