



## **Simply Magic**

*Mary Balogh*

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BONUS: This edition contains an excerpt from Mary Balogh's *The Secret Mistress*.

On a splendid August afternoon Susanna Osbourne is introduced to the most handsome man she has ever seen . . . and instantly feels the icy chill of recognition. Peter Edgeworth, Viscount Whitleaf, is utterly charming—and seemingly unaware that they have met before. With his knowing smile and seductive gaze, Peter acts the rake; but he stirs something in Susanna she has never felt before, a yearning that both frightens and dazzles her. Instantly she knows: this brash nobleman poses a threat to her heart . . . and to the secrets she guards so desperately.

From the moment they meet, Peter is drawn to Susanna's independence, dazzled by her sharp wit—he simply must have her. But the more he pursues, the more Susanna withdraws . . . until a sensual game of thrust-and-parry culminates in a glorious afternoon of passion. Now more determined than ever to keep her by his side, Peter begins to suspect that a tragic history still haunts Susanna. And as he moves closer to the truth, Peter is certain of one thing: he will defy the mysteries of her past for a future with this exquisite creature—all Susanna must do is trust him with the most precious secret of all. . . .

## Simply Magic Details

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# From Reader Review *Simply Magic* for online ebook

## Lady Wesley says

5+ stars!

I like Mary Balogh, so I expected to enjoy this book; but I was surprised that I absolutely loved it!

Susanna Osbourne is a teacher at Miss Martin's school in Bath. She has no family, since her mother died in childbirth and her father died when she was twelve. She was sent to Miss Martin's by an anonymous benefactor as a charity student, and she remained to become a teacher. She is quite happy and content with her life.

While visiting a former teacher, who is now Countess of Edgecombe (see *Simply Unforgettable*), she happens to meet Peter Edgeworth, Viscount Whitleaf. He is handsome and charming, and seems to feel it's his mission in life to flirt with all the ladies, even the elderly spinster Miss Honeydew. Susanna is immediately on her guard, not just because she thinks he's shallow and frivolous, but because she met him once as a child and his presence brings up unhappy memories. During their two weeks in one another's company, however, they strike up a genuine friendship, which culminates in an afternoon of lovemaking before they part.

Susanna expects never to see Peter again, but when he comes to Bath for a wedding of yet another teacher (see *Simply Love*), Susanna realizes that she has indeed lost her heart to Peter. (And may I just add right here that being a teacher at Miss Martin's school looks to be a better way of finding a titled husband than attending dozens of balls in London.) Peter proposes, but Susanna turns him down, feeling that he has made the offer out of guilt and obligation rather than love. She also has strong feelings about remaining independent, and she truly loves her life at the school. Again, Peter leaves, and they don't expect to meet again.

I won't go into detail about the rest of their story, but their pasts turn out to be more complicated, and intertwined, than first suspected. Peter has a lot of maturing to do, and he needs to get out from under his mother's domination.

Peter is not a rake or an alpha hero; he's really more of an overgrown boy, but he truly wants to live a meaningful, productive life, having a family and running his estate successfully. At the same time, Susanna has to stop ignoring terrible events from her past, and with help from Peter (and sometimes a little interference from him), she comes to envision a future much different from that which she had long thought was inevitable.

The obstacles to their HEA are serious and real and don't seem contrived. This is just a really sweet story that will leave you feeling happy at the end.

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## Kathy Davie says

Third in the Simply Quartet Regency romance series which carries on from Balogh's Bedwyn Saga and revolving around four teachers at Miss Martin's School for Girls in Bath, England. The couple focus is on Susanna Osbourne and Peter Edgeworth.

The action takes place while Anne Jewell and her son, David, are in Wales ( *Simply Love* , 2 (8)). It's been two years since events in *Simply Unforgettable* , 1 (7).

### **My Take**

Poor Peter had done everything expected of him, including fall in love. Who knew he could have such a backbone nor that he would stoop to such menial tasks with such enthusiasm. He's simply too kind, the wretch.

I understand why Balogh had the lovemaking scene, but the lead-up was poorly done. It didn't make sense for Susanna to fall into it as she did. I guess Balogh was simply running out of time. Nor could I buy into Susanna's later reactions to Peter. She knows what that world is like. Sure, Peter's offer was dishonorable, but what did she expect? And, then again, he sure is a dimwit when it comes to his heart.

I like pink, but Viscountess Whitleaf's "destruction" of the drawing room... You'll just shake your head when you hear her say that this refurbishment is for him. Oh. Yeah. 'Cause what young man doesn't adore pink and lots of frilly, ruffly pillows...?

While I did enjoy Miss Osbourne's determined shunning of Peter, her reasons, when we *finally* learn what they are, are annoying. Then again, as Balogh dribbles out more and more bits, it does become more understandable...and still annoying. I would have liked an explanation of the tremendous contrast between what Lady Markham said about Susanna back when her father died and what the Markhams are saying now. Was that initial comment out of context or...?

Balogh never does mention what his uncles and guardians did that was so horrible that he's shunned them for the past six years. It's rather surprising since he's so very tolerant of his mother, especially when he finds out how guilty she is of so much.

Jesus, Balogh goes on and on about Susanna's father being a servant, making him sound like he mucked out stables or worked in the gardens. He was Sir Charles' secretary for godsakes. It's a step way above servant.

I do wish Balogh had played off Peter's "There she is" more. Made it more poignant, more emotional and heart-rending.

### **The Story**

Peter should never have mentioned coming home to his earnest mother. Now he'll have to put that trip off...of course, if he hadn't, he'd never have met Miss Osbourne.

The Miss Osbourne who sets Peter a Herculean task.

### **The Characters**

**Miss Susanna Osbourne**, a former charity student, teaches at Miss Martin's School for Girls in Bath. Her father, **William Osbourne**, was Sir Charles Markham's secretary. **Colonel Clarence and Mrs. Sadie Osbourne** and the **Reverend Ambrose Clapton** are Susanna's long-estranged grandparents.

*Miss Martin's School for Girls is...*

...in Bath and was created by **Claudia Martin** who is its headmistress. **Miss Lila Walton**, a former charity girl, has become a junior teacher. **Mr. Keeble** is the elderly school porter. **Mr. Huckerby** is the dancing master. **Mademoiselle Étienne** is the French teacher. **Cecile Pierre**. **Mr. Upton** is the drawing master. **Mr. Blake** is the physician who attends the school when someone is ill. **Mr. Hatchard** is Miss Martin's solicitor and London agent. **Agnes Ryde** is a new charity girl having great difficulties. **Betsy Reynolds** is a day pupil. **Mary Fisher** is a middle school boarder.

The twenty-six-year-old **Peter Edgeworth**, Viscount Whitleaf, loves the ladies, just not that much. His country estate is Sidley Park. His mother is the nasty, mean-minded, hypocritical bitch, **Viscountess Whitleaf**, with lots and lots of nasty secrets. His sisters included **Barbara** (married to **Clarence**), **Doris**, **Amy** (married to **Bertie Lamb**, Peter's favorite brother-in-law), **Belinda**, and **Josephine**. **Millingsworth** is his condescending steward.

**Lauren**, Viscountess Ravensberg, is Peter's cousin. She's married to **Kit** ( *A Summer to Remember* , 0.6), and they have children: **Andrew** and **Sophia**. The **Earl and Countess of Ravensburg** are Kit's parents, and they all live at Alvesley. **Sydnam Butler** is Kit's younger brother who just married **Anne Jewell**, another *former* teacher from Miss Martin's.

The **Duke and Duchess of Bewcastle** ( *Slightly Dangerous* , 6 & last) are their neighbors. **Mrs.** and **Miss Eleanor Thompson** are the duchess' mother and sister. *The Bedwyns and Ravensbergs are heading back to Bath for a surprise celebration of Sydnam and Anne's marriage.* **Lady Freyja Bedwyn** is the sister of the Duke of Bewcastle and married to **Joshua Moore**, Marquess of Hallmere ( *Slightly Scandalous* , 3). **Lady Potford** is Joshua's grandmother. More siblings include **Lord and Lady Aidan Bedwyn** ( *Slightly Married* , 1) and **Lord and Lady Alleyne Bedwyn** ( *Slightly Sinful* , 5) who are in Bath.

**Fincham Manor** is the home of the Markhams. **Theo Markham** is the head of the house and brother to **Edith Markham** with whom Susanna grew up. Edith has married **Lawrence Morley** and lives in Gloucestershire. They have a newborn son, **Jamie**. **Lady Markham** is their mother.

Other neighbors near Sidley Park include the **Harrises**, the **Mummerts**, and the **Poles**.

*Somerset is...*

...where Hareford House, the Raycroft family home, is located. **John Raycroft** is Peter's friend and betrothed to **Alice Hickmore** who has gone off to Vienna. His sisters include **Miss Rosamond**.

**Lucius and Frances Marshall**, the Earl and Countess of Edgecombe ( *Simply Unforgettable* ) who live at Barclay Court, are their traveling neighbors — she's a famous opera signer. *Frances had been a teacher at Miss Martin's.* **Smothers** is their butler. **Gertrude**, **Jane**, and **Mary Calvert** are neighbors of the Raycrofts. **Mr. Finn**, another neighbor, a gentleman farmer, and the earl's tenant has two left feet. More neighbors include **Mr. Birney**, the local vicar; **Mr. Dannen** does love his monologues; **Miss Krebbs**; **Miss Honeydew** is a sister of the newly deceased vicar; **Mrs.** and **Miss Moss**; and, **Mr. Crossley** is a widower.

**Miss Rose Larchwell** is but the latest of the young hopefuls Peter's mother is trying to thrust down his throat. **Bertha Grantham** is a young lady from whom Peter withdrew his unspoken suit. **Arabella Flynn-Posy** is the Christmas hopeful.

### The Cover and Title

The cover is the cheerful green of a garden with a stone birdbath resting in the center with its sculpture of two loving children on top and surrounded by blooming flowers around it and blooming bushes in the distant

background. The author's name is in an embossed white while the title is in an embossed metallic red.

The title is what each feels when s/he see the other, a moment that was *Simply Magic*.

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### **Patrisha says**

Si poteva scegliere un titolo più azzeccato per questo romanzo? Non credo, perché anche io l'ho trovato semplicemente magico.

La serie Simply, a cui appartiene essendone il terzo, è meravigliosa, all'altezza di quella dei Bedwin per me. I personaggi bucano le pagine e diventano vivi, con le loro storie toccanti e drammatiche, con i loro dubbi e incertezze, che li rendono imperfetti e intensi. Peter e Susanna hanno lasciato il segno nel mio cuore per questo amore che cresce piano, si confonde nell'amicizia e nella passione, parole che nascondono ben altro. Peter è un uomo di mondo, nobile e gentiluomo di lignaggio ma anche di spirito, simpatico e arguto, gentile con tutti e disponibile, in cerca del suo posto nel mondo, in cerca di sogni da realizzare, piccoli sogni che nulla hanno a che fare con il ton, di cui però è esemplare esponente. E poi c'è Susanna, una ragazza che nasconde un terribile segreto che le ha condizionato la vita, la sua forza interiore l'ha portata comunque a costruirsi un presente di cui va fiera e di cui si sente appagata, fino a che non conosce il visconte e tutto il suo mondo collassa su se stesso, mentre nuove paure e un nuovo sentimento la travolgono.

Lo sviluppo della trama è come sempre impeccabile, come anche la costruzione dei personaggi e delle ambientazioni. Ed è sempre bellissimo per me ritrovare i riferimenti ad altri personaggi da me tanto amati, facendo sì che la Balogh costruisca un universo coerente in cui i beniamini degli altri romanzi vivono e sono felici.

Un piccolo sogno per una lettrice e fan come me.

Ora aspetto la storia di Claudia Martin, non vedo l'ora!

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### **Zel Plev says**

The first half of this book was a bit of a bore to just alright. The characters depth were pretty shallow and well, it wasn't terribly interesting. The book really picked up on the second half though after they separated. Peter was coming to terms with not forgetting her and contriving reasons to see her. It was love in slow motion. Meanwhile, Susanna had been disappointed and falling out of love with him. He redeems himself in her eyes though and they get together. In it, Peter makes the discovery of working hard to get his happy ending and Susanna faces her demons. Her past surfaces and they urge each other on to take that extra mile and not be complacent. Peter asserts himself in his household and Susanna meets past people and introduces herself to estranged relatives. Both people were not even certain she lived when she left.

Anyways, I feel really bad for Susanna's father. I thought Peter's mother was a bitch and I think he should be understanding if Susanna didn't want anything to do with her, rightfully. I think that issue was swept under the rug honestly. His last proposal was a bit of an ambush and they settled with the statement that they will work through their future issues.

The story revolved around Peter and Susanna. Susanna hated him the moment she heard his name, Viscount Whitleaf. He was a jovial fellow and was really charming, which is why he was puzzled at how she acted around him. He didn't know the reasons but he sought to befriend her. He needed company that wasn't frivolous and by all accounts, she was that. The more they got to know each other, the more they liked the

other. Her hatred turned to friendship and soon, they moved past friendship to become one time lovers. They left to go back to their lives and separated for a while. He thought of her often and he became a fantasy to her. When they reunited, he crushed that fantasy with his clumsy attempts to see her again. He acted like his charming and indifferent self, which she interpreted as his shallow persona, which they should have moved past.

He continually found excuses to see her again. One of their conversations led to the other asking promises to improve their lives. She asked him to assert himself with his mother and he asked her to meet the people who cared for her when she was young.

The story was that Peter was to marry this girl. He found his mother with his fiancée's father, who was married. They had a fight and had a falling out. He promised his intended that he would be faithful and she replied with derision to his idealism. She enlightened him when she bluntly told him that she wouldn't be devoted to him and would only meet her duty of one or two children. When he brought up the issue with the family, he was told to grow up. He had been really sheltered growing up and he was really idealistic. He grew up that day and kicked his uncles out. He broke the engagement and was known as a scoundrel thereafter.

The story with Susanna was that she overheard the family talking about what a burden the whole issue with her father was. She took it to mean that she was not welcome to the home after her father died. Her father committed suicide, she believed because of heartbreak. She found out later that the viscountess, Peter's mother, threatened to ruin his reputation. She was a spurned lover and sought revenge. She would accuse him of rape and ruin his name. The only way out for him was suicide, not for himself but for his daughter. He wanted to give Susanna a chance at a good life. He provided for her by making arrangements to send her to her grandparents. The only way he could see to give her that life was to get the viscountess to drop the charges and it wouldn't be brought up if he was dead. He killed himself and Susanna ran away after she thought she was unwelcome. She ran to London and applied to be a governess. She was sent away and was then approached to be a charity student. She grew up at the school and then became a teacher.

Anyways, Peter found out about her past and confronted his mother. He was a bit mild about it but he loved her. He made arrangements for her to live at another house as he was reclaiming the manor. He asked for Susanna's grandparents' permission. She told him that she couldn't leave her responsibilities as a teacher and he moved the wedding date to after the school term ended. They married with her close friends and families.

I liked this book but it was far from magical. It was just alright in the beginning and it really picked up in the second half.

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### **Fani \*loves angst\* says**

I liked the first part much more than the second.

The first half was a sweet, tender love story. Old-fashioned, but still nice. In the second part, the shadow of the heroine's past, concerning her father's death, is cast and darkens the mood considerably. Little by little we learn the secrets behind his death, but though a huge tragedy is always hinted, it seems rather mundane to the reader (at least this one). When the truth comes out, it is indeed more shocking than expected, but by then I had already classified the heroine as overdramatic and bitter (wrongly as it proved) and a large portion of the story had already been ruined for me. Had the writer made the truth known to her readers early on, I would

have been more sympathetic towards the heroine and her actions. Also, the hero is a beta male, which is not my favorite kind anyway and few times have I been persuaded to leave this prejudice of mine behind; this was not one of them. He was not bad, but he was far from interesting as well.

Even thus I might have rated it with 3 stars, had it not been for one obnoxious detail: the narrator, keeps mentioning "he said or she said" in every other sentence. For example, "It is cold here, she said. I'll light the fire, he said.<<...>>I'm sorry, she said. Did you know I was here? I did, he said. Why do you think I came? T said something about an invitation, she said. For all of you, he said." One in every two sentences is just like that. After a while, this repetition became very tiring to my ears. I noticed the exact same thing in *Then Comes Seduction*, which I also read in audio format. I'm wondering whether the books are written like this, or did the narrator took the initiative to add those phrases, that have shred my nerves to pieces?

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## **Jacob Proffitt says**

*This is third in a series, and unfortunately, lots of developments from the previous books are evident here. So I recommend reading the others first. Though that's kind of a slog and the payoff isn't that great.*

This story had lots of potential. Peter is pretty awesome and I love what Balogh does with him. It isn't often that you see a man so kind and willing to please. I love that he knows he likes making others happy and that he takes care with the people around him. And not just the pretty ladies who he enjoys careful (i.e. non-attaching) flirtations with. No, he's truly kind to the indigent widows and clueless kids and even the boors and nonsensical dorks. Knowing that he likes people, he's very sociable and eager to arrange entertainments and things he knows others will enjoy. He's not all win, and I'll get to that, but this was an interesting character and I found him very engaging.

Susanna, on the other hand, is prickly and off-putting and judgmental. Which was a lot less engaging. Yeah, she has a whole tragic backstory and she's very *brave* and stiff upper-lip and a *teacher* (as she reminds everybody endlessly). Frankly, I'm not sure what Peter saw in her. She did have the virtue of treating him like a person and not merely a font o' fun. So there's that. I can't help feeling like Peter likes her pretty much just because he's supposed to for the story. It's kind of magic (like the title), but not in the good way I think the story was hoping for.

Still. Peter is all kinds of awesome and this was cruising in four star territory. Until Peter became a weak idiot with a sudden inability to speak his mind/heart. I almost stopped reading entirely when (view spoiler). Gads. I did not like this aspect of his character and the drop in my engagement with him dropped my enjoyment of the story along with it. Which is when I began noticing all the other accumulated dumbnesses I'd been ignoring.

Chief of the dumbnesses was the eventual Tragic Past™ that came out (after dribbling along way, waaaaay too long). Man that turned out to be a convoluted crappile. And I really don't get Peter's statements about (view spoiler)

So this ends up a weak three stars. Which is better than the first two books in the series. But I'd still skip them all if I were to do this over.

**A note about Steamy:** There are two explicit sex scenes (though the second is a two-fer) so the middle of my steam tolerance. This was another weak area of the story, though, since neither made emotional sense.



It's like the characters realized they were alone and starring in a romance so "we might as well do it"...

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## **Lois says**

Loved Peter--what a kind, wonderful character.

But: It is a mistake to listen to three Mary Balogh's in a row. The parallel elements from book to book get grating:

- the heroine's belief that each encounter will be the last time she sees the man so she'll store it away to pull out later when she's old and still a spinster;
- her steadfast belief that she can't marry the man and her repeated refusals because of that;
- the belief that Fate keeps throwing people together until their love works out.

The second--the woman refuses to see how she can marry the man who loves her--was especially irksome in this book.

In this book, I was also disappointed that Suzanna's lovely accent, which was apparent in the last two audiobooks, suddenly disappeared.

Having said all that, I will definitely read the fourth book in the set to see who Claudia Martin, who runs the school where all three of the previous heroines have worked as teachers, will get for HER man.

At the Romance Writers of America conference, Jane Ann Krentz talked about people having the story they tell over and over, just with different characters and various plots. Susan Elizabeth Phillips says hers is having a character stripped of all support systems. Based on these "Simply" books, I'd guess that Balogh's is that Fate brings people together.

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## **ShoSho says**

2.5 stars

My biggest problem was that the narrator changed her voice for the heroine after using it for the first 2 books. It was like she was another character.

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## **herdys says**

It started great but kinda flopped for me halfway..

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## Caz says

**I've given this an A for narration and an A- for content at AudioGals, so that's 4.5 stars rounded up.**

While I've enjoyed the previous two books in this series, **Simply Magic** is my favourite so far. It's the story of Susanna Osbourne, another of the group of friends who are teachers at Miss Martin's School for Girls in Bath, and Peter Edgeworth, Viscount Whitleaf, who met each other briefly – once – when they were children, but whose lives have taken them in very different directions since then.

While on a visit to Frances, Countess of Edgecombe (Simply Unforgettable), Susanna is introduced to Viscount Whitleaf and his name sends a chill of recognition through her. He, however, does not recognise Susanna from that long-ago summer afternoon when they met and played together, and she does not welcome his devastating smile and his flirtatious compliments. Her family and the viscount's are linked by tragedy and she has no wish to become further acquainted with a man who seems to have been able to brush off the past so easily.

You can read the rest of this review at AudioGals.

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## Molly says

I always feel like Lucy Honeychurch from "A Room with a View" when I'm reading Mary Balogh.

"Mother doesn't like me playing Beethoven. She says I'm always peevish afterwards."

I feel the same when I'm reading Mary Balogh, which is a testament to her writing.

That said, I absolutely loved this one. I stayed up far too late reading it because I just couldn't put it down. This one gave me ALL THE EMOTIONS. The character development was really well done. It was really nice to read about a genuinely nice guy, even though he had his own problems. I did want to shake Susanna a bit and get her to stop being so stubborn. Overall, it was a lovely story.

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## Naksed says

Excruciatingly boring. I did not make it past Chapter 2, to be honest. Susanna Osbourne rubbed me the wrong way right off the bat. When Viscount Whitleaf greets her with an inanity (something about her being as radiant as a spring day), she instantly labels him a phoney, idle, womanizing half-wit and proceeds to set him down quite rudely. She really did sound like the cliché of the uptight, judgey schoolmarm. Hero was the typically bland, I-have-sowed-my-wild-oats-and-now-I-need-to-settle-down-but-how-can-I-when-no-woman-has-ever-stirred-my-jaded-heart, stock character from a thousand historical romances. I like the previous book I read from Mary Balogh but I did not feel the magic here. If a book hasn't grabbed me by the overture, it is very unlikely it will dazzle me through the following acts. Don't let me dissuade you from reading this though, it has very high ratings by much more patient and fair-minded readers than yours truly.

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## kris says

Susanna Osbourne meets Peter Edgeworth, Viscount of Whitleaf and thinks him a flirt. She's not wrong. Peter decides to befriend her because the voice in his head compels him. They fall into a light friendship that resolves in a quickie on a hilltop. Which resolves into them meeting up again and again and again until everyone is exhausted and they can be married.

1. HERE'S THE THING: this was fucking great, except that it wasn't.
  2. What I mean by THAT is that it is so well-written and Peter and Susanna's courtship was handled so deftly that I was infuriated by how much I didn't like it. Because Balogh *knows her shit*. And she has a very unique approach to Love. And I respect the HELL outta her. EXCEPT...
  3. Except, I take issue with the fact that Peter and Susanna are so resigned to their separate fates. I take issue with the fact that it takes a gross 'coincidence' to get them in the same room together. I take issue with the fact that it isn't until the last 2-3 chapters that Peter--not Susanna, never her heroines--are willing to fight for love. But only in a very passive, resigned way.
- And I get that there's probably some reaction to the horrid alpha-male stereotyping going on, and that there may be some other commentary that I'm missing but--that doesn't cut it, for me. Especially when the characters are separated again and again and again. While either denying their attraction/feelings or acknowledging their feelings in a very 'oh, it will never come to pass' sort of way. I need my hero/ine to acknowledge and (eventually) embrace their love, rush into it, rush *at* it. Glory in it. Not shrug and move on.
4. And i see my flaws in the argument above: how Balogh's books are about loving yourself and finding love, *choosing* love, but... It's just not enough.
  5. AND to add to my already grievous distaste, Balogh DOES IT AGAIN and pulls AN ENTIRE LOST FAMILY out of the fucking woods for Susanna to embrace and find ~happiness with and what-have-you. And I'm just so tired of it. Why must all her heroines have a closet full of secrets than when shaken resolve into doting family, waiting in the wings? The moment it was announced that an entire gaggle of grandparents was descending to sweep the "lost" Susanna into their loving embrace, I literally threw down the book. And as it was on my phone, it made quite the clatter.
  6. I think I need to distance myself from Balogh's novels for at least a little while: they exhaust me and frustrate me and make me cranky because she is SO DAMNED TALENTED but her story beats just emphatically do NOTHING for me except inspire rage and eyerolls.
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## Rane says

*A two weeks vacation away from her school she teaches, Susanna Osbourne meets with a man unknowing to him entwined with her past she longs to forget, and soon a man she longs her heart to forget.. Peter Edgeworth, Viscount Whitleaf is charming, kind gentleman, when he first lays eyes on Susanna he feels he's finally met "the one" their paths soon divided only to lead back to one another and their love.....*

Simply Magic's story entwines with Simply Love, but from the POVs of Susanna and Peter as you follow Susanna this time as she takes a two weeks vacation away from the school..

Susanna along with ex-teacher Frances and her husband travel to Frances's husband estate for a two week break. On one afternoon of walking, Susanna meets up with fellow neighbors, when she meets a very handsome man, whom comes across very much like a shallow gentleman, whose name triggers a dark period of Susanna's life. Susanna goes out of her way to avoid this gentleman only to have him turn up time and again. She soon sees the true kindness of this man, and tries to fight her feelings and heart as they spend a passionate afternoon together and soon say their goodbyes, knowing their's no place for one another in each of their lives, but fate plays their hand and bring Susanna and Peter back together again and this time it's a path they walk together and no apart full of love...

Peter Edgeworth has always been cuddled by his family full of sister along with his mother, after almost marriage between him and a young girl that ended with Peter leaving his family home in anger, Peter finally decided it's time to stop running. When this thought enters his mind, he's floored when he meets Susanna whom he doesn't know if he love or not and perhaps to scared to examine his emotions toward her. Peter soon finds himself and Susanna in each other's company for the wedding of Anne and Syd and Peter knows he can't let Susanna go and must face his own dragons and help her face hers in order for them to finally find love and peace with each other.

Simply Magic was a delightful read, with the main theme I felt of facing out demons from the past or dragons to slay in order for us to move forward. Peter's and Susanna's had these heavy chains that dragged them down, Susanna while stronger then most, still didn't want to deal with a past and a father whom she felt let her down by taking his life, and a family she thought loved her. But, with a little nudge by Peter Susanna was finally able to let her go of her demons and slay her own dragons finding a family she didn't even know she had.

Peter was overprotected by his family, but loved, even as a man, his family still thought of him as a boy. Peter showed everyone he was truly a grown and kind man with a big heart, but a man whom could stand on his own two feet. At the same time he always saw he couldn't baby his own family and needed to let them go on their own lives, his mother mostly, whom he finally saw a lonely woman whom wasn't without her faults and did wrong, but a human being after all.

With Simply Love and it's perfect flow, I found Simply Magic lacking in magic. It felt once again very blocky and rushed, but at least both leads didn't make me mad or turn me off on the story. I liked both leads very much and felt for them. Many characters make a return appearance that keep the story running along, but once again I felt the story was lacking that extra push to make it memorable.

Overall: a great addition that continues the simply series with two great leads, even if it lacks that magical touch.

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## **Rosina Lippi says**

This absorbing, immensely appealing novel is the third in Balogh's series of regency romances, centered on a group of friends who teach at a private girls' school in Bath. Susanna Osbourne is one of those teachers, a gentleman's daughter who has been alone in the world since she lost her father and her home at age twelve.

That early trauma has given her depth, complexity and a cautious nature. Susanna's satisfaction with her life and career doesn't waiver, even when she meets Viscount Whitleaf, Peter Edgeworth while visiting a friend's

estate for the summer. Peter's good looks, charm and easy flirtation strike Susanna as frivolous, and his connection to her childhood home and early trauma frighten her. But they are drawn to each other and a friendship develops, one that must lead someplace both of them are afraid to go. The conflicts in this story have mostly to do with the way Susanna and Peter resolve to accept the social realities of their time, and how in failing, they bring out the best in each other. This is an unusually subtle approach in a romance, and it works here to great effect resulting in a satisfying, endearing novel that should win the already popular Balogh many new readers.

first written for pw

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