

Turned

Clare Revell

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Dedication

For Andy, the best brother any girl could ask for. Even though he lives thousands of miles away, he's never far from my thoughts.

Praise for Clare Revell

Monday's Child

The blend of romance and suspense is superb, and the depth of emotion is so very touching. I am eagerly looking forward to the rest of the books in this series. Clare Revell is truly a master novelist. What a treat! I highly recommend *Monday's Child* to anyone looking for a GREAT story. ~ Mary Manners

Tuesday's Child

Ms. Revell has a marvelous touch with heroes. I love it! She also knows how to keep you on the edge of your seat! This is certainly turning out to be a great series! I can't wait for the next one! ~ Donna B. Snow

Tuesday's Child

Clare Revell...puts the EEP in creepy! *Tuesday's Child* has it all—deaf heroine, cop hero, orphaned child, and terrifying killer. This book kept me reading late into the night (with the doors locked and the brightest light on!). ~ B. Norris (Amazon review)

"If My people, which are called by My name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." ~ 2 Chronicles 7:14

1

Horns blared in the hot, muggy, late September evening. Amy Childs drummed her fingers on the rim of the leather clad steering wheel. The staccato rhythm was almost at odds with the country music blaring full volume from the stereo. *One, two, three, four. One, two, three, four.* She gazed at the line of traffic in front of her. What was the hold up this time? Surely the council wasn't digging up the roads of Filely again? Didn't they have anything better to do?

One, two, three, four. One, two, three, four...

Having been delayed at work because the till didn't add up, she now had less than an hour to get home, shower, change and be across town for Rosalie's baby shower. She and Rosalie had been best friends since school. Amy'd had a couple of boyfriends, none of whom lasted beyond a month, whilst Rosalie had fallen hard and fast for Ray Malone, the assistant pastor of the church they'd attended while at university in Scotland. Rosalie and Ray had married just after Ray had amazingly accepted the call to become pastor of a small church in Filely, on the coast of North-Eastern England. Rosalie's baby was due in

two weeks.

Not having any ties, Amy had moved down there with them. She found a small house on the sea front and a job working in a hardware store and loved it. Well, loved it most of the time. She did a bit of everything; ordering, stock taking, and the till... And it wasn't her fault the till was wrong either. The twenty had slipped down the back of the register. It was there all the time. She hated being accused of something she hadn't done.

One, two, three, four. One, two, three, four...

She dragged her thoughts back to the evening ahead, and glanced in the driving mirror. Her long blonde hair was a mess. Brushing her fingers through it, she found sawdust. Great. There was no way she could avoid washing it before going out tonight. She'd bought the most adorable outfit and made a blanket for the baby. She needed to wrap them and box up the cake she'd made. And write the card. The flowers were in the garage in a bucket of water. Hopefully they hadn't wilted in the heat.

Her fingers kept drumming. *One, two, three, four. One, two, three, four.* She sighed. "Oh, come on. This is ridiculous."

The car in front of her moved. "Blow this, I don't have time to sit here and wait." She checked the lane to her right and pulled out, doing a U-turn. She swung wide, her mind a million miles away. A car horn blared in the queue behind her. "You can just wait a minute, mister."

She kept going, pulling the wheel hard over, keeping the turning circle tight. Could she do it in one? A pedestrian appeared in front of her. There was a sickening thud, and she slammed on the brakes.

Her heart pounded, and she sat frozen in her seat. *I hit him...oh, God, forgive me, I hit him.* Her fingers whitened on the steering wheel. Nausea rose and she swallowed hard. Shaking started in her hands and spread throughout her entire body. She'd hit him.

Amy closed her eyes. She could still see his face, stamped indelibly on her memory. His wide, staring eyes, fear and tension in his body. His blue shirt and tie, jacket slung over his arm and briefcase in his hand meant businessman not manual worker. The way he'd been scooped up by her car, tossed onto her bonnet and windscreen, then back onto the road replayed over and over.

The windscreen was cracked. It'd cost a bomb to replace as the insurance wouldn't cover it. *You just hit a man...forget about the windshield.*

A crowd gathered in front of her car, but she didn't move. She just sat, shaking, trying not to cry or throw up.

Sirens echoed and blue lights flickered. She was going to be late. She needed to call Rosalie and let her know. One hand fumbled for her phone. She found Rosalie in the contacts and hit call.

Ray's calm voice answered. "Pastor Malone."

"It's Amy..." she whispered. "Ray...something happened."

"What's wrong? Are you OK?"

Someone tapped on the window. Amy gasped, jumped and twisted her head. A uniformed officer stood there. She hit the button on the door, opening the window.

"Would you step out of the car please, miss?"

She didn't move. This had turned into a nightmare she couldn't awaken from.

“Put the phone down and step out of the car.” The officer’s tone hardened.

Ray’s voice echoed in her other ear. “Amy, who’s that? What’s going on?”

She dropped the phone. Her fingers fumbled first to unbuckle her seatbelt, then the catch, finally opening the door. She got out of the car. Her legs buckled, not wanting to hold her up. She glanced to her right. The guy in the blue shirt lay on the pavement, surrounded by police and paramedics. A huge crowd of onlookers stood everywhere. “Is...is he dead?”

“No. What’s your name?”

“Amy.”

“Amy what?”

“Amy Childs.” She couldn’t tear her eyes away from the scene.

“Have you had anything to drink in the last hour?”

“No. I don’t drink.”

“Breathe into this until I say stop.”

She frowned. “I told you, I don’t drink.” But she did as the police officer asked. “Can I go now? I have somewhere I have to be.”

“Amy Childs,” the police officer spoke firmly, pulling her hands behind her back. “I’m arresting you on suspicion of dangerous driving.”

“What? It was only a U-turn...”

“You do not have to say anything, but it may harm your defense if you do not mention, when questioned, something which you later rely on in court. Anything you do say may be given in evidence.” Metal cuffs snapped around her wrists and firm hands put her into the back of the police car.

“But it was only a U-turn,” she repeated.

“U-turns are illegal,” the cop said sharply. “And you hit a pedestrian.” The door slammed shut.

Amy looked at it. It had no handle on the inside. She swallowed hard against the rising nausea as the car started to move. What had she done? Tears burned her eyes.

The journey was short. The officers led her inside the custody suite to the desk. The place stank of sweat and sick. She gave her name and address and handed over all her belongings. The officer took her down to a cell and removed the cuffs. She had to take off her shoes and leave them in the corridor. The door slammed shut, leaving her alone.

Amy sank onto the hard bench and buried her face in her hands. One small mistake and she was being treated like a common criminal. She hadn't meant to hit him. It was an accident. It was only a U-turn.



Detective Sergeant Dane Philips pushed the bowl of now soggy cornflakes back in front of six year old Vicky. “Eat it.”

She shoved it back at him, the milk slopping over the edge of the bowl onto the table, shaking her head violently.

“You eat cornflakes every morning.”

Vicky mimed shoving her fingers down her throat and throwing up.

Dane sucked in a deep breath, trying to contain his frustration and anger. “Eat it. There are starving children in Africa who'd be grateful for that.”

She waved at the cereal and shoved the bowl hard enough to send it flying off the table and smashing

onto the floor.

"Now look what you've done," he yelled. "Pick it up."

Vicky wrapped her arms tightly around her middle and scowled at him, shaking her head. She didn't even have to say "make me" for Dane to know that's exactly what she meant.

"I don't have time for this." Dane broke off as the doorbell rang. "Don't you dare move, young lady." He strode to the front door, flinging it open.

His partner, DS Nate Holmes stood there, shirt sleeves rolled up and his tie loose in his collar. "Ready?"

"No." Dane snapped. "Vicky is on hunger strike and Jodie won't get up. In fact, Vicky in her own unique way just told me to send her breakfast to the starving children in Africa because she doesn't want it."

"What you need is a nanny," Nate joked.

"Don't tempt me. Can you cover?"

"Afraid not. The Guv wants us both to attend the meeting this morning, remember?"

Dane sighed. It had totally slipped his mind. "There is no way I'm going to make it. You'll have to go by yourself." He paused. "You managed as a single parent for years. You never told me it was this hard."

"It had only ever been me. Plus, Vianne is my niece, not my daughter. Let me handle Vicky while you get dressed and drag Jodie kicking and screaming out of bed. I'll send Adeline a text. We'll drop the girls at mine and she can take Vicky to school." Nate pulled out his phone, texting quickly.

"Thanks."

"Welcome." Nate slid his phone into his jacket

pocket and headed into the kitchen.

Jodie appeared at the top of the stairs. She was twelve going on fifteen. "Is that Uncle Nate?"

"Yes. Now get down here and eat before you make me later than I already am."

"No."

Nate pushed open the kitchen door. "Jodie Kathlyn Philips, get down here this instant."

Jodie scrambled past Dane and into the kitchen.

Dane closed his eyes. *Why do they act up for me and not for anyone else, Lord?* Jasmine had been dead two years and it was still as hard as it had been in the days and weeks after her murder. Maybe Nate was right and a nanny was the answer. He could have someone live in, and solve the problem of late nights and long hours. His parents and in-laws were great, but there were only so many times they could help out.

Silence had fallen in the kitchen. He peeked around the door. Nate stood with hands on hips, staring at both girls who were sitting and eating. Dane shook his head and using sign language told Nate he should give up policing and become a nanny.

Grateful the girls weren't watching as Nate shot a sarcastic reply back, he nodded and headed out to get ready for work. Sometimes the sign language they used to communicate with Nate's deaf wife was a blessing in disguise.



Amy sat in the interview room, her head in her hands. She was tired. A night in the cells wasn't exactly conducive to a good night's sleep. She wanted a shower, a decent cup of tea, and this whole nightmare

over. She'd refused her one phone call. She had no one to call. At least no one she wanted to know about this. As the duty solicitor coughed, she looked up. "Now what will happen?"

"They'll lay formal charges and take you to court for the hearing. If you plead guilty, they'll bail you until sentencing. Otherwise you'll be bailed until a court date is set."

"Why won't they do it now?"

"The judge will want records and reports and so on done first. And the crown will need time to prepare its case. That could be several months."

"Oh." She swallowed hard, feeling sick again. "How long will it be if I plead guilty?"

"It'll probably be a couple of weeks or so."

Amy pushed her hands through her hair. "I don't understand. People get run over all the time and nothing gets done. Why am I made out to be any different?"

"If the person simply walks out in front of the car and the driver wasn't doing anything wrong, then they can't charge him. The fact is, you broke the law by doing a U-turn. You weren't driving with due care and attention."

"I didn't mean to hit him. I just had someplace else I had to be. I was in a hurry." Her conscience hit her sharply. This mess was her own making. The man she hit was innocent and she hadn't so much as given him a second thought or asked how he was in all the long hours she'd been here. "How's the bloke I hit?"

"The hospital released him with just cuts, bruises and a minor concussion. He's going to be fine."

"Good." She looked down. She'd missed the party. How was she going to explain this to Rosalie and Ray?

He was her pastor. How did she tell him she'd broken the law? He'd condemn her for it. She'd prayed all night for forgiveness and for this to just go away, but it hadn't. Did that mean she wasn't forgiven?

The door opened. "This way." The officer's tone was curt, and she stood slowly. He led her back to the desk and stood beside her.

The custody sergeant's gaze was icy. "Amy Childs, you're being charged with careless driving. You will be taken to the magistrate's court for the plea hearing. Then brought back here."

Amy started trembling as they led her out to the van and shut her inside. She was still trembling when she stood before the magistrate, her voice almost failing her when she had to confirm her name and address. She listened to the charges and when asked how she pleaded, replied "Guilty."

Because she was. She'd broken the law and hit someone one. She could have killed him. The judge bailed her for two weeks until sentencing on the condition she hand her driving license in to the court officer.

"But I need it for work," she whispered. How was she meant to do the few deliveries now? Never mind get to work. That's if she didn't get the custodial sentence she was warned was a possibility. Then she'd lose her job, too.

The judge called the next case, and she followed the official out. She handed over her driver's license, and was led to the van. At the police station she signed the paperwork, and was given her bag and phone.

The screen was full of missed calls and texts from Rosalie.

The duty solicitor looked at her. "Can I give you a

lift anywhere?"

"No," she whispered.

"Can I call someone to pick you up?"

Tears burned her eyes. "No."

"OK. See you back here in two weeks. Don't be late."

"I won't." Amy headed out into the street, walking slowly, not really caring which way she went, so long as she ended up at home. She could still see the man's face as the car hit him. The way he tossed into the air and landed almost in her lap.

A car horn blared and she jumped back from the edge of the road. Her heart pounded in her ears as a black car sped by. She needed to pay attention or she'd end up run over as well. Somehow she made it home and let herself in. She shut the door, noticing a black car drive by slowly. She locked herself in and headed to the stairs. More than anything else right now, she wanted to shower. Not that she'd ever be clean again.

The phone rang. Tempted to ignore it, she didn't. "Hello."

"Amy its Rosalie, what happened to you last night? Are you OK? You were talking to Ray, and then got cut off. After that you just didn't answer your mobile at all." She barely paused for breath before asking again, "Are you OK?"

Amy sank down on the stairs. "No..." Tears fell unimpeded. "I did something...and now I'm in so much trouble..."

"Ray will come get you, hon. Just sit tight until he does."

Not even having the strength to argue, Amy sat there and sobbed.



The next two weeks she lived in a dream. She shut herself off from everyone, including work. She didn't eat, didn't sleep and didn't attend church, so convinced she was that everyone condemned her. She was still praying that God would provide a way out of this mess. Rosalie had moved in with her and, as glad as Amy was of the company, sometimes she longed to be alone.

The day of the sentencing arrived. She had no idea how to get to court other than walking. She hadn't asked Rosalie to go with her, and wasn't going to.

Rosalie came into the hall as Amy grabbed her jacket. "Where are you going?"

"Court. Have to leave now if I'm walking."

"You're not going alone. Ray and I will go with you this morning."

Her heart sank. "What if...what if they lock me away?"

"It won't come to that."

"But it might. I looked it up on line. It could be a maximum of five years."

"We want to be there. He'll come and pick us up in about twenty minutes."

"OK."

Rosalie hugged her. "Whatever the outcome, God will give you the strength to deal with it."

Amy shook her head. "I keep asking Him to make all this go away. I prayed for forgiveness and trust He's done that, but why is this still hanging over my head?"

"He *has* forgiven you, but you still have to deal with the consequences of your sin. That doesn't just vanish, no matter how much you want it too."

“Oh.”

“Because it wouldn’t be fair otherwise, would it?”

“Guess not.” She sighed. “I feel sick. If...if the worst happens, sell this place. Put the money into an account for the baby. This letter gives you access to everything you’ll need...”

“Amy...”

She pushed it into her friend’s hand. “Please.”

Rosalie sighed. “OK.”

A little over an hour later, Amy stood before the court, her heart pounding and stomach turning. Her palms wet, it was all she could do not to throw up. She acknowledged her name and address again and stood there, terrified as the judge looked at her.

“Amy Childs, you have pleaded guilty to one count of careless driving. The court has taken into account your previous unblemished driving record. However, by performing an illegal U-turn, you then lost control of your vehicle and knocked over a pedestrian, namely Derek Saunders. You were lucky not to have killed or caused him serious injuries. It is the judgment of this court to hand down a twelve month custodial sentence...”

Amy gasped, the blood rushing to her feet. She clung tightly to the rail in front of her.

“...to be suspended for a further period of twelve months. Should you reoffend during the period of suspension, you will be immediately sent to jail. If you do not reoffend, the custodial sentence will be removed. You are also banned from driving for twelve months. You may step down.”

Behind her in the public gallery someone muttered, “That’s not justice.”

Amy left the courtroom sandwiched between Ray

and Rosalie, still shaking. Someone bumped into them and a gravelly voice apologized. Amy glanced up into the face of a stranger. Tall, with short cropped black hair and a scar on his cheek. His gaze slowly slid down her figure and then he nodded and moved on through the lobby of the court house.

Rosalie hugged her. "It's over, hon," she said, handing her the letter. "Here, I don't need this anymore."

Amy hugged her back. Not wanting to believe it, because it still felt as if she were dreaming, she looked at her friends. "Is it really over? Can I go home now?"

Rosalie nodded, then pulled a face. "Actually, I think we should go to the hospital first. The baby's coming."



Dane stood outside the newsagents and watched the ad being slotted into the window display. He took the burger Nate held out to him. "Thanks. What do you think?"

Nate read the card. "Surprised you're not using an agency. You need anyone you have looking after your kids qualified and checked out."

Dane rolled his eyes. "I'm not completely stupid." He sat on the wall and unwrapped the burger. He pulled out the gherkins and licked his fingers slowly. "It just feels like admitting I can't cope."

"It isn't. I had help with Vianne before I married Adeline. Jas wouldn't want you struggling. She'd be the first to tell you to get help in. And a nanny is the only choice right now. Unless you're going to put them into before and after school clubs."

“Just hope someone applies soon. Figured she can have the spare room. Light household chores, kids’ rooms, and the kids’ laundry and so on.”

“And a Christian I hope?”

“Would be nice, but I’ll settle for trustworthy.”



Amy got off the bus, hating the daily commute even more now. This was no way to travel and was costing her more than petrol did. To get to her job across town, she needed two buses each way. She’d already been warned once about time keeping. At this rate, she’d lose her job before she got her license back. Actually, she’d probably lose it before Christmas and with a criminal record, she’d be hard pressed to get a new one.

She paused outside the front of the bike shop. She’d passed this every day for months, but hadn’t considered the idea. But now...she could go straight to work. No more bus fares. No hanging around for ages if she missed one, or waiting in the dark for a bus, or sitting on her own while that creepy guy sat opposite her and eyed her all the time.

She caught sight of a black car in the window and shook her head. She was seeing the same car everywhere. Rosalie told her she was being silly and she wasn’t being followed at all. But Amy wasn’t so sure. Things had been strange since the court case and she was convinced it wasn’t just her guilty conscience. Although it could be. Filely was a small town and you always saw the same cars during rush hour.

She went into the store and didn’t take long in deciding which bike to buy. She also got lights,

reflective jacket and a helmet. Having paid, she left the store and rode her new purchase the rest of the way home, wondering why she hadn't thought of this idea sooner. A black car passed her at least twice. Filely seemed to be infested with black cars. Still it made a change from silver autos.

Arriving home, Amy wheeled the bike into the house and parked it in the cloakroom. She picked up the mail and shut the front door. The answerphone flashed on the side, and she hit the message button.

"Hi, it's Rosalie. Just to say we'd love dinner tonight. See you around seven."

Beep.

Then there was silence followed by heavy breathing. Amy sighed. "I thought changing my number would have gotten rid of you." She hung her jacket up, grabbing the phone as it rang. "Hello."

Silence greeted her. Followed by the heavy breathing.

"Get lost, creep." She hung up. The phone rang again, instantly. "Look, this is bordering on harassment," she sighed. There was no point changing the number again. She'd even gone ex-directory, and that hadn't helped. Kneeling down, Amy unplugged the phone at the wall. "Take that."

She went into the lounge. A black car was parked opposite the house again. She shook her head. "I'm just spooked, that's all. The phone calls are getting to me. It's a perfectly innocent black car. And if the others are coming for dinner, I best get cooking." Finding a CD, she inserted it into the stereo. She always found Berlioz relaxing and turned the volume up as loud as it would go.

Amy pulled the table out and laid it for the three