

Thursday's Child

Clare Revell

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Contact Information: titleadmin@pelicanbookgroup.com

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*Monday's Child must hide for protection,
Tuesday's Child tenders direction
Wednesday's Child grieves for his soul
Thursday's Child chases the whole
Friday's Child is a man obsessed
Saturday's Child might be possessed
And Sunday's Child on life's seas is tossed
Awaiting the Lifeboat that rescues the lost.*

The Firefighter's Prayer

*When I am called to duty, God, whenever flames may rage;
Give me strength to save some life, whatever be its age.
Help me embrace a little child before it is too late
Or save an older person from the horror of that fate.
Enable me to be alert and hear the weakest shout,
And quickly and efficiently to put the fire out.
I want to fill my calling and to give the best in me,
To guard my every neighbor and protect his property.
And if, according to my fate, I am to lose my life;
Please bless with Your protecting hand my children and my
wife. ~ Author Unknown*

Dedication

To all the firefighters who put their lives on the line for us each and every day. You are all heroes.

Special thanks go to
Station Manager Tim Edwards of Norfolk Fire &
Rescue for the technical edit of the fire and rescue
scenes

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Nicole Targett of the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue
Service

Natalja Paramonova of the London Fire Brigade
Jacqui Broadbridge and Gina McGee of the Reading
CPS

Praise for Clare Revell

Monday's Child

Packed with action and laced with faith, this romance builds excitement for the next book in the series of seven romantic suspense novels based on a rewrite of the popular nursery rhyme, *Monday's Child*.

~ Author, Dora Hiers

Times Arrow

I stand in awe of Revell's ability to pack an entire novel's worth of action and emotion into so few pages.

~ Author, Delia Latham

After The Fire

What a wild ride in *After the Fire*! Ms. Revell created a sweet romance within a beautiful setting, but don't let that fool you. There's plenty of action in this book as Freddie and Jason work to uncover the truth. Just when you think you're near 'The End,' Ms. Revell pulls out a few more surprises. ~ Author, Dora Hiers

Other titles by Clare Revell

Novels

After the Fire

Monday's Child

Tuesday's Child

Wednesday's Child

Novellas

Season for Miracles

Cassie's Wedding Dress

Time's Arrow

An Aussie Christmas Angel

Dollar Downloads

Saving Christmas

Free Reads

Kisses from Heaven

Glossary of Terms Used

Niamh—The heroine's name; is pronounced Neeve.

CPS—Crown Prosecution Service.

Shout—Term UK firefighters give emergency response calls.

BA—Breathing apparatus or air canister firefighters wear in a fire

RTC—Road Traffic Collision or Crash

Dock—this a separate box at the back or to one side of the courtroom where the defendant and a police guard sit. The prosecution and defense barristers sit on either ends of a long bench/desk in front of the judge. Sometimes the dock is behind a glass partition depending on the age of the courtroom or what the defendant is accused of.

Skippy—"Skippy the Bush Kangaroo" was an Aussie TV program in the early 70's. Therefore, all Aussies are affectionately known as Skippy in the fire service.

ED—Emergency Department. Also known as A&E or casualty or the ER.

Resus—This is the large critical care room in the ED in which all patients with life-threatening injuries are taken. It gives the doctors and nurses more room to stabilize and treat patients before transferring them to surgery or ICU.

Ni—Pronounced Nigh; Niamh's nickname

Li—Pronounced Lie; Liam's nickname

Pi—Pronounced Pie; Patrick's nickname. (Hence Niamh calling him 3.14; a play on the math term.)

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Thursday's Child chases the whole...

But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint. ~ Isaiah 40:30-31

Dressed in her black gown and white wig, Niamh Harkin sat in Crown Court number three and sent up a prayer that she would do her best and that justice would be done.

As senior crown prosecutor for the Headley Cross Crown Prosecution Service, she hoped she was beyond pre-trial jitters by now, but this case could prove to be as long and messy as it was big. The preparation had been awful, with files disappearing, and witnesses vanishing or changing their stories, due to death threats. Having finally got the case to court, she owed it to the victims to ensure the defendant was put away for a long time.

The Jonathan Acre case had made the national news and the public gallery was full to the rafters with reporters, and everyday folk alike. All of them eager to catch a glimpse of the man accused of a string of mafia type murders. The TV and ordinary cameras, prohibited under the current legal system, remained

outside the court building. Thus sketch artists drew furiously on their pads to record the images for the evening news and the morning papers.

Niamh was dead against the proposed changes to allow cameras inside the courtroom. The media circus needed to stay well away from criminals and victims alike. They needed to protect the anonymity of jurors who weren't permitted to speak to anyone about the cases they heard at all—even after the case was completed.

The jury was finally sworn in and seated. The introductory speeches concluded. Sitting under the Royal Coat of Arms at the bench, Judge Matheson looked from his papers to Niamh. The gold trimmings on the judge's red gown caught the sunlight streaming through the barred and frosted windows. His long white wig rested on his shoulders, and he regarded her over the top of his glasses for a long moment before pushing them up his nose.

"Mrs. Harkin, you may call your first witness." His gravelly, yet quiet voice resounded in the hushed courtroom.

Niamh stood and nodded. She tapped her papers on the desk in front of her. "My Lord, the crown would like to call Mrs. Gina Luckett."

"No." A shout of protest and shuffling footsteps came from the dock behind her as the defendant leapt to his feet. "You can't call her."

Niamh turned and glanced at him. She picked up the file and opened it.

"Silence in court!" The thunderous roar from the bench echoed in the courtroom. "Mr. Kingsman. If you can't keep the defendant quiet, I will have him removed and jailed for contempt, and the trial will

continue in his absence until it is completed."

There was a nod from the defense counsel, and he twisted toward the dock for a moment, gesticulating at his client.

Niamh took her seat and waited apprehensively as Mrs. Luckett came in. The court usher escorted the woman to the witness box. She looked terrified, her shoulders shook, and she kept her gaze down on the floor. Niamh glanced over at the dock to catch the expression of utter panic on the defendant's face, as Mrs. Luckett placed a hand on the Bible and took the oath. Then Niamh rose to her feet and smiled at the witness.

Before she had chance to say anything there was another outburst from the dock. "You can't do this."

Judge Matheson cleared his throat. "Mr. Kingsman, your client has been warned already. I will not repeat myself in my own court room."

"Your Honor, might I have a word with my client?" Miles Kingsman got to his feet.

Judge Matheson nodded. "Two minutes. *If* that's all right with the prosecution?"

"Of course, Your Honor." Niamh sat and twisted her pencil in her right hand, watching the agitated conversation at the dock. The voices were kept low, but from Kingsman's stance, it wasn't what the defense barrister wanted to hear.

Kingsman turned to face the bench. "Your Honor, my client wishes to change his plea to guilty on all counts."

Surprise flitted across the judge's face for an instant before he regained his composure. "Really? He does understand the severity of his action? That it will mean a custodial life sentence? And one in a maximum

security prison without the chance of parole for at least forty years?"

"He does, Your Honor."

Niamh was unable to suppress her smile as Judge Matheson promptly dismissed the jury and remanded the convicted man into custody until sentencing the following week. She gathered her papers.

Someone blocked the light in front of her. It could only be one person.

"Is something wrong, Miles?"

"That was a dirty trick, Niamh," Miles Kingsman hissed.

Niamh viewed the angry man before her. "What was a dirty trick? It's not my fault that your client changed his plea. Or are you referring to the fact that I managed to track down the witness someone tried to hide? When I did find her, the paperwork conveniently went missing. I had to hunt high and low for those files, and if I ever find out your office had something to do with their disappearance—"

"Then you'll what? Are you making an allegation here, Mrs. Harkin?"

"Of course not, Mr. Kingsman." Why had he gone all formal?

"If you have any kind of proof—"

"Oh, please. If I could prove it, do you think I'd be standing here having this conversation? I said *if* I ever find out. There is a difference."

"Are you threatening me, Mrs. Harkin?"

Niamh picked up her files and briefcase and got to her feet. "I don't do threats, Mr. Kingsman. I leave that sort of thing to your clientele. I deal in promises and the truth. Now if you'll excuse me, I have a pile of paperwork that needs attending to." She swept past

him, wanting nothing more than to de-robe and head back to her office. She'd put the papers in her briefcase in the robing room.

She was almost to the door when a hand grabbed her and spun her around. She gasped, her files flying to the floor. A figure in black shoved her back hard against the wall. She'd have a bruise where her hip caught the edge of the bench. She stifled her instant reaction. "What are you playing at, Miles?"

"Don't start something you're not prepared to finish." Miles's low, deadly voice hissed in her ear. "Or you will regret it."

Niamh stared at the blond man holding her. His icy lavender eyes glinted at her, and his fingers dug painfully into her arm. She swallowed, refusing to show fear. "Now who's making threats?"

"To coin a phrase, that wasn't a threat, Niamh, that was a promise."

Ice slid down her spine. It wasn't the first time she'd been threatened in her career. In fact she'd also received a series of death threats over the few weeks she'd been preparing this case. It came with the job, but this? This was something different. Miles was a colleague, even if they were on opposite sides of the fence.

Judge Matheson's voice came from the other side of the courtroom. "Is everything all right over there?"

Miles nodded and dropped her arm as if it burned. He turned to face the judge, his voice a more normal level. "Everything's fine, Your Honor. Niamh tripped and dropped her papers. I was just making sure she was all right."

Niamh bent to retrieve her files, snatching them off him.

"Mrs. Harkin?" Concern filled the judge's voice.

"Everything's fine, Your Honor." Niamh took the last of the papers and shoved them into her briefcase.

"Very well. Good work by the way."

"Thank you." Niamh stood and looked at him, her fingers tightening on the briefcase. She forced her voice to remain calm. "I should be going."

The judge nodded. "I will see you soon no doubt."

Niamh left the court and headed swiftly down the corridor. Which part of her offhand comment had rattled Miles...unless he or someone he worked with really did have something to do with the files disappearing? He stood to gain much if he'd won the case. He'd only gone into public defending because she got the CPS job instead of him.

"Mrs. Harkin, please wait." Footsteps ran down the hallway behind her. A frightened voice called her name. "Mrs. Harkin, could you take a look at this? I received it this morning, and I don't know what to do. I was going to hand it to the police, but now the case is over I thought maybe you should have it instead."

Niamh turned. The last thing she wanted was a conversation with a witness, but she smiled and listened before taking the letter and, promising to read it and take the appropriate action when she got back to her office, hurried on her way. Once in the robing room, Niamh changed out of her robes and hung them back in her locker. She left the court via the back entrance to avoid the press. Taking a few deep breaths of the damp October air, she speed dialed the fire station, hoping Jared would be there.

Despite everything that was happening between them, her husband's voice always calmed her. Besides, she'd promised to tell him how she'd got on in court.

"Hey, Jared. Phone."

Jared looked up from the pile of equipment he was cleaning at Cedarwood Fire Station. "Be right there." He stood and brushed the dust from his uniform trousers. Tugging down his navy T-shirt, he ran to the office. "Who is it, Skippy?" he asked the firefighter sitting at the desk.

"Your wife. Make it quick." Pete Callaghan, the duty officer for Green Watch, known as Skippy due to his Australian accent, rose, moving to the side to give Jared some privacy.

Jared picked up the phone. Eight years married and still the sound of Niamh's voice sent a warmth down his spine. He just wished things were better between them. "Hey, Niamh. How did it go?"

"It went good. I won. The defendant changed his plea to guilty."

"I keep telling you that you're scary in those robes." Jared laughed. "Does this mean I can take you out to celebrate tonight? It is tradition after all. Maybe we could talk over dinner."

"Talking isn't going to change anything, but OK. Far be it for me to be the one to break with tradition." She sighed. "We'll go to that new Chinese place you wanted to try. I'll make a reservation for eight fifteen."

"That sounds great. Gives me time to shower and change when I get home."

"Yeah."

The alarm bells began their shrill call to duty ring. Jared wasn't sure if he was relieved or not. "Niamh, I got to run. See you tonight. I love you."

"Love you too, Jarrie Jace." Her voice sounded stilted as she gave him the standard answer. Did she mean it? He dismissed the thought. No matter how rough a patch they were going through, Niamh had never lied to him. She hated liars as much as he did.

Jared hung up, tore the message specifying the details of the fire from the printer, and ran out into the main section, shouting as he went. "Both pump and ladder, house fire at One Five Four Whitgate Road, persons reported." He handed the sheets to the drivers of both fire engines and pulled on his fireproof clothing.

The familiar surge of adrenaline filled him. He loved his job and the fact that what he did saved lives. Climbing in the fire engine, he leaned back in the seat and took a deep breath.

Lord, be with us on this shout. Protect us, help us do our jobs to the best of our abilities. Give us the strength to save lives, to be alert and hear the weakest of cries for help. Enable me to give my best. You alone know what awaits us on this shout. If I am to lose my life, Lord, be with Niamh, and protect and comfort her. Above all, grant me the courage to sacrifice my life in the line of duty without thinking twice about it.

A hand touched his leg. He opened his eyes and looked at Phil Rodgers, the watch manager. "Yes, Sub?" It was kind of funny how they all still called him by his old rank title. The new one of 'Watch Manager A' didn't have the same ring to it.

"The lads noticed you do that every time we go on a shout, but none of them wanted to ask. Tell them what you're doing."

"Praying." He held the gaze of the senior officer.

Phil smiled and gave a warning glance to the

young men. "Nobody's going to mock you for doing that, least of all me. I don't think there are many of us that don't say the Firefighter's Prayer every so often."

Jared nodded and addressed the newer firemen. "And I believe what I'm saying. It's not just words to me."

Skippy nudged him. "Well, let's just hope you don't find out if God really does exist today."

"I know He exists and meeting Him is something I am looking forward to doing. And if it's today, then so be it. If not, I go home to Niamh, and we celebrate being alive and loved by God and her winning another case."

The fire engine pulled to a stop outside a blazing house. "Here we go." Jared tugged his helmet on securely and jumped out.

Finishing dead on five, Niamh left the office and headed through the vaulted hallway to the main door. She smiled at the security guard as she signed out. "Goodnight, Duncan. You have a good evening."

"This came for you about half an hour ago. Young girl dropped it off."

"Thank you." Niamh took the envelope. Her name was printed on the front. She ripped it open. Making sure she showed no outward reaction, she smiled and nodded to Duncan. "Goodnight."

Duncan smiled back. "Goodnight, Mrs. Harkin. You take care out there, now. Rain's coming down real heavy."

"I will." Swallowing hard as bile rose in her throat, Niamh turned and headed over to the elevators. The