

Save the Date Excerpt

I head straight for the pickup counter, where I see my skinny vanilla latte waiting for me, my name written on the side of the cup in Stella's familiar scrawl. Without hesitation I grab it, inhaling deeply before I take a sip. Just a tiny sip so I can savor it. I close my eyes for a second, maybe two, and when I open them, I find a guy standing there.

Watching me.

And he's not just any guy. He's cute. Wait, no. Not cute. He's...*hot*. Dark hair. Blue eyes. Wearing a suit that fits him perfectly. I know just from looking at the fabric that it's custom. Expensive.

He's smiling at me. And I'm scowling at him in return because the caffeine hasn't quite hit my bloodstream yet, so I'm not on top of my game.

"You looked like you were having a moment." His voice is deep. Rich. His face...vaguely familiar?

I stand a little straighter. Take another sip of my coffee as I contemplate the man in front of me, because for some reason I still can't come up with anything to say.

Listen, I always have something to say. But this guy. This gorgeous, well-dressed maybe-stranger, is leaving me a little...

Dumbstruck?

Huh.

"That moment you were just having. With your coffee," he continues, gesturing at the cup I'm clutching in both of my hands, like it's my baby. Which this morning—every morning—it is.

"She *loves* coffee," Stella says from behind me.

Glancing over my shoulder, I give her a look, one that says *shush*.

"I can see that." The amusement in his voice is obvious. He thinks it's funny. The sacred moment I was having with my latte made him smile.

I wouldn't mind coming up with other ways to make him smile.

Whoa. Where did that thought come from?

"What I want to know is, how did you get such special treatment?"

I blink at him like I'm an uncomprehending idiot. "Excuse me?"

“Well, I’ve been here for the last fifteen minutes. First, standing in line.” He gestures at the line of customers that trails out the door. “And now, waiting for my order.”

Guilt fills me. Just a tiny bit. Sweet Dreams Café is the most popular bakery and coffee shop in Carmel-by-the-Sea. All the tourists love it. All the locals love it too. It’s been in Stella’s family for generations.

“Yet you skip past the line, walk straight in here and grab your ready-made drink within a few seconds of your arrival. Do you have a Fast Pass?” A brow lifts, and I’m hit with a quiver. Like Cupid just drew back his bow and shot that arrow right in my heart.

Or perhaps that arrow struck me in, ahem, other places.

Who knew a brow lift could be so sexy?