

CAPE TRIBULATION

Inspired by a very real, very remote location

Written by

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EXT. DAINTREE RAINFOREST STORM - NIGHT

A young woman's SOB FILLED EFFORTS and frantic FOOTSTEPS as she fights through pitch dark, sopping wet underbrush, BRANCHES SLAP her, TWIGS BREAK under her bare feet.

Through the downpour, the flickering light of an encroaching kerosene lantern illuminates glimpses of the woman in her torn T-shirt and shorts as she fights the gripping branches.

The woman CRIES as the lantern gets closer. Her porcelain skin and hands are ripped by the savagely thorned primordial rainforest. Determined, these wounds don't stop her struggle.

The lantern closes in on her glowing red hair, luminous shoulders, and bloody hands. Snatched from behind by brutish arms, she WAILS with all of her remaining life force.

BLACKOUT

PRE-LAP:

DEAFENING RAIN grinds like gravel onto a metal car roof.

INT. MILES' CAR - DAINTREE RAINFOREST STORM - NIGHT

SCREECHING windscreen wipers. Weak headlights illuminating a curtain of blinding rain.

Zigzagging madly to avoid potholes, DR. MILES SANDERSON, 59, bastard Brit-gone-bush, wrestles his supply crate-filled beater of a station wagon over the rutted mud track.

Beside him, PETE MURPHY, 43, rough-as-guts Queenslander, enjoys the rocking ride, then leers to the back seat.

PETE MURPHY

Hope yer not 'fraid of crocs, Luv.
'Cuz if this baby carks it in one
o'these creeks, it's curtains.

Pete bares his teeth, snaps them once, and slowly runs his index finger across his throat.

PETE MURPHY (CONT'D)

No joke, Luv. These waters are
crawling with freshies.

Miles swerves, slides in the mud nearly missing the thick trees lining the narrow track. Sound of a SQUISH and a BANG.

MILES

Bloody Cane Toads!

PETE MURPHY

Got three creeks t'go. Once we
cross over, no comin' back. It's
off the grid. No way to get home.

In the backseat, OLIVIA WATSON, 28, nerdy American eco-tourist, is silent, eyes wide with terror, her four limbs splayed to stabilize against the punishing ride.

Her right arm and both hands are covered in scar tissue.

PETE MURPHY (CONT'D)

(whispering to Miles)

I'll take silence as consent.

Miles accelerates to power through the first creek. THUD and SPLASH on impact. The engine dies, halting the jostling ride. Mid-stream the headlights fade to pitch black.

PETE MURPHY (CONT'D)

Yer drivin' now, Luv.

Miles and Pete jump out of the car and into the deluge. They slosh around back to push the car.

PETE MURPHY (CONT'D)

(screaming over the rain)

Git out and steer, ya Drongo!

Olivia doesn't move. Pete gives the car THREE HARD SMACKS.

Olivia still doesn't move.

Pete rips Olivia's door open. His long hair, mangy beard and clothes cling to his body like a drowned man. He brandishes a machete.

PETE MURPHY (CONT'D)

I'm not askin' again. Ya kin hold
the wheel steady kin't ya?

Fearful, Olivia nods and slowly peels her white knuckles from their grip into the car upholstery.

EXT. CREEK #1 DAINTREE RAINFOREST STORM - CONTINUOUS

Olivia steps out into the shin deep muddy water and grinding rain. She tries to assess the situation, but in the dark, can't see through the rain and is instantly drenched.

In the swelling creek, something big and dark rubs against her leg. She jumps into the driver's seat and slams the door.

Unseen by the humans, the eyes of a crocodile bob above the dark water and float to the side of the creek. The croc silently scrambles up the grassy bank.

Olivia steers blindly in the dark as the men push the car up the side of the muddy creek bank.

Olivia steps out of the driver's seat into tall wet grass beside the muddy track. Miles and Pete re-take their seats.

Olivia looks around trying to make sense of this world. She unknowingly steps in the direction of the crocodile.

PETE MURPHY
(unaware of the croc)
Back in the car, ya Nutter!

INT. MILES' CAR - DAINTREE RAINFOREST STORM - CONTINUOUS

Olivia reluctantly gets back into the car with the men. All three are sopping wet with clothes clinging to their bodies.

The windows steam up almost instantly. They wait. Pitch black and silence except for the GRINDING RAIN. Petrified, Olivia closes her eyes to calm herself.

PETE MURPHY
(whispering to Miles)
Ya didn't tell me she was crook.
How's that gonna work?

Hearing Pete, Olivia's eyes snap open.

OLIVIA
Doctor Sanderson, what is our
intended course of action?

PETE MURPHY
Keep yer shirt on, Luv! We wait
for the next ute to come through
and they'll give us a spark.

Bright headlights flare as a big-wheeled properly snorkeled ute (truck) comes barrelling up out of the creek behind them and stops. The UTE DRIVER hops out.

Pete gets out to lift the bonnet. They hook up jumper cables, start the car. The headlights turn back on.

Pete jumps back into the passenger seat with glee.

PETE MURPHY (CONT'D)
And, Bob's yer uncle!

Miles resumes his mad high-speed driving, swerving and sliding. Through patches in the rain, Olivia glimpses twilight through the trees and down to the ocean far below.

Suddenly Miles sees a cliff ahead, he brakes, jerks into a hard turn to avoid going over the edge, slides, clears the turn, accelerates and keeps going.

Rotting fruit from the supply crates in the back of the station wagon is flung onto Olivia.

Pete turns to enjoy Olivia wiping slimy clusters of maggots out of her hair and off of her shoulder.

PETE MURPHY (CONT'D)

Whaddya think about our din-din,
eh? R'flying fox friends love it
rotten. Re-planting the rainforest,
one bat-turd at a time.

OLIVIA

What?

PETE MURPHY

The bats drop seeds in their magic
shit and the rainforest grows back.

OLIVIA

Bats are essential to the
ecosystem.

PETE MURPHY

Somethin' like that.

Pete snorts, and slides the tip of his machete over her right hand and just under the hem of her shorts.

OLIVIA

What the hell are you doing?

PETE MURPHY

What happen'd t'ya? Yer not much to
look at are ya, Luv?

MILES

Banana-bender charm, Darlin'.
That's how ya know he fancies ya.

The car swerves and heads downhill, slipping and skidding as it picks up speed.

OLIVIA

There was a fire.

Pete pulls the machete away quickly making a small cut in Olivia's shorts. He scans at the road ahead and chuckles.

PETE MURPHY

Yer gonna bloody love this one.

Olivia sees a bigger creek ahead and braces. The car SPLASHES and SLAMS HARD into deeper water, and stalls mid-stream.

PETE MURPHY (CONT'D)

Ha! You know the drill.

EXT. CREEK #2 - DAINTREE RAINFOREST STORM - CONTINUOUS

Miles, Pete and Olivia step into the black, deeper, faster moving torrent. With a wrenching METAL GROAN, the car jerks slightly downstream. Olivia hops in the driver's seat.

She steers the car up the other side of the creek.

INT. MILES' CAR - DAINTREE RAINFOREST STORM - CONTINUOUS

Olivia gets out of the driver's seat, moves to the back seat. Miles KNOCKS on her window. Olivia hand cranks the window down, rain pours in.

MILES

We took on too much water to re-start. There's a homestead two clicks ahead. We'll go get help.

Olivia stares at him with wide open eyes.

OLIVIA

You what? No!

PETE MURPHY

No worries, Luv. We'll be back before brekkie.

The two men walk off. Being pelted with rain, Olivia is too stunned to realize that she should close the window.

A dark, slimy blob drops onto Olivia's face. She flicks it off, and rolls up the window as fast as she can.

The overwhelming sound of rain POUNDING over her head, the smell and slime of rotten maggot filled fruit surrounding her, Olivia feels the alien darkness and SCREAMS.

END TEASER