

Here's a sneak peak at Falcon Quinn, Book 2, coming in 2011 from HarperCollins. In this scene, our heroes are enjoying something called the Monster Beach Party. Check falconquinn.com in coming months for more information on the next installment in the Falcon Quinn series! – J.F.B.

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Max was sitting on a beach chair watching the vampire girls play volleyball in their bikinis. The sun was setting over the sea behind them, bathing the girls in golden light. Around the bonfire to his right, a zombie girl named Mortia was playing her guitar.

Well the Sasquatch girls are hip
I love their fur all splotched with crud;
And the vampire girls, with the way they bite,
They knock me out when they suck my blood.
Egyptian pharaoh's daughter's really make you lose your head,
And the Frankenstein girls, with the bolts in their neck,
They bring their boys back from the dead.

*I wish they all could be zombie mutants
I wish they all could be zombie mutants
I wish they all could be zombie mutant girls.*

Transylvania's got the castles
And the girls all get so pale
When the sun goes down and all the banshees come out,
They knock me out when I hear'em wail!
The leprachaun chicks in Ireland,
When they drink they get so smart,
And the Chupakabras on the coast of Peru
They put a stake right through my heart!

I wish they all could be zombie mutants

*I wish they all could be zombie mutants
I wish they all could be zombie mutant girls*

Weems, the ghoul, came over and sat down next to Max and Pearl.

“Love Mortia’s tunes, man,” said Max. “You love this song? I do.”

“Is someone singing?” said Weems. “I hadn’t noticed.”

He looked discouraged.

“Senor Weems,” said Pearl. “Your spirits seems diminished!”

“I have misplaced the paddleball,” said Weems. “I am angered by its absence.”

“Hey what’s the deal with you and the paddleball, anyhow?” said Max.
“It’s kooky.”

“I find it soothing when my nerves are frayed,” said Weems. “When I find myself trying to make peace with the constant tide of deceit, and cruelty, and betrayal.”

“You should have one of these footlong hot dogs, dude,” said Max.
“Beats paddleball.”

A gorgeous young vampire named Vonda came over and sat near Mortia. She was yanking a hunchback girl along on a chain. Twisty, the hunchback, had hair the consistency of tangled spaghetti.

“Hey Twisty,” said Max. “What up!”

“Tell him not to talk to me,” said Vonda.

“She says not to talk to her,” said Twisty.

“And yet we send you our greetings notwithstanding,” said Pearl.

Now Mortia was singing another song, a cabaret piece called *Scream, Scream, Scream Went the Human*. As she sang, Max dug down into a bucket of eyeballs he had in a metal bucket, put one on a stick, and started roasting it.

“Hey, Vonda,” said Max. “You want me to make you a s’nasty?” He picked up a pair of graham crackers. “I’m the worlds’ champion s’nasty toaster!”

“Twisty,” said Vonda. “Tell them not to talk to me!”

“She says—”

“I know,” said Max.

“Hey,” said Falcon, walking up to his friends. At his side was Sparkbolt, carrying his book of poems. Just behind them was Lumpp, who now had a large sea sponge in his mouth.

“It is Falcon Quinn,” said Pearl. “And Senor Sparkbolt, the well-regarded Frankenstein author of sonnets and verse! We welcome you to our celebration!”

“Rrrr,” said Sparkbolt.

“Hey Pearl,” said Falcon.

“And they got some kind a squishy-dog with’em too!” said Max excitedly. “Whoa! He’s excellent! Where’d the dog come from, Falcon?”

“His name is Lumpp,” said Falcon. “He’s an octopus retriever. I—uh-- found him in the forest.”

Lumpp dropped his sea-sponge at Max’s feet. Max picked it up and threw it. Lumpp tore off across the sand to retrieve it.

The octopus retriever came back in a flash, dropped the sea sponge at Vonda’s foot this time. It looked hopefully at the young vampire.

Vonda kicked the retriever. It looked unharmed, although its eyes looked as if its feelings had been hurt.

“Hey!” said Max. “That’s not cool! All he wants is a little love and affection!”

“I hate animals,” said Vonda. She turned to Twisty. “Tell them.”

Twisty hitched forward and looked at them with her goggle eye. “She says she hates animals.”

“All Sparkbolt want!” said Sparkbolt. “Is love! And affection!”

“Dear god, here we go,” said Vonda.

“Can I have it?” said Twisty, looking at the sea sponge at her mistress’ feet.

“Please, just one time? Can I be the one who has it?”

“Here,” said Vonda, and threw the sponge in Twisty’s face. “Ha! Ha!”
You’re stupid!”

“Thank you for throwing the sponge at me!” said Twisty. “I’m so grateful!”

“Why are you grateful to her, Twisty?” said Mortia. “She’s so awful to you!”

“She’s so *pretty*,” said Twisty. “And that’s the most important thing in the world! Being pretty!”

“Hey, I got another question, about vampires,” said Max to Vonda. “How come you guys can just walk around in the middle of the day? Isn’t the sunlight supposed to turn you into--dust?”

Vonda turned to Twisty. “Tell him not to talk to me!”

Twisty hunched forward. “She says--”

“But it is an intriguing question!” said Pearl. “I too have wondered about this!”

Twisty's bulbous eye twitched. "It's because they wear sunscreen," she said. "It protects them."

"You're kidding," said Falcon.

"It's like SPF-ten thousand!" said Twisty. "That's how Vonda stays so pale! And pretty!"

"Senor Falcon," said Pearl. "Where have you been in the hours since the altercation? I have been concerned, in the time intervening, by your mysterious absence!"

Falcon thought about his afternoon with the Filchers, and considered telling his friends about it. But then he thought better of it. The Filchers should remain a secret, even from the monsters he cared for above all.

"I just went for a walk," said Falcon. "There's nothing mysterious about it."

"Falcon Quinn," said Sparkbolt. "Find poetry book of poems. Lost! In forest!"

"Uh-oh," said Max. His eyeball on a stick burst into flames. He pulled the eyeball out of the fire and blew on it. "Looks like this one's well done!"

Something wet and squishy bounced off of Falcon's face. He looked down to see a moist sea sponge at his feet.

"Hey, Lump," said Falcon. He leaned down to pat the octopus retriever on the head. "You're a good boy!" Lump looked at Falcon with an expression that looked very much like love.

"What's so good about him?" said Vonda. "He's boring! I hate being bored!" She looked at Twisty. "Don't I?"

"She does," said Twisty.

“Here you go, Lumpp,” said Falcon, throwing the sponge. In an instant, the octopus retriever cantered enthusiastically after it. Max and Pearl and Falcon watched as the creature swam out into the waves, grabbed the sponge with one tentacle, and then returned to the shore. It shook off the water that clung to its fur, then trotted back to the monsters, dropped the sponge and pointed once again.

“Dude,” said Max. “Now you have an animal friend!”

Lumpp started to dig down in the sand with his foretentacles. He seemed to be sniffing around with his big furry head, plunging it into the hole which he was digging. After a moment, Lumpp’s head disappeared entirely into the earth. Dirt continued to fly over the creature’s shoulders as the hole got bigger.

“He’s going way down,” noted Max. “Look at him! I mean, he’s goin’ waaaaayyy down!”

A moment later the retriever pulled something out of the sand with his tentacles.

“What is it that this creature has unearthed?” asked Pearl.

“I don’t know,” said Falcon, going over to Lumpp. “Hey fella. What you got there?”

Lumpp held a sand-covered pendant on a long chain up in the air. It dangled from his tentacle. Falcon took it from him.

“It is an amulet,” said Pearl, “of most mysterious design!”

“An amulet?” said Max. Falcon was rubbing the sand off of it. It was a golden disc with a ruby-red jewel in its center.

“There’s writing on it,” said Falcon. He rubbed the flat disc some more.

“What is this writing?” asked Pearl.

Falcon squinted. "I can't read it. The runes are in a language I don't recognize."

"Let me see," said Max, taking it from him. "I'm good at Sudoku and junk!"

The Bigfoot squinted at the strange lettering, but, like Falcon, he could not make sense of the language. "Kooky," Max said, then put the amulet around his neck.

"Senor Max," said Pearl. "I would not be placing an amulet of unknown properties upon my person without first researching its nature."

"C'mon," said Max. "It looks all hippy-dippy, doesn't it? Anyway, what could hap---"

Max's sentence was left unfinished however, for at this moment he vanished into a crimson glowing mist and the amulet fell into the sand.

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