

"You fixed the propeller and you kept the engine going. No other man would have been able to do what you did. Now we just have to get through the delta."

Allnutt nodded. "With a little luck, we'll be at the lake soon."

Allnutt went to sleep a short while later, while Rose stayed awake and thought about the journey ahead. It was a beautiful night; the water surrounding the boat was still and dark and it reflected the light of a thousand stars. Despite the painful insect bites, Rose felt happy and peaceful, and, eventually, she too fell asleep.

Unfortunately, luck wasn't on Rose and Allnutt's side. The channels of the delta were narrow, muddy and filled with reeds and by the following afternoon, the African Queen had come to a complete standstill.

"We're stuck in the mud," said Allnutt.

"I know," said Rose. "What can we do?"

Allnutt wiped the sweat from his brow with the back of his hand. "I can use this boat-hook," he said, picking up a thin, curved piece of metal. "I'll hook it onto the reeds and pull the boat along."

Rose looked at the thick reeds on either side of the boat and sighed. "Using a boat-hook will really slow us down," she said.

"We have no choice," said Allnutt. "The propeller won't turn in mud."

It took Allnutt two hours to move the boat just a few metres forward. The work was exhausting and when the insects returned, Allnutt collapsed on to the floor of the boat.

"I can't go on," he said breathlessly. "I'm sorry, Rose."

"All right," said Rose. "Give me the boat-hook."

Allnutt was too tired to argue. He gave Rose the boat-hook, but as much as she tried, she wasn't that successful either. After about ten minutes, she threw the boat-hook down with a clatter and sat down next to Allnutt.

"We'll go on tomorrow," she said.

Later that night, after Allnutt had fallen asleep, Rose heard the sound of raindrops on the stern and almost jumped for joy. Now

