

Sunday's Child

Clare Revell

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Dedication

Dedicated to all the members of the Royal National
Lifeboat Institution who volunteer to save lives at sea.
Also to Cal who wanted to be the hero.

Thanks to

Huge thanks go to
Hayling Island RNLI Station for letting me visit and
spend several hours asking questions and taking
photos. Not to mention the immediate answer to all my
emails.

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Jonathan Bradbury
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The crew of Red Watch

Also to

@RNLI on twitter
Liz Cook at RNLI HQ

More information can be found about the RNLI at
<http://rnli.org/Pages/default.aspx>

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proposal for a seven book series and going with it.
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inspirational photos for the entire series.
You are both a blessing and a joy to work with. I'm so
grateful to be part of the Pelican Book Family.

*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 Lifeboat Prayer

Merciful Father, all things in heaven and earth are held within Your loving care, look with favor upon the Royal National Lifeboat Institution. Protect and bless the crews of all our lifeboats, our lifeguards and all who risk their own safety to bring help to others.

Guide all who work for the Institution as volunteers, supporters or staff that they may be faithful to the vision of our founders, so that it may always be seen as a beacon of hope and light to those who find themselves in peril on the seas. Through the same Jesus Christ, to whom with You and the Holy Spirit be honor and glory, now and forever.

Amen

Oh, Lord, our boat is so small, and Thy sea is so vast. Please protect us.

Praise for Clare Revell

Monday's Child

Traditional romance readers will love this story! However, the plot doesn't stop at romance. A few of my favorite things about this story were; the heart pumping explosive incident, the English, Scottish, and American accents I could actually hear as I read, and an underlining thread of faith. - JoAnn Carter

Tuesday's Child

As a hard of hearing person, I easily identified with the deaf heroine whose faith and love were her bedrock. I cannot begin to recommend this book highly enough. The suspense will make your hairs stand at attention. Get it, read it, you'll be happy you did ~ J. Wright

Wednesday's Child

Liam Page is wounded. The burdens he carries tug your heart. I love the ordained way in which he meets our more than worthy heroine, Jacqui Dorne. Their paths, we discover, were meant to intersect—not just on a professional but on a personal level as well. ~ Marianne Evans

After The Fire

Clare Revell has written a wonderful Christian mystery in *After the Fire*. From the beginning, I found myself drawn into the story. The descriptions brought the story to life, and the vibrant characters felt like they could step off the page. Second-chance-at-love stories are always fun to read, and this one did not disappoint. ~ EA West

Other titles by Clare Revell

Novels

*After the Fire
Turned*

*Monday's Child
Tuesday's Child
Wednesday's Child
Thursday's Child
Friday's Child
Saturday'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

LOM – Lifeboat Operations Manager makes the decision to launch at the request of the Coastguard.

DLA – Deputy Launch Authority also able to make the decision to launch if the LOM not on duty

DODO – Drive On Drive Off rig used to launch the inshore lifeboat. The tractor tows the lifeboat in its cage into the sea.

RNLI – Royal National Lifeboat Institution. The RNLI is the charity that saves lives at sea. They provide an on call, 24-hour lifeboat search and rescue service and a seasonal lifeguard service on the beaches. It's staffed entirely by volunteers. Not part of the Coastguard.

RHIB - Rigid Hull Inflatable Boat. Also known as a RIB

Bunny Suit – the fleece onesie worn underneath the crew dry suits.

*And Sunday's Child on life's seas is tossed, awaiting
the Lifeboat that rescues the lost.*

1

*And He saith unto them, 'Why are ye fearful, O ye of
little faith?' Then He arose, and rebuked the winds and the
sea; and there was a great calm. Matthew 8:26*

“Rainbow Lodge is a small, family run, Christian guest house on the banks of the River Thames. Providing bed, breakfast, and home cooked evening meals, it's a home away from home.”

Hattie Steele tilted her head and looked at the computer screen. Designing the new brochure for the guest house she helped run alongside her twin brother and his wife, had seemed such a simple task when Steve suggested it. But it had taken up most of the day and turned into a mammoth job. Nothing else had been done, unless Penny or Steve had done it, but she doubted that. Pigs would fly first.

And try as she might, she still couldn't get rid of those annoying green squiggly lines from the text. She just had to take comfort from the fact that said green lines wouldn't be printed in the final version. She also liked the fact she could click 'ignore' and they vanished.

“Each room is ensuite, with tea and coffee making facilities. There is a large screen TV in the lounge. We

also have a games room and a large garden, with barbeque in the summer months."

She added the photos she'd taken earlier and hit save. A few clicks later and she had something she was happy with. If only those green lines would go away. If she found them annoying, Aunt Laurie, a famous novelist, must hate them even more. She pushed the chair back, needing some tea, when a cup appeared at her elbow.

She grinned. "Are you reading my mind again, Steve?"

"Of course I am. How else do I keep tabs on my baby sister? You have a problem with that, Hattie?" Her brother grinned as he handed her the cup.

"Excuse me...*Baby sister?* You are five whole minutes older than me. How does that make me a baby?" She let the mock outrage drop as the scent of the tea filled her senses. She took a long sip. "What do you think of the brochure?"

"I think you're a genius, but then I'm biased."

"Uh huh. Be serious and you haven't even looked at it yet."

"I am being serious. You've saved us about a couple of hundred quid in design costs, if not more." Steve studied the screen, running a hand through his short blond hair. "You spelled facilities wrong. You have faculties."

"Oops. My bad." Hattie changed it. "Better?"

Steve nodded. "Better. It's nice to see you putting your God given talents to use."

Hattie tucked her hair back behind her ears. "According to you, God gave me more talents than I can shake a stick at. There's this, floor cleaning, silver polishing, cooking, organizing, and shopping. Not to

mention changing the beds and making those new curtains you wanted in room twelve. I'm surprised you don't still make me do the accounts as well, like you used to do. I tell you, slaves had it easy compared to what I do all day every day."

He laughed. "I have an accountant to do the books, which is why you no longer do them. Speaking of cooking, the new guest, Callum Trant, is arriving before dinner now. He managed to get an earlier train. Is that going to be a problem? Remember I told you about his allergy when he booked. The last thing we need is someone like him getting sick or dying."

For a moment Hattie wondered why Mr. Trant was different to any other guest, but didn't pursue it. "I remember. No nuts of any description, especially macadamia and peanuts. It's fine. I never use nuts anyway and what few packets I do use, I always read carefully. There is nothing in the kitchen, or his room come to that, which can hurt him. And I have thrown out every jar of peanut butter and put all the plates and knives through the dishwasher. Not to mention scrubbed out all the cupboards and then thrown away the cloths I used. And I made his room up this morning when I did the rest of them. So, no, Mr. Trant arriving early won't be a problem." She winked. "How would you ever manage if I left?"

"You're not allowed to. Whoever you marry has to move in here, too."

"Just because Penny moved in when she married you, doesn't mean—"

"And his name has to start with a P."

Hattie twisted and gave her twin the horrified stare she'd perfected over the years. "*Excuse me?*"

"Well, I married Penny. And Mum and Dad were

Peter and Pauline. So it's a family tradition and you can't break it."

"I don't even *have* a boyfriend, let alone want one, and you're talking marriage? Thinking about it, I don't actually know any blokes whose names start with a P, unless you include Pastor Jack and I think Cassie would object to me marrying him."

"There's a chap starting with P out there somewhere."

"He can stay there. I'm planning on being the spinster aunt. *The Miss Steele*."

"Yeah, right, you'll change your mind when someone comes along and asks you out. I could set you up with someone if you want. There's this really great bloke I know that you'd adore and—"

"I'm good, thanks." She turned back to the computer, and hit save. Her brother took teasing her about her singleness to a whole new level and it grew irksome after a while. Though sometimes she did wish a swashbuckling knight on a white horse would gallop up and whisk her away from this place. If she ever did get married, she wouldn't stay here, that's for sure. "There. All ready to go to the printers, bar a final spell check. Either you or Penny can do that. I need to go make a start on dinner."

"Thanks, Hattie. I'll do it later."

Hattie stood and stretched, her curiosity finally getting the better of her. "What's all the fuss over this new guest anyway? Is he some kind of superhero or politician or something? Will him getting sick ruin your reputation quicker than anyone else?"

"Don't you know who he is?"

"If I knew I wouldn't ask. All I know is that his name is Callum Trant. Which is important because—?"

"Hattie." Steve looked at her, hands on hips, a mixture of amusement and shock on his face. "He's only the greatest footballer that ever lived. He played one hundred and twenty times for England, was capped ninety times, and scored thirty-seven goals at international level and another three hundred and fifty at club level."

"And this matters because...?" Brother baiting was her favorite pastime and he never failed to rise to it where football was concerned. The thing was, she really didn't understand this fuss over kicking an air filled ball of leather around a field. Nor did she want to.

"Because it's *football*. And because he's Callum Trant. *The Callum Trant*." Steve shook his head, sheer despair on his face. "Of course it matters. Wouldn't it matter to you if, oh I don't know, if say Beethoven came to stay?"

"Beethoven is dead. He has been for hundreds of years. And you can't put one of the greatest composers that ever lived in the same league as an over paid bloke who runs around a field all day complaining when he trips up."

"I can't believe you just said that."

She laughed and wagged a finger at him. "Oh yeah, I went there." She dropped her hand and slid it into her pocket, heading to the door. "In any event, you can't possibly compare what a footballer does with a soldier or firefighter, and they get nowhere near as much money. And I'm going to start dinner now while you lay up the dining room and I have you gobsmacked."

"*Soldiers*? Where'd that come from?"

"Those on the front lines don't make in a lifetime

what a top flight footballer makes in a week." She took a deep breath. "But I'm not getting into that now. I have fish to bone and potatoes to peel and..."

Steve's face fell. "Right. Potatoes..."

"You forgot? Ste-eve. You'd forget your own head if it wasn't screwed on. You'd best run to Asda and get some. A ten pound bag will do for now." She shook her head as her brother rushed out. Taking her tea with her, she headed to the kitchen. There would be twenty guests for dinner tonight now, plus the three of them. And she still had no idea what to make for dessert.

Callum Trant stepped out of the taxi and looked up at the cream three story guest house in front of him. A multi-colored sign declaring the name *Rainbow Lodge* arched over the front door. Net curtains hung at every window, with different colored shutters surrounding them. Flowers nestled in window boxes under each casement, each one a different color and matching the shutters. Each color of the rainbow represented. Someone had gone to a great deal of trouble to create the perfect first impression. It looked bigger than what the brochure said, but still a great deal smaller than what he was used to.

But that suited his new way of life better. He'd be the first to admit the stardom had gotten to him and turned his head, stifling his faith. This was why he'd retired and left the game completely instead of going into coaching or management. A few people on the mainland still recognized him, but he liked his otherwise incognito lifestyle. And to the people back home, well to most of them, he was simply Cal the

Carpenter.

"That'll be twelve fifty, mate."

Cal pulled the cash from his wallet and paid the taxi driver, leaving him a substantial tip. Picking up his case, and shouldering his bag, he headed up the stone steps to the arched door. Sun shone through the rainbow stained glass, casting a pattern onto the tiled floor of the hallway.

There was no reception desk, just a bell set into the wall with a rainbow tag saying *please ring for attention*.

He pressed and waited. There had been no accompanying ring. Perhaps it didn't work. He was about to press it again, when a blonde woman came through the door marked *private*. Her hair was pulled back in an untidy ponytail and she wore no makeup. A blue gingham apron tied over her jeans and open neck shirt did nothing to hide her slim figure and ample feminine curves. She wasn't amazingly pretty, but there was something about her that made him want to know her better.

Cal felt the familiar blast of heat surge through him and he did his best to quash it. That belonged to his old self, when women threw themselves at him and he took advantage. That part of his life, no matter how hard he tried, still raged like a wild animal within him. He prayed for help as his heart pounded and his pulse raced.

"Can I help you?" Her melodic voice rang in his ears like silver bells. That wasn't helping.

He rubbed his hand on his chinos before offering it to her. "Callum Trant. I have a room booked."

Her face broke into a smile. "Of course, we spoke on the phone. I'm Harriet Steele. Welcome to Rainbow Lodge and Headley Cross. It's a pleasure to meet you."

Her touch was cool and sent a ripple of peace through him. Not something he was expecting.

“Did you have a good journey?”

More than a little thrown, it took him a few seconds to articulate a response. “Nice to meet you, too. The journey wasn’t too bad. Better than I expected at any rate.”

“I’m glad. Let me show you to your room, Mr. Trant.”

Before he could respond, she picked up his case and headed down the hallway. “The dining room is just there.” She nodded to a room to the left. “The lounge is straight ahead. There is a downstairs bathroom just behind the staircase. The games room is through the lounge and the conservatory is just beyond that.”

Cal glanced into the lounge as they walked. Huge sofas sat around a coffee table, laden with magazines and coasters. Ornaments lined the mantelpiece above an open fire. A TV hung on the far wall. It looked and felt as warm, welcoming, and cozy as his grandmother’s house.

A fish tank nestled under the stairs, filled with tiny tropical fish, the filter humming and bubbling. The stairs themselves curved up and around to the first floor. Cream doors opened off beige walls, giving the place a comfortable feel. Each door had a brass number on it. He followed Miss Steele, and it was Miss as he’d noted the absence of a ring when he shook her hand, up another staircase to the second floor.

This floor had the same pale green carpet as was downstairs, but brown doors and cream walls. She unlocked room nine and went inside, placing his suitcase on the deep pile cream carpet.

The room was bigger than he expected, with a double bed, chest of drawers, wardrobe, and even a sofa. He turned around, taking in the décor and pictures on the wall. It really was lovely. A real home away from home, just like the brochure had said.

Miss Steele smiled at him. "Here you are. The ensuite is just through there, although there is another bathroom on the landing. You have tea and coffee making facilities over there on the dresser. We replace them daily, but if you need more, just ask. I've just put the kettle on if you'd like a drink now?"

"I'd love some tea, please. The buffet car on the train wasn't working."

"That could be a blessing in disguise. The last time I drank railway tea, it was hot, wet and tasted of nothing." Her smile shot straight through him. "Here are your keys. The silver one is this room. The gold one is the main front door. Its open all the time apart from Sunday's when I'm at church, and we lock up about half past eleven at night. I'll be right up with the tea."

"Thank you."

Cal turned to the window as Miss Steele left. The garden spread out beneath him. A swing for the kids, sandpit, and seating area nestled amongst trees and flower beds. A brick built barbeque stood against the corner of the patio. High fences around the perimeter ensured privacy. It was perfect.

He just hadn't expected to find the owner so—alluring, he decided was the right word. It was more than a little disconcerting, not to mention disappointing, how fast his body betrayed him. The body is willing, but the spirit is weak, wasn't that the usual saying? In his case, the spirit *was* willing, more than willing, desired to do God's will, but his body