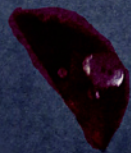


SARAH N. HARVEY AND  
ROBIN STEVENSON



BLOOD  
ON THE  
BEACH



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ORCA BOOK PUBLISHERS

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**Summary:** In this thriller for young adults, eight teens spend  
a scary week on a remote island.

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*To mystery lovers of all ages.*

SATURDAY

# ONE

# Caleb

“Let me guess,” I yelled. “First time on a Zodiac?”

The girl hanging over the side of the boat looked up at me and grimaced, her face as gray-green as the waves. Round cheeks, streaked with mascara and snot. Smearred dark lipstick. Bloodshot brown eyes. The rest of her was covered in the orange flotation suit we’d all had to put on for the hour-long trip to the island. Fifteen minutes in and she was a goner.

“Sorry,” she mumbled. I could barely hear her over the roar of the engine. “Not good with boats.”

“No shit,” I said. “Word of advice—check which way the wind is blowing next time you hurl. Blowback is a bitch.”

She groaned and retched again. I moved away from her, distancing myself from the possibility of flying puke.

Ordinarily I liked being out on the water. Not that day. It was the first day of a week-long sentence, not just for me

but for the other seven misfits on the Zodiac. Four girls and three guys—and me. Stuck on a remote island for a week with three adults, one of whom was on the Zodiac with us—though not, I noticed, wearing an orange suit. His name was Warren, and he was an ex-cop, not a counselor. He had told us he was going to be our boot-camp guy, responsible for, as he put it, *pushing us beyond our perceived limits*.

Warren had a shaved head, a lot of tats (one of them said *Sweat + Sacrifice = Success*) and really impressive biceps. I figured that was why he was wearing the muscle shirt despite the cold wind. I'd already seen some of the girls checking him out, although he had to be at least thirty-five. He and his wife, Claire, ran INTRO, In Nature to Renew Ourselves, a program for “at-risk” teens. I hadn't met Claire yet, but according to the INTRO brochure she had a PhD in psychology: *Doctor Claire Addison*. She and another counselor were already on the island, waiting for us. There was an older guy on the boat too, standing next to Warren. He was at least fifty, dressed in filthy jeans, a grubby gray T-shirt and a battered ballcap that read *Smile if you're not wearing underwear*. His purpose on the boat seemed to be limited to driving, smoking and leering at the girls. No way was he an INTRO counselor.

One of the girls, a tiny blond with glasses and a way-too-big flotation suit, staggered forward from where she had been sitting. I think she was trying to get away from the puker too, but Zodiacs aren't exactly a smooth ride, especially when there's chop. It didn't help that we were

going pretty fast. Everybody except me, the puker and now this girl was huddled on the benches, not speaking, even when Warren yelled, “Isn’t this great, kids?” as the Zodiac slammed into another wave.

The blond girl lost her balance and stumbled right into me. I grabbed on to her, and she stiffened, pulling away from me before she’d even regained her footing.

“Well, this sucks,” she said.

“Which part?”

She gave me a sideways look. “All of it. The boat, the boot-camp guy, INTRO—the whole thing. It’s bullshit.” She scowled at me as if I was the one who had signed her up, then glanced over at the puker. “At least I’m not doing *that*,” she said. “I wouldn’t have thought Imogen would be the one to lose her lunch.”

When I lifted an eyebrow, the blond girl said, “She seems pretty tough. At least, from what she told me on the bus coming up here. I can tell you where all her piercings are, if you like.”

It was my turn to grimace. “No thanks,” I said. Warren had given us strict instructions not to ask our fellow prisoners what crime they were in for—some crap about respecting personal boundaries—but I couldn’t help wondering why she had been sent to INTRO, since she hardly looked like an “at-risk” teen. More like your average suburban high school girl, someone whose biggest problem is not being good at math.

“I’m Caleb,” I said.



“Alice.” She narrowed her eyes. “You look like a rugby player.”

It didn’t sound like a compliment.

I nodded. “Rugby, soccer, basketball, baseball.”

“What? No tennis? No golf?”

What was her problem? “Who can afford that? What about you?” She didn’t look athletic, not even in a tiny-gymnast way. More nerdy, really. A miniature nerd with a bad attitude.

“Team sports?” She shook her head. “I peaked in second grade, when my friend Janna and I won the three-legged race. It was all downhill from there.”

I laughed despite my irritation. “What about the other inmates? Know anything about them?”

She nodded. “Imogen’s met one of the guys before—Jason, the short guy with curly hair. Apparently he got caught ‘in the commission of a B and E.’ First offense, so this is his best option. The rest of them—no idea. What about you? What are you in for?”

She looked up at me, her eyes obscured by the salt spray on her glasses and the hair whipping across her face.

“Didn’t you hear what Warren said?” I asked. “Boundaries.”

“Oh, so we can talk about everyone else, just not you?”

I shrugged.

“Boundaries,” she said dismissively. “Like that’s gonna last. By the end of tomorrow, we’ll know all about each other. For sure. What stupid crimes we’re supposed to have committed, why we’ve been sent here.”

I shrugged again, and she continued. "So let's at least make this boat ride interesting. What do you think he's in for?" She pointed at a guy sitting near the bow of the boat. The girl sitting next to him was obviously trying to ignore him, even when he yelled, "Whale!" Everybody else leaped up off their benches, raced over to one side of the boat and peered where he was pointing. The Zodiac hit a bigger-than-average wave, and one of the girls had to grab a rope to keep from being tossed overboard.

"Sit down!" Warren bellowed. "That was a log, not a whale! Endangering your fellow campers is not a good start to the trip, Chad. We'll talk about this later."

Chad smirked and said, "Looked like a whale to me" before he sat down, brushing his long stringy hair out of his eyes. The girl next to him got up and moved to another bench, and Alice asked, "So what do you think? Drugs, alcohol, assault, vandalism, grand theft auto, resisting arrest, reckless endangerment?"

I thought for a minute. "Is stupidity a crime?"

Alice laughed. "It should be, but there's no island big enough for all the stupid people." She nodded in Chad's direction. "I bet he's a dealer. Low level. Weed. Got caught selling to middle-schoolers."

I looked over at Chad again. "Seems about right. Chronic stoner. Thinks he's smarter than he is."

"You pick someone," Alice said. "What about her?" She jerked her head toward the girl who had moved away from Chad. She was tall and very thin, with long dark hair

streaked with blue. I could only see her profile—large beaky nose, downturned mouth, pale skin with a strawberry birthmark on her jawline.

“Doesn’t look like the criminal type. I’ll go with depressed and suicidal with a side of anxiety.” The minute I said it, I felt bad. The girl looked lonely and sad, which was probably appropriate under the circumstances. I felt a bit that way myself.

“And that guy, the one in the red tuque?” Alice said. “I think he runs a brothel out of his parents’ basement, catering to teen guys who can’t get laid. He got caught when he tried to pimp out his little sister to her school principal’s son.”

“Where do you come up with this stuff?” I said. The tuque guy looked like a regular guy to me. Good-looking, I guess, in a boy-band kind of way, but definitely not a criminal mastermind.

“Overactive imagination,” Alice said. “And my mom’s a cop, so I hear a lot. You wouldn’t believe some of the stuff she has to deal with.”

I didn’t like cops. They never helped my mom after Barry used her as a punching bag. And they came down on me hard when I finally stepped up and turned the tables on the prick. Like I didn’t have any reason to beat the crap out of him after all the times he hit my mom. But the way the cops (and Barry) saw it, I was a danger—not just to Barry, but to society. They kept me locked up for two days because Mom was too busy tending to Barry’s broken nose and his fractured arm to come and bail me out.

When she finally did, she would barely speak to me. And then she made this deal with the cops—it was called diversion—because it was my first offense: I could go to INTRO rather than enter the justice system and maybe end up with a record. Like Alice, I thought the whole INTRO thing was bullshit, including the name. As acronyms go, it was pretty pathetic.

“Time for one more,” Alice said, nudging me with her elbow and nodding toward a girl who was trying to get cozy with Warren. Even from a distance I could see that she was wearing heavy eyeliner, false eyelashes and bright-pink lip gloss. Her gigantic hoop earrings flashed in the sun as she threw her head back and laughed at something Warren was saying. Her hair was long and shiny and an unlikely shade of red—somewhere between candy apple and pumpkin. It clashed with her flotation suit, which she had unzipped partway to reveal some impressive cleavage.

“One of Mr. Tuque’s girls?” I said. “Or maybe an underage drag queen?”

“Or both,” Alice said. “I can’t wait to find out!” She turned to me. “So that leaves you. And me. Let me guess. You got caught selling steroids to your teammates on the football team. Or maybe you had a bad case of ’roid rage and attacked a referee.”

I’m used to people thinking I’m a big dumb jock. I mean, that’s what I look like, but I had hoped Alice was smarter than that. Turned out she was just like everyone else.

“Yeah, you got me,” I said. “So what’s your deal? Since we’re judging by appearances, I’d have to say anorexic. Or possibly alcoholic. Which is it?”

“At least I’m not brain-damaged from too many concussions,” Alice snapped. “Asshole.” And with that she lurched off to join Imogen, who had finally stopped puking and was hunched miserably on a bench. They turned their backs on me, leaving me to enjoy the scenery, which now included a solitary island—spiky green trees, rocky shore, a small dock with a flagpole. Red letters on a yellow flag spelled INTRO. Warren yelled, “Land ho!” as we neared the dock, in case we hadn’t figured out this was our destination.

As we came closer I could see two figures on the dock. One was a short curvy brunette in tight jeans, a red-and-yellow INTRO T-shirt and gigantic movie-star sunglasses. The other was a slight, balding dude with wire-rimmed glasses. All his clothes looked brand-new—Gore-Tex jacket, khaki cargo pants, Keen sandals with thick gray socks. Pretty sure the great outdoors wasn’t his natural habitat. He almost fell off the dock trying to help Warren and the old guy secure the Zodiac.

“Take off your flotation suits and then go and introduce yourselves to Claire and Rahim,” Warren said. “And don’t forget your stuff. Anything left behind becomes Del’s property.”

The guy in the stupid ballcap—Del, obviously—added, “So if you don’t want me wearing your boxers or bras, don’t leave ’em behind!”

“His Zodiac, his rules,” Warren said, laughing. He punched Del in the shoulder. “Del’s a local up in these parts. He takes all our campers to and from the island. Been doing it since we started. Our freezer at the camp? Chock full of crab and shrimp he’s caught. You guys behave yourselves, maybe we’ll have a seafood feast one of these nights.”

Warren clapped all the guys on the back as we staggered off the boat. He kept his hands off the girls, I noticed, although the girl with the big earrings asked him to help her onto the dock. He refused. “First step in your therapy—rely on yourself. You can do whatever you set your mind to, Mandy.”

Mandy glared at him and stumbled off the boat, dragging a gigantic purple duffel bag behind her. I heard her mutter, “Screw you” as she staggered up the dock toward Claire and Rahim. Once we were all on dry land, Del fired up the Zodiac and took off, yelling, “See ya in a week, losers!”

Definitely not counselor material.