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# Sweet



## Synopsis

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

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

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 --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

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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.”  
“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

Having loved the Monument 14 series (seriously, they were a GREAT post-apocalyptic YA trilogy) I was super excited about what Emmy Laybourne did next. So excited that I bought this book in

hardback because I wanted to read it so much - something I rarely do as I generally read books when traveling so the lighter the better. Things start really promisingly, with the story told from the perspective of two main protagonists, Tom, AKA Baby Tom-Tom, a former child star desperately trying to resurrect his career, and Laurel, a perfectly ordinary teen who is mildly overweight. Their paths cross on a luxurious cruise trip where a new diet product, Solu, is being launched. Tom to be the celebrity face of the product, selling it to the great American public, and Laurel, to accompany her best friend Viv who is so desperate to be thin that she's persuaded her wealthy Dad to send her on the cruise and pay for her best friend to be her chaperone. What none of them realised is that Solu isn't all it seems, and while it more than keeps the weightloss promises it makes, there are a bunch of side effects that nobody taking it expected. So here's where I started to have issue with the book. Solu morphs from being a diet product, to kind of being like cocaine, to eventually being more like bath salts (as in the mood-altering drug). Things get out of hand pretty quickly and just left me feeling a little nonplussed. It just felt like it was all trying way too hard to shock. That isn't to say it's completely without merit. The diet industry is big business, and the increasing pressure on people to avoid the Daily Mail's Sidebar of Shame for being too fat / too thin / badly dressed / wearing badly applied make up / too old etc etc. means we are setting ridiculous standards for ourselves to try and emulate. So, as a cautionary tale of how far people will go to be thin, it's an interesting discussion starter, I just feel it could have been handled in a less sensational way. I should have waited for the paperback.

All I can do is laugh., because this story was so crazy. It is a great, funny, and yet gross and dark story. If you like an apocalyptic tale with a twist, get this book.

Totally unexpected content compared to the title.....great read.....

Laybourne blends real commercial and nutritional threats with romantic ideals in a timely, engaging, and satisfying story. Young people, comfortable with the authenticity and attitude will get hooked by the romance. Great read for young and old.

This book was ok. I felt like it moved a little too fast and that the effects of Solu were kind of stupid. The ending was definitely not what I expected and it was overall kind of boring. The beginning was really good but then I went down hill. If you're bored this book would be OK to get.... I wouldn't spend much though

Another awesome book by an awesome author! I love the way she makes you experience the character's dilemmas through their eyes! I love the plot of the story and I can't wait until the next books come out in the series!!

Amazingly great plot. I just wanted the actual writing to be a little more elevated. Definitely a good read and perfect for summer.

This books was amazing. I couldn't put it down until the last page. I really wish there was a sequel.

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