



CLARE REVELL

Shadows
of the
Past

Shadows of the Past

*a complimentary follow-up
to the acclaimed*

TIME'S ARROW

Clare Revell

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Shadows of the Past

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Dedication

To all my readers who wanted more after *Times Arrow*
ended.

Endorsements

When long-time friends Jack and Cassie reconnect, you think the ride is almost over, but Ms. Revell has a few surprises left in this short, sweet, and emotionally satisfying story. I'll be watching for Clare Revell's next book. Five stars for *Cassie's Wedding Dress!*

~ 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.

~Delia Latham

1

Jonni Peterson sat at the desk in the morning room overlooking the vast snow covered lawns of Southby Manor. She smiled at the familiar—and at the same time, unfamiliar—view before returning her gaze to the paper before her. Carefully, she dipped her quill into the inkwell and wiped it. The last thing she wanted was to blot the paper. Other than her phone and the instant communication, the only thing she really missed from the twenty-first century, was a Biro.

The letter needed to be a perfect goodbye—if there was such a thing. With her impending marriage and the commitment she was making to Sebastian and life here, two hundred years in her past, she needed to let go of her old life once and for all. And that meant letting the friends she had been housesitting for know where she was—and *who* she was. Taking a deep breath, she started.

Southby Manor, January 31, 1842

Dear Dawn and Gabriel,

Hello. Hope you guys had a great honeymoon. I'm sorry I won't be there when you get back, and hope my disappearance hasn't ruined your homecoming too much. The thing is, when I left Southby to go shopping on December tenth, something incredible happened. It can only be described as a God-thing. I fell through a portal in time. I know it sounds insane, but it's true. I ended up two hundred

years in the past, under the wheels of the carriage of the most obnoxious man you could imagine.

But at the same time, he is the most loving, gracious, and Christian man you could ever hope to meet. We fell in love, and tomorrow he and I are to be married in the local parish church. His mother wants us to be married here at Southby, but Sebastian said our marriage is to be done in God's eyes and therefore in God's house.

Yes, Southby. Your home and now mine, for I am to marry Lord Sebastian Tyler, Third Earl of Elton.

That makes me Gabriel's third great grandmother. Sebastian does not know of the connection. I hate keeping things from him, but I must not contaminate the timeline any more than I already have by preventing him from going to London just before Christmas. Although if I hadn't been here, he'd have been on that train and died and then...

I mustn't think like this. Suffice it to say, he will never know. Look up the Sonning Cutting train disaster online and you'll see the one I mean. We watched it happen from the windows of our carriage.

I know you will have a hard time believing any of this, so go and pull up the loose floorboard in my room. There is a box containing letters and papers, including my journals.

We've both prayed long and hard and know this is God's will for us both. After all, He moved time itself to bring me here. We wanted to marry at Christmas, but Countess Maud, Sebastian's mother, refused to let us do so.

Sorry this letter is so short, but planning a wedding as well as learning how to run a large estate is no easy task. Especially with my soon to be mother-in-law watching over my shoulder and taking perverse delight every time I make a mistake. Fortunately, there haven't been any major disasters yet. But I am sure there will be.

I will write often letting you know what's happening,

and I'll place them in the box for you. Of course, you will receive them all at once, but you will at least know I think about you.

Sebastian is a good man, and he will take care of me. He loves me as much as I love him.

Lots of love forever,

Jonni aka three times Great Grandma.

She folded the paper and slid it in an envelope. She dripped the wax onto it and then picking up Sebastian's seal, she stamped it. *There done. Now to find Sebastian.* She got to her feet, turned to the door, and jumped as she found Sebastian standing there. "Oh."

"I apologize, my love. I did not mean to startle you."

She shook her head. "You didn't. I was just thinking of you and then you appeared."

Sebastian walked over to her and wrapped his arms around her. "You are crying. Is everything all right? Has my mother upset you again?"

She wiped her eyes on the back of her hand. "No, she hasn't. I have finally written that letter. Can we go to the bank? I want it to go in the vault until the right time, though no doubt they will think me crazy. Then they can deliver it and people will know not to look for me. I don't want them worrying unnecessarily when I am safe and well right here with you."

Sebastian kissed her. "Of course, my love. We will go now." He fastened her cloak around her neck and then took her arm, leading her from the room. "When are you asking for it to be delivered?"

"The day I leave the house and come here. December tenth, twenty eleven."

He looked at her. "You said your friends are away until the New Year. Perhaps some time in January

would be better." He looked at her as they reached the front door and stood waiting for the carriage. "My motives are selfish, of course. If the letter comes early and you receive it, you might not go out for that walk. I do not want anything to stop you from coming to me. I have it in mind to marry you tomorrow and make you mine."

Jonni smiled. "I'm already yours, my love."

A wicked smile crossed his lips. "Your heart maybe, but I intend to claim the rest of you, too."

Jonni shook her head. "Lord Tyler, really. There are servants present. And I don't mean me."

His hands roamed down her arms. "You are not a servant."

"Until tomorrow I am still your daughter's governess. Now please, don't make a display in front of the maids."

Sebastian nodded and kissed her cheek. "Tomorrow cannot come soon enough."



Upon their return, Sebastian went out to the estate office, and Jonni turned her attention to finalizing menus and flowers and arranging the seating plan for the wedding breakfast. There was so much to do, that she felt as though her feet didn't touch the ground from the minute they got back until Sebastian's mother breezed in, fresh from calling on her married daughter, Louisa.

"Allow me." Countess Maud held out an imperious hand. She scanned the papers and looked up. She shook her head and sighed. "No. This will not do."

Jonni bit her tongue and winced at the sharpness in her future mother-in-law's voice. "What's wrong with it? Is it the order of the courses or the seating plan?"

Countess Maud plopped herself down at the desk. "There is nothing right with it. It needs to be redone. I should not have allowed you to do it in the first place. I will make the necessary changes myself."

Jonni rolled her eyes. "Well, if I'm not needed I shall go find something else to do."

"Just stay out of the kitchens. It may be best if you just went to your room and remained out of my way."

Jonni bit her tongue and left the room. She wasn't some schoolgirl to be sent to her room. Her best would never be good enough. She would forever be an annoyance, a servant, someone who had put all Countess Maud's plans for her son and the estate into disarray. She stood in the hallway for a moment and took a deep breath.

God, help me here. I shouldn't feel angry and upset, but I do. Forgive me.

"Is everything all right, Miss Jonni?"

Jonni glanced at the butler. "Everything's fine, Hudson. When Lord Tyler comes in, tell him I am upstairs."

"Of course, Miss Jonni."



Three hours later Jonni smoothed down her dress and headed to the door. She was halfway to the stairs when a hand grabbed her arm and spun her around. Her cry of shock turned into a laugh. "You scared me. You're making a habit of it."

"I do apologize, Miss Peterson." The dulcet tones of her fiancé sent shivers down her spine, as he wrapped his arms around her, nestling her snugly against his lithe form. "That was not my intention."

"And what are your intentions, sir?" Jonni leaned her head against his chest, hearing his heart beat within it. She glanced upwards. "I trust they are honorable."

Sebastian's laugh was deep and unexpected, his dark eyes sparkling. "Only until tomorrow night."

"You are incorrigible." Jonni looked at him in mock shock, hiding her smile behind her hand. "Totally, and utterly incorrigible."

Sebastian's grin widened. "That, my love, is the intent." He kissed the tips of her fingers, his lips lingering. "Now, may I escort you to dinner?"

"Of course." She let him take her arm and lead her to the stairs. "How was your afternoon?"

"Tiresome. I must find a new bailiff, or perhaps a steward that knows what he is doing. I cannot leave the man unsupervised for even half a day without him making a mistake. How my father ever managed to balance the books is beyond me."

"Maybe over dinner you should ask George if he knows of someone. It sounds like he and your sister have arrived."

"So it does, and maybe I will."

She smiled. He was gradually picking up the odd word from her and using it in his speech. "At least he and your sister approve of my marrying you. Unlike some people I could mention, who will never accept me."

Sebastian nodded. "I heard you had another run in with Mother."

Jonni sighed. "I can't do anything right as far as she is concerned. I spent ages doing seating plans and menus..." She broke off and lowered her voice. "Sorry, I shouldn't complain. Suffice it to say I'm wrong, she's right, and she's redone everything correctly."

"She will come around. If she does not, then my love will more than make up for the absence of hers."

They reached the bottom of the stairs, and she waited whilst Sebastian and his mother greeted the visitors.

Countess Maud turned to her. "Miss Peterson, perhaps you could ask Cook how long dinner will be."

"Mother," Sebastian objected sharply.

Jonni looked at her. "I'm sorry? You want me to go and check on dinner?"

"Is there something wrong with your hearing? Do not make me repeat myself."

Jonni took a sharp breath, inclined her head, and turned to go.

Sebastian shook his head. "No. Jonni, I forbid you to go. Jonni is not one of your servants that you can order around, Mother."

"Until you marry her in the morning, Sebastian, a servant is exactly what she is. Miss Peterson, I gave you an order. I suggest you carry it out immediately or suffer the consequences."

Jonni looked at Sebastian, her face flaming. "It's fine, I know my place." She shoved down her feelings, and dropped into a deep curtsey. "Yes, my lady."

Sebastian caught her arm, pulling her upright. "Jonni. You are *not* a servant."

"I am still Alexis's governess until morning. I should not have lost sight of that. If you will excuse me, sir, I have duties to perform."

"Jonni..." His eyes searched hers for a moment, then he let her go. "OK."

Not even his use of her slang could make her smile. Jonni turned and left the room, heading for the servants' passage. She blinked back the tears of humiliation that filled her eyes without warning. She could hear Sebastian remonstrating with his mother from the room behind her, but she didn't stop to listen. If this wedding actually went ahead without anyone trying to stop it, it would be a miracle.

In the kitchen, servants ran to and fro, pans simmered on the stove, dishes clattered on the table and voices called to each other. As always, it looked utter chaos, but Jonni knew that Cook had this timed to the minute and everyone knew what they were doing.

"Oh, Miss Jonni." Cook came rushing over, wiping her hands on her apron. "Is everythin' all right? I wasn' expectin' you."

Jonni looked at her. "I wasn't expecting me either. Lady Tyler wishes to know when dinner will be ready."

"Does she now? Well you can tell her from me, tha' its no' your place to come an' ask, an' she can have it soon as, an' no' one minute before."

Jonni raised an eyebrow. "Oh?"

Cook took a deep breath. "Mebbe not. She's as like to yell at you for tha'. Tell her ten minutes."

Jonni nodded. "Thank you. It smells delicious."

"Roast beef with them pudding things you like."

"Thank you." Jonni smiled. "I shall let you get on." She left the kitchen and headed back up to the parlor.

Angry voices echoed down the hallway. "Yes, well, after today I will not be mistress of this house. Miss Peterson takes over. Goodness only knows what a

mess it will become. Thirty-eight years I've run this house, like clockwork. Mary never commanded the respect of the servants, never mind had the ability to run the house."

"Mary was my wife and the mother of my daughter, madam. I'd rather not have you speak of her like that."

"It's the truth, whether you would rather hear it or not, Sebastian. And if she could not do it, how do you expect someone like Miss Peterson to be able to do so?" There was a loud sigh. "Your father worked so hard to build up this estate, and for what? So you could throw it all away on *her*."

"That's enough, Mother."

Jonni opened the door a crack.

"Why are you so afraid of the truth, Sebastian? We need an heir for the estate and title. Mary repeatedly failed in her duty to provide you with a male heir. It was clearly not your fault, but hers, as she failed to carry the children to term. You made a wrong decision when it came to your choice of wife."

Sebastian scoffed. "I chose? May I remind you that Mary was chosen for me by you and Father? And the fact she could not bear children had nothing whatsoever to do with that. It was an arranged marriage. She never loved me."

"Sebastian, please. You know very well love and marriage have little to do with each other. I have tried so hard to find you a suitable match and you refuse every time. For a while you seemed interested in Miss Stott, even escorted her to a few dances. When Louisa accepted George, it seemed natural for you to accept his sister. Then this *woman* came along and ruined it all."

There was a sharp intake of breath. Jonni pushed open the door in time to see Sebastian turn away, his face set with anger and his eyes flashing.

Countess Maud, now in full flow, faced the window. "It is not too late. You need a son and for that, you need good breeding stock, a woman of class, from a decent family. Not some tramp off the streets, someone who is too independent to follow her husband's wishes. You need a woman, who is most definitely not a governess, or a servant. You are marrying beneath you and that is a mistake. This woman is *a nobody* who appeared from nowhere with a fanciful story. She has no family, no money, no background, no breeding."

Jonni moved silently across to Sebastian and slid her hand into his, a gentle squeeze the only acknowledgement that he knew she was there.

Louisa stood to one side with George. Both shot her an apologetic look. She wasn't sure who was more embarrassed, them or her.

Countess Maud continued her tirade. "You always were a soft touch for a pretty face. I give you six months before you tire of her and go chasing after the next pretty woman you see. As for this wedding, you arranged it with indecent haste. Anyone would think you had got the woman with child."

Jonni could almost see Sebastian's hackles rise. Her face burned with shame, and she wished she had stayed in the hallway.

"I beg your pardon." His voice was taut with annoyance.

His mother turned, and Jonni took pleasure in the fact that the older woman's face colored as she saw her standing there.

"It was a civil enough question, Sebastian. Is she or is she not with child?"

Sebastian's whole body resonated with anger. "I thought you knew me better than that, madam. I have not so much as taken a mistress, in all the years I was married, never mind since Mary's death. And no, for your information, I have not taken Jonni to my bed."

Jonni stood her ground. "I'm not pregnant. In fact, I've never slept with a man. If you wish you can call out your doctor to prove it." She felt Sebastian squeeze her hand and returned it with feeling.

"Mayhap I will."

"You are not to speak to Jonni like that again, madam."

"Oh? And who is going to stop me?"

"*This is my house,*" Sebastian thundered. "Jonni is going to be *my* wife, and the mistress of this house as from tomorrow. Nothing is going to stop that, madam, neither you nor anyone else."

A cough came from the door before Hudson announced, "Dinner is served, madam."

Louisa moved over to them. "Good, I'm hungry. It smells wonderful." She looped her arm though Jonni's. "Shall we?"

Jonni looked at her gratefully and nodded, even if she was no longer hungry. "Sure. Are you coming, Sebastian?"

"Yes, in one moment. Mother, a word first, if you please?" His tone however left no such option. "Don't wait for us."

Jonni nodded and left the room, heading towards the dining room. "I'm sorry about that."

Louisa looked at her. "Do not apologize. I am sorry we kept silent, but it is Sebastian's fight, not ours."

We are glad you are going to be our sister. And if Mother cannot accept it, it is her loss.”

Jonni nodded. She just had a feeling that something was going to go wrong and stop her from marrying Sebastian.

2

Sebastian fastened the ribbon in his collar and pushed his fingers through his hair. He'd lain awake for most of the night, thinking that morning would never come. When sleep had come, it was filled with dreams of Jonni dying during the ceremony. After he woke, he'd lain awake, working out how to protect her and prevent it from happening.

He'd given the servants orders to change the linen and bed curtains while he was at the church. He and Jonni had chosen new ones and he had to admit she did have remarkably good taste in fabric.

He allowed himself a smile at the thought of his intended, the woman he loved. No one had ever touched his life the way Jonni had. She made him feel alive in a way his previous wife never had done. She was a gift from the Lord Himself. Unexpected, unsought and the greatest gift, other than his salvation, he could have received. He spent a vast portion of every day thanking God for moving the Earth and indeed time itself to bring Jonni to him.

He glanced over at the bed, looking forward to the night he would spend there in the arms of a woman who loved him and whom he hoped would be an equal partner. Not one who merely wanted his title and money and nothing else.

Leaving his suite of rooms, Sebastian made his

way down the hallway to his daughter's room. He stood in the doorway and watched the eight-year-old fidget as the maid, Liza, did her hair.

"Haven't you finished yet?" Alexis whined.

The servant sighed. "No I ain't, Miss. An' the more yer wriggle, the longer it'll take an' all. Why 'er ladyship 'ad to ask me to do this I dunno. It ain't as if I don' have enough t'do this mornin' as t'is."

"Then give me the brush and go and do your oh-so-important-chores. I can always ask Miss Jonni—"

"Don' yer be so cheeky. Yer lucky yer father didn' 'ear tha'. Anyhoo, 'er ladyship has enough t'do this morning withou' fussin' o'er yer." Liza untied another ribbon, letting the ringlet fall. "An' you will do well to remember 'er new title."

Alexis sighed. "I know what her new title is, but she doesn't marry Papa for another three hours. 'Sides I don't have to call her my lady. Are you done now?"

Sebastian heard enough. "Alexis, stop giving the servants a hard time."

Alexis jumped off her chair. "Papa," she cried running to him and hugging him. "You look handsome."

He smiled at her, hugging her back. "Thank you. And you look pretty in that dress."

Alexis beamed, twirling. "I chose the color myself."

"You chose very well." His smile broadened as she spun. She really had blossomed into an adorable child thanks to Jonni's work as governess, and picked up the shortened speech that Jonni used as well. "Now sit and let Liza finish. We need to leave soon so the carriage can come back for Jonni."

Alexis sat down, swinging her legs. "You didn't

call her Miss Peterson.”

“Because she is no longer a servant.” The fact he’d called her Jonni in private for weeks was neither here nor there. “That reminds me, your new governess arrives in the morning. You will behave. Is that understood?” He hunkered down next to her looking at her seriously. “I mean it. No tricks.” He knew all too well the way she played up to the governesses. He had gone through a series of nine in the space of ten weeks before Jonni came.

Alexis pouted. “Why can't Mamma teach me still?”

“Mamma?” he asked, surprised at the choice of title.

She nodded. “A present for her. Is that all right? Will she like it?”

“I think she will like it very much.”

Liza set down the brush. “There done. An’ a pretty picture if I do say so meself.”

Alexis jumped up. “Can I go now?”

Relieved he didn’t have to answer her original question, Sebastian nodded. Jonni was going to find the change to Countess hard enough, without having to teach on top of it all. Never mind the fact that a Countess simply didn’t work, let alone teach. “Yes.”

Alexis ran from the room yelling over her shoulder. “Come on, you’ll be late.”

Sebastian shook his head grinning slightly, wondering where her energy and enthusiasm came from.



Jonni stood still as Gabby fastened stays, petticoats