



# Fear Is the Rider

*Kenneth Cook*

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**Fear Is the Rider** Kenneth Cook

*It was quite silent in the scrub. No breeze stirred the leaves and no bird moved, except for the kite hawks wheeling silently, eternally, high in the hot air.*

*She smelt her attacker before she saw him.*

*A heavy stench hit her with such force that she started with shock. It was a smell she'd never encountered before. Not man, not animal, something like carrion, but alive. It seemed to envelop and suffocate her, then became tangible as two arms wrapped around her body and began tearing at her clothing.*

A young man driving from Sydney to Adelaide for work decides to take a short detour into the desert. He turns his hatchback on to a notoriously dangerous track that bisects uninhabited stone-covered flats. Out there, under the baking sun, people can die within hours.

He's not far along the road when a distraught young woman stumbles from the scrub and flags him down. A journalist from Sydney, she has just escaped the clutches of an inexplicable, terrifying creature.

Now this desert-dwelling creature has her jeep. Her axe. And her scent...

From the author of the classic novel *Wake In Fright* comes a chillingly brilliant short novel that's part *Wolf Creek* and part *Duel*. *Fear Is the Rider* is a nail-biting chase into the outback, towards the devil lurking at its centre.

*Wake In Fright* was made into an internationally acclaimed film. *Fear Is the Rider* is a previously unpublished manuscript from the 1980s that was recently rediscovered among Kenneth Cook's papers.

**Kenneth Cook** was born in Sydney. *Wake In Fright*, which drew on his time as a journalist in Broken Hill, was first published in 1961 when Cook was 32. It was published in England and America, translated into several languages, and was a prescribed text in schools. Cook wrote twenty-two books in a variety of genres, and was well known in film circles as a scriptwriter and independent film-maker. He died in 1987.

'This lost Ozploitation gem is pure horror adrenaline, as characters and reader alike are hunted by a relentless golem—the nightmare outback monster we've always feared.' Chris Flynn, author of *A Tiger in Eden* and *The Glass Kingdom*

'The moment to moment effect of reading *Fear Is the Rider* is one of gasping attentiveness to the urgent needs of the present...There is special, pulpy kind of genius to the kind of book that almost swipes ahead for us, like a concert pianist's assistant.' *Australian*

'Another great retro thriller. Treat it like going to a movie, because it will only take you a couple of hours to power through it...It's just pure adrenaline and survival.' *Herald Sun*

'A suspense packed ride until the final page.' *QANTAS Magazine*

'Possibly the scariest, most spine-chilling and nerve-wracking book I've read. Ever...It's incredibly

filmic—think Wolf Creek meets Mad Max—and so visceral I could feel my heart rising up in my throat as I turned the pages.’ Reading Matters

‘A schlocky, old-school thriller in the best possible way...A kind of literary Mad Max, a master class in Ozploitation, or simply as a short, sharp burst of literary adrenaline, *Fear is the Rider* is a hell of a lot of fun.’ Readings

‘[A] short but powerful novel, Cook takes the reader on an action-packed, tension-filled ride...Definitely a page-turner.’ BookMooch

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