



## Blessed Are the Dead

*Kristi Belcamino*

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## **Blessed Are the Dead** Kristi Belcamino

To catch a killer, one reporter must risk it all ...

San Francisco Bay Area newspaper reporter Gabriella Giovanni spends her days on the crime beat, flitting in and out of other people's nightmares, yet walking away unscathed. When a little girl disappears on the way to the school bus stop, her quest for justice and a front-page story leads her to a convicted kidnapper, Jack Dean Johnson, who reels her in with promises to reveal his exploits as a serial killer. But Gabriella's passion for her job quickly spirals into obsession when she begins to suspect the kidnapper may have ties to her own dark past: her sister's murder.

Risking her life, her job, and everything she holds dear, Gabriella embarks on a quest to find answers and stop a deranged murderer before he strikes again.

## **Blessed Are the Dead Details**

Date : Published June 10th 2014 by Witness Impulse

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Author : Kristi Belcamino

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Genre : Mystery, Fiction, Thriller

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## From Reader Review Blessed Are the Dead for online ebook

### Jeff Shelby says

Can't recommend this book enough. A great debut mystery that doesn't feel anything like a debut. Fantastic plot with an even better heroine, one who absolutely can carry a series. Belcamino's real life experience as a journalist is evident in her skillful, detailed unraveling of the mystery behind a young girl's disappearance. Suspenseful, emotional and smart - just a great mystery in every way.

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### Michelle Brink says

Holy moly, what a ride!! Once I started reading this book, I didn't want to stop! Great job by Kristie Belcamino! I just recently discovered this author and I am SO glad I did. I really like her style, she grabs your attention from the get go and does not let up! I can't wait to read more from this author. So...on to the NEXT Gabriella Giovanni book!!

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### Anne Hokenstad says

Powerful book! Not a cozy mystery, but a solid mystery grounded in basic human desires to be loved and known. When confronted with suffering and loss, humanity's choices are surprisingly simple: to chose life or death. This choice is examined in sharp first-person prose that moves the story forward with endearing narratives.

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### David Pennington says

A story that's immediately engaging? Check. Terrific pacing and plot structure? A protagonist who's flawed in some ways but for whom we still root? Check, check.

At times I found myself getting angry at Gabriella, but she always redeemed herself later. This is truly the sign of a great author--one who can create a character who, though fictional, can elicit real emotions from me, both good and bad.

Had I not known, I'd have never guessed this was a debut novel. It stands among the best of it's genre. I'm looking forward to the next installment!

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### Alexis Tanner says

This weekend I finished a fantastic book called "Blessed are the Dead" by Kristi Belcamino. I was lucky enough to have connections in the writer world (thanks Owen Laukkanen) and obtained an early draft to read as this novel isn't available to the public til June. I'm looking forward to reading the final published copy for

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comparison! But I do have to say that I think this novel is poorly categorized as being about a serial killer. To me I found, at least in this version, the serial killer was a sub plot to the dynamic and interesting star character. I couldn't put this book down because I loved Gabriella Giovanni. Intensely well written. Interesting characters and exploits. A storyline that keeps you interested from start to finish. I am definitely hooked and looking forward to the next adventure! I highly recommend you put this book on your to-read list and pre-order the digital version today! It's a great deal (price will likely go way up when they announce the hardcover publish date) and you won't regret it. 2-click order:

<http://www.amazon.ca/gp/aw/d/B00GLS4V...>

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### **Kristin Boldon says**

A thumping good read about a serial killer and the newspaper reporter who becomes the Clarice Starling to his Hannibal Lecter. Gabriella is a great main character: flawed, relate-able, hard-nosed and Italian Catholic. Loved the details of the newsroom. Her killer, based on a real-life one, is chillingly credible. Plus there's humor, romance, and family drama throughout that elevates this well beyond a by-the-numbers thriller. Can't wait for the sequel, Blessed Are the Meek!

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### **Monica says**

A child kidnapper is on the loose. Time is running out. The case is bringing back painful memories for reporter Gabriella Giovanni. Will justice be served?

A fast paced, detailed narrative laden with mysteries, and a hint of romance, lead the reader and characters through twists and turns.

Characters are passionate, varied, develop as the tale progresses, and caring.

Overall, a thrilling read.

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### **Diane Vallere says**

Author Kristi Belcamino lives up to the promise of a reporter compelled to investigate a story that is uncomfortably close to home. Gabrielle Giovanni is a likable protagonist, and even her bad decisions felt organic. I'm looking forward to more of her and Donovan and Dusty--the whole crew, really--in Blessed are the Meek: A Gabriella Giovanni Mystery (Blessed are the Meek). A really fantastic read and I highly recommend it.

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### **Kathy says**

When a series comes highly recommended from people whose opinions you value and trust about great reading, it's both exciting and a bit daunting to finally start reading it. There's the anticipation that it is going to be thrilling, but there's also the fear that you might not like it when those trusted friends do. Of course, I had the advantage of meeting the author Kristi Belcamino before reading the Gabriella Giovanni series, and

it was hard to imagine anything but dynamic being her style in writing. It feels so good to be right, because dynamic is the word that perfectly captures my feelings about this book

The mood of Blessed are the Dead is intense and the action is fast paced in the best possible way. There is quite literally never a dull moment in this story. Kristi Belcamino moves the reader from scene to scene with a brilliant deftness, engaging you so completely that it's impossible to stop reading. The action compels you to keep moving with the characters to the conclusion. And, the characters are wonderfully flawed, beautifully brave, and filled with witty dialogue.

Gabriella Giovanni is a twenty-eight-year-old crime reporter for the Bay Herald, a San Francisco newspaper. She's been on the job for seven years and is good at what she does with her great instincts and ability to put people at ease to talk to her. Not much shakes this Italian dynamo. But, the disappearance of a young girl that comes across the police scanner presents Gabriella with a sense of déjà vu from a terrible event in her past, the kidnapping and death of her seven-year-old sister when Gabriella was six-years old. It has been 22 years since Caterina was taken and left dead on the side of a road. The killer was never found.

Gabriella isn't the type of reporter to sit and wait for the news to come to her. She immediately becomes involved in the case of the missing eight-year-old Jasmine, running down leads and putting herself in danger. She also has to contend with the police and the lead detective, Sean Donovan, someone she's both attracted to and easily annoyed with. Gabriella's track record with men is lousy, and this case brings home the reason she can't let a guy get close. Of course, her defense is always that her job comes first, and she is indeed as dogged a pursuer of the truth as they come. When a suspect is brought in, the story becomes glaringly personal. Jack Dean Johnson will only talk to Gabriella and knows just what buttons to push with her about her sister. As Gabriella is desperate to discover if the little girl Jasmine is still alive and try to save her, she is willing to suffer through the mind games of a sociopath. Gabriella is all too aware that time is of the essence.

Kristi Belcamino was herself a crime reporter, which lends great credibility to the character and work of Gabriella and to the interaction with police departments. I suspect that like her character, Belcamino was quick to appreciate the issues involved in and the significance of crimes to the larger picture of humankind. That this book had its beginnings in actual tragic cases of missing children with which the author was familiar again adds authenticity to the story and the emotions experienced by the characters. It's an important story to tell, the crime perpetrated upon these children, and Kristi Belcamino uses fiction to tell it well.

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## **Samantha says**

Kristi Belcamino has just added a fiery Italian bombshell to the pantheon of best selling fictional detectives. Gabriella Giovanni is right up there with Alex Cross, Kay Scarpetta, Kinsey Milhone, and all the big names. She's like Sophia Loren fighting Clarise Starling's demons.

And the bad guy, Jack Dean Johnson, is believably creepy. The dialogue in his scenes really sticks with you. Since finishing the book, I've been keeping an extra close eye on my kids. (I've also been making more pasta.)

I think Blessed are the Dead might have more mainstream appeal than some other mysteries because the characters and relationships are so well done. Also, Belcamino brings the setting to life. While I was reading, I felt like I was in San Francisco and in the news room with Gabriella. I think a lot of readers will fall in love with this series.

I hope to see a lot more Gabriella books after this one!

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### **Bethany says**

Kristi Belcamino's Gabriella Giovanni has the sharp wit of a seasoned beat reporter and the tragic past of a truly complex heroine.

As Gabriella delves into the complicated mind of a beguiling criminal to report on a case about the kidnapping of a young girl that is eerily similar to that of her deceased sister, she approaches the source of what makes a killer kill with a refreshing amount of pragmatic compassion.

Fans of acclaimed shows like *The Killing* and *True Detective* will devour **BLESSED ARE THE DEAD**. Belcamino is a strong female voice in a genre dominated by men. I can't wait for the next installment in this thrilling series!

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### **Elisa Hordon says**

You know how a good scary movie has you constantly looking over your shoulder, under the bed, behind the doors, just waiting for someone to jump out and you, well this is how I felt after reading *Blessed Are the Dead*, it was engrossingly spine tingling good and grabbed me from the very first page, I could not put it down or look away until I finished it.

Getting into the mind of a serial killer is just freaky but I guess as a crime reporter you just have to go for it but wow they really are sneaky bastards because they can get into your mind just as easy without you even knowing it Gabriella was lucky this time, I can't wait to see what she gets up to next.

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### **Carmen Pacheco says**

A police reporter for a small newspaper in San Francisco for seven years, Gabriella suffers from the hazards of meeting deadlines and blowing off boyfriends by default – breaking news/stories demand attention. Lamentable, yes, but Gabriella thrives under the pressure. When 8 year old Jasmine goes missing, and triggers Gabriella's own nightmare (her sister was kidnapped and murdered 22 years ago), the suspect in custody reserves his attention and story only for Gabriella. \*Goosebumps\* *Blessed are the Dead*, written by Kristi Belcamino, is a compelling thriller about murder and survival. I was stunned to learn this was a debut novel – Belcamino was clearly meant to be a storyteller!

When Jack Dean Johnson is arrested, but refuses interviews with every reporter except for Gabriella, I could hear warning bells sounding from the pages. Gabriella was so focused on luring Johnson in, gaining his trust– she never considered he could have been involved in her sister's disappearance. Sociopath that is, however, he won't outright admit to nefarious behavior so Gabriella has to endure his nonsensical, twisted philosophies:

"I interpret the religion as a quest to find what makes me happy. It gives me permission to do what makes me righteously happy."

“Even if it that involves hurting a child?”

“Yes,” he says without hesitation. He leans forward eagerly. “Buddhism allows me to find out about me and what makes me happy...”

I don’t know much about Buddhism, but I know enough to realize this guy is twisting a peaceful religion into a justification for murder.

Warning, you will become incensed when you read their scenes. The very situations parents dread, and try carefully to avoid, are what Johnson’s spouting off as strategy. I don’t envy Ms. Belcamino’s research of this disturbing topic, but she wrote it deftly. Their dialogue will entice you, shock you, and keep you in suspense to the very end! When Johnson is too scheming to incriminate himself, Gabriella has to dig deeper and more depraved to appeal to his vanity (even while hiding her nausea when he references her sister):

I glance at my watch. I need something, anything new to put in the paper tomorrow if I want to keep my job. Then I hit on it – I can write a story about how the mind of a child predator works.

Now as dark as that particular psychology may be to write, Ms. Belcamino doesn’t skimp on the romance aspect. It’s here, and I swooned for Detective Sean Donovan. Aside from his good looks and smarts, he is recovering from a divorce, so you can imagine how reserved he must be. Not these two. Their attraction is so natural... it terrifies them. Ugh! You’d think that similar backgrounds would be a common, empathetic fit? More like a feat they can’t overcome.

Not only was the writing style vivid and intriguing, the tension and competition at the newsroom frenetic (fist-clenching reactions!), the investigative efforts palpable (you desperately want clues/leads to find Jasmine alive!), but Gabriella’s approach was just as unnerving – becoming a predator’s confidant! I had to pause several times to shake off the disturbing images.

When pressures mount and intense events begin to unfold, propelling Gabriella into a pseudo-vigilante role, the possibility of double jeopardy kept blaring at me, but was ignored in the book. I found this oversight jarring and would really like to know why it wasn’t addressed? On a personal note, having lived in Northern California, Belcamino’s description of North Beach and the surrounding communities of the Bay area were so spot-on; visualizing the locales enhanced my enjoyment of the read.

Blessed are the Dead was awesome from beginning to end. As deliriously happy as I was with the culmination of the story, and that life-affirming visit involving Sean, I did scream out in simultaneous torture. Now what?! Lol...I’ll tell you what: Blessed are the Meek, the next installment in the Gabriella Giovanni Mysteries is on sale July 8, 2014. I’d be blessed to receive an ARC! :) Kristi Belcamino, consider me your fan!

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## Julie says

Blessed Are the Dead by Kristi Belcamino is a 2014 Witness Impulse Publication. I was provided a copy of this book in exchange for an honest review by the publisher and Edelweiss.

Gabriella Maria-Grazia takes her job very seriously. She is a crime reporter for a Bay Area newspaper. She has news in her blood. She lives it, breaths it. She is currently coping with yet another break up and an ambitious newbie who isn’t beneath trying to a few underhanded tricks to make Gabriella look bad in front

her bosses.

But, when a missing persons case involving a young girl is making headlines, Gabriella takes it personally. She has lost a sister at a young age and this case is hitting her hard. Everything else is on a back burner while she joins in the search to find the missing girl.

Told in first person, this taut suspense thriller follows Gabriella as she follows a creepy serial killer down a dark, twisty road in hopes of finding out what happened to a missing girl, but also in hopes of finding out about her own sister whose killer was never brought to justice. As the suspect, Jack Dean Johnson, plays games with Gabriella she will remind you a great deal of Clarice Starling. Gabriella is spellbound by the suspect as she finds herself feeling some kind of empathy for the trauma he suffered in childhood, and he dangles information in front her making her think he knows something about her sister. But, is he the real killer? Oh, yes, he's killed before, many times. But, is he the one that kidnapped the most recent victim and does he really know anything about what happened to Gabriella's sister? Or is he just toying with her?

Also, on the case is a veteran detective, named Donovan who has a bad reputation, but who also finds himself drawn to Gabriella and she to him. However, the relationship appears doomed from the start as their respective careers clash.

The atmosphere is dark and gritty, and this crime thriller is not for the faint of heart. It is always tense when a child is involved in a crime and this book is not only riveting but heart wrenching as Gabriella begins to remember the sadness and grief she and her family suffered when her sister died. Plagued by vivid and horrendous flashbacks of her sister's funeral and her own sense of helplessness and guilt, this case has Gabriella throwing caution to the wind and stepping out into some really dangerous territory. I liked Gabriella from the start to the finish. She was often hard on herself and took blame when she shouldn't have, but she is very easy to understand despite keeping herself closed off to people. Donovan is also a dark and mysterious character that I didn't quite know how to take. Was he using Gabriella? Was he a rogue cop? I just couldn't get a good read on him.

The secondary characters fleshing out the story with Gabriella finding out just who her real friends were and a big dose of karma will see Gabriella coming out a winner in the end. There are lingering questions about some things, but since this is a series I think we will probably get the answers to some of these questions sooner or later. In the meantime, I have found a new mystery/ thriller author to add to my "Must Read" list. If you like dark suspense thrillers be sure to check this one out. Five stars!

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## **Kris Mehigan says**

I couldn't put this book down. It may be billed as a mystery, but I'd argue it's a brilliantly crafted psychological suspense. The main character--Gabriella Giovani- is an Italian American shoot-first-think-later-vodka-swilling-crime beat newspaper reporter. She's also my newest favorite character ever (move over Valentine Roncalli a la Adriana Trigiani!) as she races around San Francisco & the Bay Area trying to track down leads on a kidnapped girl. All the while, Gabriella has sole contact with an incarcerated self-confessed killer who seems to know a few too many details about her sister's abduction and murder from 20 years before. It was reminiscent of SILENCE OF THE LAMBS, but with a much more relatable protagonist.

And there's great news... this was the first in a series. Can't wait to meet Gabriella again in book #2. Bravo, Ms. Belcamino. You've earned yourself another fan. Me.