

## BLANCA

### Synopses by Episode

#### **Episode 1**

A new intern, Blanca, arrives at San Teodoro police headquarters: Enthusiastic, vital, extremely well trained, but unfortunately blind. Commissioner Bacigalupo does not hide his consternation at having a blind intern there, while Inspector Liguori is intrigued by the girl's remarkable ability to compensate for her lack of sight by using her other senses and her amazing intuition.

The first case she has to deal with involves Margherita, a woman Blanca had briefly met at the entrance to the police station and who is found stabbed under the San Giorgio Bridge, formerly the Morandi Bridge, her eyes horribly gouged out. Suspicion initially falls on the husband, alcoholic and violent, but their 12-year-old daughter, Lucia, firmly insists her father did not leave the house that night and begs Blanca to find a way to clear him.

Blanca can't help but see herself in that little girl. In fact, when she was more or less the same age as Lucia, she lost her sister Beatrice to arson, which took her own sight, as well. Plagued with guilt at not having been able to save her sister, she found a kind of redemption in the pursuit of justice.

Although she is not directly involved in the investigation, it's thanks to careful listening to the recording of the last call Margherita made that she is able to identify the exact spot the woman was killed: It was not where the body was found, but at the port, where she worked as an interpreter for the Marcenaro family's logistics company. Blanca's discovery reinforces Liguori's hypothesis, which links the murder to four others that took place in the same area, coinciding with the docking of the ship *Zacinto*. Despite that, the discovery of the special attention Ruggero Marcenaro had showed Margherita and the fact that the woman was three months pregnant at the time of her death, reinforce the hypothesis of a relationship between the two and that it was because of it her husband killed her. Gianni is then arrested, right in front of a shocked Lucia.

#### **Episode 2**

For Blanca, every day is fraught with challenges, especially since she has decided to return to live in the old family home, her only company being Linnaeus, her faithful guide dog. To enjoy good meals, she often orders takeaway and gets to know Nanni, an extroverted young chef whom she dared to give a negative review to.

At work, Blanca is firmly unconvinced that Margherita's murder is a case of domestic violence, and when she finds herself consoling Lucia, distraught at her father's arrest, the little girl provides her with a substantiated clue: She is sure that Gianni did not leave the house that night, because for some time she has been devising ploys for keeping him under surveillance so he doesn't drink too much. Of course it isn't hard evidence that can be brought before a judge, but it is enough to persuade Liguori. With a little help from Alberto, Blanca's uncle, who holds an important position in the Public Prosecutor's Office, the two obtain permission from Bacigalupo to bug the ship, even though their boss thinks it's just a waste of time.

The surveillance leads to nothing, and the ship is about to leave, but Blanca discovers by chance that Andrea Marcenaro works on board, under a false name, so the other sailors won't know he is the owners' son. The vanilla incense burning in his cabin reminds Blanca of what she had smelled on Margherita's clothes and convinces her of the man's guilt. To set him up, she then decides to offer herself as a decoy in the bar where they figure the young Marcenaro met his victims, unbeknownst to the commissioner but in cahoots with Liguori.

At the bar, Andrea speaks affectionately of Margherita and gives no sign of wanting to hurt Blanca, but when he takes her to a taxi, he overhears her home address and shortly afterwards she finds him there, armed with a knife. She manages to fend him off, but only Liguori's lucky arrival finally saves her – he had intuited she was in danger.

So, Andrea confesses to the murders of the four women, but not to Margherita's: Our team then determine it was Rita Marcenaro, Andrea's mother, who killed her, because Margherita had realized the boy was a serial killer and was about to turn him in.

Although Bacigalupo is anything but effusive with compliments, Blanca can only feel satisfied: Thanks to her courage and her extraordinary skills, she led to the solving of five murders, got Lucia's father released, and discovered a profound professional rapport with Liguori. But above all, she proved she is not afraid: So much so that in the end she goes to dive from the cliff her sister used to jump off of when they were children – something she never had the courage to do before. She doesn't know, however, that a shadowy figure is spying on her.

### **Episode 3**

This time the San Teodoro police are investigating the mysterious death of a sixteen-year-old boy, Camillo, who, following an anonymous tip, was found dead at the foot of the stairwell in an ancient noble palace. The case deeply affects Liguori: The building, in fact, has belonged to his family for generations, and for the inspector it harbors painful memories. His uncle lives now there, Count Edoardo, an eccentric who dwells in the glories of the past.

At first, the suspects are Arianna and Bartolomeo, friends of Camillo's who were with him on the night of his death. Liguori tries to conceal evidence against his uncle, but suspicion shifts to him anyway following the testimony of the two kids. Edoardo is arrested but proves to be delusional, since to declare his innocence he claims it was the ghosts haunting the palace that attacked Camillo.

It's discovered, in the meantime, that the kids are part of a drug ring being monitored for months by the team of Deputy Chief Achilli, a colleague of Bacigalupo's. Camillo might have been killed because he wanted out of the ring and planned to rat on the pushers.

Blanca is puzzling over the truth, while also trying to extricate herself from some personal issues: Lucia, Margherita's daughter she's stayed close to, goes to her for help because her father is unable to get over his wife's death and can't find work. But above all, we find out who the shadow spying on Blanca was: Carmine Russo, father of Sebastiano, Beatrice's then boyfriend found guilty of her death based on Blanca's testimony. Carmine claims that his son, after being released from prison, committed suicide, and it's all Blanca's fault, that she ruined his life with her accusations. Blanca at that time was only a child and in that same disaster she lost her sight ... how could they have possibly considered her testimony reliable? Blanca is publicly defamed by Carmine, who demands to know how a blind woman can possibly work for the police, insinuating it's only because of her family connections.

Just as Blanca is starting to question her own credibility, Arianna calls her, saying she has a confession to make and wants to speak only to her.

#### **Episode 4**

When Blanca goes to the meet with Arianna, she finds the girl almost dead from an overdose. Everyone dismisses the matter out of hand, sure that the girl was just a junkie, while Blanca senses she had something important to say, so much so that someone tried to get her out of the way. Unfortunately, when you are blind, drug addicted or simply elderly and a bit eccentric (as in the case of Count Edoardo), it is tough to be considered credible.

Only Liguori seems to trust Blanca and, in a moment of closeness, she invites him to dinner. Lost in her reveries about a romantic evening, she can't prepare anything and has to turn to Nanni to put something edible on the table. Although the cook is jealous at seeing her interested in someone else, he makes the best of a bad situation and also agrees to hire Lucia's father as a busboy in his restaurant, so he can at least have some work.

It's all set, but Liguori doesn't show. Instead, Uncle Alberto appears. At Blanca's request, he had taken over the files of the investigation into Beatrice's death: He came to

reassure her that her accusations against Sebastiano were well founded and that the man certainly did not take his own life, but drowned at sea while working on a fishing boat.

Meanwhile, Liguori, worried about his uncle Edoardo's situation, plucked up his courage and went to ask his mother, the top lawyer Livia Timperi, for help to clear him – but she refused. Deeply disappointed, instead of going to Blanca's house, he preferred to visit Stefania, a coworker of Achilli's and an old friend, with whom he has a casual relationship when they work on the same investigations.

The next day, when Blanca and Liguori meet at the press conference for the closure of the case, she feigns indifference and limits herself to a few digs... but she is soon distracted by something far more important. In the room, full of policemen, journalists and judges, she recognizes the voice of the anonymous caller that led to Camillo's body being found.

Blanca and Liguori, more and more certain that the kids were in a game bigger than just them, manage to involve Bartolomeo and set a trap for the real ring leaders, who turn out to be Achilli and his team. It was they who killed Camillo and tried to eliminate Arianna too, when she decided to report them.

Edoardo is cleared, Arianna wakes up in the hospital, and Blanca and Liguori find themselves close again ... if it weren't for Blanca's discovery that there's a woman and a child in his life, Marinella and Gabriele. It's a setback for her, just as it is to discover that Carmine Russo, even when she assures him she was right about Sebastiano, does not give up in the face of evidence. The man is determined to prove that Blanca was wrong and to make her pay for what she did.

What Blanca does not know is that another threat also looms over her: A mysterious man sneaks into her house and installs an electric wire in the kitchen pantry, disappearing before she returns. The only trace of his having been there is a packet of Linnaeus' kibbles left out of place, but she puts it back on a shelf without paying much attention, unaware of now being framed by a hidden camera.

## **Episode 5**

As Blanca is wondering about the relationship that links Liguori to Marinella, the latter goes to pick up her son Gabriele from the pool – but there is no trace of the child. After locating his cell phone in a trashcan, she is convinced he has been kidnapped and rushes to the police station. Bacigalupo thinks it's just an ordinary runaway, but Blanca notices a detail in a voice message that really makes it seem like kidnapping: In fact, shortly after, the recordings of the cameras in front of the pool show a twenty-year-old young man, Vittorio Pittaluga, forcing the child into his car.

Vittorio's parents, Marzio and Clelia, prominent wholesalers of a fish company, are evasive when questioned, but thanks to wiretaps, Blanca discovers that their son has also been kidnapped and a ransom request has been received. In fact, Vittorio and Gabriele are locked up together in an abandoned factory. The two kidnapers, Italo and Marino, only wanted to take the older boy, but the latter already had Gabriele in his car: He was taking him to the police on charges of petty theft, which the boy refuses to admit. Although at first Vittorio goes on treating the boy badly and closes himself up in pointless egotism, little by little the difficulties of imprisonment make him open up and feel protective of little Gabriele.

Blanca has figured out Gabriele is not Liguori's son and that he has a rather superficial relationship with Marinella, as in "going out together and sleeping apart". But in such a difficult moment Marinella seeks greater closeness and emotional support from the inspector, and Blanca does not know how to deal with that.

The police decide to trace the kidnapers' location when they contact the Pittalugas by telephone ... but when Blanca and Liguori arrive at the factory, they find that Marino has been warned and has already loaded the hostages into a van, ready to take off. In the shootout that ensues, Liguori's car is put out of commission and Linnaeus is seriously injured.

## **Episode 6**

As the dog hovers between life and death in a veterinary clinic, Blanca is distraught: For her, losing Linnaeus would mean not only losing her lifelong companion, but also her ability to move safely and independently. It was thanks to Linnaeus that she, after losing her sight, had managed to find the courage to go out alone into the world, which had suddenly become dark and threatening. Maybe she really should leave the police force and stop being a danger to yourself and others...

For the kidnapers, the situation is more dire than ever: Hidden in a makeshift shelter, they are forced to improvise. To put pressure on Pittaluga and get him to pay up, Italo decides to send him an ear of one of the boys, and Vittorio offers himself in Gabriele's place.

Lucia tries to comfort her as best she can, but the girl has her own problems: She doesn't want to go on a school trip for fear of leaving her father home alone. As she's talking to Blanca, her cell phone rings and, hearing that ringtone, Blanca has an intuition: Clelia Pittaluga doesn't have just one cell phone, but two. One personal, and one she uses only to communicate with the kidnapers. She is their accomplice, the person who warned them the police were coming.

Clelia confesses: She set up the kidnapping to pay off her son's debts with dangerous types (and maybe in the secret hope of getting her husband to value a son he never felt

was his), but then the situation got out of hand. Her ability to control things further diminishes when Italo, the only kidnapper she actually knew, is accidentally killed by Marino during a fight. The latter, freaked out, no longer seems interested in money but only wants to get it over with as quickly as possible.

The kidnapped boys realize they have little chance of making it out alive, and a repentant Gabriele gives Vittorio back the webcam he had, in fact, stolen from him. Vittorio has a brilliant idea and turns on the camera: From the live stream that lights up on his profile, the police are able to identify the exact spot they are being held.

The police surround the shed but do not know how to intervene: Marino threatens to blow everything up if anyone dares to approach. But Blanca, before anyone has time to stop her, crosses the square and gets to Marino. She manages to make him listen because she, blind and unarmed, is not seen by Marino as a threat – and she convinces the kidnapper to give himself up.

As the parents hug their children again, Liguori praises Blanca: She is special, and she must not even think of leaving her job. But then he leaves with Marinella. What Blanca cannot know is that, after recovering from the emotions of those days, Marinella will ask Liguori to take their relationship to the next level and move in with them, but he does not return the woman's feelings with the same intensity and so will choose to leave her.

As consolation, Blanca hears the news that Linnaeus will recover, although his convalescence will be lengthy. And so she finds herself spending a pleasant evening with Nanni, with whom she had quarreled in a moment of tension, but from whom she now gladly accepts an automatic vacuum cleaner, which will help her when she is in a pinch. Their image appears on a monitor: Through cameras now hidden around her house, someone is still spying on her.

## **Episode 7**

At the police station, the case of the mysterious death of a diver, Lorenzo Barisoni – a former convict the police had been keeping an eye on for a while – is being investigated. He was suspected of being involved in the trafficking of Nazi finds from the Second World War, being run from a well-known diving center in the area. The center is owned and managed by Claudio Pastorino, along with his kids Bernardo and Fulvia, Lorenzo's wife. Fulvia and Lorenzo met in prison, where she was a volunteer, and falling in love with her gave Lorenzo the push to finally change his life. But now our protagonists – and in particular Blanca, who is sent to seek information undercover, as a student in a course for blind divers – are wondering who Lorenzo really was: The trafficker? Or the innocent victim of an injury, while the real culprits are elsewhere...?

Understanding what's really going on gets even tougher when a woman is caught running away from Lorenzo's apartment: It's Carolina, his lover from before and an

accomplice in his criminal enterprises ... had she and Lorenzo secretly begun to see each other again? The woman denies it, claiming he was simply lending her money, so she could get it together and change her life, the way he did. But can people really change?

The theme is also reflected in Blanca's personal life. After the successful resolution of the kidnapping case, she and Liguori find themselves very close, and this leads her to neglect Nanni's constant attentions – even though she knows very well that of the two men he is the only one who can be relied upon.

Also on Blanca's mind is Lucia. Her father seems to have finally found a job, but it will mean going out of town for a few days: Blanca tries to find out more, but in vain, and in the meantime she invites the girl to come and stay with her.

Lucia is very happy to accept the offer, especially since Blanca finds herself in a really vulnerable moment: The vet tells her that Linnaeus, despite having recovered from the injury during the shootout, will no longer be able to serve as her guide dog: It would be better for him to go to another owner, to lead a more peaceful life adapted to his now advanced age. Blanca, despite the pain of separation, agrees to place him in the care of a retired trainer, and she tries to carry on with her life by relying only on a cane.

## **Episode 8**

The Lorenzo case gets complicated. It turns out that dealing in Nazi artifacts is only the tip of the iceberg of a much bigger crime ring: In the German ship in which they were found there was also a cargo of TNT, which the gang is taking from the ship and selling with Bernardo's help. Maybe Lorenzo was also part of that operation?

Blanca, whose true identity as a police agent is discovered by Fulvia, continues the investigation by leveraging the relationship she's established with her and convincing her of the importance of finding out the truth about Lorenzo, to prove her innocence. But just when Fulvia seems to have reached the decisive point, she crashes the car into an escarpment in an 'accident' that is not accidental, and ends up in a deep coma.

As if the difficulties at work were not enough, Linnaeus runs away from the trainer to whom he had been entrusted, and there's no trace of him. Blanca manages to find him in a nearby wood, but the dog is so aggrieved he won't let her get close and hides in the underbrush.

The police succeed in proving Bernardo's guilt in the trafficking of Nazi relics and the TNT, but he firmly denies having anything to do with Lorenzo's murder or Fulvia's crash. While the latter can easily be traced back to organized crime, a detail gleaned during her interrogation allows Blanca to grasp that the real person responsible for Lorenzo's death is Carolina. She had seduced Lorenzo and pushed him to use what he knew about the deals to their advantage, putting him back on the road to crime. Lorenzo

at first went along with her, but then he was on the verge of telling Fulvia everything ... so Carolina had to stop him.

And in taking him out, she had reminded him that men like him can never change.

That's the conclusion Blanca also draws in her personal life: She and Liguori finally kiss, but he immediately pulls back. She is convinced Liguori will not change for her, and that she must have someone reliable by her side. She already has such a person: Nanni, who was there for her from the moment they met, without ever having second thoughts, despite the fact she has often neglected him in favor of Liguori. When the case is closed, Blanca decides to tell him that if he's still interested, she is ready to be with him. It's plain that the cook had been waiting to hear only those words.

In the meantime, Gianni has returned to Genoa, and Lucia leaves Blanca to go back with him, despite his continuing to drink and display violent tendencies. Fortunately, Blanca is not alone for long because, amazingly, Linnaeus returns: The two are together again, and Blanca knows that she cannot do without her most trusted friend.

Everything seems to be going well. In the last scene, however, the viewer discovers that the mysterious person who sneaked into Blanca's house, the secret spy, is none other than Nanni, to whom she has just opened her heart.

## **Episode 9**

Nanni, as always preparing Blanca's food, begins to add drops of poison to her drinks. Initially, she complains of listlessness and slight dizziness, but she does not give it much importance, partly because at the station they are dealing with a particularly complex case: The death of Caterina, a young doctoral student of humble origins (her father is a sea captain, dishonored after the wreck of the his ship), but bright and dedicated. Her body, wearing only provocative lingerie, is found in an apartment owned by the oil company Picoil, but the girl's boyfriend, Valerio, also a researcher at the university, has no idea what she was doing there.

Liguori, on the other hand, has a very clear notion of who the culprit is: The president of Picoil, Giorgio Piccardo, a man with whom the inspector has had unfinished business since he was twelve, when he caught the man kissing his mother. Now the relationship between the two is over, but Livia, Liguori's mother, continues to be Piccardo's trusted lawyer. In this instance, too, she builds a solid defense around Piccardo, treating her son with disdain.

Blanca does not know anything about Liguori's fury towards Piccardo and instead focuses on the girl's acquaintances. By questioning Prof. Balduzzi, with whom Caterina was doing her doctorate and for whom Valerio is also an assistant, she discovers the girl did not have a scholarship and did the cleaning every morning for Cargo Genua, the



very shipping company her father was working for at the time of the shipwreck. Blanca senses she took that job to look for evidence to restore her father's good name, and she feels she's at last on the right track... but just then the police receive an anonymous series of intimate images of Caterina, which lead them to conclude she was a call girl. Was it one of her clients who killed her?

## Episode 10

Liguori is sure that sending the images was his mother's idea, to divert police attention from Piccardo, and he confronts the man directly, to the point of roughing him up. Called to testify about what happened, Blanca confesses it was Liguori who started it. She then tries to explain to her colleague she couldn't help but tell the truth, but he treats her coldly, feeling betrayed. For Liguori, telling the truth is not always such a good thing: He cannot forget how, as a child, he confessed to his father he saw his mother kissing Piccardo, and then how his father, shortly afterwards, took his own life.

But Blanca does not know all this and, with Liguori now removed from the case, she and Bacigalupo continue their investigation, discovering that Caterina had actually found evidence that demonstrated willful misconduct behind the shipwreck: There was an agreement between Cargo Genua and Picoil, which allowed the latter to get rid of chemical waste in old sunken ships. In order to have the definitive evidence to frame Picoil and exonerate her father, she was willing to grant sexual favors to a low-level Cargo Genua employee (the intimate images came from that and not from a double life as an escort) ... but when the guy showed up at the apartment for the assignation, Caterina was already dead.

Blanca carries on with the investigation and discovers Piccardo is actually innocent, and, indeed, that he was collaborating with Caterina to shed light on the actual link between Picoil and Cargo Genua, with whom Prof. Balduzzi was also colluding. This was the only secret relationship that actually existed between Caterina and Piccardo. The murderer turns out to be Valerio, the victim's boyfriend: When he discovered that Caterina's investigation would have also implicated their professor and irreparably compromised his career, he decided to get her out of the picture.

In this episode, Blanca also learns that in a fit of anger Lucia's father broke the girl's guitar, and that the girl built a dummy to practice for the admission exam to the Conservatory. Blanca then decides to lend her Beatrice's guitar, sure that Lucia's father won't have the nerve to touch it.

Blanca, estranged from Liguori and increasingly weak from the drops secretly administered by Nanni, takes refuge in the latter's affection. He seems to anticipate her every wish – thanks to the fact that he constantly surveilles her with the hidden cameras.

But his plan goes deeper. In fact, we discover he has completely soundproofed a basement room and equipped it with everything needed for a person to survive.

## Episode 11

One night, Blanca receives a call from an unknown number. No one says anything on the other end, only the mysterious sound of flowing water is heard. The caller is Carmine Russo, Sebastiano's father, but she doesn't know that. Nanni, who was sleeping next to her, seems to have heard nothing; but to reassure her he gets up to prepare something hot for her ... continuing to poison her without her suspecting anything.

The next day, Carmine is found dead in his apartment. Next to his body is the murder weapon, a pistol with the serial number abraded. A wall of his apartment is found covered with articles and photos of the people involved in Beatrice's murder, testifying to a life spent in a vain attempt to prove his son's innocence.

Bacigalupo is sure it was suicide, but Blanca realizes that that night there was someone with the victim. She goes to the house, and nearby she hears the water of the Bisagno, which flows forcefully due to a spate of rainy days: The noise reminds her of something, although the girl struggles to concentrate because of the drugs Nanni is poisoning her with... and because of those, when she enters Carmine's building, she suddenly falls, unconscious.

She wakes up in the hospital: Liguori had found her, having gone to there despite his refusal to accompany Blanca, still angry from events in the previous episode. The hospital doctor (not realizing Blanca is being poisoned) speculates that the cause of her illness may be a serious ear disease, which might even result in deafness. Blanca is terrified at the thought: Her uncle Alberto accompanies her home and tries to comfort her, reassuring her that feeling fear is normal.

Blanca feels sure it was Carmine who called her that night, but on her cell phone there is no longer any trace of that call, and Nanni says he does not remember anything of the kind. Is it possible she is so confused? Maybe so, since she even forgets to accompany Lucia to enroll in the Conservatory and only thanks to Nanni's help do they manage it.

Blanca goes back to Carmine's house to get a clearer idea, and on the wall with the clues she finds an earring she recognizes: Beatrice was wearing it when she lost her life in the shed on the beach. Those earrings had caused a quarrel between Beatrice and Sebastiano, who was jealous and wanted to know who had given them to her. Blanca mentions it to Nanni, and then she has an epiphany: Why aren't there any photos of his son in Carmine's house? But then Nanni suddenly slugs her, almost knocking her out.

## Episode 12

Blanca does not show up at Lucia's audition, which alarms Liguori: At Blanca's house he finds only Linnaeus, left alone. It then emerges that Carmine had indeed phoned Blanca on the night of his death ... and our protagonists realize that Nanni is the only person who could have erased the call from her cell phone. With an inspection of her home, they discover that Nanni is in reality Sebastiano – a fact that Blanca, now a prisoner in the soundproofed room, is also just realizing. Nanni's plan is to leave her locked in there to make her feel what he felt, unheard and confined for years, all because of her. Once out of prison, Sebastiano stole Nanni's identity; he was a coworker on the same ship, and he died in an accident. Blanca accuses Sebastiano of killing his father, Carmine, after the latter had discovered by chance he was still alive. However, he once again declares his innocence, and also of Beatrice's death. In any case, Sebastiano abandons Blanca in her prison, which begins to fill up with water as a flood hits Genoa. But at a certain point, seized by a guilty conscience, Sebastiano tells the police where Blanca is: Liguori rushes to free her and manages to rescue her just in the nick of time.

Going over Carmine's research, Blanca and Liguori find the address of a man who was a lifeguard on the beach where Beatrice died: He says he only saw a white car near the crime scene and immediately reported it, but then the prosecutor who had taken down his testimony never showed up again. Blanca is seized by a horrible doubt: Her uncle Alberto, at that time, had a white off-road vehicle. Is he the man from the prosecutor's office who only pretended to take that testimony, covering it up so as not to be found out? Was he Beatrice's killer? Had Carmine discovered the truth, and had Alberto also killed him because of it?

Meanwhile, the police track down Sebastiano near the Punta Crena promontory: Alberto also goes there ... to kill him. Blanca and Liguori, having arrived on the promontory, set out after them. Blanca finds her uncle and tells him she now knows everything. Her uncle confesses: Yes, he had lost his head for Beatrice and was obsessed with her. Knowing she was in love with Sebastiano had driven him insane with jealousy, to the point of killing her. Now it is Blanca, however, who is in danger: All at once, Sebastiano reaches them and saves her, as Alberto plummets over the cliff, just as Liguori was about to arrest him.

Blanca, with Linnaeus and Lucia, returns to the beach of the fiery tragedy. The little girl has rebelled against her father and now plays her guitar freely for them. Blanca feels she can finally get on with her life, proud of having played an active part in uncovering the truth, and finally at peace with her sister's memory.