

CHAPTER 4

THEY REACHED THE HILLS OF SHONA MUCH FASTER THAN Allnutt had expected. He kept throwing wood into the furnace to make sure that they would move swiftly through the rapids. Rose was at the tiller and Allnutt shouted instructions to her whenever it was necessary.

When the Askaris (the local African soldiers) at Shona village saw the boat coming, they immediately ran to inform the German commandant. The commandant quickly climbed the wall that surrounded the village and checked the river with his binoculars.

He smiled when he saw the African Queen. Von Hanneken had ordered him to keep an eye out for the steamboat; the Germans had been tracking the boat ever since she'd left the mission, but had lost sight of her when she'd entered a backwater. The commandant assumed that the mechanic and the English missionary had decided to surrender. The German was pleased. He was looking forward to telling von Hanneken that he had successfully captured the runaways and was sure he could make good use of the African Queen.

The commandant continued to watch the boat. Soon, however, it became clear that Rose and Allnutt had no intention of surrendering at all. The commandant had no idea what the pair were up to; all he knew was that they had to be stopped. He ordered the Askaris to open fire on the boat. The soldiers took up their positions and began to shoot.

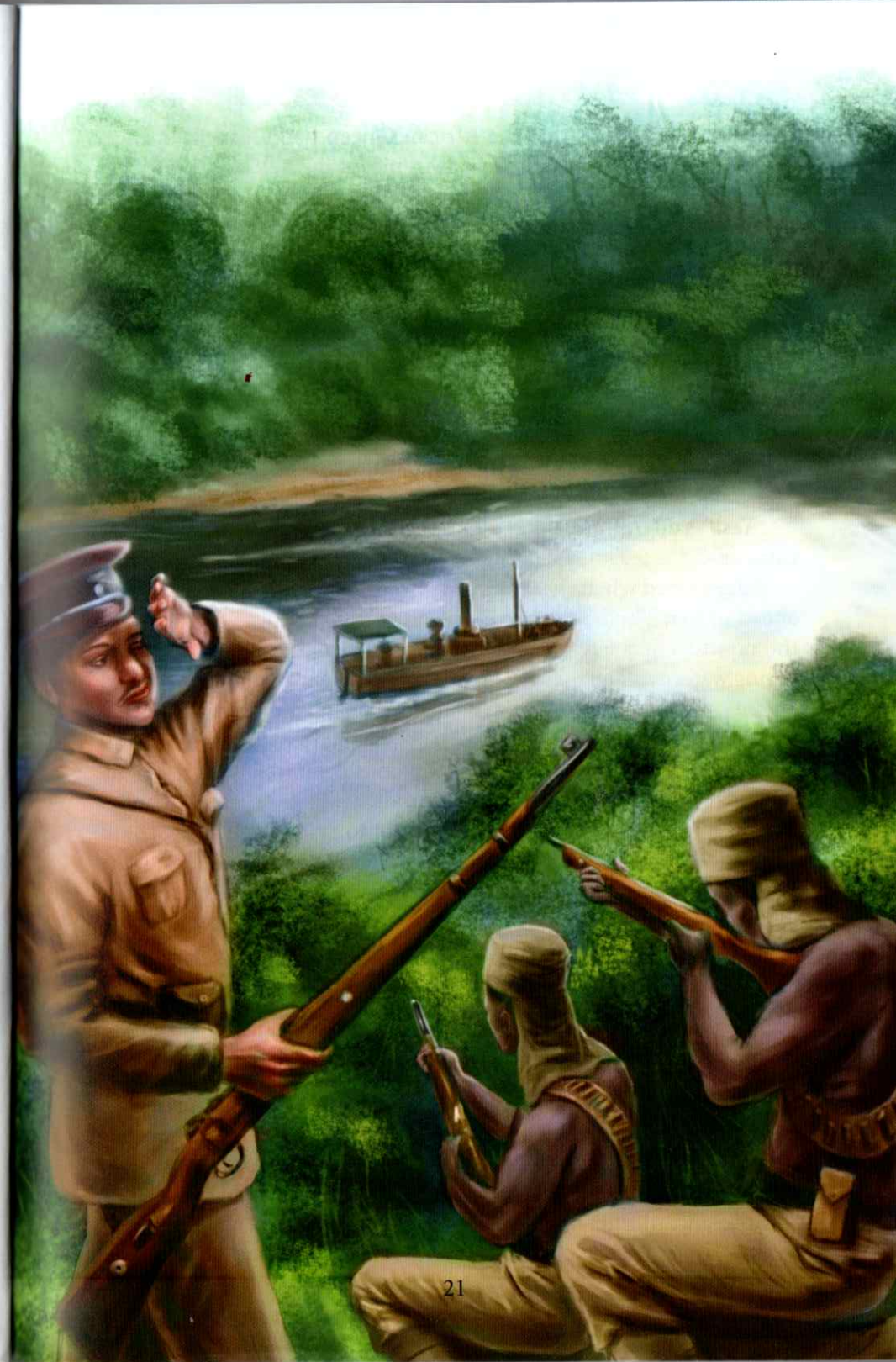
But the boat continued on its course, untouched by the bullets.

The commandant looked through his binoculars. "Again!" he shouted.

The soldiers opened fire once more, but the African Queen carried on down the river. The boat was about a kilometre away and was apparently out of range of the rifles.

The commandant was frustrated. He grabbed a rifle from one of the Askaris and began to shoot at the boat himself. He missed. He fired, reloaded and fired again, but the reflection of the sun on the water made it difficult to take aim.

The commandant watched as the boat disappeared down the



river. He was furious that the African Queen had escaped, but was convinced that she would be torn to pieces in the cataracts. "Poor devils!" thought the commandant. "No one has ever managed to successfully pass through the rapids and cataracts of the Lower Ulanga. That little steamboat doesn't stand a chance at all!" The commandant decided not to tell von Hanneken about the incident; he knew there would be trouble if he did.

Meanwhile, the strong currents of the Ulanga River were carrying the African Queen towards the rapids with frightening speed.

"Were those gunshots?" shouted Rose.

"Yes!" said Allnutt. "Keep going, Rose! We're approaching the cataracts!"

Rose gasped when she saw the rushing water and dangerous rocks ahead of her. The boat swayed and rocked violently as they entered the rapids. The air was suddenly full of spray and the sound of the raging waters was terrifying. Allnutt kept his attention focused on the engine – Rose was struggling to keep the African Queen on course, and he was too frightened to look up. He started to pray; seconds later, the boat was flying down a dangerous cataract.

They reached a second series of rapids, and Rose turned the tiller sharply to the right in a desperate attempt to avoid the black rocks in the water. She knew that the rocks would tear open the bottom of the boat if she touched them. The current started to push the boat to the opposite bank, and Rose threw herself on the tiller to make it turn.

Once they had passed a third series of rapids, Rose realised that Allnutt was trying to get her attention. He was waving a piece of wood at her; their fuel was running out and they would have to find a place to stop. Rose looked around frantically, then she saw what she was looking for. Further up the river, Rose noticed a gap in some rocks. The waters there were clear and calm. Rose aimed the boat at the gap and the strong current carried the boat down into a gorge.

"We made it!" said Rose as Allnutt dropped anchor. "We made it through the rapids!"

Rose and Allnutt hugged each other, with tears of joy and relief



running down their cheeks.

"Well done, Rosie," said Allnutt. "You did a fine job."

Later, Allnutt went ashore to collect wood, while Rose pumped water out of the boat. The gorge was cool and pleasant; there were no insects to bother them, and no danger of being discovered by the Germans. When Allnutt returned, the pair ate their dinner and drank several cups of tea. They talked and laughed for hours – the difficulties they had faced had clearly made their friendship stronger and it seemed that they both enjoyed each other's company very much. After dinner, Rose and Allnutt fell asleep under the starry African sky.



CHAPTER 5

THE JOURNEY DOWN THE ULANGA RIVER CONTINUED THE following morning. Rose had learnt a great deal in the short time she had spent on the river, and was now able to navigate the boat through the rapids with surprising ease. In fact, Rose was beginning to enjoy the challenge of steering the little steamboat through some of the most dangerous waters in Africa.

When the river started to widen, Rose and Allnutt tied the boat in a calm stretch of water. Once again, Allnutt went ashore to collect wood, leaving Rose to admire the scenery for the first time since their journey had begun. The water was a clear, green colour; the riverbank was covered in blue and yellow flowers, and a rainbow danced in a distant waterfall. Rose smiled. She was truly content and extremely proud of how far she and Allnutt had come.

An hour or so later, Rose saw Allnutt coming towards the boat. He was limping.

"Would you mind looking at my foot, please Rose?" he asked as he climbed into the boat. "I think there's a splinter in it."

"Of course I wouldn't mind," said Rose.

Allnutt sat down and Rose examined his foot. She then removed the splinter carefully with her fingernails.

"It's out now," said Rose.

"Thank you," said Allnutt.

CHAPTER 4

Comprehension

1 Read Chapter 4 and match the two halves of the sentences.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. The German officer smiled | a. to avoid the black rocks in the river. |
| 2. Rose tried her best | b. under a starry sky. |
| 3. Strong river currents carried the boat | c. down into a gorge. |
| 4. After dinner Rose and Allnutt slept | d. when he saw the African Queen. |

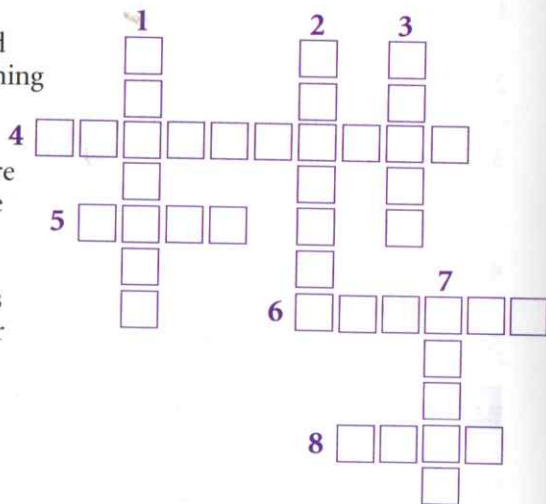
2 Are the following sentences True or False? Write T or F in the boxes.

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| 1. Allnutt stayed at the tiller all the time. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. The commandant was the only one to fire at the African Queen. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. The commandant expected the African Queen to be destroyed by the cataracts. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Rose steered the boat to safe water through a gap in some rocks. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. The gorge where the African Queen anchored was hot and full of insects. | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Vocabulary

3 Do the crossword.

1. A person who has escaped from somewhere / something
2. Small metal objects fired from a gun
3. A deep narrow place where a river usually runs, inside the very high "walls" of a mountain
4. An instrument that makes faraway things seem closer
5. To move slowly from side to side
6. Full of stars
7. Type of a long gun
8. Without large waves



4 Find words or phrases in Chapter 4 which mean the same as:

- | | | |
|---|-------|-----------|
| 1. a place to burn wood in | _____ | (page 20) |
| 2. allowing yourself to be caught by the enemy | _____ | (page 20) |
| 3. with little hope of success | _____ | (page 22) |
| 4. the side of a river | _____ | (page 22) |
| 5. put your arms around and held another person | _____ | (page 22) |
| 6. to annoy or irritate someone | _____ | (page 24) |

Follow-up activities

5 Discuss.

1. When the German commandant saw the African Queen coming near the village, he thought it had come to surrender. Do you surrender or give up when you have a problem? On what occasions? Give examples.
2. Should the commandant have tried harder to stop the steamboat escaping down the river? What could he have done to capture Rose and Allnutt?
3. Rose and Allnutt succeeded by helping each other. How important is it to work with others when trying to solve a problem?
4. How do you expect Rose and Allnutt's friendship to develop?

6 Imagine that you are Rose or Allnutt. Write a page in your diary describing your impressions of the other person. Include details on appearance and character. (80 - 100 words)