

## Nothing for Tomorrow: A Memoir

**Nancy Rossman**

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*A tender exploration of the relationships between women, Nothing for Tomorrow honors a friendship that helped shape the author's life.*

There's no predicting who will enter our lives, or the effect a stranger can have on us. Nancy Rossman's memoir, *Nothing for Tomorrow*, is a touching memory of an unexpected friendship. Rossman revives the late 1970s, as well as her connection with her friend Lynda Burns, in a story that honors both the author's own coming of age and the end of Lynda's life.

*Nothing for Tomorrow* is deceptively simple. It's 1978, disco is king, and the Arizona desert is blooming. On page 1, Rossman meets Tim Burns, whose "freckled face and dimpled cheeks reminded me of a grown-up Norman Rockwell kid: straight teeth, chocolate eyes, a sincere air about him." His redheaded, feisty mother, Lynda, immediately takes Rossman into her inner circle, introducing her to a world of high-end restaurants, exclusive doubles tennis, and fillet mignon. "The more time I spent with her, the more I appreciated her. Through her reasoning, she continued to bridge the murky water that separated my mother and me."

Although her relationship with Tim doesn't last, Rossman's connection with Lynda only sweetens and deepens. As the two women grow closer, the author discovers that Lynda suffered permanent injuries during her years of athletics, horseback riding, and competitive sports. Slowly, her friend loses her ability to play tennis, run, and eventually walk. Rossman gradually reveals the conclusion Lynda comes to: in order to stop living with the chronic pain that debilitates her, she will end her own life.

Rossman's recollection of detail and dialogue makes this story sparkle, bringing to life a decades-old memory. The chronological plot is easy to follow, with the focus on the women's relationship. The sights and scents of Arizona are immediate, vibrant. From the first page, Rossman is a likable narrator. Settling down to her memoir has all the laughs and fun of a good gab session with girlfriends. "I'd frantically scoured my closet for something cool to wear ... the maroon Danskin body suit and matching skirt. The crisscross front showed more cleavage than I remembered from when I had tried it on in the store." Rossman is savvy, and her story only improves with the benefit of hindsight.

There are some issues with pacing as the story wears on. The final conversation between the two friends seems rushed after so much buildup—as though Rossman is leaning too hard on the reader to understand and feel sympathy. However, the last moments she shares with Lynda are poignant and authentic, as is Rossman's honesty about her reaction to losing someone who was a second mother to her during her years of single life.

A tender exploration of the relationships between women, *Nothing for Tomorrow* honors a friendship that helped shape the author's life.

CLAIRE FOSTER (February 11, 2015)

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