



Someone to Care

Mary Balogh

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Once the Countess of Riverdale, Viola Kingsley throws all caution to the wind when adventure calls in the form of a handsome aristocrat...

Two years after the death of the Earl of Riverdale, his family has overcome the shame of being stripped of their titles and fortune—except for his onetime countess, Viola. With her children grown and herself no longer part of the social whirl of the ton, she is uncertain where to look for happiness—until quite by accident her path crosses once again with that of the Marquess of Dorchester, Marcel Lamarr.

Marcel Lamarr has been a notorious womanizer since the death of his wife nearly twenty years earlier. Viola caught his eye when she herself was a young mother, but she evaded his seduction at the time. A prize that eluded him before, she is all the more irresistible to him now although he is surprised to discover that she is as eager now for the excitement he offers as he is himself.

When the two defy convention and run away together, they discover that the ties of respectability are not so easily severed, and pleasure can ensnare you when you least expect it.

Someone to Care Details

Date : Published May 1st 2018 by Berkley

ISBN : 9780399586088

Author : Mary Balogh

Format : Mass Market Paperback 356 pages

Genre : Romance, Historical Romance, Historical, Regency, Historical Fiction

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From Reader Review Someone to Care for online ebook

Guilty Pleasures Book Reviews says

Someone to Care isn't your typical romance but is one of a mature couple finding passion and love for the first time. Both main characters had disastrous first marriages and have been walking different paths before they saw each other again. Viola Kingsley is a widowed former countess who has lost everything and throws caution to the wind for a sexual dalliance with Marcel Lamarr, the Marquess of Dorchester. Marcel has become a rogue to the highest order after the death of his first wife and was smitten with Viola 14 years ago when he first set sight on her. Viola turned him away all those years ago but can she now accept him for what he is and have a walk on the wild side for once in her life?

This was a wonderful story to see how these two lost souls find love but they realize there is more to them than what they think, and how family really means something after all. Marcel has only thought of himself for so long and puts his enjoyment above his duty and family. He has had many women, and now that he's been with Viola, she isn't what he expected. He didn't grow tired of her and that puzzled him. Ever since Viola's world turned upside when she found out her marriage was bigamous, she went through the motions but finally had enough. She cracked and needed to run away from her life and be alone. Was it fate that threw Marcel in her path on her way home? She thought so and took a chance to have a fling and do something for just herself. Unfortunately, both their families found out about their tryst and Marcel and Viola are caught up in drama and doing the right thing. Doing the right thing for the wrong reasons isn't always the way to go, as both Marcel and Viola found out. Thankfully it all worked out in the end.

The author has done a wonderful job creating a love story for two very deserving individuals who do a lot of reflecting on how to proceed forward with their relationship. I love that their families play a small part in this and cheer for them to get their act together. Mary Balogh is one of my favorite historical romance writers and this story spoke to me. Someone to Care is a highly engaging and contemplating story for historical romance readers. It's never too late to find love and get a second chance at happiness.

Angela says

I can accept I'm in the minority with this review, because honestly, it was a chore to finish the book. As a MB fan (and a fan on the series) I can say I'm disappointed.

The good: MB is good about giving us main characters that don't fit the normal HR mold. I like that Marc and Viola are mature (in age, at least), and that I didn't have to read about an 18 year old romance. I also like Marc's character growth. One of the themes is about family: unconditional love, acceptance, and forgiveness. This is done well.

The not-so-good: Reading this book was like slowly pulling my hair out, one individual strand at a time. It was tedious, and boring. There's way too much time spent in the character's heads, and they feel pretty sorry for themselves throughout. The dialogue wasn't particularly witty or engaging, and both characters mope around for the bulk of the story. Nobody can come out and say what they're thinking or feeling - assuming they can even figure out what they think or feel (we have paragraphs and pages and heaps of useless, wishy-

washy words). And, because we need even more words, there's a point towards the end when the story literally repeats itself word for word.

Definitely not the best in the series.

Ira says

I can't wait to read Viola's story.

Is about time to read a real woman with real story, not just a teenage girl pretend to be an adult's story! LOL ?

We got glimpses of her tragic situations from previous books and that teaser at the end of Someone to Wed? You very meanie Ms. Balogh, asked us to wait that long ??.

Mei says

I almost DNF this one... At 40% was so boring!!!

Viola and Marcel were rusticating and enjoying themselves. Going for walks, looking at the scenery... In that half of the book descriptions abound. And nothing happens...

I suppose we were to see how they got nerer to one another and how they feelings grew, but I didn't feel that way at all! For me it was just booorriinnng...!!

Then they're *discovered* and, instead of getting more interesting, it gets just full of miscommunication! They don't talk. Each of them make suppositions about what the other is thinking and, obviously, get it all wrong!!!

But, apart from all that, I just couldn't warm to Marcel. He's such a cold fish IMHO! I didn't like him. His way of dealing with grief was all wrong. He deserts his young children, we go around chasing women, he doesn't do anything at all!

For all the author did to make me like him, I didn't buy it! He deserved to remain alone for another 15 years! He didn't deserve his happy end!

I could understand Viola better. At least she did have her reasons to be bitter. Her whole life was ruined by the men in her life: first her father and then her bigamous husband. I could see that too much love from her family could smother her and make her want to run away to deal by herself.

But, not everything was bad. I appreciated the family love. Their children were incredibly good. Neither was too much resentful and all of them loved their parents. That was good and I liked them!

Well, I'll read the next and decide then if I'll continue reading this series.

Jacob Proffitt says

This is fourth in a series and you really should read the others first. There's a lot of emotionally relevant events and background that plays into this story and it works better if you have gone through them. The second (Someone to Hold) is of particular importance and Camille and Joel and their family are key to some important scenes.

I've been looking forward to this for months. So it is with sadness that I admit it isn't up to the standard of the others. I was looking forward to this because I knew it starred Viola and she's an extremely non-standard Regency heroine. She's 42, has grown children, and is a society outcast because of her previous non-marriage. I figured that's a lot of interesting things for Balogh to play with and expected it to be a great story.

Unfortunately, not so much. Oh, I was engaged with the first half. I loved meeting Marcel and their impetuously running away together. It was pretty clear from early on that their shared past mattered more than either cared to admit so I had reasonable hopes that this would be a nice second-chance/rediscovery thing with characters I liked. Because I *did* like them both quite a bit. I was a bit disgruntled that they seemed to have reverted to much younger people, though. I could understand their almost giddy interactions and was trying very much to forgive Viola for suddenly feeling like a kind-of naïve ingénue. Because, frankly, her life had been grim and she really had bypassed all that as a girl and I could read it as her reliving what she'd missed if I wanted to. And I did want to. But then it all went into the dungpile and I stopped caring.

The rest of this review is spoilery in the sense that it gives the flavor from the midpoint on. You want to read this to know what you're in for, but it'll kind of remove hope for better while you're reading. I'm sorry for that, but it can't be helped.

The thing is that from about the midpoint on, circumstances change and they each do a huge pull-back and the entire tension from then on is monotonous. It's not *quite as bad* as simply not communicating with each other. That problem is a **painful** nuisance when it comes after the characters have established a framework for communication and that's not the case here. Oh, they've shared an idyll but they haven't done much but escape for a while. You get the feeling that they're close to honestly sharing, but it doesn't happen. Which is *fine at that point*. Only then it goes on and on and on with the entire rest of the story only possible because neither has the courage to speak honestly to the other. Seriously, either one having even a lick of courage would short-circuit the rest of the book.

Okay, it really is quite as bad as not communicating with each other. Sigh. I felt for both because I bought the need for courage given the circumstances. Both had past wounds to protect and others to consider. They were both so sad, though. And then it just kept going on. And as it wore on, I gradually lost more and more respect. For both of them. Because continuing to hurt inside and projecting that hurt onto each other (sometimes innocently, sometimes not) without having the courage to step out of the pain cycle got old. By the time it finally culminated, the pain had grown to the point that it wasn't courage at all that motivated the eventual reconciliation—it was simply the most expedient way to stop hurting.

I was so sad when I finished this book. This series had been an outstanding read with all three previous books an unprecedented five stars. I hate to see that streak stop here. But it did. I'm keeping it at three stars because the beginning was so engaging and the second half still had some outstanding secondary characters and I particularly liked Marcel's twins and that Balogh didn't make the couple who raised them on his behalf into the caricatures a lesser author might have.

A note about Steamy: Some lovely explicit sex scenes put this approaching the middle of my steam tolerance, but not quite reaching it. Mostly because they're clumped up and aren't terribly long when all's said. Seeing Viola take on new experiences so openly, even courageously, deluded me into thinking she'd be brave and forthright, though, so I feel a bit cheated by them, in the end.

Caz says

B+ / 4.5 stars

This fourth book in Mary Balogh's *Westcott* series is a gently moving and beautifully observed story about a woman trying to define herself and her purpose in life after the death of the man she had believed, for more than twenty years, to be her husband. Readers familiar with the series will recall that the Westcotts were thrown into upheaval by the revelation that the head of the family, the Earl of Riverdale, had contracted his second marriage bigamously, rendering his son and two daughters illegitimate and his wife... not his wife at all.

Viola Kingsley had, when a much younger woman, been pretty much sold into marriage to Humphrey, the Earl of Riverdale, who was in desperate need of her large dowry. For more than twenty years, she had been the perfect wife, mother and countess; composed, confident, poised and dignified, she had been widely respected and, in spite of the fact that her marriage was not at all happy, she had a comfortable life, children she adored, friends and such occupation as she desired.

Two years earlier, however, she discovered that her life had been based on a lie, that she was not and had never been the Countess of Riverdale at all, but that she had lived in sin with the Earl for more than two decades. In shame and humiliation, and shunned by society, she fled with her daughters, Camille and Abigail, to her mother's home in Bath and then, with Camille about to be married, Viola left Abigail with her mother and went to live with her brother, a country vicar, and re-assumed her maiden name. But she couldn't remain with her brother forever – and when she was reunited with the family, was surprised and touched when her husband's legitimate daughter Anna (the Duchess of Netherby) asked her to return, with Abigail, to her previous home at Hinsford. Viola has been a mess of roiling emotions for the past couple of years; feeling she has no right to be counted as one of the Westcott family, she has repeatedly tried to distance herself from them, only to be brought back to the fold by the generous and sympathetic group of people who, regardless of legalities, continue to regard Viola as one of their own.

At the end of the previous book, **Someone to Wed**, we learned that Viola had, without telling anyone where she was going, absented herself from the family gathering celebrating the birth of Camille's son. But Viola has finally snapped. The love and acceptance she has encountered from her not-family is stifling her, and although she knows she is being incredibly ungrateful, she just can't bear to be around them. For two years she has tried to disappear into the background, maintaining a façade of quiet acceptance, internalising her own pain and suffering - and she can't do it any more. She needs to figure out who and what she is – she has spent her forty-two years being a countess, a wife, a daughter, a mother... but who is she *now*?

When the hired carriage she is travelling in needs to be repaired, Viola breaks her journey at an inn, where she encounters someone she hasn't seen in almost fifteen years – the austere and compellingly attractive Mr. Marcel Lamar, a man whose reputation as an inveterate womaniser has only grown over the years. Their last encounter had been at a ball when Viola, who was deeply infatuated with Marc, but was nonetheless a faithful wife in spite of the unhappiness of her marriage, had rebuffed his flirtation and told

him in no uncertain terms to leave her alone – and he took her at her word.

Marc has, for the past two years, been the Marquess of Dorchester, although it appears that Viola is unaware of this and still refers to him as “Mr.” – he doesn’t bother to correct her. He is widely known to be a rake, reputed to be a man without a heart and doesn’t put himself out for anyone or anything. He has stopped at an inn on his way to pay one of his semi-annual visits to his country seat where he will spend a couple of days with his twins, Bertrand and Estelle who are nearing their eighteenth birthdays, and then he will disappear back to London and his own life, leaving them in the capable hands of their aunt, to whom he entrusted them following his young wife’s death almost twenty years previously.

He is somewhat surprised to recognise Viola when she arrives at the inn, and not at all surprised to find that he is as attracted to her now as he was the last time he’d seen her. They strike up a conversation and agree to spend the next day together, and Marc delights in watching Viola gradually breaking out of her carefully constructed shell of dignity and propriety to reveal a woman with a wonderful sense of the ridiculous, who does not stand on ceremony and, he suspects, is possessed of hidden depths of passion he very much hopes to explore.

If you’ve read the synopsis, you’ll know that Viola and Marc agree to run away together to indulge in a brief affair. Both are running from their families for different reasons, which, in Marc’s case, prove to be especially heartbreakng. For almost twenty years, he has denied himself the love and affection of his children and those around him because of the burden of guilt he carries over the death of his wife, believing himself to be an unworthy and unfit father. He has deliberately isolated himself, indulging only in physical relationships and thinking himself incapable of falling in love... although of course, what Ms. Balogh does brilliantly is to show him doing just that while completely unaware of what’s happening - or at least in very deep denial about it.

Equally brilliant is the way Ms. Balogh has so perfectly captured and conveyed Viola’s situation. She needs time and space to work out who she is and where she goes from here, and much as she loves her daughters and other members of her extended family and feels guilty for not wanting to be with them, she knows she can’t continue as she has been doing and needs to break out of the rut. I’m sure there are many women who will relate to her predicament whether it be in relation to the loss of a partner or “empty nest” syndrome; there comes a point when we realise we’ve been defining ourselves in one way for many years and that we’re a bit lost when we no longer fit that definition. I applauded Viola for wanting to take time for herself and for being selfish for probably the first time in her life. She’s a grown woman – why shouldn’t she have an affair with a handsome man? Provided they’re discreet, they’re hurting no-one - and they both know it’s a finite fling... don’t they?

The first half of the book, in which Viola and Marc embark upon their physical relationship and at the same time develop a friendship outside of the bedroom is beautifully done, peppered with moments of humour and tender affection, insight and longing. In the second half, however, things start to run away a bit; I won’t spoil the storyline, but while there were things I really liked – such as meeting Marc’s children – there were others that struck me as a bit off, such as Marc jumping to a fairly unwarranted conclusion about Viola’s wishes. His misguided attempt to protect her reputation is understandable, but there are too many fingers in too many pies, and I just wanted everyone to go home so that Marc and Viola could straighten things out between them without any more needless angst!

Had the second half of **Someone to Care** continued in the same vein as the first, I probably would be calling it my favourite of the series, but the weaker second half means it just misses that appellation. Still, it’s an excellent addition to the **Westcott** canon, and I, for one, was delighted to read a story featuring an attractive,

vibrant heroine in her forties. Ms. Balogh once again delivers a character-driven romance of great emotional depth and insight and I'm sure fans will enjoy it.

♥Rachel♥ says

3.5 Stars

Viola Kingsley used to be the Countess of Riverdale until she found out the marriage was invalid since her late husband was already married to another woman. She and her children lost the title and fortune, but in the time since her family has rallied around her, and her children have come through remarkably well. Still, Viola hasn't really dealt with her feelings about the whole situation and suddenly, she's feels the need to escape the family gathering she's attending. Hiring a carriage and fleeing for home, she becomes stranded in a small town when the carriage breaks down.

This is where she runs into Marcel Lamarr, The Marquess of Dorchester, and prior acquaintance. The man was temptation personified, but as a married woman, as she thought, Viola turned him down. Now seeing him again, fourteen years later, his appeal hasn't diminished. They run off together, both trying to escape life temporarily, and they do, for a while.

Mary Balogh is one of my favorite historical romance writers, and I've loved all the stories in this Westcott series. Viola and Marcel have aches in their heart each escape by running away together and enjoying each other's company, both physically and mentally. They have meaningful conversations, steamy nights, and grow closer than they thought possible. The cottage in Devonshire where they spent their time was dreamily described and sounded gorgeous!

I was a little disappointed Viola and Marcel kept their true feelings, both deeper than they wanted to admit, from each other. It was obvious to everyone that they loved each other, but their pride and worry over being more hurt stopped them from sharing what was in their heart and it went on longer than I would've liked. I'm thrilled with how it all turned out at any rate, and although this wasn't my favorite installment, I still heartily recommend it.

A copy was kindly provided by Berkley in exchange for an honest review.

This review is also posted at The Readers Den.

steph says

[

-First, I did not like Marcel. He said he loved Viola fourteen years ago, said he loved her now (well, he never told her to her face but that is a different bullet point) but his actions did not show that. He is se

Khanh, first of her name, mother of bunnies says

I lack the words with which to sing this book's praises because this book leaves me speechless with joy.

Mary Balogh is above and beyond the best historical romance author in the whole world. There's like almost no sex in this store and I DON'T CARE.

This book made me furious. It made me ache. It made me squirm with joy. If you want a reformed-rake story, I don't think you can do better than this.

Some people may think that her writing is boring. And it is true that the pace is slow. There is a lot of internal monologue, but for people who desire great writing and the depiction of realistically falling in love, one can do no better.

This book is unusual in that the characters are both mature. As in the main characters are above 40 and both widowed (kind of, but you'll know what I mean when you read the book). It makes the book no less readable, and indeed, I do wish more of these books exist. People do fall in love past their 20s.

I just have a lot of feelings right now.

stl_reader says

SLIGHT SPOILERS BELOW

As a baby boomer, I was initially thrilled that Ms. Balogh was giving us an older heroine. And I had hopes for the novel, though it started a bit slowly. (Though that's fairly common for the author's novels—they progress at a rather “stately” rate.) The premise sounded interesting.

But man, this story let me down big time.

I was BORED. And as far as I'm concerned, the story bordered on Women's Fiction instead of Romance. Plus there was soooo much “telling” and not “showing.” (which I have found to be a trend in the author's more recent novels).

I wanted to see a lot more interaction between the H/h once they were found out by their families. For example, why not let them discover, after the initial anger, embarrassment, etc., that they actually still wanted to be together very much, but perhaps one or both feared tying the knot, or the scandal of being exposed should they continue their affair, and *that* could have provided the central conflict...

Instead, the story remained in this “he/she got tired of me before I was ready, but I'm hurt anyway, but I knew it would happen, so I just need to move on, but it's hard, but I have to, but I'm hurt ...” loop for endless pages. (I'm not a fan of the “Big Misunderstanding” trope, which we have a variation of here.)

Normally, I love that Balogh is an author who gives us a view into her characters' minds. But in this case, there was too much repeated internal dialogue.

So, in a nutshell, you have a "romance" novel where the H/h have a brief affair, but always keep themselves emotionally and mentally at a distance from each other in anticipation of the inevitable affair's end. This mutual distancing continues right until the end of the book. The distance is not only mental and emotional, it's physical, since for the last half of the book the H/h are hardly ever together. (Or it seemed that way to me.)

Disappointing.

Sonya Heaney says

Originally posted **HERE**.

I love that the US cover shows an important location in the story. Mary Balogh gets great covers.

Readers have had a lot of different reactions to this book, as I would expect seeing as the two lead characters are so unconventional for the historical romance genre. That said, I loved *Someone to Care* a lot, and will go back to some parts of it again and again. It made me feel things.

The first half of the book is particularly strong. It's an emotional story about a woman in her forties who has never been able to make a choice for herself in life until now, and when she does it all goes horribly wrong.

Viola is a mother and a grandmother, but nobody sees her beyond that. She was a countess until her marriage was declared void because of her husband's bigamy, and now she has no standing in society and no idea what is ahead of her.

One thing that makes Mary Balogh one of the best authors in the genre is that she refuses to modernise her Regency world. She writes HISTORICAL romance, and it's so much better for it. We get the society and the societal restrictions. Balogh doesn't present us with her feminism by putting her heroines in breeches and sending them stumbling through ballrooms like bulls in china shops; instead she shows us the constraints women lived under and how they got around those strict rules to find happiness.

Because of this, we get to see the hypocrisy surrounding Viola's situation, and feel the full effect of the oppression she lives under. Marcel has spent seventeen or so years running around England and indulging in any and all vices, and not once has he been forced into a situation he doesn't want.

And yet Viola – at **forty-two** – finally takes a chance to do something for herself, and that one decision has massive consequences.

I read historical fiction to read about another world, and Balogh, Madeline Hunter, and a few others (but not nearly enough of them) take me there.

I think this could just about be called a reunion romance, as the characters loved each other in the past, but could do nothing about it. I felt connected to this pair (even when Marcel was disguising his hurt behind cruel words), and invested in them finding a way back to each other by the end.

For readers new to the series, I think you could very much enjoy the first half of the book. However, then the other characters arrive, and you're going to be overwhelmed. There are several dozen characters to keep track of, and I don't think that's going to work for someone who hasn't come into the Westcott family in book one.

The overpopulation in the second half is my only complaint about *Someone to Care*, but because of how much it made me feel at the start, I'm forgiving it.

Kathryn says

Someone to Care is another delightful book in the Someone series by Mary Balogh. We met Viola in the first book where she had just found out she was no longer who she thought she was. Apart from being a mother and grandmother.

When the stress of the past few years catches up with Viola she escapes the family for a brief respite. She walks right into Marcel, a person she felt rather attracted to many years ago but had not acted upon it because she believed she was married. Together now they experience a wild and passionate and joyful time until...

What follows is a chapter of mistakes and unrevealed feelings and thoughts. Marcel makes one rather quick decision that lands him in trouble and from which there seems no return - but there is and as it turns out he reaches a turning point that will change his life and that of many others as well.

This is a story about truly caring and holding a person as someone to respect and treat well. Viola says " It seems to me there has never been anyone who cares about me, the person who dwells within the daughter and mother and all the rest. No one even knows me. Everyone thinks they do, but no one really does. Sometimes it feels as though I even do not know myself." The novel is about discovering who you really are, not just a list of labels like wife, mother, Countess and so on.

I really enjoyed the first half of the book, a little disappointed with the second half as it reverted into the trappings of society and Marcel and Viola suddenly change from the carefree wonderful people we have come to know. However in saying that the mistakes and acting out of hurt then resulted in both characters, and especially Marcel growing and becoming the person he really was meant to be.

So a story about older characters, in their early forties and and a whole cast of beloved family characters made this book another great addition to the series.

OLT says

(Could) Someone (please help me) To Care about this story?

Again I seem to be missing my "sensitivity" chip while reading a Balogh HR. Instead of enjoying the heartwarming sentimentality of a story about love, family, and acceptance, I found myself annoyed and sometimes in danger of tooth decay from the sweetness I ingested here. One day this past week this story was offered at \$1.99 so I snapped it up, since the usual price for a Balogh HR is a bridge too far for my budget. Well, even at that price I have buyer's remorse. Lordy, lordy, but this was tedious and repetitive and slow and annoying and tedious and repetitive and slow and annoying and tedious and repetitive... See, I told you. No sensitivity chip.

I guess I should have started with what's good about the story. It's that the H and h are mature individuals (39+ and 42 years of age, respectively). However, they're mature in years, not emotionally, so that positive aspect is somewhat nullified. Heroine Viola is the disgraced "widow" of the bigamous late Earl of Riverdale,

who was married to another woman when he married her and hence her marriage and her three adult children have been de-legitimized. This all began in Book #1, SOMEONE TO LOVE.

At the beginning of this story #4, Viola is having an emotional crisis, even though things are going fairly well for her, with one daughter happily married, a son content to be off fighting in the Napoleonic Wars, and the youngest daughter doing fine at home with her. In addition, all family members both of her family and that of the late earl are kind and accepting of her. Of course, upper-crust London society wants nothing to do with her but this doesn't seem to be the problem. Viola wants to feel like a person in her own right, not just as a mother and grandmother. She wants to have someone to love and care for her as a woman.

So she runs off to be by herself for a while and accidentally meets up with our hero, Marcel Lamarr, the Marquess of Dorchester. They have a history, having met and been attracted to each other some 14 years ago when she was married and he was a womanizing widower. Now, in her emotionally-vulnerable state, she agrees to have an affair with him and they run off together to his cottage in Devon, where they have lots of sex and occasional outdoor recreation such as walks, runs down hills, or twirls on bridges.

Marcel, it must be noted, is an unrepentant libertine. But, of course, we will learn that the poor dear has a tragic backstory so we must all be forgiving of his "a\$\$wipery". Sorry. I can't do it. No excuse for leaving his twin babies, after the death of his wife, in the care of relatives and only visiting them twice a year up to the time of this story, some 16 years later. What kind of a father does this? And what does he do with all his time in these years that he is NOT spending with his children? Uses it in the pursuit of pleasure, and you know what that means. What a gem of a man. Yes, yes, he doesn't feel worthy of them or of love in general. I got that.

Well, the families of both Viola and Marcel descend upon them in surprise visits and Marcel feels himself obliged to declare that they are engaged to avoid ruining what little reputation Viola has left after what her miserable late husband did to her. But, of course, there must be scads of miscommunication, failure to communicate, etc. which causes each to doubt and misunderstand the other. And so on and so forth. Eventually it all gets worked out. Viola will feel cared for and Marcel will learn to appreciate family, forgive himself and not be such a jerk.

But, as I said earlier, this is all presented tediously, in Balogh's schoolmarm fashion which is even more schoolmarmish than usual. And there's too much village festival, Christmas preparations, way too much family, interminable internal rumination by both H and h, and too much failure to communicate. A good editor should have cut at least 50 pages out of this.

My apologies for this insensitive review.

Phoenix77 says

I just couldn't get into this story. There was very little to like about Marcel and I felt like his kids were more mature than he was. Viola was little better but the traumas she'd experienced in her adult life gave her a bit more leeway in regressing into a childlike irresponsibility. Mary Balogh has written several "Older than average" romances in her career but this one felt forced. Overall a disappointment and may have put me off reading the next book in the series.

Jaci says

If you keep up with my blog you know that I am a huge Mary Balogh Fan, I have read everything she has written and loved them all. This story goes to my 3rd favorite, behind Heartless and Slightly Dangerous. Marcel Lamarr, Marquess of Dorchester is the perfect hero for Viola Kingsley. In some ways, Marc reminds me of Lucas (Heartless) and Wulfric (Slightly Dangerous).

He is unapologetic in the way that he chooses to live his life. He is beautiful in a dangerous way without a care for others. He is arrogant, subtle in his speech and irresistible to women. He takes what he wants and moves on when he gets bored. He is not interested in reforming and is brazen in his appetites. He was married when he was 20 years old, his wife 18. He has twins, a boy, and a girl. His wife died in a tragic accident which has shaped his life and everyone in it. He is 40 years old and has spent little time with his family or his children. He has buried his past and all the emotions that led to his wife's death. His sister-in-law and her husband moved into his home and has raised his children. He only goes home when he feels he must put in an appearance and never stays long, the feelings that try to emerge send him fleeing back to London.

Viola Kingsley is a tainted woman. Her husband of 20 years apparently was married before they met and married Viola before his first wife died. Which meant they were never legally married and her children were made illegitimate. She hasn't been seen in Society in a long time. Viola has always been the perfect lady. It was an arranged marriage and she never even liked him, but she did her duty and never complained when he took mistresses and gambled away his son's inheritance. She has always been the perfect wife and mother. Where did that ever get her?

A chance meeting in an out of the way Inn where both Marc and Viola are running away from their family and the guilt that drives them. They knew each other when they were both in London pretending to enjoy the Season. Marc saw something in Viola that made him pursue her even though she was married. Viola was young and lonely and fell in love with Marc, but she would never have an affair and sent him away. Marc persuades Viola to run away with him for a week of being free of all their cares and of pleasures that she has never had before.

The journey that Marc and Viola take through this is a story is so profound. It is filled with sadness, guilt, regret, and discovery. The fears they discover are ones that they have buried for years. The greatest one is that it is not too late. They can try to redeem themselves and embrace their feelings and those of the people who have always loved them, flaws and all.

This is vintage Mary Balogh, I cannot even tell how many times I cried in the last five chapters of this story. Mary has a way of letting you into the minds and hearts of her characters that you feel what they feel. All of

her characters are memorable and her stories ones that you will read over and over, year after year. If you are new to Historical Romance, I highly recommend you start with Mary's books. Mary is the standard for all Authors of Historical Romance to emulate.
