

the water level in the channel would rise and by morning, the boat would be above the mud and reeds. They would be able to continue their journey at full speed. Rose smiled to herself and fell asleep.

The rain had indeed been a blessing, and Rose and Allnutt set sail after a quick breakfast. By lunchtime, they had entered another channel, only this one was full of water lilies. It was a matter of minutes before the boat got stuck again.

This time, Allnutt used his boat-hook and Rose used a canoe paddle to move the boat forward. But it was no use. The boat wouldn't move.

"What do you think is wrong?" asked Rose.

"Sounds like something's happened to the propeller," said Allnutt. "I'll have to go down and take a look."

Rose looked concerned. "Do be careful, Charlie," she said softly. Allnutt nodded. He dived into the water and disappeared under the carpet of weeds while Rose looked on anxiously. She sighed with relief when Allnutt finally reappeared.

"There are weeds wrapped around the propeller," Allnutt informed Rose. "I managed to cut some of them away, then I had to come up for air. It shouldn't take me too long to cut away the rest."

"Please be careful," said Rose as Allnutt went under a second time.

He had to dive four times to cut the weeds away from the propeller. When Allnutt came up for the last time, his face was shining with pride.

"All done!" the mechanic announced as Rose helped him on to the boat. Suddenly, Rose let out a little cry; Allnutt was covered in fat, black leeches. They were stuck on his arms and legs and were quickly swelling up with his blood.

"Get them off!" Allnutt shouted as he hopped around the boat. He hated leeches more than anything in the world.

Rose remembered that the best way to remove leeches was to pour salt over them, and she rushed to the store cupboard to get the tin of salt. She rubbed the salt on the leeches and they rapidly let go of their victim. The creatures fell on to the floorboards one by one, and Rose threw their remains into the water.

Allnutt looked disgusted. "Let's get away from here, Rose!" he

pleaded. "Quickly!"
Ten minutes later, Rose and Allnutt continued their journey through the delta.

