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CLARE
REVELL



All that Glitters

HE SKATED HIS WAY TO A GOLD MEDAL
NOW HE HAS TO WIN HER HEART

All that Glitters

Clare Revell

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Contact Information: titleadmin@pelicanbookgroup.com

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Dedication

For Jill.

What Readers are Saying

Fairytale of Headley Cross

I love being swept away through Revell's writing. She expertly sucks you in and allows you to fall in love with each character as God's love and grace shine brightly. I really enjoyed this short read. It includes romance, excitement, humour, a slight thrill and most importantly, God's word. Great Christmas read.

~ T Suckoo

Vegas Vacation

Vegas & Royalty? Sign me up. I've never been to Las Vegas, but Clare Revell put me smack-dab in the middle of the strip using her trademark combination of romance, wry humor, hope and suspense. Don't miss it!

~M Evans

Carnations in January

I absolutely LOVED the whole U.K. vibe. By the end of the book, I was thinking with an accent & craving another cuppa! It was not only a engaging storyline with enjoyable characters, but the romance was Divine-literally! It was not only a beautiful romance of two hurt and hurting people, but a beautiful love story between Jesus and His wandering child.

~S Sarber

*How the gold has lost its luster,
the fine gold become dull!
The sacred gems are scattered
at every street corner.
How the precious children of Zion,
once worth their weight in gold,
are now considered as pots of clay,
the work of a potter's hands!*
Lamentations 4:1-2

1

Peter Stanmore stood on the Olympic podium, the men's figure skating gold medal surprisingly heavy around his neck. From the speakers to one side of the ice rink, the United Kingdom national anthem played while the Union Flag fluttered over his head. *This is for you, Mum and Dad.* Tears pricked his eyes as he sang along. He'd watched ceremonies like this before and couldn't believe the number of athletes who shed tears during them, yet here he was doing the very same thing. Crying and smiling with overwhelming happiness and at the same time, in awe of what he'd just done.

It had to be the pinnacle of his career. Proof, if proof were needed, that God honors those who honor Him.

Peter had made a concerted effort never to compete on a Sunday, which resulted in him being dropped from teams or not even selected. Sundays

were for God, not for skating and definitely not for competitions. And it seemed his faith and determination were now paying off. Just as it had for Eric Liddell decades before him.

Peter finally had the medal he'd craved, without having to compromise either his beliefs or his promise to the Lord along the way.

And the glory went to God, not him.

He waved as the anthem ended and posed for photos with the other medalists, including the obligatory kissing-the-medal picture that he'd never seen the point of before and still didn't now. As the cameras flashed around him, the '*if onlys*' began to filter through his mind.

If only things were different.

If only Mum and Dad were here. His heart broke that they weren't here to share it with him. An accident had ripped his family apart just months before the Olympics, taking his parents from him and leaving him alone. He hoped that somehow they were watching him from heaven and shared in the mixed emotions that filled him.

If only Jill had been here to collect it with him.

His career had begun in pairs skating. He and Jill worked their way up to the nationals and just as they were about to make it big, he'd messed up completely. As a result he'd made a career decision he now wished desperately he could undo. He'd allowed himself to be persuaded the right hand path was better than the left. That meant leaving Jill behind, a decision he'd regretted every moment of every day since.

This should have been both of them, not just him. He needed to call her, to put things right, to try to atone.

Three hours later, he sat on the couch in the team hotel still trying to pluck up the courage to call Jill.

Winston Brown, one of the bobsleigh team, nudged him. "Hey, a bunch of us are going to celebrate your win with a bottle of soda and a game of darts. Coming?"

"Sure, why not." He grabbed his coat and followed them outside. It was snowing again and the wind turned the heavy flakes into a blizzard. As Peter stepped out onto the wooden decking, his foot slipped on the ice beneath him sending him flying to the floor. His ankle snapped with an audible crack as he landed.

Pain ricocheted as stars danced in front of his vision. For a long moment he wasn't sure if he would throw up or pass out. Either way, nothing made much sense. He closed his eyes, hoping the pain would just go away.

Sometime later he opened his eyes to find a doctor wearing surgical scrubs beside his bed. He remembered falling and vaguely remembered an ambulance, but that could have been a dream. The smell told him he was in hospital, and he was definitely awake. Wide awake. He glanced down at his legs, but his vision was obscured by a screen. His stomach plummeted. "Doctor, what have I done? And please, don't sugarcoat it with platitudes. I need to know."

"OK, Mr. Stanmore. When you fell, you shattered your ankle. So we had to operate to screw your ankle back together. The metal pins will need a mention in your passport—I'll give you a letter for that. You'll be able to walk, possibly without a limp eventually, but I'm afraid your competing days are over. Your ankle just won't take the strain of the jumps and turns."

The bottom fell out of his world. The irony was not lost on him.

Only a few hours ago, he'd been on top of the world, literally. Now, he was at his lowest ebb. As the doctor left, Peter closed his eyes as the words of Psalm 31 filled his mind.

Be merciful to me, Lord, for I am in distress; my eyes grow weak with sorrow, my soul and body with grief. My life is consumed by anguish and my years by groaning; my strength fails because of my affliction, and my bones grow weak.

~*~

Jill Davenport picked up the local paper and put it on her mother's tray. Despite it being the previous day's news, her mother liked reading it over breakfast. Not that she remembered what she'd read, but it gave her something to do for a while. The headlines were once more dominated by the victorious Olympic team who, having won more medals at a Winter Games than any previous British team, had visited both Downing Street and Buckingham Palace yesterday.

In the middle of the picture stood Peter Stanmore—the kid next door who grew up to be a friend, then more than a friend, and a skating partner...until the lights of stardom called him away, leaving her behind.

Olympic champions dine with the Queen and PM screamed the paper. The subheading read *Injured Stanmore never to skate professionally again*. Grief ran through her. Despite the way he had left her behind and her mixed feelings about it and him, no one deserved to end their career like that. Nor to have their

nose rubbed in it in public, either.

She ought to write to him. Maybe the team headquarters could forward on the letter. She'd meant to send a sympathy card when his parents died, but then things had deteriorated at home and she'd never gotten around to it.

But right now, she had to appear cheerful and not dwell on the past. Sending up a prayer for help, she took a deep breath.

Jill picked up the tray and carried it up the stairs, past the stair lift, and into the master bedroom overlooking the back of the house. She set the tray beside the bed and strode to the window. "Morning, Mum." She opened the curtains. "It looks as if it might rain later. I was hoping we'd get snow. We haven't had any this year at all, yet."

"Snow's pretty. You and Peter could play snowballs and build a snowman. But the chair does tend to get stuck in it." Her mother slowly pulled herself up and reached for the paper. "I hope the toast is hot."

"Yes, Mum."

"Good. It was cold yesterday."

Actually the toast was hot, same as every morning and the chair had never gotten stuck... Jill cut off the thought as her mother unfolded the paper. It wasn't her mother's fault she was confined to a wheelchair with MS. Or that the forgetfulness of her mother's middle age had turned into full blown Alzheimer's disease.

Being her mother's sole carer, Jill took the brunt of mood swings and irrational behavior, which sure made following the Biblical instruction to do everything joyfully hard, if not impossible, at times.

"Peter's picture is in the paper. But he's on

crutches. Did he have an accident?" Her mother's voice had a faint tinge to it, which never bode well. It usually meant she was confused and on the verge of what Jill termed 'one of her turns.'

Jill turned and leaned backwards. She braced her hands on the window sill behind her, allowing the early morning sun to warm her back. She eased her shoulders a little. "Yes, he fell and broke his ankle. The reports say he'll never skate again, but they could be wrong. Take your pills, Mum, before you forget them."

"I'm not a child." Her mother grumbled, but took them anyway. She glanced up and frowned. "But what about you? Who will you skate with now?"

She shook her head. "I don't skate anymore, Mum. I wasn't good enough for the national squad, remember? Anyway, I enjoy nursing."

Or she had. She'd given that up; right along with a social life. The one exception to that was church, but that had been curtailed to one service a week, rather than two Sunday worship services plus the midweek prayer meetings. And that was only when someone else could sit with Mum.

"It says here he's returning to Headley Cross to his parents' place," her mother said. "So he'll be living next door with them."

Jill turned away, her stomach wrenching. Peter living next door was not a good idea. There was way too much history between them. "Makes sense if he has to clear the house and so on, before he sells it. It's a little hard to do that from York." She fussed over the ornaments on the dresser, changing them around.

"York?" came the confused response. "Why does he live there? And why does he need to clear the house? Are Peter and Edna moving? She hasn't come

to visit in a while now.”

Jill took a deep breath, counting to ten quickly. She wouldn't admit to following Peter's career, wishing things were different. Or to having told her mother this at least six times already. "His parents died, and he needs to go through their papers and so on."

Her mother rustled the paper. "It'll be nice to have him living next door. Invite him over for tea. I could make those coconut macaroons he likes."

Jill's hands paused, every part of her body on edge as she imagined sitting across the tea table from Peter as if nothing had changed over the intervening years. Were things different she'd jump at the idea.

However, he'd left her, shattering all her hopes and dreams at the same time. And not a word had passed between them since.

Somehow she managed to persuade her head to shake the negative, rather than go its own way and nod the affirmative. "No. He isn't going to want a fuss, and he won't want anything to do with me, anyway. Peter and I broke up a long time ago, and we've both moved on since then."

Well, he had. She on the other hand... *Let's just say nothing could be further from the truth and leave it at that, Jill.*

Her mother frowned. "If you say so, Jillian. Perhaps he shouldn't come back now if it will only lead to more heartache for you."

Desperate to make a quick exit before she got another lecture on the evils of men and how they never love you only use you, Jill pushed away. Her mother did have a tendency to go back in the past and dredge up things. "My heart is perfectly safe, Mum, so you don't need to worry on that score. Will you be OK if I

go shopping here in a few? We've run out of some things, and I need to pick up stuff for dinner, as well."

"I'll be fine. I shall stay right here with the paper until you get back."

"See you later." Jill left the room. She didn't believe what she'd just been told for a second and needed to be as fast as possible. She didn't like leaving her mother, even for a short period, in case she fell or did something just as silly. Even if she did deadlock the front door before she left, locking her mother in seemed mean, but it was for the best. There wasn't anyone who could look in this morning.

"Jillian..."

She turned and ran back up the stairs. "What is it?"

"I need some more of that cologne; you know the one I like."

Jill tried not to sigh. She'd bought a new bottle not two days previously. "Yes, Mum." This time she got as far as the door.

"And see if you can get some of those biscuits your dad likes. He could have some with his tea after dinner."

"I'll try to get some."

Jill ran down the stairs, grabbed her jacket and bag, and was out of the door before her mother had time to call her back again. Sliding her bag over her shoulder, she put her jacket on top and fastened the zip. She hadn't seen her father in years. For all she knew, he was dead.

She drove to the shops and parked just off the High Street. The grocery store was warmer than outside, but then that wouldn't take much today. The mercury hovered a few degrees above freezing, winter

not wanting to relinquish its firm grip on Southern England just yet.

Jill grabbed a basket and meandered slowly, picking up what she needed to replenish her store cupboard, aside from the basics of sugar and flour. She paused by the meat, wondering what to make that would be different enough to spice up her boring diet, but not exotic enough to make her mother refuse to eat it. *That would be nothing.* She sighed and settled for lamb, chicken, and chops again, before moving further down the aisle.

She reached for the last loaf of brown bread.

Another hand touched it at the same time. "You have it."

The voice was awfully familiar and sent a ripple running down her spine. She'd know that voice anywhere without looking up. She knew those hands as well. They'd held her so many times, although they were bigger now.

Peter. The only man she'd ever cared about.

The man who'd left her years ago to pursue his dreams...their dreams...alone.

2

“Jill? Jill Davenport, as I live and breathe, is that you?”

She jerked her hand back from the bread and looked into eyes that dragged her in and swallowed her whole. “Yeah...” Her voice died in her throat and she had to cough to make it work. “Yeah, yeah, it’s me. Hello, Peter.”

Peter Stanmore, looking as gorgeous as ever, leaned on a cane next to her. His ankle was in a support boot. She’d expected a cast. His dark hair, longer than she remembered, stuck out untidily and brushed against his collar. His green eyes were still as piercing as they were all those years ago, although now their brightness was dimmed with grief.

The rest of him however, was just as striking. Judging by the way her heart pounded, her stomach flipped, and the lack of air currently in her lungs, he still had the same effect on her. She struggled to breathe, light headed through lack of oxygen. Simply being this close to him was intoxicating, mind numbing, and overwhelming.

“Of all the places to bump into you, I didn’t think it would be here.” His voice concentrated her mind; which could only be a good thing. “What are you doing?”

“Shopping,” she said, stating the obvious. She seemed incapable of doing anything else right now.

"The same as you are doing. The same thing most people do in a grocery shop. Unless you're Mrs. Jones, in which case you're here to gossip."

"I guess some people never change, but you sure have." Amusement tinged his voice as his gaze swept up and down her figure, before lingering on her head and face. "What's with the hair?"

Jill ran her hand over the top of her head. Had she left the comb in her hair? Left a single plait in or splashed bleach in it and now had a white streak in her dark locks? "I d-don't..." she stuttered.

"It's long," he said. "I've never seen you with long hair before."

"Oh. I stopped cutting it years ago. I usually tie it back, but haven't gotten that far this morning." She pulled a band from her jacket pocket and tied her hair back into a high ponytail. "There."

Then, out of a desperate need to get back onto solid ground, she held the loaf of wholemeal bread out to him. "Here."

Peter shook his head. "You have it. You got to it first."

"It's fine," she insisted. The solid ground she so desperately needed could only be found by ending this conversation and sudden encounter right now.

"I can eat white bread just as easily."

Jill rolled her eyes. "And I can make my own."

"Really?" Surprise filled his face. "That's a talent I don't possess. Most things I can cook, but my bread always turns out doughy and inedible. Mum says...said I'm the reason shop bought bread was invented."

Jill put the bread into his basket. "Then you should definitely take this one. I must get on. Have fun

shopping.”

She headed into the next aisle and leaned against the freezer of vegetables, rubbing the back of her neck. She hadn't expected the reaction to seeing him again that now flooded her. Every nerve ending sang and her pulse raced, conflicting with the fluttering in her stomach. The scars around her broken heart ached. She and Peter were old friends from school, who became skating partners, who then dated off the ice. They'd been teased by their competitors for their chasteness. She'd hoped and prayed that his kisses would one day lead to more, and her happy ever after would mean marriage and life with Peter.

But it hadn't happened. He'd dropped her like hot cakes to pursue a solo career. The last thing she needed was someone like Peter back in her life. No, not someone *like* him, rather *him* personified. The last thing she needed was him back in her life, breaking her heart all over again. They were so over.

She shook herself and opened the freezer to pull out a packet of frozen peas. A hand reached down and grabbed the same packet.

Jill sighed. Not again.

“This is getting to be a habit.” Peter pulled back. “You can have this one.”

“Thanks.” Jill picked up the peas.

Bumping into Peter was a habit she wanted to avoid. Moreover, it was a habit she *needed* to avoid if she were to have any hope of getting home before her nerves shattered into a million tiny pieces and went spinning off into the heavens. She moved away and continued to shop, only to find she reached the checkout at the same point he did. Somehow Jill managed to resist raising her eyes heavenward as she

all but begged God to stop them meeting like this. It wouldn't do either of them any good in the long run. There was too much water under the broken bridge between them to ever hope it would be mended or gulfed.

Peter held out a hand. "Ladies first. We seem destined to meet today."

"That we do." She began unloading her basket onto the conveyor belt. She could feel his gaze almost burning through her jacket and glanced back.

"It seems a shame to waste the opportunity destiny has presented us with. Can I buy you coffee? We could catch up."

Jill hesitated, wanting to decline, but had better manners than that. She'd have to explain about her mother and that was a conversation she didn't want to have with anyone, let alone with Peter. Question was how much longer could she leave her mother, before she tried to get up by herself or attempted to leave the house? She glanced at her watch, then for some unknown reason decided to take Peter up on his offer. "OK, just a quick one. I really can't be out much longer. I have a shed load of housework waiting for me when I get home."

Why she'd just said that she had no idea. She needed to spend less time with him, not put herself in a situation where she had to look at him, never mind speak to him. That was just asking for trouble.

But the ability to hold an adult conversation on a topic other than her mother or her own spiritual state of heart and mind was something she craved. Perhaps a few minutes with Peter wouldn't be so bad after all. Surely she could take the time to be selfish, just this once. After all, it wouldn't hurt.