



# Saltwater Vampires

*Kirsty Eagar*

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## **Saltwater Vampires** Kirsty Eagar

He looked to the sky, praying for rain, a downpour, some sign from the heavens that he should refuse the abomination contained in that flask. But all he saw was the bloated white face of the moon smiling down on him ...

And the sky around it was cold and clear and black ...

They made their circle of blood. And only the moon witnessed the slaughter that followed.

For Jamie Mackie, summer holidays in the coastal town of Rocky Head mean surfing, making money, and good times at the local music festival. But this year, vampires are on the festival's line-up ... fulfilling a pact made on the wreck of the Batavia, four hundred years ago. If their plans succeed, nobody in Rocky Head will survive to see out the new year.

Page-turning and suspenseful, Saltwater Vampires is a distinctly Australian vampire thriller.

## **Saltwater Vampires Details**

Date : Published August 30th 2010 by Penguin Books (first published August 25th 2010)

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Author : Kirsty Eagar

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Genre : Paranormal, Vampires, Young Adult, Fantasy

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## From Reader Review Saltwater Vampires for online ebook

### Paula Weston says

This book was awesome.

Not only is it rich with the evocative prose and authentic voice inherent in a Kirsty Eagar novel, it's got vampires!

Raw Blue remains one of my favourite books of all time - it's still firmly under my skin three years on - and is the novel that firmly entrenched Kirsty as a gifted voice in contemporary YA. The fact that she can create a complex and compelling paranormal thriller involving vampires without losing that voice blows my mind.

Without the vampires, this would still be an absorbing story about friends who have let each other down and need to find a way to forgive. To reconnect.

With vampires - and meticulous, realistic world building - it becomes a page-turning thriller with an existential twist. Well, as much of an existential twist as surfing obsessed narrator Jamie can manage. :)

As you'd expect, Jamie's hormone-driven voice is pitch perfect, as is his - and his friends' - reaction to the revelation that vampires are lurking in their beachside town.

I laughed out loud more than once at the banter between Jamie and Tanner, and worried over whatever caused the rift between Jamie and Kelly. They all feel like people I know, or have known - regrets and all.

I loved the surfing, the vibe of the music festival and the all-too-familiar capacity of a small town to remember mistakes.

Saltwater Vampires (released in 2010) is a clever - and very Australian - take on vampires. Loved it. Recommend it.

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### Carla says

If you like ur vampires to sparkle in the sun, break into ur house and watch you sleep, then sex you up until ur all pregnant with a half breed that has to be eaten out of ur tummy, then Saltwater Vampires is SO not the book for you. However, if you like ur vampires to be crazy scary and insanely crazy gonna eat u right up and kill you, then YAYYY!!! What up!

So here's the deal - there is this blood pact made on this kick ass ship called the Batvia like 400 years ago. Then there is Jamie and his surfer dude mates in Rocky Head. Also there is something going on with some weird guys in Amsterdam, including a vampire apprentice. THIS IS THE PLOT! It's all intricate and daring and all tied together to make something amazing. And you are going to EAT it right up. LIKE A BOSS. And yeah mate, I get it, you don't really get what I'm talking about. BUT! Under this super smart and seriously ambitious plot line, it's really just a book about friends, and how actions have consequences and ACTION UP IN HURRR!

You know, Kirsty Eagar really brings it with the writing you guys. She really does. And yes, this may be MILES AND MILES away from Raw Blue, but like, so what? (I'm sorry raw Blue ILY!!) It's her writing

and her seriously snazzy characterization skills that make me come back for me. Because she really gets how to suck you into a story by working her magic and making you become invested in these people that live in her head and are basically just words on a page. BUT SHE DOES IT EVERY TIME.

And the suspense? Someone get me a chaise longue. AND ALSO GET ME SOME SMELLING SALTS. I swear, I was like omg what is happening, where is this going, why did they do that, WHAT IS GOING ON HERE. It was exhilaratingly exciting. All the intrigue and the mystery and this plot that is so thick and scrummy I wanted to spoon it up and DEVOUR IT ALL WITH NO LEFTOVERS. And you know the best thing? SELFISH PEOPLE! YOU GUYS!! I really relate to selfish people, because I too can be selfish. Like if I was going down, I would most certainly try to take someone with me. I'd like to pretend that I am selfless and blah blah blah, it's all about the personal gain. And some of these creepy creepster are like out for themselves and it makes it all nerve wracking-y fab.

Male POV GONNA GET'CHA!!! Honestly, when I read books that perfectly nail the male pov, I srsly have this big smug on my face, like see, I TOLDJA SO. This is why male pov is my favourite. It's always incredibly charming and authentic and packs a great big sold punch of emotional connection. Seriously, I may be a chick but there is nothing that makes me more happy than a male pov done right.

You know, I truly believe Kirsty can do no wrong. This was heart racing terror. This was dramarama. This was creepy and weird and fascinating. This was funny and touching and scary as shit. It was all other things that I can't even put a word to. I just loved it.

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## **jesse says**

in comparison to eagar's other novels *saltwater vampires* lies smack in the middle. the author's undisputed #1 being her debut *raw blue* , *saltwater vampires* is slightly better than eagar's newest work *night beach* .

what eagar always gets right are the character studies. *saltwater vampires'* protagonist, jamie mackie struggles with guilt, shame and self-hate over how he left one of his friends alone when he was needed the most. nice also, was the way the author played with various vampire clichès.

the end scene where jamie and his group of friends (view spoiler) will either lead readers snorting in disbelief or make them succumb to nostalgia with its buffy/charmed-esque scene:

(view spoiler)

(hide spoiler)]

## **another quote:**

(view spoiler)

(hide spoiler)]

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### Isamlq says

Cool read. Very cool as in bad vampires, secret societies and all, even that bit of alternate history where the baddies really are as monstrous as the act related. Then the fact that there were demons of the personal sort, for Jamie in particular.

As usual, Eagar's writing is slow, specific and deliberate. And unlike *Night Beach*, this one is clearer on what it's trying to do. That is to scare you brainless. Never did things get to that point with *Night Beach* as half the time I was wondering what the protagonists were as going on about. Here, there's a clearer definition of what's going on here and who's facing off and why.

And who indeed?

On one side you've got bat shit (heh) vampires with delusions of ... ergh, something. Then on the other are a set of teens who're mucking about and doing what they love (that would be surfing once again.)

Take your time with this one though because the beauty's not in the scary vamps or even the boys facing up to hard truths (though both those bits were good too. ) The beauty in this one has to do with the writing: slow but not boring. So specifically laid out, that each word, then every phrase has purpose that us to paint us a world that's got a secret that's bigger than they all imagine, but fun too... except substitute the word scary for fun... as more often then not, things in this one did get like that. Bottom line? There's no denying Eagar simply has got a way with putting words together...

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### Steph Su says

There are few authors I would trust to write a truly original and good vampire story. Kirsty Eagar is one of them, and she delivers beautifully with *SALTWATER VAMPIRES*, her sophomore novel. Quirky, fast-paced, and sprawling, *SALTWATER VAMPIRES* should be your next read if you're looking for a book that's, well, pretty much like no other.

Usually the adjectives "quirky," "fast-paced," and "sprawling" aren't used together to describe one book, but hey, this is Kirsty Eagar we're talking about here, and she defies norms. *SALTWATER VAMPIRES* is *quirky* because, as others have said, it is a purely Australian vampire thriller. It combines elements of the paranormal, thriller, horror, and YA contemporary, presented in a distinctly Australian writing style, by which I mean, in addition to some Australian slang, a deep respect for readers' intelligences: the book is not going to pause for you to get with it, so you had better not have a lazy reading mind and expect everything to be laid out clearly for you.

*SALTWATER VAMPIRES'* *fast pace* comes from its thriller aspect. The book channels some Dan Brown and Stieg Larsson for its exciting premise. Don't expect a melodramatic romance here: these 15-year-olds are trying to save their town, and their actions and reactions befit that of one of their age and predicament—that is, they (especially the boys) are going to occasionally say some really stupid things that make you want to clip them upside the head the way you would a younger brother. I truly enjoyed how realistic yet personable the characters were, and would not trade their occasional awkwardness and

dramatically heroic decisions for the much more boring and unbelievable antics of a pair (or trio) of luv-struck-dumb teenagers.

Finally, this book is *sprawling* because of the way it successfully handles its convergence of multiple genres, time periods, and perspectives. In between setting up the *Batavia* backstory to following the thoughts of some vampire-connected adults on their journey to Australia, the book remains true to its YA genre by treating its teenaged characters the way they should be treated: sympathetically, but with attention paid to their idiosyncracies and (occasional) idiocies.

SALTWATER VAMPIRES doesn't make vampires out to be anything other than single-minded monsters. It also doesn't delve too much into the subtle mindsets of adolescents, so if you're looking for something akin to *Raw Blue*, you won't find it here. On the other hand, if you want an exciting read unhampered by teenager melodrama, you'll want to basically date this book.

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## Limonessa says

Barely.

So, Saltwater vampires.... as opposed to freshwater vampires?

Kirsty Eagar's *Raw Blue* was probably one of the best YA fiction I read this year but this book is just a NO for me.

First of all, it is unclear to me what this book exactly wanted to be: did it want to be a dark, paranormal novel à la Anne Rice where some rebel bad-ass vampires try to become all-powerful?

Did it want to be YA fiction about some kids who love surfing but who end up in a big, messy trouble?

Or did it want to be a thriller where a secret society plots to annihilate said bad-ass vampires and to restore peace and perpetuate its secrecy?

There were three distinct plot threads going on at the same time and let me tell you that the whole thing was *complicated* and distracting.

The parts where the book wanted to be a paranormal novel reminded me a lot of one of the *Pirates of the Caribbean* movies, except the pirates, in this case, were vampires. The whole book is about them stealing a flask of super ancient vampire blood in order to perform a ritual and be able to:

a - walk in daylight again, so basically being nostalgic of the time they were humans;

b - travel through time to go back to the time of the shipwreck of the *Batavia* and look for Lucretia. WHAT?

A bloodsucking predator with a romantic heart? Did I miss something there?

The parts where the book wanted to be YA fiction were certainly the best, we know Eagar excels in the field. Lots of surfing, like in *Raw Blue*, and a set of quirky, funny characters trying to solve their inner conflicts and, simultaneously, fight off the horde of monsters come to town. I loved those scenes, the surfing and the dialogue but it put a lull in the building-up of the plot, making the pauses excessively long. Midway through, it lost momentum and it started to get tedious.

The final scene is really adventurous and spectacular but I'm not sure if readers will actually get that far in the book. I did, out of sheer stubbornness.

The part where it wanted to be thriller and the secret society was involved were fairly predictable, both in regard to Clifford's motives and as to how it would end for him. And how could said centuries-old secret society be so inept at locating the bad guys?

The writing is, true to Eggar's style, flawless, although this book could surely have been (should have been) shorter, in my opinion.

It is its hybrid character that really didn't sit well with me.

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## ALPHAreader says

'Saltwater Vampires' is being called 'a distinctly Australian vampire thriller'.

The book opens in 1629, and introduces the Dutch shipwreck survivors of the Batavia. Among them is Jeronimus Cornelisz, an apothecary with a questionable offer of immortality for three other survivors; David Zeevanck, Gerrit Haas and Jan Pelgrom;

*The apothecary leaned forward and whispered, "You want to know about the trick within the trick."*

Skip forward to present day and we meet Jamie Mackie; a fifteen-year-old Rocky Head native. He loves the sun, sand, surf and Rocky Head's annual music festival. Jamie lives for the waves and the oblivion of riding inside a wall of water. Surfing has become quite cathartic to Jamie since a boating accident saw his best-friend permanently scarred and refusing to talk to him. Things have been tense between Jamie and Dale ever since the accident, but Jamie never thought that Dale would go so far as to attack him... While surfing one morning Dale starts swinging fists in the ocean, ending the fight with a vicious bite to Jamie's neck. What follows is Jamie's hunt for answers, along with his best friend Tanner, Dale's girlfriend Kelly and new resident of Rocky Head, Talia – this group of surfer locals uncover more than they ever bargained for and discover a dark side to Rocky Head.

*Jamie removed his sunglasses, squinting at Willem.*

*"Too bright for you?" Willem asked knowingly.*

*It was. Blindingly bright. Jamie had to jam his sunglasses back on. "How do you know it's a bite?"*

*"I said, it's a special kind of bite. And it must be real because I don't know why you'd manufacture something like that. It's completely at odds with your type."*

*"My type?"*

*"You're a capitalist waxhead. Not the type who's into dark fantasy."*

*"You got that right. Even if I still have no idea what you're talking about."*

*"I'm talking about nighthawkers, bloodsuckers, phantoms of the night...Vampires."*

Apart from Keri Arthur's 'Riley Jenson' series, Australian authors really haven't jumped on the Urban Fantasy/Vampire bandwagon. Personally, I think that all needs to change... because 'vampires' as a subject are not a passing fad. They are a genre unto themselves, and there's definitely room in the Australian book market for some uniquely Aussie vampire tales... case and point, Eggar's 'Saltwater Vampires'.

How to describe this book? It's an eclectic mix of the very best of Vampirism and Australian culture. It's reminiscent of the 1987 cult-classic 'The Lost Boys', with a dash of Keanu's 'Point Break', and a nod to the 'Underworld' movie franchise. But still with an Aussie flair, for Eggar's writing style reminded me of our two heavy-weight authors (in their respective readerships) Tim Winton and John Marsden.

The pace is slow, and I found that initially hard to overcome. But at some point it clicked for me that this is an \*Australian\* vampire novel. Eggar isn't writing to Urban Fantasy conventions as I've come to know them through American UF books. Eggar is instead putting an Aussie spin on an old gothic tale. And the fact of the matter is; every country in the world has different storytelling conventions, and Aussie books likewise have a different flavour. I would say our books prefer a more relaxed narrative style, letting the character's introduce themselves and the story unravel as it will. The slower pace also works for the fact that this is a

surfing novel, and there's something about that culture that's all about being laidback and carefree.

Eagar beautifully delves into characterization. As much as the vampire plot is exhilarating and terrifying, Eagar's exploration of her character's motivations is equally intricate and submerging. Jamie is a boy who hates himself. He let his best mate down and is now living with survivor's guilt. Jamie is a wonderful hero for all his flaws and complexities, some of which are on the surface, but readers also have to work to recognize his deeper scars.

Jamie's 'Scooby gang' consist of his best mate and quintessential surfer dude, Tanner (who yawns when he's nervous. Ha!). Dale's girlfriend, Kelly, with whom Jamie has his own complications. And new Rocky Head resident, Talia, who uses her hotness magic on the boys. This isn't your typical crack-squad of vampire hunters, but they are very typical Australian teenagers and a chance for Eagar to hold up a very apt mirror to our younger generation.

Eagar has really used the Australian landscape to great horror advantage. 'Saltwater Vampires' takes place in and around the sea (Australia is an island; after all). The sand and surf make for an eerie backdrop to the collision and confrontations with the vampires. The eeriness of a black ocean at night, and the loneliness of crashing waves; Eagar captures this picturesque Australian scenery and turns it into an astonishingly spine-tingling gothic setting;

*By then, the tip of a lava-orange sun had appeared over the horizon. The ocean was purple and grey, bruised by the dawn sky.*

The story jumps between present day in Rocky Head, following Jamie as he searches for his friend Dale, and discovers more than he bargained for. Then a few chapters flashback to 'Amsterdam, three weeks earlier'. In Amsterdam a covert organization called 'Piravem' guard the four original vampire bloodlines, but supernatural terrorism looms when Jeronimus Cornelisz steals the blood of ancient vampire, Vitus. This jump-back was quite jarring, but once I let Eagar's distinctly Australian narrative take the reigns the flashback paid off. Ten-fold. I had to stick with it, but the converging of storylines were worth the wait and moments of confusion.

The book does have a few problems. I had one small complaint about the vampire 'reveal', as it was a little too convenient and coincidental for my liking. Jamie bumps into a brainiac classmate who sees his neck wound and connects the dots because as well as being a super genius he is a fan of vampire fiction. The reveal was a little clunky for me. But having read a lot of Urban Fantasy, I know that lots of writers struggle with the plot technicalities of explaining vampires in the real world - at least Eagar didn't go the Stephenie Meyer route and have Jamie type keywords into a search engine.

Like I said earlier, Australian authors (or publishers?) really haven't responded to the Vampire literary craze. I'm sure there's lots of reasons for that – mainly that America has really cornered the market, and also that the Australian literary scene is by comparison smaller and heavy on the \*literary\*. I hope that changes, soon-ish. If Eagar's 'Saltwater Vampires' is anything to go by, then we do have Australian voices out there that have a vampire tale to tell... and I, for one, would love to read about vampires in my backyard.

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## Wendy Darling says

**3.5 stars** In 1629, the Dutch ship *Batavia* was shipwrecked off the western coast of Australia on her maiden voyage. Among the survivors were nearly 300 men, women, and children...but this meant that resources were severely limited and there were far too many witnesses to the mutiny swelling among the crew's ranks. Led

by a vicious opportunist, a group of men went on to execute more than 100 of their hapless victims, making it the first documented mass murder on Australian soil.

How ingenious it is to re-imagine this story as if vampires were somehow involved in this savage part of the country's history. *Saltwater Vampires* follows three interconnected threads, one from the 17th century, one involving a few of the mutineers gathering forces in present day, and one that follows Jamie Mackie, a 15-year-old who expected to spend his summer surfing, chasing girls, and maybe earning some money. One night as Jamie and his buddy are out night surfing, however, he is brutally attacked while he is far away from shore, and his wound won't seem to stop bleeding. But what really freaks Jamie out is that he thinks he actually knows his attacker...and it's someone who should not be anywhere near the water at all.

I really loved the author's writing. The way she describes the sensation of being out in the water and surfing are incredibly evocative, and you can practically smell the surf wax and feel the white brightness of the sun and the wincing sting of salt in your eyes. Although the conversations between Jamie and his friends are casual and touched with humor, there is also a stillness and depth in many of the passages that are quietly chilling. Many parts of this book, although not graphic or gross, are dark and frightening and sad because of the feelings they call forth.

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*Excerpt:*

The world kept changing but he remained the same, cold and pale and still. His face full of pain, his blue eyes haunted by the things they'd seen, the bite on his neck throbbing like a heartbeat. He felt a terrible ache inside him. At first he couldn't identify the feeling, but...he knew what it was. It was loneliness. He was becoming a vampire and if he lived forever, everything he loved would change, and everyone he cared about would die.

\*\*\*\*\*

The writing is really beautiful and wordy, and the story is perhaps more complex than many YA readers will be accustomed to. Although I enjoyed hanging out with Jamie and his friends, I think the book would have flowed a little better if some of their casual scenes didn't take up so much time, as the book lost some of its momentum in the middle. The urgency and fear I felt in the beginning were somewhat lost midway through the book, and in a way it never really recaptured that same tone again. Still, there's a really good ending battle and this is probably one of the most well-written and unusual vampire books that I'll ever read. I'd love to read more books from this author, as she certainly has a way with words.

Totally irrelevant side note: (view spoiler)

My heartfelt thanks to Missie and Nic for sending this book along as part of the Go Aussie Book Tour! I really appreciate having the opportunity to read such great Australian YA literature thanks to their generosity. So many of these titles will never make it to the U.S. (or will take years to get here), so it's wonderful to be exposed to authors we might otherwise never find.

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## **karen says**

i am pretty much a fan of any revisionist history that blames human atrocities on monsters. we gotta save face, right, and that's what monsters are *for*, to hang all our shortcomings upon.

so this book is about this:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Batavia\\_...](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Batavia_...)

the slaughter of innocents for personal gain. oops. but by blaming it on *vampires*, it takes some of the sting out of it. vampires can't help it - they have an innate need to mutiny and feast. but what happens when these wacky seamen from 1629 mess with some australian teens in modern times? well, you know aussie teens - they aren't going to take that shit, hey?

and i really liked it.

although like *Raw Blue*, there is almost *too* much detail about surfing. it's probably something that bookish surfers appreciate, but for the landlubbers among us who havenever willnever surf/ed, the attention to detail is simply mystifying.

apart from that, i thought this was a genuinely gripping vampire story, and i am someone who is rarely interested in vampire fiction.

the mythology was solid, the contemporary characters felt realistic, and i thought the story flowed really well, even though it was not really a quick read. i appreciated the density to it; it never felt that story was being sacrificed to pacing, the way some YA can.

i had a couple of issues with the lurve/relationship elements, but those parts are usually the parts i am enduring to get to the good stuff anyway, so the occasionally bewildering decisions and lack of communication by our characters in their social relationships didn't bother me the way they probably did for some readers.

i was just there for the vampires. and they did not disappoint. they are not feel-good vampires who are looking for a clumsy teen girl to love - these vampires are all about the power and enhancing their immortality. and it is good, good stuff.

i am *eagar* to read another book by her.

groan...

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## Heather \*Awkward Queen and Unicorn Twin\* says

I was initially drawn to this book because 1) vampires, and 2) it was hard to find. All the copies were on the other side of the world and just too damn expensive, until somehow I happened across a cheap copy at Abe and snagged that bad boy up.

The back cover of the copy I got made this book seem reminiscent of the movie *The Lost Boys*, which I love. I was excited to start it because of this.

Both the movie and this book are set in coastal towns, and the book has a music festival that echoed TLB's rock 'n' roll vibe. There was even a scene in the book with one character floating at the second-story window of another. But these characters were younger, only 15, and the vampires were nowhere near as cool, and the rock 'n' roll vibe just wasn't there despite music pervading the entire book.

It was an okay read, and it didn't fail my expectations simply because it didn't live up to a movie it has

nothing to do with. This seemed really long and drawn out for something with an average page count, and the characters weren't given *quite* enough depth to make me care about them for that long. All the action takes place over two or three days, with a couple flashback scenes, yet there was somehow time for long conversations between the characters. The plot was just kind of all over the place, and the climactic scene was, sad to say, a little silly.

I'm still on the fence about whether I'll keep this or donate it.

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## Romy says

Saltwater Vampires is a highly addictive vampire novel which will suck you in from the very beginning (pardon the pun).

I have been patiently waiting for a book like Saltwater Vampires - with real vampires - to enter the YA vampire genre, finally it has arrived! Now you may be wondering what I mean when I say real vampires, well when I say real vampires I mean the evil, nasty looking bloodsuckers of yester years none of this oh so sparkly, beautiful and noble vampires that seem to have inundated the market lately. It appears that somewhere along the line vampires in novels changed from being these frightening evil creatures to being these beautiful caring creatures. I for one prefer the former, I like my vampires menacing and nasty and boy does Kirsty Eagar deliver, these vampires gave me the creeps!

Saltwater Vampires begins with a bang, the year is 1629 and the Batavia has crashed off the Australian coast, it soon becomes apparent that four of those that survived the shipwreck are planning on undertaking something very dark and evil. Skip ahead to the present day and we are introduced to Jamie, a 15 year old surfer who is not dealing with an accident that occurred four months ago which involved Jamie and one of his best friends, Dale. I don't want to give too much away but it becomes apparent very quickly that something strange is going on in Rocky Head. What follows is a non stop suspense filled ride where Jamie and his friends must work together to save not only themselves but their whole town from the vampires because they are coming and they have a plan.

From the moment I read the prologue I was engrossed. As a reader we are not 100% sure of who or what exactly the four shipwreck survivors are so I was eager to discover more of their back story which is elaborated on further as the book progresses. I especially loved how the prologue ended leaving me on edge and a little creeped out

"They made their circle of blood. And only the moon witnessed the slaughter that followed." - Page 12

Jamie was a relatable character, Kirsty did an excellent job describing the swell of emotions he was going through and boy he was having to deal with some difficult issues. I find that I generally enjoy a book much more when I feel something for the characters and I really felt for Jamie. He was beating himself up for the accident that happened with Dale when in reality it wasn't his fault, I really wanted to tell him this but I had to remind myself that Jamie is not an actual person he is only a character in a book. Whilst I have never experienced the things Dale endured (absent mother, distant father) I still was able to feel for him as a character too.

I have decided I wouldn't mind having Jamie's friends - Tanner, Kelly, Talia and Willem - as friends. All of these characters were willing to sacrifice themselves in order to help both Jamie and Dale which is an excellent quality to find in a friend. Tanner was a relaxed surfer, nothing seemed to phase him except maybe getting stuck in a campervan waiting for vampires to turn up, who wouldn't get scared! Kelly, a talented

surfer, was a bit prickly and aloof at first but I soon softened towards her once I found out the reason as to why she was so prickly. Then we have Talia the new girl in town who takes a liking to both Tanner and Jamie, who's not afraid to speak her mind especially in situations when she probably shouldn't. Finally we have Willem, he was a bit of an odd ball but was a wealth of information on vampires (very helpful), I don't know what it was but there was something about Willem I found endearing.

Kirsty managed to surprise me in this novel, I thought I knew a character and then all of a sudden they did something that I was not expecting at all. There was one particular action a character took that I did not expect, maybe I'm a bit naïve or trusting but I didn't see that coming.

I also have to mention that I loved the setting for the novel, I could picture Rocky Head so clearly in my head especially because it reminded me of the coastal town we stayed in when I was younger where we used to go camping near the beach for holidays.

Towards the end of the novel the suspense builds until the final confrontation occurs between the vampires and the teens and what a confrontation it was!

The only real issue I had was when Jamie and Tanner were informed that vampires exist by Willem. Now I know this is only a story and vampires aren't real (obviously) but both Jamie and Tanner just accepted that vampires must be real, there was no real skepticism, if it was me I'd be very skeptical I'd probably ask them what are you on? All this was a little too convenient for me, I would have liked for them to show a bit more uncertainty but like I said it's only a minor quibble.

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## Nomes says

Saltwater Vampires has a hugely ambitious and sophisticated plot - there's three story-lines that blend together: the shipwreck and blood pact made on the Batavia (400 years earlier), a gathering of powerful freaky-guys in Amsterdam and Jamie and his mates kicking back surfing in Rocky Head, Australia.

What I loved about this book is it's unique blend of rich prose and suspense-filled plot. It's got this laid-back Aussie pace that manages to buzz with an exhilarating, suspense-filled plot. My reading experience was similar to *Raw Blue*: a contradiction - I was tearing through the pages and at the same time pausing at moments to re-read sentences and soak up the magic in the prose.

Jamie and his mates are not your usual heroes or vampire slayers. They're these loveable, freaked-out, wide-eyed and brave teens: flawed and crushed, hopeful and resilient. They're mates who watch each others back as well as let each other down and these contractions are so well drawn that the characters breathe on their own and worked their way into my heart. Eagar is a master of showing and readers are drawn into the richness of her characters and maybe have to work a little to see all the shades and complexities in the Aussie gang (consisting of three guys and two girls - whose history includes crushes, betrayals, guilt, relationship complications and a recent horrific accident in the ocean).

The vampires from the Batavia wreck are seriously freaky creatures of the night. Ugly and evil and the stuff made of nightmares. Powerful and relentless and their desire for blood and sadistic plans of mass feasting gave me chills. The horror factor clawed at my belly - in a wide-eyed, can't-look-away, creeped-out manner.

Just like the power of the outback setting in Lucy Christopher's *Stolen*, Eagar evokes similar sensations with the ocean. It's churning and powerful and compelling and lurking with hidden horrors. The ocean and the

bush and music festival were used to advantage to add to the creepy undertones and Australian authenticity.

I haven't seen many thrillers of this outstanding calibre in the YA scene. Also, the male POV - spot on in a way that made me ache for it's authenticity.

It's a dark, spine-tingling read but not without it's moments of laid-back humour and some heart-felt relationship drama that added some levity. Also, how much did the last page just make me grin? It left me with a sense of loving these guys.

Two quotes I loved:

Aw, bugger it. Don't die wondering. 17.

Jamie's eyes met hers and recognition passed between them. He wondered if that was how it was going to be for the rest of their lives. They'd talk as if they were just two people who used to hang out, but all the time their eyes would be saying, I know you well and I miss you badly. 304.

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## **Amanda says**

Saltwater Vampires by Kirsty Eager is set in Rocky Head in Western Australia. The story starts with a look back at the events of the shipwrecked Batavia. In 1629 the ship ran into the Morning Reef near the Houtman Abrolhos islands, off the coast of Western Australia. Most of the crew survived and managed to swim ashore. They were separated onto different islands and the captain and some of the crew took one of the long boats and went to search for fresh water. Jeronimus Cornelisz remained behind, he was a pharmacist and had been planning a mutiny while on board the ship. He organised a group and began to murder the survivors, including the women and children.

Kirsty used this event as the inspiration for this book. In her version, Jeronimus is an apothecary who has plans to become a vampire. In his possession is a vial of vampire blood, stolen from a group called The Society. He chooses four men from the crew to turn and together they create a blood circle. Once they've turned, they massacre the remaining passengers.

The book then jumps forward to the present day. Jamie and Tanner are local boys who love to surf. It's school holidays and all they can think about is surfing, making some money through their vending machine business and hanging out at the annual music festival. But four months ago, Jamie, along with his former friend Dale, almost drowned and since then he's found it difficult to sleep. He drops by Tanner's at four thirty one morning and they head down to the beach for a pre-dawn surf. They thought they were the only ones out in the ocean but they were wrong.

It turns out the four hundred year old vamps are back and they have big plans for the residents of Rocky Head. At the same time, in Amsterdam, the Society, now known as Piravem are sending members to track and kill Jeronimus and his followers.

I was hooked from the beginning of this book, I really liked Kirsty's interpretation of vampires. Her vampires don't sparkle and they definitely don't want to marry you, they just want to drain your blood and kill you.

The story is told from Jamie's point of view and it was great to read another book narrated by a boy. He is such a cheeky character and I loved the banter between him and Tanner. You can tell they're the sort of boys who will be mates forever. Their friends are a great bunch too. Dale was the third member of their group but

after the incident he drifted apart from them. Kelly, Dale's girlfriend, is a strong girl who's happy when she's surfing with the guys. Talia, the new girl is a great addition to the group and gets bonus points for being a vegetarian from Sydney's Nothern Beaches. Then there's Willem, a boy from school who's into metal and knows a lot about vampires. Together they make a kick-arse team and they come up with a plan to try and save their town.

All of the plotlines worked well together for me, I started this book one morning and was finished by the afternoon, I just couldn't put it down. It was so suspenseful and action-packed towards the end that I found it hard not to skim read and rush ahead but I forced myself to slow down and enjoy it. I'm more of a fan of contemporary YA these days, while I don't mind some paranormal most of it feels a bit repetitive but I was pleasantly surprised by this book. And let's face it, if anyone is going to write a great book about surfing and vampires, it was always going to be Kirsty!

I didn't see the little twist coming right at the end but it made me smile because it really suited Jamie's character. And now I am super excited for the Kirsty's new book, *Night Beach*, which is going to be released in April this year!

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## Michelle says

There are several reasons why I should have read this book earlier. So many people told me this book was fantastic and, of course, they were right. It is a wonderful read. From the very first page I was completely sucked in (hah, oh my wit!)

Set in a small coastal town, *Saltwater Vampires* is, as the name would suggest, about vampires. But these aren't your sissy, sparkly vampires. No. These are evil, bloodsucking, murderous vamps who have plans to make sure nobody leaves the Rocky Head music festival alive. It's up to a group of teenagers to stop them and make sure that two of their own aren't turned as well.

I really, really enjoyed the characters in this novel. Everyone, from the vampires to Jamie, Tanner and the gang. Everything just felt so authentic to me, it was very easy to believe that this was real. Which is something I always look for in a supernatural/paranormal novel. I know that seems like a strange concept, but when I read I want to be completely absorbed in the word and the novel, whether it be a contemporary romance, a historical fiction or a fantasy land. I want to believe these characters and the events are real and *Saltwater Vampires* did this so incredibly well.

While this novel was about murderous vampires, I didn't find myself scared in the way I did with *Raven's Gate*. With that I felt a physical manifestation of fear and I had an adrenaline rush as I read it in the dead of night. I'm kind of a glad I didn't have those feelings with *Saltwater Vampires*, because I'm not a huge fan of scary movies or books. The reason I didn't really feel fear was because I was so enthralled in the mystery unfolding. Okay, so I do have to confess that I did guess almost every twist that happened, but I still felt compelled to read and see if my guess was correct.

In terms of the way the story unfolded, I really enjoyed the intermittent point of view shifts. I felt like it kept the suspense quite high and definitely contributed to how captivating I found this book. I also enjoyed the way the significance of the historical elements was revealed later in the novel.

Of course, not everyone is going to feel the same way I do about this book. I know other reviewers had a few issues, but perhaps this was a case of the right book at the right time. Something just clicked between me and this book and I was completely captivated.

*Saltwater Vampires* is a thrilling paranormal novel which stands out in a sea of YA vampire romances. With a distinctly Australian setting, this is one vampire book I will be looking forward to reading again.

*This review and many more can be found at Maree's Musings.*

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### **Maree Kimberley says**

Vampires - I loved them as a kid & a teen. Then *Twilight* came along with its glittery vampire with no teeth nonsense & ruined everything. Or so I thought. Luckily Australian writer Kirsty Eager is not afraid to write vampire fiction with nasty, vile, bloodthirsty characters & restore my faith in the genre.

I suspect that, like me, Eager is a fan of the movie *The Lost Boys*. A couple of scenes in *Saltwater Vampires* echoed the movie for me, which was an added bonus. But *Saltwater Vampires* stands alone as a great example of vampire fiction the way it should be: with vampires causing havoc and lusting after human blood. The Australian backdrop of a small beachside town in the midst of a summer music festival made it come alive, and was the perfect setting for the story to unfold.

Although I did find the prologue a little slow going, once the story proper began it raced along. With great characters and great dialogue, this Australian twist on the vampire legend is a must read. Highly recommended.

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