



The Fallen Angel

David Hewson

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Acclaimed author David Hewson returns with this mesmerizing new thriller featuring Nic Costa and the detectives of Rome's Questura. This time Costa must solve a case with roots buried deep in one of the ancient city's most infamous episodes—a story of incest, murder, and martyrdom.

It's August in Rome, and Nic Costa's vacation is about to be cut short by a scream, a girl covered in blood, and a man lying dead in the Via Beatrice Cenci. It seems that Malise Gabriel, a scholar with an impressive list of enemies, stepped onto faulty scaffolding for a cigarette and fell to his death.

On the surface, it's no more than an unfortunate accident.

But the deeper Costa looks—into the facts that don't add up, into the haunted eyes of Gabriel's beautiful daughter, Mina, and into the mysterious links between the present and the past—the more he's haunted by disturbing parallels with a centuries-old crime: In 1599, Beatrice Cenci was beheaded by the Vatican for murdering her father, a man known for unthinkable sexual crimes. Does Mina's obsession with Beatrice intimate her own family's dark secrets, or is someone using her as a smoke screen for a far deadlier plan?

Soon another body is discovered and Nic comes to doubt his own first impressions. Something evil is circling Mina, her angry and silent mother, her runaway brother, and her family's checkered history in England, the United States, and Italy. And now that something is closing in fast for the kill.

In a novel that captures modern Rome in all its complexity, as well as its history of beauty and barbarity, genius and blindness, *The Fallen Angel* is David Hewson at his best—a twisting and twisted contest between innocence and evil.

The Fallen Angel Details

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From Reader Review The Fallen Angel for online ebook

Selena says

The Fallen Angel written by David Hewson is the 9th novel in the Nic Costa series. I haven't gotten to read any other of the series and I can't say I really want to. No offense to Mr. Hewson but this read was extremely strange. It's about a detective in Rome, Italy who witnesses a tragic death of a man who fell from a scaffolding balcony to the street below. His daughter was covered in his blood as she comforted him in his last breath of life. All evidence leads to her and the familiar story of a woman named Beatrice who was murdered for an alleged murder of her family. Everything that happens is like history repeating itself.

Spoiler Alert

Nic Costa and his colleagues investigate the stories behind this death that was deemed a murder where there are three suspects. The daughter, son, and the mother. I will give this writer credit for a compelling story of crime with twist and turns but I still can't unread the last chapter of what truly happened in the book. The fact that the daughter was prostituting herself for the family's income by her own blood uncle is just disturbing. He took her virginity and was a disgusting man. I'm sure there are just as demented and messed up people like him out in the real world.

It was a decent read but I must say it's not a series I will continue on. Nic Costa had his fair set of troubles in romance but really, it was the only thing I could relate to in this novel. Otherwise, I was primarily detached from all of the characters. It's better when there are characters you can find in some way to relate to. otherwise it's nothing but paper. Was so glad when it was over. Not a book I would full-heartedly suggest to other book lovers.

Beth says

Every time I read a book by David Hewson I wonder how it is that THE DAVINCI CODE was a best seller. I wonder how the blockbuster movie on which it was based was so successful. Neither has a plot, an interesting character, or anything that suggests it is something other than a cartoon.

On the other hand -

David Hewson has created three of the most interesting and diverse characters to ever grace a page. Nic Costa, just thirty at the beginning of THE FALLEN ANGEL, Gianni Peroni, his partner, and Leo Falcone, Gianni's classmate in the police academy, are close friends, men without personal lives, who depend on their relationships to each other to keep them grounded while policing a world-class twenty-first century city that is also firmly planted in the ancient world and the world of the Renaissance. Despite their differences in age and rank, they are a unit.

THE FALLEN ANGEL begins with a quote from Nathaniel Hawthorne's THE MARBLE FAUN. "She knows that her sorrow is so strange and so immense, that she ought to be solitary forever....It is infinitely heart-breaking to meet her glance, and to feel that nothing can be done to help or comfort her....She is a

fallen angel -fallen, and yet sinless; and it is only this depth of sorrow, with its weight and darkness, that keeps her down upon earth, and brings her within out view even while it sets her beyond our reach.” Hawthorne is writing about the sixteenth century Beatrice Cenci, a young woman, who across more than four hundred years, reaches out to the women of every generation who came after her. Hawthorne may as well be writing about Mina Gabriel.

Beatrice Cenci was beheaded by order of the Vatican in 1599 for killing her father, the man who forced her into an incestuous relationship. That she was the victim of a terrible sin and a victim of a terrible crime did not help her. Through the years, Beatrice has become a legend, an icon for women who understand that Beatrice’s suffering was her motive and her guilt a vindication. Her portrait, attributed to Guido Reni, inspired Shelley’s poem about the doomed young woman.

As Nic walks through Rome on a sultry August night, he hears screams and discovers the body of a man, cradled by his daughter. Malise Gabriel is a failed academic whose appointment to an academic institute is his last chance. The police on the scene can see easily that the death is an accident. The apartment in which the Gabriels are living is being renovated. Malise has stepped onto the balcony for a cigarette but the scaffolding has given way and Malise is killed instantly. Mina, a seventeen year-old, is overcome with grief and Nic tries to help her. The police see nothing to be investigated but Nic isn’t comfortable; he feels something is wrong, contrived about the scene. Nic is on vacation and has no business being involved at all but it is August, the police are short-handed, and the heat in Rome has made everyone short-tempered so with Peroni’s help and Falcone’s decision to look the other way, Nic begins to learn what he can about Mina and her family.

Nic quickly discovers that Mina is obsessed with Beatrice Cenci and she does what she can to play up her resemblance to the woman in the portrait. Family is the theme that connects the Cencis and the Gabriels across four hundred years. And the different varieties and definitions of family inform the characters of Nic, Gianni, and Leo. “He thought of Peroni and his love of everything to do with that word. Of Falcone and how the very mention of such a secret, insular closeness could place a dark cloud in the eyes of one of the most decent men he knew.” And there is Nic’s solid, loving relationship with his own father that has survived the older man’s death.

Investigating Gabriel’s death leads the police to look into the academic circles that comprised Malise’s professional world. In a book, they find a picture of a young woman whose face is partially concealed. She is in a compromising position. On the back of the picture are scrawled the words, “E pur si muove” – “and yet it moves.” This leads them to Galileo and the ancient argument between church and science for it is these words that Galileo spoke as he left the courtroom after recanting his belief that the earth revolved around the sun. Who in this story is insisting on one thing while believing something else?

Mina takes Nic on a tour of all the places important to Beatrice. At the Palazzo Barberini, Mina shows Nic the Reni portrait of Beatrice Cenci. Then she guides him to Caravaggio’s Judith and Holofernes. It is not lost on him that Mina relates to two beautiful young women who had to do something terrible for the sake of the greater good. “E pur si mouve” is also translated “In this I still believe.”

Mina, at seventeen, thinks Nic is naive, an incurable optimist, despite what he has seen in his job. Mina has no delusions. Nic is a seeker of truth, no matter how difficult the path and painful the results. Mina is living a role, suggesting she shares the life of Beatrice, but is Mina playing another role? If so, what one?

David Hewson incorporates strong, likable characters (I didn’t forget pathologist Teresa Lupo), complex mysteries that do not end necessarily where they lead, resolutions that mirror the real world, and hefty doses

of art, literature, music, history, and Rome. Every page is a page turner and many pages require the reader to turn back and read some lines again, accepting the complexity of a story that never forgets that it is entertainment.

THE FALLEN ANGEL is so compelling that I couldn't go on to another book until I had left Nic, Gianni, Leo, and Mina behind.

Miles says

When I began reviewing books in August last year, one of my main goals was to challenge myself and explore titles I wouldn't normally read – on the whole I think I've done quite well but I need to do better as an old and inspirational teacher once said to me! - Think outside the box lad!

With that in mind I received an ARC of David Hewson's "The Fallen Angel" from Pan Macmillan a few weeks ago and although a crime thriller and well within my comfort zone – it was my first Italian mystery and one I was sure would offer the challenge I was seeking!

Set in its entirety in the ghettos of Rome, "The Fallen Angel" is marvellous blend of historical and fictional narrative - one Hewson carries off remarkably well I may add - as we follow Detective Nic Costa and his colleagues in their quest to solve another crime.

I must confess before I began reading Hewson's book I had very little interest in Italian history – sure most of us have studied Roman history at one point or other in school or university – but I honestly wouldn't have gone out of my way to pick up a book that for the greater part spent time revisiting 16th century history in Rome.

However, once I began reading, and bear in mind this is my introduction to David Hewson's work, I was mesmerized by the Italian beauty contained within. Hewson's captivating prose and his obvious passion for all things Italian is clear for all to see - it ignited an interest I really didn't expect; the author's passion is certainly infectious.

The first half of the book explores the fascinating history surrounding the events that lead to the tenuously legal execution of Beatrice Cenci in the 16th century. Daughter of the violent and abusive Francesco Cenci, an immoral aristocrat who found himself in trouble with the Pope on more than one occasion, the family as a whole suffered at his hands but due to the leniency afforded nobility in those times he escaped long sentences.

Full review on my Blog:- <http://www.milorambles.com/2011/02/01...>

Kathy Davie says

Ninth in the Nic Costa mystery series set in contemporary Rome, Italy.

The Story

Nic is fascinated with the history of Rome as well as its art and in *Fallen Angel* we get a double helping with the tale of the injustice done to Beatrice Cenci by the Church in 1599. Accused of plotting the murder of her pedophilic father with her mother and brother, the three of them are tortured into confessing and executed for not accepting the father and his friends' attentions.

The relevance is the similarity that Nic notices the night Mina's father, Malise Gabriel, falls to his death from unsteady scaffolding and the tale that unfolds. For Nic pushes that this be investigated as a murder and not the accident everyone first believes it.

The Characters

Nic Costa is a thirty-something police detective in Rome who lost his American wife to terrorists a short while ago. He loves history, how it permeates the city of Rome, and its art, most especially Caravaggio. A vegetarian, he inherited the family farm located on the old Appian Way after his father, a renowned Communist died.

His partner, Gianni Peroni, is a few years short of retirement and living with Teresa Lupo the chief pathologist. Silvio di Capua has been a part of Teresa's team for a long time starting as a hippie-ish intern and turning into her much more responsible morgue assistant.

Leo Falcone is their boss and insistent upon good bars and restaurants. He's also one of the few policemen who are more interested in truth and justice than bribes making this a team effort. He has known Agata for years as he sponsored her as a student in the orphanage.

Agata Graziana is a former sister who left the convent after the case in which Nic's wife died. She is an art expert consulted by museums. And Gianna and Leo have set her up with Nic in an attempt to entice him back to life.

My Take

I love this series. I love how Hewson integrates modern-day events with an ancient city so we get to play armchair tourist as we follow the detectives through Rome's art and architecture as they work to solve the crime. And the food! Oh, Hewson brings such an enjoyment of Italian foods as the team meets over meals to discuss the case.

In *Fallen Angel*, Hewson will have you twisting in frustration and anger as the contemporary story unfolds. It's a nasty story of Cain and Abel proportions with a horrid twist at the end. Expedient with a sort of justice.

The Cover

I liked the cover. The subtext is the story of Beatrice Cenci and at the top of the cover is what appears to be a marble statue of a girl lying down forming an arc over a sunset backdrop of the city of Rome with the River Tiber front and bottom with its own arches repeating the effect. The title is very apt applying to both the contemporary and the historical.

Marleen says

ARC, to be published February 4, 2011.

This book was send to me by EASON Book Club for me to review.

This is the ninth book in the Nic Costa series and before I begin my review I have to admit that I didn't read any of the previous titles.

The story starts with Rome detective Nic Costa being the first person on the scene when British academic Malise Gabriel falls to his death from an apartment, where he finds the death man being cradled by his young daughter Mina. From that first moment onwards Costa is intrigued by the teenager and the impression she gave of having something she needed to say but couldn't.

Although it's not immediately clear that this was more than a tragic accident a tentative investigation is started by the police. An investigation that gains speed when the apartment is emptied of its contents within a day of the death and the disappearance of Mina's brother.

When another death occurs in the same building and the family of the academic proves not only very uncooperative but also uninterested in discovering what happened everybody's suspicions are roused.

The death shows shocking similarities to the 16th century legend of Beatrice Cenci, a young noble woman who was tortured and executed by the Vatican after she and her family killed her father, who was abusing her.

Is this really a case of history repeating itself, or is there a darker, more hidden explanation. And with none of the people involved prepared to give honest answers to questions, will Costa and his colleagues ever get to the bottom of this case.

This is a very well written book. It is as much about the characters involved, the relationships between them and their emotions as it is about the mystery. Rome is a wonderful setting and almost a character in the story in itself.

The mystery is well plotted. Everytime the reader thinks she knows what's going on another twist is introduced. And when I finally thought I had it all worked out, the author had one more surprise in store for me.

Yes, I think I might have gotten more out of this book if I had read the previous titles in the series, but I don't think I missed out on much. This book can very well be read and enjoyed on its own, although it might entice you to go back and read the first 8 books. I know I will be looking for those now. I found myself another author to add to my list of "must reads".

Zoe says

First I have read of this author. Enjoyed the overall story arc with the characters, and felt that they have (probably) been well established in other novels. Found it hard to read at times as it sometimes was unnecessarily descriptive of particular things. Found the pace of the book to be rather slow at points with plot developing mainly through the characters. Overall I probably would have enjoyed this more if I had read some of the earlier books, where the characters were the main focus and we knew more of there backgrounds to understand why they act and react the way they do. If I read more I may come back and review my rating and comments. :)

Pavan Reddy says

Good.Boring.Different.

Strictly no offence to anyone its not my kind of novel. I thought it would be fast paced but it was just opposite. Last chapters were expeditious and I had fun reading it from then. I'm not good at reading a novel

which describes more of geographic rather than the content. Now I will stop blabbering and continue with my review story was exemplary and its connection through past were convincing. Overall its an rational book and according to me it delivers a message which says "Even if you're an innocent, circumstances can bend you to make the anything discreet for survival".

Be happy and Thank you

Julia says

I was very excited to get this book as an ARC. I'm always looking for a good suspense novel, and its clear David Hewson knows how to write them!

The Fallen Angel manages to have a constant stream of plot twists that keep you guessing and an ending you wont expect, but despite all the times you try to wrap your head around the ending, once you get there you'll say "Of course!". Although, let me warn you (in a good way), you may have the "of course" moment twice! Hewson has quite a twist planned for you and things are not as they seem!

The suspense aspect of this novel, is of course there. The beginning starts at a nice pace, introducing you to the characters and setting of the story. The murder of the Englishman Malise Gabriel happens right around the beginning of chapter three. The first 100 pages or so go at a medium pace, giving you time to piece together the clues but then after that, the book becomes impossible to put down. The evidence comes streaming in and the painful thing (in a good-writing way of course) is that you get to see what different characters now, and of course people are quite tricky and frustrating at times, so you have to be reading the book yelling at them to do something that they don't want to do quite yet.

The characters are amazing. I think the important thing is that characters always have depth, and these definitely do. Everyone has a back story and although this book in the Nic Costa series doesn't cover everyone's, you at least get a hint of what it would be. The people in the Gabriel family of course have a more detailed background (as the death is in their family) but they become a great mystery within itself.

Another great part of this book: it involves history. The book has a great incorporation of the story of Beatrice Cenci who was executed in Rome. The incorporation of this part of history brings you around Rome and to the controversy that surrounds Beatrice Cenci's death (that if you read the author's note, does exist in Rome but not such a high awareness level). I think this added pluck of history greatly adds to the story and constantly reminds the reader "You are in Rome" (which, if you are reading intently enough, you really will feel that you are in Rome).

I would definitely recommend this book to anyone who wants a good suspense novel! Although it is probably nice to have read the previous books in the series first (1-8), I think this was is easily enjoyed standing on its own!

I think this was a great read and I am definitely going to read more of Hewson's writing. He has a true talent for creating suspense novels that keep you constantly guessing.

Note: I struggled with how many stars to give this book so its somewhere in the mushy center between four

and five!

*I received this book free through a Goodreads Giveaway.

Barry Stoch says

This is the second of the Nic Costa series that I have read. I quite enjoyed both of them!

Wonderfully paced, with great character development, and the occasional plot twist made for entertaining reading. If you enjoy the detective murder mystery genre, I would definitely recommend as being worth the read

Renee Alarid says

I received this book through **Goodreads First Reads** and I have to say that I wish I knew about this series and the author before I read the novel because I know that I have probably missed some very valuable insight on the characters and the back-story of the book.

With that said, *The Fallen Angel* intrigued me from the start. I love murder mysteries and this was not a disappointment! Mr. Hewson made me want to get to know the characters and why or why not they were apart of the novel. The novel was well written and each character was used throughout the novel and had a purpose to actually be mentioned. As a reader, you wanted to know each of *The Fallen Angel* characters and you could actually imagine what they looked liked and felt throughout the novel. I am still curious about Mina and I still have many questions about her and the dynamics of her family as odd as they were!

I also like the fact that the author incorporated real-life restaurants, locations and tales of history from Rome. I can not wait to go to Rome in the fall so that I can actually see the location and have some really good food thanks to Mr. Hewson.

Bottom line, if you like crime/thriller/murder novels that interweave with real-life locations, I suggest that you read *The Fallen Angel* - you will not be disappointed. I am excited that I found a new author and a new series to start reading. Mr. Hewson found himself a new fan!

Lizzie Hayes says

On the last weekend of August Nic Costa is sitting on a bench on the Garibaldi Bridge in Rome with Agata Graziano, when he is attracted by a commotion and sees a pyjama clad girl with blood on her sitting next to a body on the ground, saying in English 'Daddy'. The papers the next day report the tragic accident of British academic Malise Gabriel who fell to his death from a Rome apartment.

But Nic Costa senses that something is wrong, and that this is not a simple accident. The girl Mina brings to Nic's mind a tragedy from another age that of the long dead Beatrice Cenci who had been executed by the Vatican 1599 when she had avenged the sexual tyranny of her parent. Although on holiday he gets permission to visit the apartment of the building from which Malise Gabriel had fallen.

Nic learns that the girl Mina was something of a prodigy, but had never attended school being taught at home by both her parents. But the son Robert three years older than Mina was somewhat wayward. After visiting the apartment with his colleague Peroni, Inspector Falcone agrees to open a formal investigation. But the Gabriel family is less than co-operative and Nic is sure they are hiding something.

Whilst both Peroni and Falcone have been struggling with the investigation sometimes veering to, maybe it was as accident? Further revelations and the discovery by Nic Costa of another body and all doubts are swept away. Then the investigation is stepped up.

Atmospheric and mesmerizing the reader is drawn into a present day story that has parallels with the past, but can we trust the past – how much is truth and how much is myth? As the story unfolds the sudden surprising twists make compelling reading, as eventually tragically the truth is unveiled.

Lizzie Hayes

Susan F. says

Typical Hewson! Well written and so many twists and turns - keeps you guessing right up to the last page.

Ed says

Six-word Review: Hidden family secrets lead to danger.

A slow moving but interesting mystery that shows how complicated things can get when a dysfunctional family is involved.

I've liked every one of Hewson's "Nic Costa" series. This one perhaps less than the others. The character development is incredibly well done but the long conversations involving these characters could have been shortened without losing any of the meaning.

The book opens with the death by a fall from a scaffolding of a visiting academic and author, Malise Gabriel. At first, it appears to be an accident but later is correctly diagnosed as a murder. Nic's boss, Leo Falcone, becomes obsessed with the case and tramples over everyone's grief as he tries to drag out the truth. Nic is drawn to Gabriel's teen-age daughter, Mina, and her fascination with the execution of Beatrice Cenci for patricide in 1599. As more and more is learned about the relationships within the family, Nic and his co-workers become even more confused. The case also gets even more complicated when Mina's brother and a crooked cop are shot on the street.

Eventually, all is straightened out but in ways that are somewhat surprising. The last chapter attempts to tie

things up but contains a surprise of its own.

There are a couple sub-plots that illuminate Nic's emotional vulnerability and his close relationship with his partner, Peroni. The descriptions of Rome are extremely well-done and having been there, I can picture where things are taking place.

I think it would be helpful, if you are new to the series, to read some of the earlier books but even without that, you can enjoy this offering.

Suspense Magazine says

This ninth Nic Costa book follows closely on the heels of “City of Fear.” Nic's present adventure takes the reader deep into Rome, not only into the complex family life of the man, Gabriel, who has apparently plunged to his death from a faulty scaffold, but deep into the ancient Cenci family and the mythology that surrounds that fateful clan.

Three days into his August holiday, Nic comes upon a young English girl, Mina Gabriel, bending over her father's dead form. The similarities to Beatrice Cenci, a tragic Roman figure, are striking. As are the parallels between the Gabriel family and the Cenci family. To begin with, the death happened on Via Beatrice Cenci, where the family has been staying. Something about the accident, about the way Mina looks at him and about the way her brother disappears after an enigmatic statement, ‘She's safe now,’ compels Nic to investigate, even though it's August and, as everyone reminds him, he's on holiday.

So is almost everyone else at the Questura, the police department where Nic works. This makes investigation a little more difficult. The fact that the other police don't at first think the death is suspicious gives Nic more problems. Why was Mr. Gabriel, an intelligent, popular, respected academic, reduced to living in this dilapidated building in the ghetto? Is the answer in the family's tangled history or in further links to the Cenci history? Mina and her mother are obviously holding something back, but nothing will make them reveal what it is.

An ancient organization, The Brotherhood of the Owls, with links to Galileo, may hold some clues. But then, again, it may just add to the confusion.

Meanwhile, an attraction to Agata Graziano—a beautiful woman who has given up the vocation of nun—is tugging at Nic. Will the memory of his deceased wife let him pursue whatever might become of a relationship with her?

It was great fun to delve into Roman history and a modern mystery with Nic Costa.

Reviewed by Kaye George, Author of “Choke”, for Suspense Magazine

Molly says

As a native Italian I can be very picky when it comes to novels set in Italy, and I was really looking forward to this, my first read in the Nic Costa series.

The story starts with the untimely death of Malise Gabriel, a British academic living in Rome, an event which initially seems an accident but soon it emerges it might be all but. The dysfunctional family of the deceased are hiding something from the police and investigator Nic Costa, who is captivated by the mystery

and naivety Malise's teenage daughter Mina, feels he has to get to the bottom of the story even though is he meant to be on holiday.

The family's behaviour and relationships soon seem to mirror the story of Beatrice Cenci, an Italian noblewoman who, together with her family and especially her brother Giacomo, organised a plot to kill her abusive father and was executed in 1599 despite the great protest of the people of Rome.

I really liked a number of aspects of this book, which is clearly very well researched not only from the historical details about Beatrice Cenci. The police characters and their description are realistic and not patronising: the book portrays people who have to work within the constraints of a rigid and often corrupt bureaucracy. Nic likes Rome, Italy, good food and good wine which are an important part of his life – but not to the point of making him become a caricature. The description of places and people shows clearly that David Hewson has spent a considerable amount of time in Italy – his description of Rome made me want to go back, and he really had me wondering how on earth he knows so much about how to rebuild an old Vespa!

This has been deemed the best so far of the Nic Costa series but I'm sure I won't be disappointed when reading the previous ones – which I can't wait to do.
