



# Ripples

*Robert Innes*

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## **Ripples** Robert Innes

When Detective Sergeant Blake Harte is given the opportunity of a relaxing week away at a spa manor, he jumps at the opportunity. He can take one person with him - and who more than Harrison Baxter deserves time away from Harmschapel after everything he has been through?

But once at the Manor of the Lakes, the rest and relaxation they both crave is quickly brought to an end, when Blake and Harrison witness a man being murdered, by a mysterious hooded figure who appears to have the ability to walk on water.

How is it possible for someone to defy the laws of physics? And Blake's problems are only just beginning. The visit to the manor finds him coming face to face with figures from his past – and one in particular who could ruin any chance of Blake and Harrison ever being happy together.

The ripple effect is well and truly in play...

## **Ripples Details**

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Author : Robert Innes

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## From Reader Review Ripples for online ebook

### Neet says

This is the 3rd book in the DS Blake Hart mysteries and what a mystery it is. In this short read we find Blake happily thinking of ways to spend his two weeks off work. Along comes his landlady with an offer he can't refuse. A week at a luxurious spa with a fabulous discount and the landlord plans to invite a friend and Blake decides to ask Harrison. Blake hesitates at first but after talking to his BFF Susan. Only when he goes to ask Harrison he finds his landlady has beat him to the punch. No worries, Harrison decides to go. When they are ready to head out on the planned day, they discovered that the landlady has come down with a bad "cold"...can you say set up. The two decide to go with the blessings of the landlady. After a long drive they get to the mansion and upon arrival they see a hooded figure. After checking in and discovering that they have put in a room together (they get two singles) a surprise from Blake's past appears. I won't say more but we see more of the hooded figure, we are served with a murder mystery most foul, and will these two men get together? This is a fun read and it has biting humorous touches. It's a good read indeed!

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### Marcella says

This is the third book in the Blake Harte Mystery series.

Detective Sergeant Blake Harte is looking forward to his 2 weeks vacation. He plans on spending time at the local pub and just unwinding. Since his arrival in Harmschapel, there hasn't been a dull moment with the recent murders, so he is looking forward to unwinding and recharging his batteries.

He is given the opportunity to spend a week at a very exclusive spa and is able to bring along one guest. The only person he wants with him is Harrison. No one deserves relaxation and a getaway more than Harrison. The past year has been so traumatic for him and Blake wants to help ease some of Harrison's pain. So he invites him to the spa and Harrison happily agrees.

Upon arrival at the Manor of the Lakes, what Blake and Harrison hope will be a relaxing getaway quickly comes to an end when they both witness a murder committed by a mysterious hooded man who appears to have the ability to walk on water. They are dumbfounded and try to articulate how it is possible for such a thing. They know what they saw, but how is it possible?

Along with this mysterious murder, Blake is confronted with faces from his past, one in particular has the ability to interfere with the possibility of anything more happening between Blake and Harrison.

I do not want to give anymore away, because it is a mystery after all. The only thing I am going to say about this book is OMG!!! I thought Robert Innes shocked me speechless with the first two books, but I have never seen such a twist in a mystery before. I was truly shocked by the outcome and was just in awe of it all. Robert did an incredible job of keeping the secret until the very end. I was blown away. JOB WELL DONE!!!

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### L.Giselle says

**Another mysterious adventure!**

I love whodunnit and howdunnits, add a little romance and some drama and you have an excellent read!  
Light on the sexual content, heavy on mystery!

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### **Karen says**

DS Blake Harte and his new boyfriend, Harrison Baxter, are on a holiday. Soon after their arrival, they spot a hooded figure lurking around their hotel/spa resort. Harte also has a run-in with his ex-boyfriend and is beginning to think this vacation was not a great idea. The husband and wife owners are afraid. Between the hooded figure that only they seem to see, a hotel that isn't making much profit, and a mean and cruel elder brother lording his younger brother's failure over him, the owners are befriended by Harte and Baxter who just want to help. Then a horrid old man is murdered under nearly supernatural circumstances.

The police responding to the murder happen to be Blake's best friend Sally (a DS herself) and his former boss. The DI is a jerk whose dislike of Blake is obvious to all, and he has no compassion or empathy in his investigative techniques. While trying to figure out their new relationship, Blake and Harrison also get involved in the investigation.

I'm beginning to really like these characters even though the character development is going at a snail's pace. The action is rather simplistic and the ending, meant to be a surprise, just left me going "meh". I'm stubborn though and since these are so short, I'll finish the series.

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### **Galia says**

3.5 stars

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### **Harshini says**

Love how well crafted the plot is, and the development of Blake & Harrison's relationship

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### **Rachel says**

I really enjoyed this book. I love a good mystery and this gave that. In the previous two books the murders and murders were slightly measure to guess. I hadn't worked this out fully at all. But a few things had not niggled at me, also some of the clues weren't actually mentioned until the big reveal at the end like the razor. This book is well written and I loved seeing Sally more in this book. The whole storyline flowed well and made you want to keep reading.

I liked the closure with Blake's ex and I'm especially happy that Harrison and Blake are together now. I like that the book is more mystery than romance too.

I can't wait for the next book.

I voluntarily reviewed an advanced reader copy of this book.

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## **Ulysses Dietz says**

Confessional (Blake Harte mystery #2)

Ripples (Blake Harte mystery #3)

By Robert Innes

So in the next two instalments of this cute series, set in the fictional British country town of Harmschapel, we see the further adventures of lovelorn exile detective Blake Harte.

Blake is a compelling character—smart and empathetic—and has adapted happily to life in this little town where everybody not only knows your name but your business as well. The colorful characters that surround him, from his beehive-wearing landlady, Jacqueline, to his constabulary teammates, Matti, Patil, and Michael, to his maybe-almost-someday love interest Harrison Baxter, are all charming and curious and appealing.

The books feel like episodes in a TV series. The mystery plots aren't very profound, and anyone who's read Agatha Christie will figure things out. But I suspect the point is more to figure out what all the various players in these little dramas will do. "Confessional" focuses on a series of mysterious deaths associated with the local church (more on that anon), while "Ripples" has Blake and Harrison heading off on a "friends only" vacation week at a lake country resort—only to run into Blake's cheating ex and his new homewrecker wife.

Awkward.

Awkward, too, is some of the grammatical peculiarities that Innes clings to, and also his apparent lack of familiarity with either basic Catholic or Anglican church practice. A Catholic priest with children and grandchildren? An ordained woman in the Catholic church? Didn't the author ever see "The Vicar of Dibley" on BBC? Anglicans not only can have children, but they can have confessionals. This seemed a very obvious error that a careful editor would have caught.

But, if you're not a purist, the people are everything Miss Marple would have appreciated, because they invite analysis. And, how can one resist a handsome copper who's so insecure about his love life?

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## **Geri says**

I really like this series. The crimes are always really thought out and detailed....I never know which way they are going to go. This book is no different. The author has an incredible mind! My only slight disappointment was the romance between Harrison and Blake. Its been super slow burn, however this book seems to fast-forward their relationship without the development between them. Overall still a good 4\* read.

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## **Stuart Page says**

I finally returned to this series to read book three. Started last night, finished this morning. It's lovely to be back with Blake once more. Harrison is as cute as ever, too. And the mystery this time? Much, much more interesting than the last, in that it'll have you enthusiastically scratching your head (kind of like how I imagine Blake does.) I mean, the murder method is wacky - maybe even a little preposterous - but that's ok.

In its silliness, it's exciting. I enjoyed it.

\*Some spoilers up ahead. Watch out!\*

In the previous installment, Confessional, I knew who the murderer was, and how they had done it, quite early on, but what I didn't figure out was why they did it. In Ripples, I knew who had done it, and could guess most of why they had done it, very early (more on this later) but I had no idea how. And I think I prefer it this way around, if I have to choose. I'm still hoping that the mysteries will become a little trickier to work out all around, though. I don't want to know who did it - not until the very end - but everybody is so obvious that I can't help but figure it out before the halfway point.

For the first time, I'm wondering if the writing is a little bit lazy.

Robert, if you're reading this, (and I hope you are! Reviews are important feedback, right?) then I want you to know that you have an invested, long term reader here. And I want to remain invested in you and in this series. But here's where we get serious.

I worry that you are squandering your talent and loveable characters. You slip into too many simple, sometimes problematic, cliches. (When a character fumbles with a key during an important event? Sorry. They're a suspect. When somebody has a physical disability? Sorry, it's done to death, they're a suspect. Wife of an ex-spouse? They're absolutely a suspect, if only because we are meant to resent them. The fact that all three were involved in the murder? Come on. Boring. Easy. Done. Also, something I've been meaning to say for a while. The untrustworthy bisexual ex partner cheating on you with the opposite sex? Another cliché I could have done without. The ex-partner appearing years later, their personality smarmy, rude, and arrogant, their open button shirt revealing curly chest hair, gross in its upfront sexuality? I'm sorry, man. It's done. It's boring. A snooze fest. Given Blake immense empathy, I would expect the flawed characters in his life to be a little better than this paper cut-out, nineties sit-com style character.)

Also, you are not proofreading for errors enough. A better proofreader would pick up on those cliches above, and also those errors that you keep missing. Perhaps you should enlist more help. Moreover, and I think this should come under proofreading, you had two characters use a racial slur early on - thankfully it didn't come up after those two uses - as if they didn't realise the mistake, and what the appropriate alternative term is. Please find those terms. Change them. It's one thing for an ignorant character to use them, setting up their ignorance of other cultures and peoples. It's another thing for an ignorant writer to do it.

Finally, you stretched my suspension of disbelief too far in the setup and it snapped. The whole thing with the landlady setting up Blake and Harrison? I'm sorry. It's stupid. It is. I nearly stopped reading there. There are a million ways you could have got Blake and Harrison to the hotel, and you chose the silliest - not the good kind of silly - way of doing it. The idea of this landlady shipping her tenant with some other guy so much that she pays for their trip away somewhere, the way it's all handled. It reeks of a first draft, placeholder scene that never got updated.

And breathe.

Once the story got going - really, from when the murder 'took place' - it became much stronger. Most of my issues are with the opening chapters. The good thing is that, this being the age of electronic reading, you can fix a lot of things post publication if you want. Please, please do go back and think over a couple of details and the general presentation or your prose. I love your work in this series, and like Blake and Harrison's relationship, I want that work to continue to grow deeper, stronger, sexier - who said that?!

Heh. This became a lot longer than I planned for it to be. Guess I had more to say than I realised.

All the best, Robert. To other readers, wondering if they should continue with the series: please do. The opening is weak but it becomes a lot better in time. And there's kissing. So there's that.

PS: I loved the last chapter. I knew /it/ was going to happen as soon as Harrison mentioned his wish for it - and I was really happy to actually see it take place. It was kind of a mockery of all of the seriousness of Blake and of the genre, and it worked for me. It worked a treat. More of that. Dare I say that it felt almost subversive? Oh, good heavens!

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### **~nikki the recovering book addict says**

#### **Loved it!!**

I devoured this book so fast that I was honestly surprised that it was nearing the end! This was a good mystery. I would never have figured it out! Lovely writing too!

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### **Ashley John says**

Bonkers. Barmy. BLOODY BRILLIANT!

Okay, so I don't want to give anything away here, so I'll keep this brief because the less you know about this book before reading it, the better. The setup is that Blake and Harrison go away to a spa retreat where a man is murdered by a spectral being that appears to be able to walk on water. Of course, Blake wades in with his thinking cap on to figure out the mystery.

I'm glad Blake could because I couldn't, but when the reveal happened, my hair was snatched out of my follicles because it was so brilliant and unexpected! I'll say no more.

Another gripping book filled with twists and turns from Robert Inne's, and I can't wait for the next instalment!

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### **Raymond Mathiesen says**

Ripples

#### **A hooded man haunts The Manor... ?**

Detective Sergeant Blake Harte has two weeks well-earned vacation and he plans to spend them basically doing nothing, but Jacqueline, his landlady, engineers him into spending a week with her at The Manor of the Lakes, a spa in the Peak District. Of course Blake's crush, Harrison Baxter, is invited too. Jacqueline knows the proprietor and has a super-cheap discount, so Blake and Harrison can't refuse. Arriving at The Manor, Blake and Harrison spot a strange hooded figure staring at the building from some distance away. It turns out that The Manor has for some time been 'haunted' by this figure. The place has even been vandalised. This is bad enough, but things are about to take a decided downturn.

Robert Innes is an excellent author and it was a delight to once again enter the world of the Blake Harte Mystery series. This is book 3, and once again the mystery will turn out to be completely baffling and have a solution totally unexpected. Blake and Harrison's relationship definitely progresses to the romantic stage, but this book is undeniably, chiefly a police mystery. For example, sex does take place, but it is only alluded to, not depicted: this is not romance or erotica. None the less Blake's private life does play a large part in the story, and his much disliked ex-boyfriend, Nathan, turns up to make the holiday awkward and uncomfortable. Innes once again keeps the book short, so the story moves ahead rapidly, with no dull spots. The writing is polished and interesting, and the characters feel comfortably familiar, like real people we know.

Blake is quite the experienced professional, but in his personal life he is as much at sea as anybody else. He worries if he really has a future with Harrison, and if he is completely past Nathan. The reader likes this accomplished, but imperfect personality. We can both admire Blake and relate to him. He will certainly appeal to the older man. Harrison is needy, but by no means helpless. We like his vitality and his ability to survive, to go on. Also he is a kind, caring person who we naturally take to. He will appeal to the young and young at heart. Nathan is arrogant and cocksure. While not exactly the villain, the reader certainly enjoys disliking him.

As with all mysteries the theme is certainly that parts of life are hidden. We never know quite exactly how life will work out. Sometimes, for example, we are convinced that we are the loser, only to find out that later we have in fact unexpectedly won. People can seem to be one thing, only to turn out to be quite different.

As I say, this book was a joy to read and over too soon, but there is a fourth novel in the series to look forward to. *Ripples* is definitely worth 5 stars.

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## **Heather Martin says**

### **Ripples**

I'm really enjoying this series! The author has once again created an intriguing murder mystery, that has a very unexpected twist!

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## **Daniel Mitton says**

(Originally reviewed for Love Bytes Reviews. Rated 4.5 out of 5.0 Love Bytes.)

Now that I've read three of them, I think I've figured out why I like these books so much. They are nostalgic. They are like the Hardy Boys mysteries, but updated to today, with gay characters. They are suited for young adults and up, in my opinion, as there isn't any questionable material really in any of them. There are murders, and mayhem, but all in a clean-cut way.

In *Ripples*, we join Detective Sergeant Blake Harte and Harrison on a week away from the small town of Harmschapel. It has been a month since the events in book two, and Blake's nosy neighbor/landlady has set Blake and Harrison up on a week-long vacation at a place called Manor of the Lakes, an imposing mansion turned into an Inn, close-by to where Blake lived before he moved to Harmschapel.

Nearly the first person they run in to at the Manor is Blake's ex. The man who tore his heart out when Blake found him in bed with a woman... a woman he left Blake for, and eventually married. It turns out the wife works at the Manor!

When a really nasty piece of work is murdered, the suspect list is huge. The murdered person is the oldest son of the estate and he is pretty much universally hated. Anyone could have done it. But why did Blake, Harrison, and the others witness a hooded figure stabbing the man to death after walking across the water of the lake!

Then the police show up, and the man Blake used to work for, who he utterly despises, turns out to be in charge of the investigation. Can it get any worse?

As I said at the top, these books remind me of the Hardy Boys books. Each of them is a light detective mystery. I'd recommend it to anyone who likes that type of story. I'll eagerly be awaiting another book in the series!

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