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Opening extract from

# I See You Baby

Written by

**Kevin Brooks & Catherine Forde**

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**To Anna**

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# CHAPTER 1
# JUST ANOTHER SATURDAY

## SALLY MACK

Yeah.  Just another Saturday.

That's what I thought.

I work for my Aunty Rena from 8 o'clock in the morning till 5 in the evening at her café, the Last Stop Caff.

I'm always run off my feet.

I'm as hot and sticky in my pink overall as one of Aunty Rena's iced buns.

I make coffee.

I make tea.

I cut up cake.

I try not to cut my fingers. Or lick the leftovers in public.

I serve sandwiches.

I wipe down tables.

I try not to trip over shopping bags. But I trip over shopping bags.

I dish up soup. I spill it ...

I'm so clumsy I always spill something ... over my hands. Down some woman's skirt. Over some bloke's lap ...

As soon as I spill something hot over someone, Aunty Rena comes rushing over to mop up the mess. She flaps and fusses.

"Oh, dear me! Take a wee break, Sally," she tells me, and she shoos me into the back kitchen.

If you heard how kind Aunty Rena's voice can sound you would think she was –

a. My real aunty. Not just some old pal of my mum's.

Or

b. Not one bit angry with Sally Mack. Her big clumsy slave.

But Aunty Rena is always angry when I spill stuff. Fizzing. When she smiles and says, "Take a wee break," that's really secret code for, "Sally Mack! You stupid great lump of lard on legs! Be more careful or you are *sacked*."

As soon as Aunty Rena's looked after the customer I'd spilled egg and chips or lentil broth on and given them a free meal to make up for my clumsiness, she stomps into the back kitchen to give me grief.

"Sally Mack, this is your last warning," Aunty Rena nip, nip, nips.

Every Saturday.

After that, it's Teach that Stupid Sally Mack a Lesson Time.

Aunty Rena makes me clean out the caff's toilets. One of them's always blocked. All of them honk.

Yeah. Just another Saturday.

That's what I was thinking as I swished a toilet brush round the bowl in the Gents. Yuk! I was trying not to look at what I was trying to clean. I was also trying not to breathe. It was toxic in there.

If only I could quit Aunty Rena's stupid job.

I'd just love to march out of the toilets and into the caff right now. I'd shove the dirty end of this toilet brush into Aunty Rena's hand. Pull off my pink overall.

I'd give Aunty Rena a bit of grief for a change.

"Don't bother sacking me, cos I'm leaving," I'd say. "Don't need your stupid job any more."

Then I'd walk out the caff with my head high. Into the sunset. Or better still, into the bus station next door. I'd buy a one-way ticket to Somewhere Better Than This.

I'd do it right now. I'd make everything different. Better. If only I didn't need this stupid job so bad.

But I do.

I'm saving up to start my own business. Making punky funky cut-up T-shirts out of old clothes. I need a proper sewing machine for that. And I need Aunty Rena's stupid job to earn the money to buy one.

Life's unfair that way. Unfair as Aunty Rena.

Today I didn't even spill anything hot on that girl.

Her coffee went nowhere near her. A few splashes landed on her lumpy great rucksack. Which was waterproof.

"Sorry," I said right away. "Sorry. I'll wipe that off."

But that girl made such a crazy song and dance.

"Idiot," she said, so stuck up and flipping *loud* that I bet even Aunty Rena's deaf punters heard. Everyone in the caff turned and stared at me. Then the girl's voice went all whiny.

"My rucksack's soaked," she moaned. "I can't sit on a bus to Manchester with a wet bag! Total DIS-A-STER! All my weekend clothes are in there. Ruined. Now I can't go to Rock Out. I've a free ticket and everything. You should lose your job for being so clumsy."