

## CHAPTER 7

SOON, ROSE AND ALLNUTT ENTERED ANOTHER CHANNEL OF THE delta. Unfortunately, this channel was filled with mangroves. These thick, weed-like plants made it almost impossible for the boat to move forward.

"We can't use the engine here, the propeller will get stuck again," said Allnutt. "I'll have to use the boat-hook."

"I wish we had two boat-hooks," said Rose, as she examined the mangroves that lay before them. "Do you think you'd be able to make one for me?"

"I can certainly try," replied Allnutt.

It didn't take the mechanic very long to beat a piece of iron into the shape of a hook. With both Rose and Allnutt using hooks to move the boat forward, they began to make steady progress. But the mangrove swamp was approximately twenty kilometres long, and Allnutt estimated that it would take at least two to three days to reach the end of it.

Rose and Allnutt encountered numerous obstacles in the swamp, including twisted tree roots, thick branches and even some snakes. Huge trees like fences were all around them and the heat was terrible. The worst part, though, was the swarms of mosquitoes, and it was not long before Rose and Allnutt began to show signs of malaria. They both experienced high fever, terrible thirst and muscle pain, which slowed down their progress. Fortunately, Allnutt had medication on board which offered some relief from the symptoms. Days passed slowly in the dark mangrove swamp.

Finally, the African Queen entered another channel. This one was wider than the one before, and it was some time before Rose and Allnutt realised that they had left the mangrove swamp behind.

"Do you think we're through yet, Rose?" asked Allnutt.

Rose stared into the distance. "Yes, Charlie, I think we are," she replied.

Too weak and tired to celebrate, all Rose and Allnutt could do was smile at each other. After days of suffering in the swamp, the pair looked terrible. Their hair was full of mud; their clothes were torn

