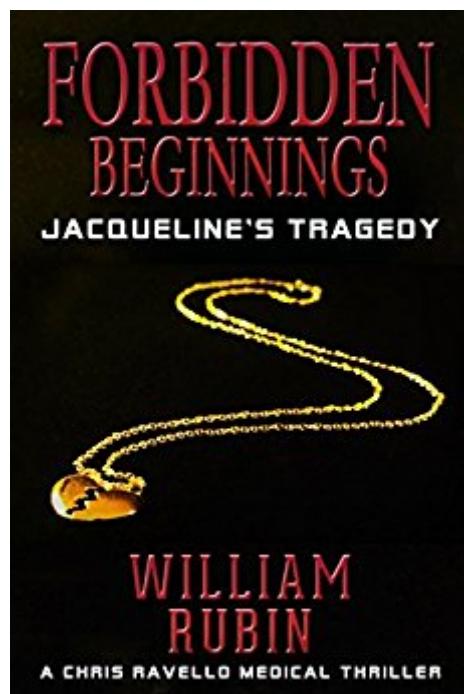


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Forbidden Beginnings: Jacqueline's Tragedy: A Chris Ravello Medical Thriller



Synopsis

A senseless assault. An agonizing, life-threatening decision. In the moment of truth, with countless lives at stake, how can justice hope to prevail? New York City trauma surgeon, Dr. Christopher Ravello, has it all. A breathtaking, vivacious wife. Lovely children. Life-saving work, and a beautiful home in one of the City's most coveted neighborhoods. But in an instant, Chris' world is shattered. The brutal and senseless assault of his mother, Jacqueline, leaves her barely alive. Consumed with anguish and fear, battling time and circumstances, Chris' search for a life-saving treatment leads to an agonizing decision and takes him down a path of no return. In the wake of his mother's assault, Chris and life-long friend, Detective Kevin Kennedy, risk their lives and livelihoods tracking down Jacqueline's attacker. When Ravello, driven by an all-consuming rage, at last comes face-to-face with his mother's assailant, every fiber of his being calls out for vengeance. In the moment of truth, with so much at stake for he and his family, what will Chris choose?

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Customer Reviews

In the preface to his book *Forbidden Beginnings: Jacqueline's Tragedy*, author William Rubin explains that this stand-alone novel delivers the back story of Chris Ravello, a trauma surgeon who will serve as a protagonist in the already published *Forbidden Birth*, also published in 2017. This is not a prequel in the way many prequels are, short novels ending with a cliffhanger that entices the reader to buy the next book in the series. This 191-page novel stands on its own and delivers a story with a conclusion. It is not a conclusion I enjoyed. I am not a fan of rainbows appearing over the good ship lollipop while ethereal happy music plays in the background but there is an audience for feel good endings. I am not trying to reveal the ending but I feel comfortable with setting the scene for what is to come. There is a good story here with more than one serious medical problem examined. Dr. Chris Ravello is plagued with a condition described by a word so long that I still can't appreciate it. Sufficient to say, it is brought on by stress. He is a trauma surgeon. That should be stressful enough to bring on many attacks. There is a crisis event in which Chris's mother is attacked and remains in a coma for a long time. More stress for Chris. For the reader, there is an interesting discussion of diagnoses and treatments for coma victims. There is yet another horrible medical problem discussed but that would be a spoiler so I can't list it here. This novel should interest folks in the medical field: nurses, EMT personnel, and students pursuing medical degrees or certificates. This is a novel celebrating family values and how those values help people get through different types of crises. I felt it went overboard in this respect and at times I felt I was watching *Ozzie and Harriet* re-runs. Not all bad because *Ozzie and Harriet* were popular. There is an audience for this type of sugar-coated, optimistic, all-things-are-possible-if-you-believe world. And except for this rather saccharine view of the world, the story is well told even if at times it is rather slow moving. Dr. Chris Ravello is a trauma surgeon at the top of his game. The long years of study are finally paying off and he is now in the position to train other doctors. He has enough money to secure a seven-figure mortgage on a dream home. He, his family, and his friends have dinners and get-togethers to congratulate each other on how well they have done and how perfect their world is. This goes on for 33 pages until Chris's mother is attacked and hospitalized. The race is on to find a method of treatment that will save her life. Another race is on to find out the identities of the attackers so they can either be brought to justice or at least experience vengeance from Ravello and his life long friend, now a detective, Kevin Kennedy. Dr. Ravello feels that there can be other uses for his scalpel other than to save lives. This moral conflict is played out in the rest of the novel.

Is vengeance ever justified? Can good people do bad things if it leads to justice that can not be delivered through strictly legal means? Detective Kennedy and Dr. Ravello will conduct their own investigation in their own way. As an ex-police officer, I could not accept that a senior detective would go so far as to perform an armed assault with a trauma surgeon as a backup. But that is only one of the problems I had with the novel. If you are looking for a story with a Utopian, rosy picture of the world, try this story. It is well written.

Beginnings, was an interesting read. The starting of the story was a little slow due to backstory on the main characters, but picked up speed shortly after and was well worth sticking with. The theme of the story hinges on the brutal attack of Jacqueline, Dr. Chris Ravello's mother. She ends up in a coma. Dr. Chris Ravello, a trauma surgeon, is faced with many struggles brought about within his mother's tragedy. His pheochromocytoma becomes worse due to added stress, he has problems staying focused on his job, struggles with trying to stay strong for his family, and deals with an underlying will for revenge. It only gets worse. Dr. Ravello is forced to make some life altering decisions. Will he take a leap of faith or play it safe? Even though this was a prequel in the series. It was easy to read as a stand alone. I look forward to reading the next book in the series..

I felt this novel was a great read! Dr. Rubin did a successful job drawing the plot, which was fast moving and polished. The main characters were realistic and empathetic. I've never read any novels by William Rubin, and have book 2 in my Kindle library ready to read next. I recommend this novel to those readers who like thrillers, especially medical thrillers. My recommendation is that you read them in order.

Basically, the story was okay but there was just something that I never really "got" about it. I hate to say this but maybe it was a little too "sugary" for me. Oh I don't know. It just wasn't my taste.

Great reading! Reads like a Robin Cook novel. I hope he writes many more! Can't wait to read future novels!

Sometimes a prequel doesn't seem important to a series already started; however, I was very happy to take a step back for William Rubin's Chris Ravello Medical Thriller series! More, I highly encourage you to start the series with this book before you continue on to the second, *Forbidden Birth*... Be sure to read my review of that book. There are two reasons I was happy to see the

prequel. First, it shares more of the life and family of Chris Ravello so that we learn more of the man who by the next book has made a major career change...and that leads to the second reason--to learn why he made that decision...By the time readers are in the second book, we are immediately thrown into a brilliant plot or a thriller that pulls you directly into and through the book. Knowing the why, how and when Ravello became a cop lays a foundation that, for me, established him as a righteous hero, one to look forward to as he uses his significant knowledge, expertise, and experience in fighting crimes related to medical issues...The Sub-Title, Jacqueline's Tragedy, is the key to the major change to Chris Ravello and his family's lives. Jacqueline, Chris' mother, had been behind every action and reaction of daily living during Chris' early school years. From her, he gained the strength to fight against bullies, stand strong in doing right, and working hard to achieve the most he could... He was now a surgeon, performing small and large miracles to save those who needed his expertise...Chris was now able to afford a larger house for his wife and two children. It was on the first Sunday in that new house that all the family, including Chris' parents and his best friend, Kevin Kennedy had come for a small housewarming... Kevin was a cop as had been Chris' father. Everybody was thrilled with the beautiful home and after the meal, that day, Jacqueline had taken Chris into another room and presented her son with a stunning gold medallion of St. Jude. It was almost as if she knew even then that Chris would one day need that help promised through praying to St. Jude... But that was later, after Jacqueline, herself, had been killed by street violence...Jacqueline had been on her way to help serve at a food kitchen when a man waved her to stop. She hesitated, but then saw another man lying on the nearby walk. As soon as she got out to help and moved to the man, she was caught. But she fought them so hard that finally they had to run because the police was on their way. They rushed her to the hospital but she soon went into a coma... Finally, after days of visiting, Chris noticed a strange mark and thought she might have been drugged... Telling Kennedy, it was soon discovered that another man had the same mark and that there appeared to be more than an assault happening...Ravello and Kennedy had handled many tough issues since they had grown up together. Now, there was no way that Chris was not going to be involved with finding those who had attacked his mother. Kennedy soon showed his intelligence in working to get Chris permitted to be informally involved, since the mark appeared to be leading to something that could be behind all the missing older people who had been reported. Soon, even the governor was involved and not only agreed to have Chris involved, but wanted him to take over an already-formed medical group that had, as yet, not solved one case since none of those working had any medical training...The book quickly gets into a serious investigation, with Chris finding a side of him not seen for a long time, when he used a scalpel as a weapon to scare a witness into

talking! There were two interesting medical issues that became prominent in the story...one that was unique and plagued our main character, Chris... And another which was used to attempt to bring Jacqueline out of her coma... The ending of Jacqueline's life was via a brief awakening where she was able to speak to all of her family... What a blessing that decision, though fatal, made to the family. In fact, the drama of routine death-life actions, together with those who care not about life itself, if they can make money through, in this case, selling organs, brings about today's reality into books that stir strong emotional responses that keep readers riveted. But the thrilling ending when Chris is in serious danger cannot be beat for an exhilarating conclusion, as well as lead in to Chris' new career! Bravo to Rubin for giving this more personal touch to his characters as we look forward to future medical thrillers by this expert in the medical field! Highly recommended. GABixlerReviews

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