



Confessional

Robert Innes

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Book 2 in the Blake Harte Mysteries!

St Abra's church is harbouring a dark secret. Several elderly parishioners have been found dead in the church's confessions booth, all appearing to have suffered fatal heart attacks.

But when another, much younger body is discovered in exactly the same way, Detective Sergeant Blake Harte must investigate how it is possible for the confessions booth to be killing off its occupants. Dark forces are at play, forcing Blake to believe it's more than just tragic coincidence.

Book 2 in The Blake Harte Mysteries series! A head scratching collection of impossible crimes featuring Detective Sergeant Blake Harte, set in the small picturesque village of Harmschapel. Police procedural with dark themes and romantic undertones.

Are the deaths a punishment for the sins confessed, or are there ulterior motives in play? In a race against the clock, only Blake can discover the long-kept secrets and lies hiding in the shadows before they tear apart the sleepy village of Harmschapel.

Confessional Details

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From Reader Review Confessional for online ebook

Ashley John says

Blake is back and he's better than ever! This book pulled me in from the beginning because I'm a sucker for a good mystery set in a church. There's nothing creepier in my mind. Robert has really ramped things up from the first book, and I don't want to spoil anything, but the finale is absolutely sublime. Would HIGHLY recommend!

Karen says

Better than the first novel in this series, but still in need of character development, more detailed police work, and a plot that isn't obvious from nearly the beginning of the book. The mystery involves the sudden heart attack deaths of four people... all found in the confessional of the local church. Although one person suggests that God struck them down, most sensible people feel that it's too coincidental that all four died the same way and in the same place for it to be natural. DS Blake Harte and his crew are on the case, in between figuring out romantic involvements which for Blake involves young Harrison Baxter who featured in the first book of the series (Untouchable).

The characters are still fairly vague. It's almost as if the author can't decide whether he's writing a mystery or a romance and while the romance is intriguing, I would have enjoyed more of the police procedural elements that really make a mystery worth reading. By chapter 2, I'd figured out who the murderer was, although it took me a little longer to figure out why. Some of the passages could use an editor's eye as they made for confusing reading. I'm probably going to read the other three novels in the series just to see if any progress is made. I think Innes shows some promise as an author and hope he'll improve as time goes on.

Eugenia says

Great narration, but the mystery was rather transparent and the police work shoddy. Still, a fun-ish series if not taken too seriously as a "real mystery."

The two MC's still haven't gotten together. One MC does hook up with another notable character. No on-page sex :(

Janeylou says

4.5 stars

Marcella says

This is the second book in The Blake Harte Mysteries series.

The quiet town of Harmschapel is once again rocked by tragedy. Three elderly parishioners from St. Abra's church have died by what appears to be fatal heart attacks. They were found dead in the church's confessions booth. When the incidents were brought to the attention of Detective Sergeant Blake Harte as being suspicious, his first impression was that it may have been age related, although three deaths with the same cause does appear to be a little suspicious.

What raises Detective Sergeant Harte's suspicions and convinces him that these deaths are murder is when a young man is found dead in the same place with the same cause of death. How does a young man die of a heart attack?

Detective Sergeant Harte immediately gets to work as to the possible ways someone can be murdered by way of a heart attack without leaving any marks or traces of foul play. He tirelessly works to find answers for the family of the young man killed. Detective Sergeant knows there is sinister work at play here but just can't seem to figure out how these murders are being committed. He is running against the clock before more victims are found dead.

I really enjoyed the second book in this series. It was very engaging and I was right there with the Detective Sergeant trying to figure out who the killer was, and how on earth they were able to do it. I was so involved in the story and couldn't put it down until I figured it out. Excellent story. I can't wait to see what happens next.

Anke says

[On top of that I'm a tad bit miffed that Blake and Harrison still are not an item. (hide spoiler)]

Rachel says

I voluntarily reviewed an advanced reader copy of this book.

Another brilliant mystery from this author. The plot line was really well written. But I must say I was slightly disappointed that I worked out who did it before it was revealed. But saying that it didn't detract from the rest of the book. The characters are developed well and there are stories within the stories developing with Matti and Patil.

My one disappointment is Harrison and Blake I was so looking forward to more interaction between them in this book but alas I was to be let down but there was a nugget left at the end of the book.

This was a really well written follow up book and I can't wait to see where the rest of the journey with these characters go.

B says

This was short and felt a bit rushed but a decent mystery and I like the characters- would read further in the series. But I was really confused that the church in the story was a Catholic Church, and the Catholic priests

were a (biological) grandfather and a lesbian in a non-celibate relationship. Like... did you mean Episcopalian, maybe? But it just said Catholic. Every time. The whole book. Am I in an alternate reality?

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?

Raymond Mathiesen says

Confessional

Murder and love? Two mysteries of life.

Blake and Harrison's one night together (as seen at the end of *Untouchable*) seems to have come to nothing,

though booth look longingly at the other from a distance. Blake's life as a police detective seems fairly quiet. But then people start turning up dead to the local church confessional box. They are all old people, and surely this must be just a terrible coincidence? Isn't it? Although doubtful, Blake agrees to investigate.

While certainly being a hard boiled police yarn, this book definitely has more romance in it than the first in the series. Will Blake and Harrison get together? Will Patil and Matti? And what about Gardiner? Will he remain his grouchy, single self? Along with this, there is once again comic relief from Jacqueline, Blake's amorous landlady. But of course the central part of the novel is the murder mystery. Is there really a serial killer on the loose? Innes spins his story with confident skill, enticing his reader on with the occasional 'wow' chapter ending, all the time keeping us wondering about what is really going on. The book is short and there are definitely no dull spots. Things move quickly as the mystery spins out, getting more and more complex. I definitely did not guess what was going on.

Blake is an intelligent, but perhaps too controlled, man. No longer young, he doubts himself, setting up barriers to his own happiness. The reader has sympathy for him, but also respects him. He is caring, and in need of someone to care for. Even as a police officer he carries out his job with tact. Harrison is a young man who is kind, but is perhaps not the best in making life decisions. He is attracted to Blake, but passes up opportunities. He has certainly had much stress in his life, as seen in *Untouchable*, and the reader hopes that he will finally find happiness.

We all have secrets, and of course a murder mystery is about exactly that. The truth can be not at all what we expect. It is easy to imagine that you have life worked out, but often there is the complication, the detail, that is not seen. As a subtheme, love can also be a mystery. We imagine we understand our emotions and relationships, but once again it is the complications and details that trick us. But mysteries do have a way of working themselves out in the end.

I was glad to dip into the world of Blake Harte again, and I am happy to award this book 5 stars.

Jenn (not Lily) says

I liked this book a bit more than *Untouchable*. Since the village had been introduced in book 1, there isn't nearly as much exposition here, which makes for tighter pacing. I also had some ideas about the who and how if the mystery -- it wasn't overt, but it made more sense than the first one. Nice development of the recurring characters. My biggest problem was probably with the use of the term "Catholic" instead of "Anglican" -- as far as I know, there are no women Roman Catholic priests or ones who (openly) have children and/or grandchildren, but both are allowed in the Anglican Church, if not common. Anyway, I'm interested in what happens to Blake Harte -- *Ripples* is definitely going onto my TBR now!

Misty says

**** 4.5 Stars ****

This is the second book in the Blake Harte Mystery series and I think it keeps getting better and better. While the series is not too deep, it's quite entertaining. Great plot and characters. I'm very much looking forward to reading the next one!

Linda ~ chock full of hoot, just a little bit of nanny ~ says

2.5 stars

As I said on my DNF review of the first book in this series, Untouchable, there are good bones here. I feel like this author has a lot of potential but just isn't getting any kind of guidance at all. He clearly doesn't have an editor. Some of the grammatical issues from the first book are improved on - mostly - but many others remain. Many of the character interactions are more or less well done, though the author could use a better grasp on basic human psychology to avoid cliché pitfalls. There wasn't much to the mystery. It's formulaic and predictable. I had the whodunit pegged from the second they showed up on page, and I even had the murder method more or less figured out from the get-go. (view spoiler) The ending was filled with all the bad clichés; I was cringing, y'all. I couldn't get up the energy to even be remotely concerned about the welfare of the characters. It was obvious what was going to happen and it was just boring.

So yeah, there are good bones here, and if this author can find himself an editor or two who really know what they're doing, I can see him writing some great stories. But as of now, with one DNF and one 2.5 star read, I won't be bothering with any more from this writer.

JB says

An excellent follow up to Untouchable, the author has crafted a story in 'Confessional' that I found compelling, and with the usual wit and excellent characterizations, I was hooked from start to end. These characters are real, and relatable, and their relationships so thoughtfully developed, whilst not distracting from the main plot... it's just very skillfully written and I applaud Robert for that. The climax to the story in particular was something very special indeed, and it was my favourite part of both books he's written so far. Dramatic and intense, I felt like I was right there, it was an unexpectedly thrilling and heart-pounding end to the story and I was captivated by it!

Hopefully this series continues as I look forward to seeing where these characters go next and what further mysteries Harmschapel has in store for us.

Galia says

3.5 stars
