



BODYGUARD
AMBUSH

**CHRIS
BRADFORD**

HUNTER. KILLER. SURVIVOR.

'Crocodile!' he cried in warning.

Her smile evaporated as soon as she spotted the ominous snout and pair of slit-eyes gliding towards her. With furious strokes, she made for the bank. But the crocodile was closing in fast.

Connor swam for all he was worth. His daily pool training with Charley, which he'd begun in preparation for his previous assignment, was once again paying off as he cut through the water like a fish. He dug deep, calling upon hidden reserves of energy.

Amber was only a few metres from the bank when the crocodile shot forward with a final burst of speed. Connor plunged on, determined to protect her however impossible the odds.

Focused on its immediate prey, the crocodile didn't notice Connor's approach from upstream. As it opened its jaws to sink its teeth into Amber's trailing legs, Connor dived forward and wrapped his arms round the crocodile's snout. Praying Gunner was right about the weakness of their opening jaw muscles, Connor clung on with all his might, his legs wrapped round its body.

Unfamiliar with being the victim of an attack itself, the crocodile momentarily froze and Connor found himself eye-to-eye with the prehistoric beast. It studied him with cold carnivorous intent. Then the crocodile wrenched its head away, its unimaginable brute strength trawling Connor through the water as it attempted to shake him off. But Connor refused to let go – he had to give Amber enough time to escape the river.

Besides, once he released the crocodile, *he* would become the prey.

Enraged, the crocodile dived beneath the surface. Connor barely managed to snatch a breath before he was dragged under with it. The crocodile rolled him, its tail whipping, its body writhing. Connor lost all sense of orientation. His arms became numb as he clung on for dear life. But it was no use. He was weakening with every passing second and his lungs screamed for air. Forced to let go, Connor kicked himself away from the crocodile's jaws and came up gasping.

The crocodile vanished.

'Where's it gone?' he yelled, looking wildly around him.

Amber, who'd managed to crawl up on to the safety of

the bank, scanned the river. Then she spotted a ripple beneath the surface moving towards him at high speed. 'There!' she cried.

The water being shallow enough for him to touch the muddy riverbed, Connor half-swam, half-ran for the bank. He was waist-deep when the crocodile burst out of the water, its ferocious jaws open wide. It clamped down hard on Connor's back.

'NO! Connor!' Amber screamed as he was dragged back into the river and disappeared beneath the surface.