

"It's an old sailor's expression, darling, of how the sea can be so unmerciful to some," Tom said as he finished with the dressing. "I think that will just about do it."

Pam gently rubbed her head. "Not bad, not bad at all. Tom, you're definitely a man of many talents."

"Why thank you, my dear."

Munching on the beef jerky KB had given them, they ate and chatted while enjoying the cool breeze that blew in from the open sea. At times, it seemed as if they were relaxing at a posh beach resort instead of being stranded on a seemingly deserted island. "The others have been gone for a long time, Tom. You think we'll make it out of all of this all right?"

"Yeah, I do. That KB is a good fellow. Seems to know what he's doing. Old Cappy seemed to take a liking to him, and that's speaks volumes," Tom jovially explained and abruptly stopped when a swishing noise in the dark jungle behind them caught his attention. "Maybe that's the others returning now."

"I can't go another step!" Bridget shouted to Richard as she gasped for air. In his panicked rush Richard didn't bother to slow down. In fact, he had left quite a bit of distance between him and Bridget before he noticed her faint voice in the distance. The area around him grew unusually silent as he stopped and waited for her to catch up. All of a sudden, he felt as if he were the only one in the tunnel, alone, vulnerable, and exposed. It felt as if when he was eight years old again in the horror house, but this time, it wasn't some fictional horrific thrill bought with a carnival ticket. This was real, as real as it gets.

Richard wanted to turn back toward Bridget, but for some reason, he couldn't move. Now, the person many called 'White Lighting' was slower than any living creature in the world. He wanted to call out to Bridget, but his lips would not function well enough to say her name. At that very moment, he felt something move in the water. A blunt force suddenly knocked him off his feet and into the water. Richard struggled to gain his footing, slipping and falling several times before he was able to stand upright in the water. While he was submerged, his flashlight flickered erratically. In the light, he noticed that the water had turned red and something was floating next to him. It looked as if it was a chunk of meat. A burning feeling overcame

him and he grabbed at his stomach. Instead of clutching skin, he felt only a large fleshy hole. Looking down, he saw that his entire stomach had been ripped open with fleshy remnants of the intestines exposed. In shock, he was totally powerless to scream out, and only stood there staring in disbelief as he realized that the chunk of meat floating was of his own flesh. A trickle of red began to seep from his lips as he became blurry-eyed, dizzy, and began to stagger. A nearby splash snapped him from his temporary trance. He noticed that the chunk of floating flesh was gone, and realized that it had been snatched up like piece of meat by a hungry beast.

Suddenly, he found his voice, although it was more of a gurgle than a scream, with his mouth full of blood. In desperation, he fired off a few rounds into the water hoping to kill whatever had attacked him. "Jesus! Help me!" he shouted. Another tremendous force knocked him down again. This time, his right arm was completely ripped off. The tunnel erupted with the sounds of his terror. The flashlight Richard was carrying fell to the ground next to his sheared-off arm. The flashlight illuminated the tunnel floor for a split second, giving Richard a partial glimpse of his attacker before it yanked him beneath the water. While falling backward, the gun discharge sent an errant bullet spiraling into the direction of Bridget. KB had heard all the turmoil and had caught up to the startled girl. The bullet bounced off the walls and ricocheted several times over the water before grazing his arm, its force knocking him into to Bridget. They both fell backyard into the water and she dropped her flashlight.

"Are you all right?" Bridget asked as they helped each other up.

"Just a graze, I'll be alright. Richard!" he shouted. "Richard!" There was no reply.

KB pointed his light in the direction of Richard's screams. The water was bubbling and made swishing sounds as though something was struggling underneath. Richard's head popped up out of the water a couple of times, each time he screamed out. "Help me! Oh please! Help me! No! No! No! No! No!" Richard's body was yanked and jerked wildly. His head banged so hard against the walls of the tunnel, that bits of brain matter burst

from his exposed skull. KB couldn't make out what was attacking Richard, but knew it was large and powerful. Never had KB seen anything so brutal in his entire life. He and Bridget watched helplessly as Richard was being torn apart. When their friend went under for the last time, KB handed Bridget the flashlight and ordered her to step back and cover her ears. He pointed the rifle, squeezed the trigger, and fired at where he thought the attacker might be. Instantly, the dark tunnel lit up from sporadic white flashes of light. With rapid controlled bursts, the former Marine laid out a barrage of deadly fire, the rounds whistling through the tunnel, striking against walls, and piercing the water. The sounds of gunfire were deafening and drowned out KB's emotional cries. He yelled while his body wrenched from the recoil as if the bursts caused him pain, though his yells weren't of physical pain but of fear, anger, and adrenaline.

After a few moments, he and Bridget stood silent, listening, hoping that whatever had attacked Richard was killed in the blaze of bullets. KB, still holding his weapon at the ready, could feel the throbbing in his arm from the errant round from Richard's gun. He wanted to wipe his forehead that dripped with sweat, yet was unwilling to release his grip. He looked hard in the direction in which he had fired.

Bridget stood close, frozen with fear, the flashlight in her hands shaking uncontrollably. KB wanted to turn and comfort her, but he too was somewhat shaken. The silence was eerie and yet in some way, calming. It gave them a false sense of security, thinking that maybe he did kill whatever was there. Then, without warning, a large splash in the water re-ignited their fear. Bridget shined the flashlight on the water where a wave began to move toward them.

"Move! Move!" KB shouted as they began backing up.

"Run, Bridget, run!" he shouted.

"What about you?"

"Don't worry. I'm right behind you!" KB shouted while firing at the oncoming wave. Bridget hurried as fast as possible toward the den with the sound of gunfire behind her. The loose debris in the muddy water caused her to lose her footing several times in the sludge and she banged one of her knees against a large sandstone that was submerged in the water. The throb of