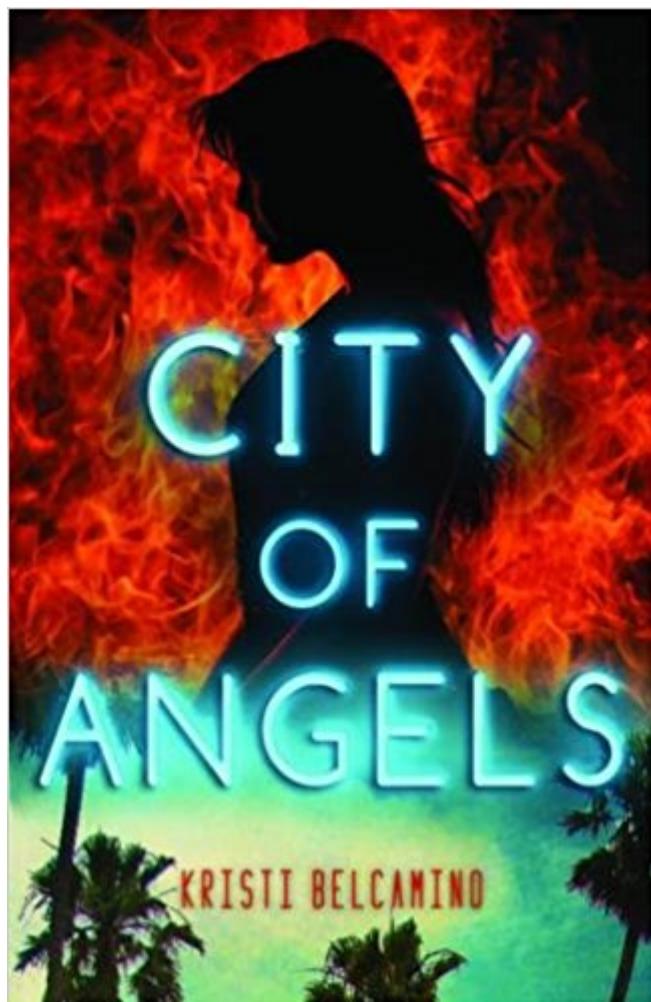


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# City Of Angels



## Synopsis

"With a strong female protagonist who won't stop fighting, this page-turner is a delightful and gripping read." *Kirkus Reviews* "A fast-paced mystery that will keep readers anticipating what the heroine will encounter next... (an) entertaining mystery with a convincing portrayal of the dangers associated with young people trying to survive on their own." *Library Journal* "Belcamino offers detailed characterization, particularly Nikki, who is feisty and determined to make her own way. Readers who enjoy a breathless pace and gritty, noirlike atmosphere will find plenty to like here." *Booklist* *~* Nikki Black, a self-imposed lone wolf since her mother died, fled suburban Chicago to escape her painful past. But when her so-called boyfriend reveals why he really lured her to Southern California, she ends up on the streets of L.A. with only the clothes on her back and a destitute twelve-year-old named Rain following in her shadows. The girls seek refuge at a residential hotel above a punk rock bar in downtown L.A. a few months before the city erupts into chaos during the 1992 riots. At The American Hotel, Nikki makes friends and, for the first time in years, feels as if she has a real family again. But everything changes when Rain disappears. Everyone believes Rain succumbed to the seductive allure of addiction and life on the streets. Determined to find Rain, Nikki burrows deeper into the underbelly of a city that hides a darkness beneath the glamour. And when she unveils a sinister cover-up by a powerful group that secretly controls the city of angels, she could lose everything, including her life. *City of Angels* is an edgy, gritty, mature Young Adult mystery about a young woman's struggle to not only belong *~* but survive.

## Book Information

Hardcover: 304 pages

Publisher: Polis Books (May 18, 2017)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1943818436

ISBN-13: 978-1943818433

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 1.1 x 8.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 14.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.9 out of 5 stars 25 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #732,435 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #81 in *Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Loners & Outcasts* #151 in *Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Runaways* #315 in *Books > Teens > Historical Fiction > United States >*

## Customer Reviews

"With a strong female protagonist who won't stop fighting, this page-turner is a delightful and gripping read." ª Kirkus Reviews "A punk-rock time machine, rich in detail and authentic atmosphere, CITY OF ANGELS gives us a memorable cast of misfits to lead us through. Like her heroine herself, Belcamino's writing is gritty, rife with attitude and, at its core, possessed of real courage and genuine heart. You'll cheer on Nikki Black, and you'll cheer for Kristi Belcamino, too; this is a talented author at the top of her game." ª Owen Matthews, award-winning author of How to Win at High School "A fast-paced mystery that will keep readers anticipating what the heroine will encounter next...(an) entertaining mystery with a convincing portrayal of the dangers associated with young people trying to survive on their own." ª Library Journal "Belcamino offers detailed characterization, particularly Nikki, who is feisty and determined to make her own way. Readers who enjoy a breathless pace and gritty, noirlike atmosphere will find plenty to like here." ª Booklist "Belcamino offers a great sense of place, setting the stage for her story by putting her characters on a rooftop as they watch the city burn during the riots. Nikki is a courageous, compassionate young woman and her friends, male and female, are there for her when she needs them." ª Pioneer Press "Nikki Black is a fierce protagonist which makes her an absolute pleasure to spend time with. The setting and time period are also pitch perfect. What a great read." ª CrimeSpree Magazine Praise for the novels of Kristi Belcamino "Belcamino puts her experience on the crime beat to good use, creating the kind of villain who'll lurk in your nightmares long after the book ends. Double-check your locks before you crack this one open!" ª Owen Laukkanen, award-winning author of The Professionals "Blessed Are Those Who Weep is a crackling, emotional, and rocket-paced mystery. Kristi Belcamino brings her reporter chops to Gabriella Giovanni, the very best kind of heroine -- smart, plucky, and true. Keep your eye on this writer." ª Lisa Unger, New York Times bestselling author of Crazy Love You "Belcamino is a writer to watch." ª Alex Marwood, author of The Wicked Girls

Kristi Belcamino is a writer, crime reporter, and Italian-American mama who makes a tasty biscotti. She is the author of the Gabriella Giovanni mysteries. As a reporter in the San Francisco Bay Area, she flew in an FA-18 jet with the Blue Angels, raced a Dodge Viper at Laguna Seca, and attended barbecues at the morgue. Her books, dark mysteries featuring fierce females fighting for justice,

have been Anthony, Barry, and Macavity-award finalists.

A fast-paced twisty thriller set in LA during the Rodney King riots with a feisty main character, Nikki, who has to shoulder way too much, way too young. Fortunately, she finds a small band of similarly fragile young people at The American Hotel, and together they form a chosen family. Getting to know these characters and their stories was one of the joys of this book. The bad guys are rich and powerful, and include a familiar cult-like church in LA. The heroes are small and scruffy but they fight like hell.

As others have stated this is a fast paced thriller which I was unable to put down until I finished reading the book. I could not wait to learn how such young people survived on the streets and the values for life they were able to keep even with those who wanted to cause them harm lurking around every corner. I really enjoyed this book and would recommend it to everyone.

I Read Ms. Belcamino's first novel after reading it's review in The San Jose Mercury. I have read every one of her books since, loving every one. I also loved this one, but I don't think it should have been classified a young adult novel. I have an almost 15 year old granddaughter who I had hoped to share this book with, but after reading City of Angels I would never recommend this book to her. I feel that the subject matter is way too mature for most teenagers, especially for those under 17. Although I think the relationships between the young runaway Nikki and her new friends and neighbors charming, I was alarmed when the plotline went really dark with pedophiles, kidnapping, rape, murder and snuff movies. These are very adult subjects and probably too disturbing for most young adults. Don't get me wrong, I loved book, but I think the subject matter was strictly for grownups, and mature ones at that. Just my opinion.

This novel takes place during the Rodney King riots in Los Angeles in 1992. It's the perfect backdrop for this explosive story about a teenage girl who's run away from her father and landed at a residential hotel in gritty and dangerous downtown LA. She finds a new family of friends, but then gets swept up in a criminal ring and many other risky activities as she fights to save a friend and keep herself from getting killed. This book hits all the right buttons — exciting, fast-paced, great characters, and a fascinating look at LA during that time period.

City of Angels is an awesome page turner with lovable characters who each have their own painful history. The way they pull together as a family is heartwarming in this thrilling mystery. There is just the right amount of romance and history in the story, too. I couldn't put it down until I made it through the twists and turns to the end.

City of Angels takes us into a part of history that is more important in these times we are living in. Always gripping with a cast of characters that are at once believable and honest. Ms. Belcamino has given the young adult genre a new voice.

Let me start by saying that I am an unabashed fan of Kristi Belcamino's Gabriella Giovanni series, and have come to expect terrific writing from her. That being said I was a little apprehensive as I began reading her newest novel, City of Angels, a book being marketed as "Young Adult" fiction. I was concerned whether her foray into a different "type" of writing would result in a book that might disappoint me. I am very pleased to say that City of Angels was a wonderful read, capturing and engaging my attention immediately with a cast of young (thus the YA tag) characters, sparked by the damaged and flawed Veronica 'Nikki' Black; all of whom I quickly came to care about for their roles in an unfolding drama, featuring the trademark grit, relevance, tension, and feels which I have come to expect in a Kristi Belcamino novel. I think this novel will speak to, and engage, readers across the age spectrum, as there are vivid life challenges portrayed which will find and touch a sensitive spot in every one of those readers. Well done. (My thanks to the publisher for making available an electronic ARC of City of Angels!)

CITY OF ANGELS tells an interesting story about a complex time in American history. Nikki Black has fled to southern California after her mother's death and her father's self-destruction. She finds herself in Los Angeles alone just in time for the LA riots that followed the Rodney King verdict in 1992. The story tells what life is like for a runaway with no friends. Nikki finds herself staying in the American Hotel with a bunch of other young misfits. Since Nikki fled a creepy boyfriend and a movie producer who makes child porn with twelve-year-old Rain, she has to be careful that they don't find her. Rain is drug-addicted like Nikki's mother was and also being groomed by a child predator. When Rain disappears one night, Nikki is sure that she has been sucked back into the world the two recently escaped. Nikki begins an investigation fueled by her own guilt at not being able to save Rain or her mother that has her looking at a new creepy church and the world of child porn. She is assisted by the motley crew that has become her family. The mystery aspect of the story was

engaging and well thought out. The problems I had with the story centered on two things. First, most of the characters were stereotypes: the happy-go-lucky gay character who just learns he's HIV positive, the former cover model who lost it all because of drugs and is just getting her life back in order, the multiracial couple, the musician with the string of girls and his own hidden guilt. Second, Nikki herself seemed much older and much more self-aware than any seventeen-year-old. Fans of the time period and fans of teens forging their own futures will enjoy this one.

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