

Vampire Beach: Hunted

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About the Book

Jason Freeman is torn, wondering which natural wonder is more deserving of his attention - the awesome-looking Malibu surf, or his stunning vampire girlfriend, Sienna Devereux, who is lounging on the beach.

The vampire clique is settling in for a great summer and Jason is looking forward to some sun, sea and sand. But the peace is shattered when vampires start going missing. They reappear - but with no memory of what's been happening to them. Are the vampires being hunted?

VAMPIRE BEACH: HUNTED

Alex Duval

RHCP DIGITAL

To JN, for all the laughs along the way!

Special thanks to Laura Burns & Melinda Metz

One

THE SOUND OF the waves crashing in. The slap of a football being caught in a pair of hands. Girls talking. Guys laughing. Seagulls cawing. A volleyball net flapping in the breeze coming off the ocean. Jason Freeman grinned as he dug his toes deeper into the sun-warmed sand of Surfrider Beach, his eyes closed behind his new Diesel sunglasses. This strip of beach – just your basic paradise – had become his home away from home since he'd moved to Malibu from Michigan at the beginning of his senior year. If someone dropped him on this spot, blindfolded, he'd know it just by the sounds.

That didn't mean he wouldn't miss the visuals, because he definitely would. Jason shoved his sunglasses onto the top of his head, then rolled onto his side, giving himself the perfect view of his favorite Surfrider Beach sight – his girlfriend, Sienna Devereux, in one of her many bathing suits, this one a black bikini with a top that tied in a bow in front. That bow made Jason's fingers itch.

Sienna slid up on one elbow and pulled her big sunglasses down on her nose. She gave him a playful smile, a smile that made him think she could read his mind about that tie.

'You know exactly what I'm thinking, don't you?' Jason asked.

Sienna glanced over to his surfboard, which was jammed in the sand a few feet away. 'That there are some all-time, classic waves out there and you can't let them pass you by?' she asked, widening her eyes with extreme innocence, putting a little surfer-dude spin on her words.

Jason shot a look at the ocean. There *was* some pretty tempting wave action going on out there. He looked back at

Sienna. But that bikini bow . . .

How spoiled am I? he thought. *Sitting here trying to decide between two natural wonders: the Malibu coast and my scorching girlfriend. Answer: so insanely spoiled.* Malibu had been very, very good to him. Even if the place was bursting with vampires.

Or maybe *because* it was. There was one vampire who'd definitely made his life more intense and more exciting - Sienna. Being with her made him feel more alive, even though entering her world had nearly made him dead! He'd been attacked by a crazed vampire consumed with bloodlust, and shot with a crossbow by a vampire hunter. And then there was the Aristocratic French vampire who'd been stalking Sienna's sister.

And yet in spite of all the near-death experiences, Jason wouldn't have had his life any other way. Sienna was worth it all. He'd give his life for what they'd already had together, although, ideally, it wouldn't come to that.

'Go ahead. Surf if you want to,' Sienna sighed, settling back to sunbathe.

Jason grinned. 'No way. I'm not surfing. There are much more exciting things to do right here.' He moved closer to Sienna - then reached across her and grabbed the copy of *Cosmo* sticking out of her beach bag. 'I have a lot of reading to catch up on. I haven't even *started* to study the Body Language Decoder.' He opened the magazine and locked his gaze on the page, like it was mesmerizing.

'Decode this,' Sienna said, plucking the magazine out of his hand and tossing it across the sand.

Jason laughed. Then he kissed her. Teasing Sienna was fun, but kissing her was more fun. Way too soon, she pulled back a little and gazed out across the ocean, her expression thoughtful.

'What?' Jason asked, running his fingers down her cheek.

'Just wondering how many days we'll have like this, with all of us,' she answered. She turned toward the beach where

most of the guys were playing football and some of the girls were setting up a volleyball game. Her eyes skipped from face to face, taking in all their friends, pretty much all of them vampires, scattered over 'their' piece of the beach.

Sienna had just brought up the topic that every senior at DeVere High had been avoiding: life after high school. They were just a breath away from graduation. In the fall, they'd be scattered all over the place at different colleges. Forget fall; they'd start splitting up as soon as high school ended. Everybody had summer plans.

'All of us, not that many more times,' Jason admitted. 'But a lot of us, most of the summer. And the two of us, pretty much constantly. Even in the fall. I'm at CalTech. You're at UCLA. We'll practically be room-mates.'

'And together, we're going to own L.A.!' Sienna agreed with a smile, but her dark eyes didn't have all of their usual sparkle as she looked across at her friends.

'So you noticed it too. I can see it in your eyes,' Belle Rémy commented as she grabbed three beers from a nearby cooler and sat down on the other side of Sienna. 'Do you think we should stage an intervention?'

'What?' Sienna asked, staring at her best friend.

'For Adam,' Belle answered. 'Weren't you watching him about to crash and burn with that girl over there?' She jerked her chin toward where Adam Turnball and a short, curvy girl wearing cut-off jeans, a flowered bikini top, and what Jason always thought of as 'smart-chick glasses' - the ones with the black frames - stood loading fish tacos and chips and salsa onto paper plates.

'Well, she's smiling. She doesn't seem to be attempting to back away,' Sienna commented.

'But I heard him use the words Godard, Truffaut and David Lynch in one sentence,' Belle explained. 'And he was using the intense voice. You know, the voice that's one level down from where there's spittle.'

'It's all good,' said Jason. 'Well, not the spittle part. But that girl - yes, that cutie - is here as Adam's date. He invited her here all by himself. Her name's Brianna Graham and Adam met her at a young filmmakers' convention. That means that Godard, Truffaut and David Lynch are actual total turn-ons for her,' Jason explained.

'Huh. Well, good for my little dating protégé.' Belle gave a small nod of approval. 'Maybe someday he'll be able to flirt with someone who *isn't* a film freak.'

Michael Van Dyke intercepted a pass and ran the football over to the cooler in time to hear Belle's analysis of Adam's love life. 'No girl who looks like that is a freak,' he told her. 'Except for the *good* kind of freak. Know what I'm saying?'

'Belle, are you going to bring us our beer today or what?' Maggie called. Her shortie wetsuit glistened in the sun as she took a practice serve over the volleyball net.

Brad Moreau, Sienna's ex and, kind of surprisingly, the guy who had ended up being one of Jason's closest friends, trotted up to them, breaking the strained silence that had fallen. 'Van Dyke, we're in the middle of a game here,' he said.

'I've officially called a beer break,' Van Dyke replied, hoisting the cooler onto one shoulder and trotting toward the football players.

'Make a stop over here!' Erin shouted from the other side of the volleyball net. 'Belle's deserted us!' Van Dyke obediently veered in her direction.

'Listen up, you guys,' Brad said to Jason, Sienna and Belle. 'Party tonight at my place.'

Sienna raised one eyebrow. 'I thought you were going to cut your parents a break and let them have one out-of-town trip where you *didn't* throw a party,' she said. 'Especially since the trip's for their anniversary and everything.'

'I was,' Brad answered. 'But there's an epidemic in our town and I feel it's my responsibility to do something about

it. If I don't provide an outlet for the rampaging "senioritis", some serious damage could be done.'

'Brad's right,' Belle chimed in. 'I definitely won't be held responsible for my actions if I don't have a party to go to tonight. And nobody's parents should go on a special anniversary Caribbean cruise without expecting the offspring to take a little advantage.'

'Besides, this could be our last chance to party *chez Moreau* before we all go off to different colleges and don't see each other again until our ten-year reunion, where we won't be able to think of anything to say to each other,' Brad added.

'Except to talk about how fat and bald the men have gotten and how all the women still look so fabulous,' Belle agreed.

Sienna laughed. 'Wow, I can't wait.'

'So, you're coming tonight, right?' Brad asked.

Sienna shot a glance at Jason. 'We *might*,' she answered.

'What's this "*might*"?' Brad protested. 'I'm telling you—'

'Brad, get over here!' Van Dyke yelled. 'We're combining football with volleyball and a little Frisbee, and we need a rule consult.'

'OK!' Brad called back.

'I want in,' Belle said, leaping to her feet. 'Flying folleyball is definitely my game.'

'Get yourselves over to my place tonight. No excuses,' Brad said, with a grin over his shoulder to Sienna and Jason, as he and Belle headed off.

'Do you have something else planned for tonight?' Jason asked.

'Well . . . ' Sienna gave him one of her slow smiles, the kind that always made his stomach flip-flop in a good kind of way. 'Didn't you say your parents had plans tonight?'

'Yeah. They're off to some business dinner,' Jason replied.

'And there's *no* possibility Dani is going to miss a party at Brad's . . . ' Sienna continued.

That was true. Jason's younger sister would not let a juicy party pass her by. It just wasn't possible. He felt a slow smile slide across his own face. 'So, we could be al—'

Jason didn't have time to finish. Adam slid to a stop in front of them, spraying sand in his wake. 'Should I ask her to the party?' he burst out. 'I think she might actually *like* me. But is it too soon? Because the party is tonight. And we're already doing something today. This, I mean. We're here together. So that would be two events in a row. And isn't that uncool? Am I not supposed to be sort of aloof? Vince Vaughn would definitely tell me not to ask. I don't want to be like the guy in *Swingers* who filled up the answering machine - not that I was going to ask on an answering machine. I was going to ask in person. I'm not a raging doofus, but . . .'

Sienna and Jason looked at each other. Sienna unscrambled the Adam-speak first.

'OK . . . did Brad mention the party in front of Brianna?' she asked.

Adam sucked in a deep breath. 'Yeah.'

'Well, then it would be rude not to ask her if she wants to go,' Sienna decreed. 'Tell her that Brad was definitely inviting everyone.'

'Really?' Adam grinned.

'I don't think at this stage in your dating life you should be playing hard to get,' Jason added.

And Adam was off, sending up another shower of sand.

'What was that *Swingers* answering machine thing he was talking about?' Sienna asked.

'I don't know. Some movie thing. And I never ask him to explain his film references anymore. Ask one movie question and you can't get a word in for at least half an hour,' Jason answered. 'So, before the Adam interruption, we were talking about my house - which is going to be empty tonight, which means we could be alone.'

Sienna snuggled up against him. 'That was what I had planned. Is it uncool of me to tell you that?'

Jason grinned, shook his head and wrapped his arm around her.

'Who knows how many chances we'll have to be alone this summer?' Sienna went on. 'Then when we're in college, we'll both have room-mates . . .'

She let her sentence trail off.

She's right, Jason thought. Next year in L.A. was probably going to be great. But could it really compare to what he already had? Was that possible?

'Right now, let's not think about anything but today,' Jason suggested. He pulled Sienna tighter against him, trying to absorb every detail of this moment with her, with their friends, trying to lock in the memory of this little stretch of paradise on earth. Because, in Malibu, things had a way of changing quickly.

Two

'I CAN'T BELIEVE I let you drag me away from Sienna for this,' Jason complained to Adam. 'She was wearing the black bikini. Not that it isn't a thrill a minute standing around in the drugstore with you.' He checked his watch. 'You do realize we've been here, in this same aisle, for thirty-two minutes.'

'Thanks for the update,' Adam muttered. He picked up a small orangey-red box, one he'd already picked up about twenty times. He put it down again, and picked up a small neon-green box that he'd also picked up about ten times already.

Jason shook his head. 'I'm still opposed to the Night Lights. One, the name is stupid. It sounds like something that should be in a baby's room. Two, do you really want to be illuminated down there on your first try? I mean, if you know you have the moves, then maybe, but . . .'

'But "Caution Wear" sounds like heavy-duty protection,' Adam commented. 'It doesn't exactly sound fun. Or romantic.' He shot a look down the aisle to make sure it was still clear. 'Can you see it? "Hey, Bree, excuse me a minute, while I slip into the Caution Wear".'

'I don't want to see it. I don't want to *think* about it. Do they sell brainwash in here?' Jason groaned, scrubbing his forehead with both hands.

'I heard this is the brand they use in movies,' Adam said, pointing to another one of the little boxes.

'That's all you'll have to tell Brianna,' Jason joked. 'By the way, Van Dyke was pretty impressed that you scored such a babe,' he added.

‘I’m totally impressed with myself,’ Adam admitted. ‘I mean, she’s so out of my league, right? She looks like she could be on one of these boxes’ – he tapped the nearest row of condoms – ‘and I look like, you know, me.’

‘You don’t exactly look like you’ve been raised in the cellar or anything,’ Jason told him. ‘You shower. You brush your teeth. Belle has stopped you wearing all your truly geek-squad clothing.’

Adam shook his head. ‘Still, Brianna and I don’t match up on the hot scale, I know. But on the, well, the *soul* scale, we are a perfect match. Two minutes after I met her at the conference, she was telling me how *Inland Empire* had made her swear she was going to shoot in digital her whole life. And just a couple of weeks ago, I wrote this whole blog about deciding that I was never going to shoot on film, that it sucked all the spontaneity and lightness out of a piece. And CGI – well, it can be awesome – but now, I see something with CGI and a little part of my head is saying “fake, fake, fake”. Brianna agrees totally. She—’

‘OK, OK, I get it. You’ve found the girl who is worthy of the gift of your precious virginity,’ Jason interrupted. ‘So pick a box, any box, and go pay.’

Adam shot a look at the counter and groaned. ‘I can’t.’

‘Can we just leave then?’ Jason asked. ‘Clearly, you aren’t going to need any condoms tonight. If you can’t even get yourself to buy any, I don’t think you’re ready for actual sex.’

‘Unfair,’ Adam answered. But he laughed. ‘I’m just waiting for that other cashier to come back. I can’t buy condoms from a hot girl. It would be pure bep.’

“‘Bep”?’

‘Did you even look at the Klingon dictionary I gave you? “Bep” means “agony”,’ Adam explained. ‘And, speaking of bep, couldn’t you spare me some, and just give me some of your stash? That way we could leave right now. Or I’ll give you money, and you buy me some from the hot cashier. I’m