

## A Note from Caroline O'Donoghue



Dear Reader,

The first card in a standard pack of tarot is called The Fool. Despite the rather unfortunate name, The Fool is not an idiot. The Fool is about to set off on a journey, and he has no idea where he's going. He has to believe that the winds of fate will carry him in the right direction, and while he is certain that there will be peril and pain along the way, he also knows in his heart that it's a path that needs to be taken. Ultimately, he believes that everything is going to work out OK.

A similar kind of foolish determination goes into writing a book. Maeve Chambers arrived in my head one day while I was sitting on a London bus. It was the coldest night of the year, and we were stuck in traffic. I was miserable: I was broke, I'd recently lost my job, and my family—all the way across the Irish Sea—was in crisis. I conjured Maeve Chambers because I knew she was someone I could understand and someone who could understand me. In many ways, she's exactly like I was as a teenager: overshadowed by charismatic siblings, terrible at school, and desperately looking for a "thing" to be good at. I started writing about her on my phone, sending long text messages to my long-suffering agent. I didn't know where the story was going, but I knew I had to write it.

I threw myself into my Fool's journey, and I hope you'll throw yourself into it, too. Along the way you'll meet some people who are very dear to me, and they'll take care of you. Maeve will give you courage, Fiona will make you laugh, Roe will stay sensible, and Lily . . . well, it's better if you get to know Lily yourself. (If you can find her.)

It's not always a great journey. The world can be a vast and ugly place. People do mess things up when they're sad or scared or lonely or jealous. But The Fool isn't dumb for believing that everything is going to work out in the end. He's able to believe it because he knows that ultimately there is more good than bad in the world. More kindness than you might suspect, more joy than you might dare to guess at. And if you can adopt some of The Fool's attitude, trust me, you're going to have a great time.

Yours,

*Caroline  
O'Donoghue*



**Caroline O'Donoghue** is an Irish author, journalist, and host of the acclaimed podcast *Sentimental Garbage*. She has contributed to *Grazia*, the *Irish Times*, the *Irish Examiner*, BuzzFeed, Vice, and *The Times* (London). She lives in London.