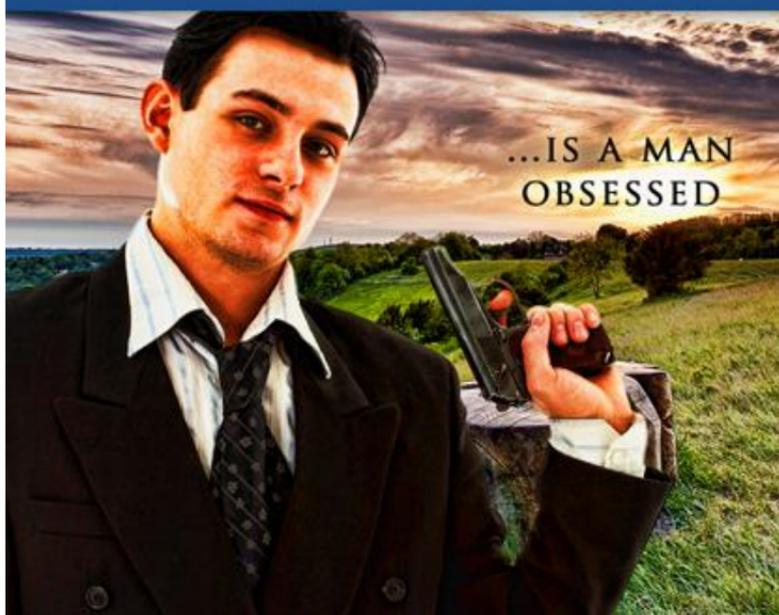


CLARE REVELL

Friday's Child



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Cover Art by Nicola Martinez

White Rose Publishing, a division of Pelican Ventures, LLC
www.pelicanbookgroup.com PO Box 1738 *Aztec, NM * 87410

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Publishing History

First White Rose Edition, 2013

Paperback Edition ISBN 978-1-61116-279-0

Electronic Edition ISBN 978-1-61116-278-3

Published in the United States of America

Dedication

For Rhys.

With grateful thanks to Fiona.

Praise for Clare Revell

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

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.
~ Delia Latham, author

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

Other titles by Clare Revell

Season For Miracles

Saving Christmas

Cassie's Wedding Dress

Time's Arrow

Kisses From Heaven

After The Fire

An Aussie Christmas Angel

Monday's Child

Tuesday's Child

Wednesday's Child

Thursday's Child

Glossary

Pi - Patrick's nickname, pronounced Pie. Hence his other nickname of Agent 3.14 after the math term

Li - pronounced Lie - Liam's nickname

Ni - pronounced Nigh - Niamh's nickname

Niamh - pronounced Neeve

Spook - an MI5 agent

Siobhan - pronounced Cher-vaughn

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.

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

CO19/ARU - the armed response unit. The only armed police officers in the UK

CPS - Crown Prosecution Service. The British equivalent of the DA.

*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*

1

Friday's child is a man obsessed...

If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing. ~ 1 Corinthians 13:1-3

“You really agreed to a drop here?” His partner asked.

Agent Patrick Page, MI5, nodded and looked up at the library, certain he was insane. Either that or he was going soft in his old age, letting informants insist on a dead drop location somewhere as public and quiet as this. Recently extended, the library was an interesting mixture of two modern A-frame wings of brown timber and huge panes of glass, with the original Tudor style wattle and daub central part sandwiched between. Colored posters lined the windows and an enticing display of books peeked between them.

It's not insanity, it's middle age, the small voice within him insisted.

Thirty-seven is not old, no matter what you want to

think.

Great, now he was arguing with himself.

Niamh, his sister, had summed it up last night over dinner. "You just work too hard. All work and no play have made Patrick a dull man. A man obsessed, with no time for anything, fun or otherwise." He'd tried brushing the comment off, but she hadn't let it drop. "You need to get out more, Pi. Do something other than work for once. Don't do what I did, because it ruins your life."

"Earth to Patrick?"

Patrick still stared at the library, through the pouring rain. He didn't have time for fun. Not with his heavy case load. And not with this twisted case he was currently embroiled in. The tip off had come from Scotland, from an American of all people. He still couldn't get his head around why an American cop would be working for the Scottish police, although he hadn't had time to exchange pleasantries with the Lieutenant.

Detective Inspector he corrected, as the guy had recently been promoted to an equivalent UK rank. Which was even more of a puzzle. One that could wait for a better time. Right now, he had work to do.

"Patrick, are you all right?" Shay Williams, his partner of five years, sounded concerned this time.

He shifted his gaze to her. "Yeah, I'm fine."

"Then how about answering me rather than staring into space. You're letting this case get to you, aren't you?"

"No more so than usual."

Why had his contact, known only by his street name of Skinhead, given the library as the location for the drop? More to the point, why had he agreed?

Accessibility? Hardly, given the library's odd opening hours. An urge to read? Again, not likely either for him or his contact. No, for Patrick, it was his desire to catch this guy and make the charges stick this time. And while odd, he could go in and out of a library frequently without arousing suspicion.

He checked his watch. It was time he actually did what he was paid for, rather than just sit here. Rain pounded against the car windshield. Even the wiper blades on super-fast made little impact on the downpour. Patrick pulled his collar up against the power of the elements and jumped out of the car. He opened the back door and leaned in to grab the pile of books.

Raising an eyebrow at his blonde partner in the driver's seat, he shot her a mock look of imposition across the top of the seats. "I should make you take these back yourself, Agent 7x3," he said, using her nickname. She hated it, but after insisting she was only twenty-one no matter how many birthdays she had, what did she expect? "After all, they're your library books."

Shay laughed at him. "But, it's raining, Agent 3.14, and I know you're too much of a gentleman to make a lady get out in the rain. Besides, it's your drop, right? Your contact, your drop, so by default, your turn to get wet."

Patrick scowled half-heartedly at her, teasing her back. "Pfft, woman. And there I was thinking we were partners. How wrong can I be? You can buy lunch for this."

Shay rolled her eyes. "You stop for lunch? That will be a first. And it'd explain the rain."

Not bothering to reply, he shut the door and

hurried inside the building.

Working for British Intelligence, Patrick's fast-paced life left him very little time for the niceties, like stopping for lunch, visiting the library, going out with family, getting to church or dating. He couldn't remember the last time he saw a woman socially that didn't involve undercover work either with Shay or an informant. Or the last time he made an entire church service without his pager going off.

He headed to the 'in desk' and stood in the queue. Glancing around, Patrick took in the huge windows, and walls lined with shelves of books. He hadn't been in a library in years, but the smell never changed.

The queue moved forwards and he placed the books on the counter, giving the librarian his best smile. "Hi. I'm returning these for a friend."

The librarian scanned them and nodded. "All done. Thank you."

"You're welcome." He paused, looking over the leaflets of things to do in the local area. He picked one up, taking his time over reading it, ignoring the queue behind him. Then he walked past the nondescript envelope on the edge of the desk and pocketed it in one swift action along with the leaflet, then stopped.

"Could you point me in the direction of the religious section, please?" While here, he might as well see if they had that book Liam recommended. Shay wouldn't begrudge him a few minutes. After all, he'd done her a favor.

She nodded. "Around that way, then to the right."

He smiled. "Thank you." He headed off in the direction she pointed. Liam had raved about this book for the past month. Either he found a copy here or he borrowed Liam's one. *H....h...there...* He ran his fingers

along the books until he found the one he wanted. He pulled it off the shelf and turned around.

"Oh, I'm sorry." He looked at the woman he'd walked into and stopped short. *Elle?*

If it wasn't her, it was someone who looked just like her and was just as beautiful as she had been when he last saw her—even though the tweed suit she wore gave her a dowdy appearance with its long skirt and boxy style. With her brown hair pulled back into a severe bun and glasses perched on her nose, she was the epitome of a stereotypical librarian.

Warmth flooded him and a hard bolt traveled through his stomach leaving it in knots. He forced his voice to work past the huge lump in his throat, and held out a hand to her. "Elle? Eleanor Harrison?"

Her brown eyes widened with shock and recognition. "Patrick." Her fingers whitened against the pile of books in her hand, and she made no attempt to take his hand in return. "What are you doing here?"

"I'm borrowing a book." He dropped his hand and smiled, ignoring the shaft of disappointment. "What did you expect in a library?"

"No, I mean, here in Headley Cross."

"I live and work here. Always have." His phone beeped. "Excuse me. I should get this." He pulled the handset out of his pocket and checked the screen. *Bother. Just when I could do with a few minutes.* "I have to go. Can we meet up for coffee or something? Catch up on the past few years?"

Elle shook her head, backing away. "It's best to just leave the past alone. Bye." She hurried off.

Patrick stood still, the book loose in his hand. He and Elle had been at university at the same time. Two years above her, he'd been post grad and assigned as

her mentor, but they had been inseparable none the less.

Until she'd vanished into thin air partway through the spring semester. He hadn't seen or heard from her since. Perhaps he had hurt her after all, though she had seemed pretty happy about their relationship, from what he remembered.

Shaking his head, he went to the desk and checked out the book. He glanced casually over his shoulder, always on alert, and saw her watching him.

Maybe he should go back over and speak to her. The more he thought about it, the more he was convinced he should. He might never have this chance again. He took a step towards her. A hand on his arm stopped him mid stride. He glanced around to see Shay. "What is it?"

"Sorry to bother you, sweetheart." She leaned into him, her hand squeezing him in an intimate gesture. Her voice was husky and low in his ear, as she played her part to perfection as always. "We've got to go. Suspect is on the move and we need to tail him. Did you get the intel?"

He nodded, pushing all thoughts of Elle from his mind. "I'll drive."

Eleanor watched as Patrick and the woman left. He'd filled out a little in the past few years, his shoulders were broader, his dark hair flecked with grey over his temples. She couldn't help but notice the snug fit of his shirt, how the cotton caressed his chest, and the way his long dark overcoat swirled around him. A shock of heat had flooded her traitorous body

at their unexpected meeting.

He was the only person to have called her Elle. His Irish brogue was as strong as it had ever been and still thrilled her.

She clutched the books tighter in shaking arms, her breath fluttering and heart pounding.

This wouldn't do. She walked past the window, and glanced through the rain, in time to see Patrick climb into a smart black car. He smiled and joked with the woman accompanying him and her heart sank. Just as well she was steering clear of men. Apparently, the only one she'd ever been interested in was taken.

"So, who's the hunk?" Tina's sudden voice made her jump. "He seemed quite taken with you."

"Just an old friend," Eleanor whispered.

Tina's brows furrowed in thought. "Are you all right? You look like you've seen a ghost."

Eleanor sucked in a deep breath. For all intents and purposes she had. Patrick Page was from the past, her dark past, and that was where he had to stay. What occurred between them should never have happened and she was still living with the choices, consequences, and responsibilities of her actions.

She looked up from the books in her arms. "I'm fine. He's just the last person I expected to see here."

"When you say old friend, do you mean friend or boyfriend?"

The sixty-four thousand dollar question. "Yes, I dated him—for a while. Then I left university and never saw him again." *And tried not to think about him. Not that it worked.* She managed a smile. "But that was almost fourteen years ago."

Tina tilted her head and looked long and hard at her. "Is he the reason you swore off dating?"