

After a funeral, teenage girls try to help their families by babysitting Adam, a 6-year old child with whom they share their imagination, books, and love of flowers. TOMORROW MAYBE is a middle grade coming-of-age story for Grades 7-10.

Tomorrow Maybe

By Rolla Donaghy

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Tomorrow
Maybe



Rolla Donaghy

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CHAPTER 1

Fourteen-year-old Bettina Davis held a green umbrella over two small children and walked them to church, where she nudged them into a wooden pew to sit with the adult relatives.

"Can we go to the park after this, Violet?" the little boy began asking his sister as he wriggled in.

"Shh, please be quiet now. Tomorrow, Adam," Violet whispered. "I promise to take you to the park tomorrow."

Bettina, as a typical teenager, chose to sit elsewhere, and finding her older cousin Louise, went to join her.

"Are the prayer cards ready?" Bettina asked.

"Should be. Mom reminded the print shop to deliver by noon. We put a verse from St. Patrick on it, about being a light in the darkness. I apologize for my moodiness; we had other plans for today. I see a lot of people here and doubt they knew Aunt Mary."

Bettina smiled, "They could smell your coffee. Absolutely, we should be elsewhere, like riding a horse in the Adirondacks. Instead, I ordered sandwiches and petit four cakes from the bakery."

"That will be plenty. Mom brought chicken salad and scalloped potatoes for something warm on a damp day."

They watched people enter, shake off the spring rain and look for a seat where they could hear the music. A thin teenage girl with perfumed braids entered the pew directly in front of them. A cantor sang, 'My cup runneth over'.

Louise murmured, "She's good, right? At college, we have a fine choir and next year, I'll join."

"Did you date in your freshman year?"

"Ooh, no. One word of advice - never date a freshman guy. They revert to being 15, drink, pledge fraternities, act like fools, fail their classes. You have to wait until second year to find out if they even return."

Their chatting stopped when a woman reader approached the lectern.

"We are assembled this day in May on the feast day of St. Adalbert of Prague, who died in 999 AD. It is fitting that we also remember and celebrate the brief life of Mary McConnell Davis, a member of the parish this past year. She was a kind and brave wanderer, forsaking self-indulgence to follow a life of values, justice, fairness and humanity. Anyone with words to say about Mary, please inform the usher."

She gestured at an ornate copper vase containing Mary's ashes.

"Let us begin by singing 'Look Kindly on Our Sister', Hymn Number 428."

Look kindly on our sister who departs from here,
Smile gently on our sister that now is in your care,
Let kindness embrace her on the golden street,
Birds and angels singing, petals beneath her feet.

Amen

The girls lapsed into silence, smelling faint incense, aware that they scarcely knew the young relative who recently passed.

CHAPTER 5

When Mary Davis was feeling unwell in Hawaii, despite the fact that Kyle's military duty was completed, it was out of the question that he would re-up and leave Mary feeling alone and isolated. Instead, he looked online for job options on the mainland, luckily finding one at a store on a base in Virginia Beach. The family moved; Adam started kindergarten. Kyle enjoyed his job doing inventory, purchases and special orders for personnel on tour, moving or being sent abroad on short notice.

"I'll be right here," he assured Mary. "I track packages, and deliver them to families myself. It's a much-appreciated service by personnel leaving town."

Two blocks away, Mary opened her 'Curio Cabinet' that was a pleasant family activity until her health declined, and in February, they closed the shop temporarily. By the time illness took her, Kyle kept a solid routine, the family was absorbed into the community, and aside from the quiet funeral, no one knew she was gone. To the children, it was as if she evaporated, like Frosty the Snowman, gradually, and no one is surprised when he is no longer there.

"First day of school vacation," Kyle repeated to the children as he opened the lock of the shop on Fairview Lane. "Violet, did the morning go well? I can't believe that babysitter never came today, never called."

"We were perfect," said Violet with pride.

"Perfect," echoed Adam.

'Curio Cabinet' was cash and carry, a bitter-sweet place filled with knickknacks, books, carved end tables, old jewelry and plates shipped from Hawaii.

"If I can't pick it up," Mary had joked, "it isn't here."

Her hand-painted signs decorated the walls: 'We know the price -- You know the value.' and 'We found it -- You keep it.' Another read, 'If you think it's a real antique -- don't tell me, just buy it.'

"Daddy," said Adam, tugging his sleeve, "a woman wants to know how much is the pineapple platter and we aren't open yet."

Kyle walked to the front as a woman surveyed the platter for chips.

"You are wondering is it authentic? When I was stationed in Hawaii, my wife poked around pawn shops and thrifts. People leave stuff behind and we shipped a ton over. When something is cracked or broken, we throw it out."

"It looks to be in fine condition. Please wrap it well. I'll take it; we entertain."

The woman handed Violet ten dollars. Violet secured the platter in layers of bubble wrap and placed it into a paper bag. As she put the money in the cash register, Adam came over.

"I love the cash register, Violet," he said. "When I grow up, I'll buy a store."

After the woman walked out, Violet locked the door to clean without further interruption.

"Well, that's silly, Adam," she said, laughing. "We already have a store."

At night, Adam stood by the bedroom window while Violet snuggled in on the upper bunk.

"Should I close it, Violet? Close the window?"

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"No, it's not raining. Come to bed. Daddy said we did good today; tomorrow we will do the exact same as today except with a babysitter."

"Goodnight, Violet."

"Goodnight, Adam."

About the Author



Canadian author Rolla Donaghy studied theatre arts and music throughout her school years. Professionally, she worked as a school counselor in Toronto, Boston and Honolulu, with a specialty in reading skills.

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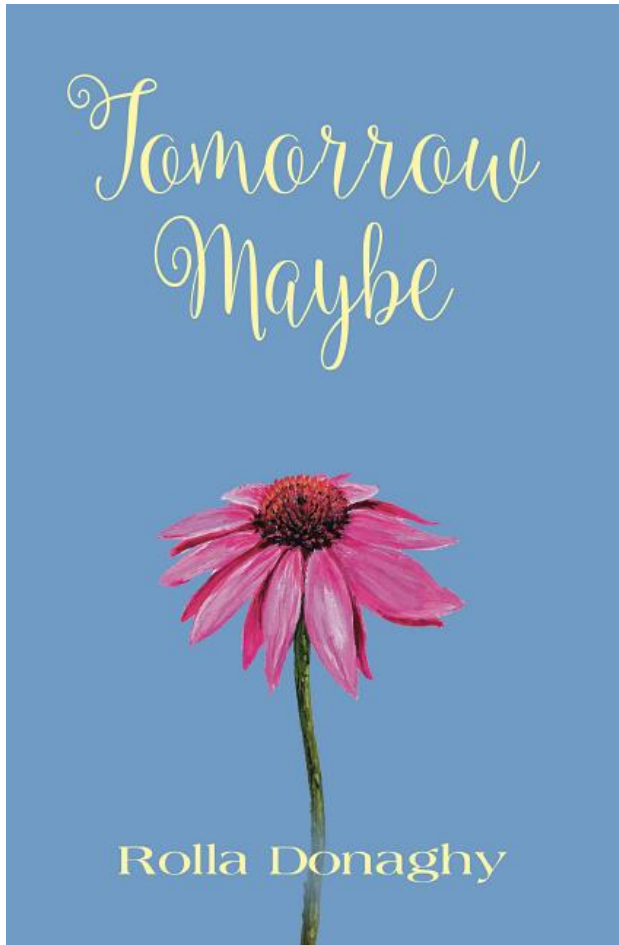
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