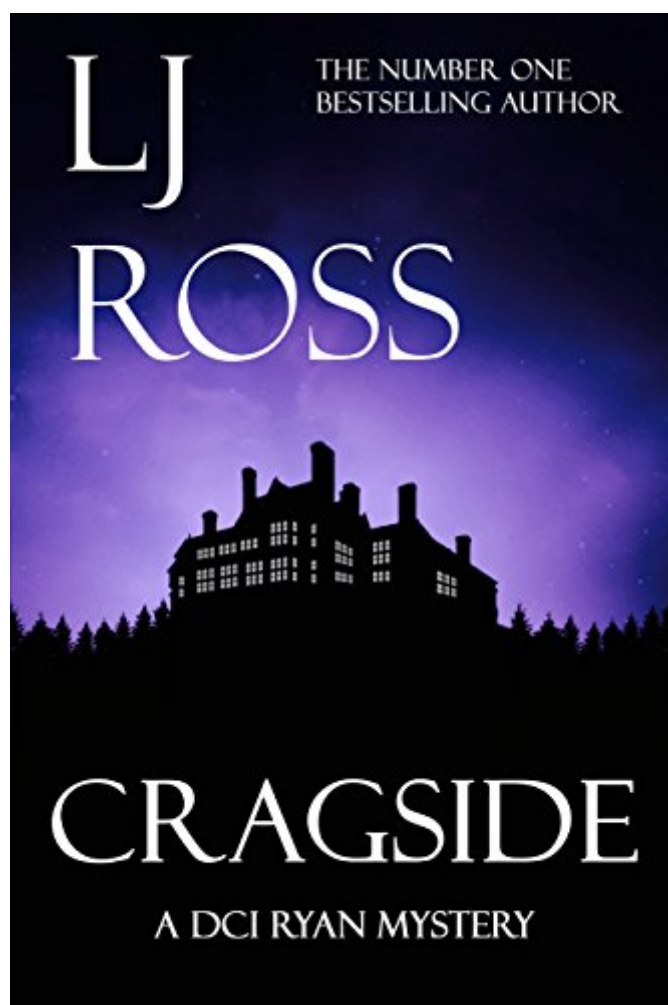


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# Cragside: A DCI Ryan Mystery (The DCI Ryan Mysteries Book 6)



## Synopsis

FROM THE #1 INTERNATIONAL BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF HOLY ISLAND Are you afraid of the dark..? After his climactic battle with notorious serial killer The Hacker, DCI Ryan is spending the summer with his fiancée within the grounds of Cragside, a spectacular Bavarian-style mansion surrounded by acres of woodland. When they are invited to attend the staff summer party – a Victorian murder mystery evening – it’s all a joke until the lights go out and an elderly man is found dead. It looks like an unfortunate accident but, as the dead man’s life begins to unfold, Ryan and his team of detectives realise that all is not as it appears. When a second body is found, terror grips the close-knit community and Ryan must uncover the killer who walks among them, before they strike again... Murder and mystery are peppered with romance and humour in this fast-paced crime whodunit set amidst the spectacular Northumbrian landscape. LJ Ross is the queen of Kindle • “ Sunday Telegraph” A literary phenomenon • “ Evening Chronicle” LJ Ross keeps company with the best mystery writers" - The Times

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I read all of this series and want the next one... soon! Not complicated. Easy read, likable characters and always a twist at the end!

Very good book.

Love these books!

This is No. 6 in the #1 bestselling series featuring DCI Ryan (or, Detective Chief Inspector Maxwell Finlay-Ryan to give him his full name), written by L J Ross, who is successfully pursuing a self publishing career, having turned down a traditional publishing deal! She is the author who knocked *The Girl on the Train* off the bestseller top spot ([link](#)). She has sold well in excess of 1,000,000 (yes, a million) copies of her books to date and her star continues to rise! All her novels to date are set in Northumberland. *Cragside* is a cosy crime mystery set in the house and grounds of the eponymous imposing Cragside estate, built by the Armstrong family in Victorian times and now run by the National Trust. You can really sense the influence (which L J Ross goes on to mention below) of Agatha Christie in the author's work. This novel works well as a standalone book but perhaps what a reader might miss is the build up of the various relationships within the series. DCI Ryan is about to tie the knot with his partner Anna and so there is a human strand that gently weaves its way through the narrative. The two have come to rent a house on the Cragside estate due to earlier events involving serial killer 'The Hacker'. Now, at a summer party thrown by current Cragside owners, the Gilberts, a pleasant evening turns very sour, as the Gilbert's personal butler, Victor Swann is found dead. The death seemed to occur during a power outage "a clever use of detail" because Cragside still tries to run on the gadgetry for hydroelectricity, installed by the Victorian builder of the house. But power surges, when using modern technology, can rupture the antiquated system, so everyone in the house is more than careful about timing the use of state of the art gadgets. It seems that Victor may have stumbled to his death down a flight of steps, it doesn't look particularly suspicious. However, the investigating team starts to have niggling doubts about whether this is a pure accident or whether there is something more sinister going on. They start to probe beneath the veneer of the motto: "We're like family, at Cragside". A second death "in brutal circumstances" certainly gives them the ammunition to take the investigation in a new direction. Operation Lightbulb is soon underway, and it is a pertinent title for the investigations as

Cragside was the first building in the world to be lit by hydroelectricity! There are plenty of characters who might be in the frame for having motive for murder – people trying to cover their tracks (remember, bleach does not mask blood residue!) and there is certainly someone astutely observing the comings and goings of the investigation team. It is also clear that an explosion on the Valiant, a ship being constructed back in the 1970s over on the Tyne shipyards, is potentially part of the picture. How does DCI Ryan get to the bottom of what is going on??? A very readable mystery set in the heart of Northumberland.

The DCI Ryan mystery series by LJ Ross is absolutely one of the best I've ever read. Brilliantly written, I enjoyed and loved each and every one of these books. So when I was offered an advanced review copy of book 6, 'Cragside', I could hardly refuse! Once again the author has done an outstanding job and kept me entertained and intrigued from start to finish. For me Louise Ross is the Agatha Christie of the twenty-first century! Following events taking place in 'High Force', Ryan and Anna are now temporarily living in a holiday cottage within the estate grounds of Cragside, on the outskirts of the Northumberland National Park. Built against a craggy hillside, the aptly named, majestic Cragside residence is famous for being the first house in the world to have been lit by hydroelectricity, back in the 1800s, using water from the lakes on the estate. One night Ryan and Anna are invited to a Victorian murder mystery themed staff party inside the house. At one point all the lights in the house go out and Victor, the owner's trusted valet goes to find the fuse box somewhere in the house and restore light. But Victor never makes it back to the party. Ryan finds his twisted body crumpled in a courtyard, at the foot of an external staircase. What happened to him? Was it an accident? Or murder? Since nothing indicates foul play, the death is declared as 'non suspicious', but still Ryan's nose is not convinced. When a second death is reported at Cragside the following day, Ryan and his team find themselves at the start of a complex, frenetic investigation. But with a house full of suspects and a shrewd killer hiding in plain sight, Ryan knows that this will be a tough nut to crack. From the very beginning I knew that I would have a great time reading 'Cragside'. Thanks to the author's crisp, articulate writing, I was drawn in from page one and through her vivid descriptions, I felt as if I was there at Cragside. Even though I have never heard of, let alone visited, this place, I could clearly imagine it... the impressive huge house with its turrets and towers, almost hidden from view by the many trees surrounding it. The iron bridge spanning the steep gorge which separates the house from the forest. The stream trickling between the rocks as it makes its journey through the valley far down beneath the bridge. The characters in this book and the whole series are all realistic, and whenever I start reading a new DCI Ryan book, it's as though

I'm revisiting old friends I've known for ages. Ryan, Phillips, MacKanzie, Jack and Anna are all very engaging characters and the right mix of ingredients for the perfect team. I love the strong sense of camaraderie and the banter going on between them. But in this book we also see some new additions to the CID team... one is a very intuitive, yet somewhat mysterious character that joins the others in the investigation. I won't say anything about the second addition though as they have just merely been introduced in this book, but I'm sure they will represent nothing but trouble for poor Ryan! Can't wait for the next book to see how that aspect of the story develops. With ongoing suspense sprinkled with humour and romance, beautiful vivid descriptions, twists and turns, various interesting revelations made during the investigation, numerous suspects, blood-curdling scenes that made me bite my knuckles, and chapters ending in cliffhangers urging me to keep on reading, together with the perfect ending, I couldn't ask for more. This book ticks all my boxes! Needless to say, 'Cragside' is another fantastic addition to the series, I really enjoyed it and I highly recommend it. With huge thanks to the author for an ARC of this book which I voluntarily accepted to read and review.

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