

Mayday

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EXT. DUSTY RURAL AIRSTRIP - DAY

SUPER: Gove Airport, Northern Australia.

JEN THOMAS, 30s, tiny frame, angular features and a cigarette permanently stuck in her mouth, kicks a tyre on the chubby Skyfarmer T-400.

JEN
Can't believe this still flies.

RUSSELL GALLEY, 60s, leathery skin and a nervous twitch found in a whiskey bottle, ducks under a wing to join her.

RUSSELL
It'll be fine.

Jen shakes her head.

JEN
It's an ugly beast.

RUSSELL
Crop sprayer, what'd ya expect?

She shrugs and grinds the cigarette out under her boot.

JEN
So Borroloola?

RUSSELL
Yep, quick hop, refuel. Then Howard's place, southern corn fields.

JEN
What's in the tank?

RUSSELL
Lorsban, so careful.

Jen clambers aboard the weird four wing plane, not an easy task as the pilot's cabin is elevated fifteen feet above the ground to accommodate the enlarged fuselage where the liquid chemicals are held.

JEN
See you in a couple of days.

Russell is already on his way towards a distant hangar.

JEN
Charming.

EXT. SKY ABOVE THE ARAFURA SEA - DAY

The heavysset plane dips, nosedives and then levels out.

A moment later it repeats the movement, each erratic dip taking it closer to the sea below.

INT. SKYFARMER COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

Jen taps the red flashing controls. They stop flashing.

JEN
Thank God.

They start flashing red again.

JEN
(into her headset)
Borrooloola tower, do you read me?

STATIC the only response.

JEN
Borrooloola tower, I'm heading for an
emergency water landing. I'm coming
down hard, near Hawk Island.

She struggles with the yolk as it writhes in her grasp.

JEN
Fuck!

The plane SMASHES into the sea, windscreen shatters, wings snap and water rushes into the cockpit.

INT. SKYFARMER COCKPIT - NIGHT

The plane is mostly horizontal, submerged up to Jen's chest.

An eerie glow comes from the submerged control panel and weak light from the cabin's overhead bulb.

Jen's unconscious, a large and bloody wound visible on her head. She's surrounded by debris, seaweed and small fish.

The red plastic First Aid box catches a swell in the water and bumps forcefully into Jen's forehead.

She comes to with an agonised GASP and looks round.

Two things then happen instantaneously.

A saltwater crocodile crosses in front of the windscreen and thrashes its tail against the side of the cockpit with a loud dull THUMP.

Jen tries to get out of her seatbelt, but the release mechanism is stuck. She yanks on it but to no avail.

The crocodile THUMPS the plane again.

Jen grabs the floating First Aid box and yanks it open.

Bandages, no. Wipes, no. Gel sanitiser, no.

Scissors, yes.

The crocodile shoves its head through the shattered windscreen and into the cockpit.

It catches its legs on the window's metal frame and retreats to find a better entrance.

JEN

Fucker.

Jen ducks her head underwater so she can see as she works on the seatbelt with the scissors.

She resurfaces and looks for the beast. Can't see it.

SNAP

The crocodile attacks from the side, forces its flat head through a gap in the glass.

Jen leans as far away as she can.

This enrages it even further. It kicks harder and faster in an attempt to force its jaws onto Jen's flesh.

Jen SCREAMS but keeps cutting at her belt.

The weight and motion of the crocodile tips the plane, the cockpit sinks slowly forward, the planes tail up.

The unexpected shift prompts the crocodile to retreat.

It also forces Jen completely underwater.

Bubbles escape Jen's mouth as she hacks at the belt.

The dark shadow of the man-eater moves silently in the background, considering its next move.

The shadow solidifies as the croc gains speed, coming at the cockpit at full speed.

CRASH.

The beast comes straight through the centre of the windscreen, jaws wide and snapping.

The belt comes free as Jen kicks upwards and backwards.

Jaws snap on empty space as Jen's feet connect with the animal's snout and propel her out of the water and into the rear of the cockpit.

Jen gasps for air and scrabbles to the back of the cockpit as the crocodile's small feet struggle for purchase.

She scans around for a weapon, but it's a crop-sprayer, not a military plane.

The crocodile shreds the pilot seat and clambers over.

Jen grabs the handle of the fuselage access panel.

The crocodile HISSES at his prey and moves towards her.

Jen turns the handle.

The hatch opens inwards and drops Jen into darkness.

INSIDE FUSELAGE

Jan dangles in the tank, legs in the liquid chemical.

Above, the croc's profile is limned by the cabin's light.

It pauses.

JEN

C'mon you snappy little fucker.

The crocodile scuffles into the hole, inches forward, unsure of its footing but too hungry to stop.

Gravity gives the reptile an assist.

It plunges into the dark as Jen swings the hatch and herself sideways out of bite range.

Jen immediately pulls herself up, shoots a hand up and onto the cabin and keeps pulling.

She's almost out when the saltie's jaws snap onto her foot.

She SCREAMS in pain, kicks backwards and her boot is the only thing left in its jaws.

She drags herself up into the cabin.

The plane tilts, fuselage dips due to the animal's weight.

SCRATCHING.

The beast's head is through the hatch.

She looks for something, anything, to use against the scaled behemoth.

Her eyes alight on the sanitiser.

She grabs it and squirts a stream of gel from her feet to the crocodile's head and beyond it, back down the hatch.

She clammers through the windscreen, pulls her lighter from her pocket and strikes the wheel.

It sparks but doesn't light.

The beast pulls his front legs through the hatch.

Jen strikes the lighter again.

A flame shoots up.

Jen smiles and drops the lighter onto the gel trail.

It sputters into life as the croc inches further out of the watery darkness.

Jen thrusts herself away from the plane.

The flame races along the gel trail, sets the leviathan alight and continues down into the chemical tank.

WHUMP!

The chemicals in the fuselage explode.

EXT. BEACH - DAWN

Jen lies motionless on the sand, the tide laps at her feet.

A soft GROAN escapes her lips.

FADE OUT