



Sweet

By Emmy Laybourne

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They'd kill to get thin.

The luxurious celebrity cruise launching the trendy new diet sweetener Solu should be the vacation of a lifetime. But Laurel is starting to regret accepting her friend Viv's invitation. She's already completely embarrassed herself in front of celebrity host Tom Forelli—the hottest guy ever!—and she's too sick to even *try* the sweetener. And that's *before* Viv and all the other passengers start acting really strange.

Tom knows that he should be grateful for this job and the chance to shed his former-child-star image. His publicists have even set up a 'romance' with a sexy reality star. But as things on the ship start to get wild, he finds himself drawn to a different girl. And when the hosting gig turns into an expose on the shocking side effects of Solu, it's Laurel that he's determined to save.

Emmy Laybourne, author of the Monument 14 trilogy, takes readers on a dream vacation in *Sweet* that goes first comically, then tragically, then *horrifyingly*, wrong!

“Simultaneously terrifying, hilarious, and action-packed, *Sweet* is a wild ride that holds up a warped mirror to our society. I loved it from the first line to the last.”
?Marie Lu, *New York Times*—bestselling author of *Legend* and *The Young Elites*

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Gr 9 Up—A posh, seven-day celebrity cruise begins as a pre-launch publicity party for Solu, a groundbreaking new artificial sweetener. Passengers are promised they will lose five to 10 percent of their body fat in a matter of days. Over the course of the week, they lose a lot more than fat. Celebrity TV host and emcee of the festivities, Tom, is 19 and handsome. When he shows interest in Laurel, 17, she is excited but cautious. As a tender romance between the two develops, a strict diet and a case of sea sickness keep them from Solu. Most passengers, however, eat Solu with every meal. The weight loss is dramatic, but so, too is the unexpected side effect of rage. The ensuing addiction to the substance (sucking spilled Solu out of the carpet, anyone?) yields homicidal actions—and worse. As dead bodies pile up, Tom and Laurel realize it is up to them to get off the ship and warn the world about Solu before its widespread public release in a few days. Tom and Laurel are sympathetic characters with personal histories, hang-ups, and hopes. Laybourne's fictional world highlights themes of friendship, the culture of celebrity, and addiction. The horror bits (stated but not described gratuitously) push the story to the border between realism and supernatural horror but in such a believable way that readers will have second thoughts the next time they tear open a packet of sweetener. **VERDICT** A finely knit narrative in which romance pairs perfectly (somehow) with societal horror.—Jennifer Prince, Buncombe County Public Libraries, NC

Review

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“Laybourne's fictional world highlights themes of friendship, the culture of celebrity, and addiction...A finely knit narrative in which romance pairs perfectly (somehow) with societal horror.” ?Jennifer Prince, Buncombe County Public Libraries, NC, *School Library Journal*

“Laybourne's masterful novel opens as a comical potential romance, becomes suspenseful, then horrific, and ends as a gripping action-adventure survival story sure to enthrall readers ... The book is recommended as required summer reading.” ?*VOYA, Starred Review*

“Combining mystery with a bit of romance and a peek into Hollywood's obsession with being thin, Laybourne creates an interesting commentary on society's addiction to weight loss and diets.” ?*Booklist*

“While maintaining an exciting, face-paced, terrifying narrative, Laybourne manages to weave in details that highlight friendship, the culture of celebrity and addiction.” ?*Asheville Citizen-Times*

“Laybourne delivers a candy-coated horror novel that alternates between increasingly violent scenes and Laurel and Tom's poignant romance.” ?*Publishers Weekly*

About the Author

EMMY LAYBOURNE is a novelist and former character actress. She is the author of the upcoming release *Berserker*, the horror/comedy novel *Sweet* and the critically acclaimed *Monument 14* trilogy. Before her life as an author, Emmy performed original comedy on Comedy Central, MTV and VH1; and acted in the movies "Superstar," "The In-Laws" and "Nancy Drew," among others.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Jerry Raminez:

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