



More Than a Mistress

Mary Balogh

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An arrogant duke does the unthinkable-he falls in love with his mistress.

She raced onto the green, desperate to stop a duel. In the melee, Jocelyn Dudley, Duke of Tresham, was shot. To his astonishment, Tresham found himself hiring the servant as his nurse. Jane Ingleby was far too bold for her own good. Her blue eyes were the sort a man could drown in-were it not for her impudence. She questioned his every move, breached his secrets, touched his soul. When he offered to set her up in his London town house, love was the last thing on his mind....

Jane tried to pretend it was strictly business, an arrangement she was forced to accept in order to conceal a dangerous secret. Surely there was nothing more perilous than being the lover of such a man. Yet as she got past his devilish facade and saw the noble heart within, she knew the greatest jeopardy of all, a passion that drove her to risk everything on one perfect month with the improper gentleman who thought love was for fools.

More Than a Mistress Details

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From Reader Review More Than a Mistress for online ebook

Punk says

Romance. You know what? I want to read a Regency romance about the *second* most notorious rake in London. He's pretty good at flirting, but that other guy is always swooping in and stealing away his conquests. It just drives him up the wall! So the second most notorious rake in London decides to do something about it. No matter what it takes, he will win the title of Most Notorious Rake in London. The current Most Notorious Rake in London thinks this sounds like good fun, as a little competition always makes things more interesting. They start showing up at all the same parties and watch each other keenly, studying the other's moves, getting into his head, exploiting his weaknesses, admiring his talents, enjoying the tightness of his breeches, going riding together, falling in love.

I will also take an alternate universe where it's the men who must be presented to society and the women are out sleeping around and riding horses and winking lasciviously at the beautiful young boys so tender and rosy cheeked and pure. Wait. That actually makes me a little queasy.

Luckily, in this book, the one I'm supposedly reviewing, Jane is twenty and has a pretty good head on her shoulders. The love interest is an alpha hero with an artistic underbelly she must coax out, so there's almost a beta hero buried deep, deep within him, but mostly he's dark and imperious and brooding. And, of course, the most notorious rake in London.

I don't know why I keep reading Regency romances. Maybe I'm looking for the one that subverts traditional gender roles. Maybe I want one that works within traditional roles to craft something so exceptional that a modern reader doesn't have to stifle modern thoughts about civil rights. But this Regency doesn't do either of those things, and in fact, relies on gender as a substitute for personality traits and is often given as a point of attraction.

The problem is that words like "masculine" and "feminine" don't actually tell me anything about the characters or their attraction for each other. Also the sex is boring. I liked the angry sex best, but even it had weird ideas about...pelvic floor muscles? I guess. Jane was getting philosophical about penetration in a way that made me grimace.

The plot is a solid line through the book. The sense of risk flagged a bit in the happy middle section, but led naturally into the third act misunderstanding, and from there we had quite a bit of excitement and rushing around. That was my favorite part and during that time I really did want the couple to work out their problems and have their happily ever after.

Three stars. The gender-as-character stuff was sloppy, but it's otherwise well written, with a romance trajectory I haven't seen before, and a heroine who tries to rescue herself and mostly succeeds.

eBook: No cover, and I didn't see a single error.

Suzanne says

3.5 stars. It took me awhile to get into this - the writing felt more formal than I'm used to for this genre. But I

ended up enjoying it. One of the things I especially liked is seeing an actual friendship, not just lust, between the two main characters.

Chumchum_88 says

Well, that definitely was different, this is my first Regency book with a lady as a mistress, it didn't have the severity of most books, or the dramatics, as all Mary Balogh's books it had the touch of gentle smoothness and lightheartedness which I'm over the moon for.

Jane was more of an adorable character, at the beginning I couldn't help but smile every time she talked, I kind of understood Jocelyn's attraction to her impudence, she was supposed to be a servant but all she did was scold the master of the house^^. I also felt she was more responsible than her years, for she was barely crossed her teenage years and yet she confronted everything that faced her with utmost rationality and calmness, I respected her for it.

Jocelyn was supposed to be the arrogant lofty kind of man, who didn't give any second thought to those who are beneath him, and as other users mentioned to me before he would look at them with his quizzing glass that hinted of disdain, well truth to be told sometime it did sound hilarious when he did it but the other times it felt as if he used it as a shield. But when someone gets to dig deeper they would find a very sensitive kind of man, soulful and artistic that was suppressing under a tight leash, and I hated his father for it.

- I realized it had a touch of Beauty and the Beast in it, which is my all time favorite Disney movie, that's why it's a huge plus
- I liked their going-on banter, especially at the beginning when he was shocked when she spoke back to him, plus the reaction of the other characters on such occasions.
- I liked how he played the piano so soulfully, and every scene he played and she singing along, and how he was bragging about her, when he made her sing to other people.
- I liked the scene at the music room, when she first got to know that he plays.
- I honestly liked that week they spent together when she started as his Mistress, they were cute, him playing and painting, her embroidering and singing.
- Loved every scene she cried with him at her side
- Loved that night while he was crying clinging to her at his lap telling her about his past, I really loved him there.

Overall, *thumps up*

Preeti ♥? (Romance She Reads) says

Unequivocal 5 stars for being...

~Delightful
~Amusing
~Tender
~Heartfelt
~Sensual

A bit corny, a tad farfetched, not classic Mary Balogh (more Lisa Kleypas-ish!).
But made me smile and swoon in equal measures. *sigh*

A delicious alpha H who's not a jerk (at least not excessively so!) and a spirited sweetheart h lock horns and more. First she gets him shot, then he forces her to be his nurse and later his mistress – not that she's a timid or helpless quarry.

Add some villains, trying circumstances, minor intrigue, a h in need of saving, a H more in need of saving (from himself) and you get ...

An utterly sweet and stunning love story!

Going straight on my Favorites shelf!

Her... *"This was not the way she had expected it to be. This was not man and mistress. This was lover and beloved."*

Him... *"Jocelyn did not sleep. He was thoroughly sated but also uneasy. What the devil had he been babbling? He hoped she had not been listening."*

(No review needed)

Wealththeow says

[Jane is actually Lady Sarah Illingsworth, heiress to a considerable fortune. Her guardian's impecunious lechery and greed have her on the run, suspected of a murder she did not commit. (hide spoiler)]

Catherine says

In the middle of a duel the Duke of Tresham is distracted by a woman yelling at the participants to stop. In his distraction the Duke ends up being shot in the leg. He blames the woman and summons her to him so he can make sure she knows it. He's surprised when she doesn't give ground and admit she was wrong. Believing it is her fault he ends up detaining her to help him which ends up making her late for work. When Jane tries to explain the circumstances to her boss the woman says she won't believe her unless she has a signed note from the Duke. Jane refuses to let the Duke off the hook for making her lose her job and goes to his house to acquire the note.

The Duke is amazed by her gall and ends up hiring her as his nurse to entertain him after the doctor says he must stay abed for three weeks. Jane agrees because what choice does she have? She doesn't want to starve. They both agree it will be temporary until he's back on his feet. While she plays the nurse the Duke amuses himself by picking at her. He likes that she never backs down. When he demands she show him respect and address him as "your grace" she demands the courtesy right back and will only let him call her Miss Ingleby.

Every time he pushes her on something she stands her ground and pushes him right back.

Slowly the two realize their attraction to each other and try to fight the feelings. They both know it can't go anywhere. The Duke, Jocelyn, refuses to seduce a servant under his protection and Jane has secrets that she is reluctant to admit. When Jane tells Jocelyn that it is time for her to go he ends up offering her the position of his mistress. Jane realizes she'll be in a better position to hide her secrets if she accepts, and truthfully she doesn't want to leave him. What follows is a beautiful tale of friendship and love. Even though the road is rocky until the end they both couldn't be happier when they are finally together.

I loved the fact that friendship between Jocelyn and Jane was so important to this story. It was nice to see that they didn't just love each other. They actually liked the person inside too. Often I'll read stories where the hero and heroine love each other but it seems like they can't help it. They never seem to really like each other and want to be friends. This book was a very refreshing change of pace. I also really liked Jocelyn's habit of saying the total opposite of how he felt when he was vulnerable. When he turned haughty and tried to put distance between them she knew exactly what he was doing and why he was doing it. It was fun to see him scramble to regain his Duke persona when he felt his feelings overtaking him.

The contract was an interesting piece of the story. It was also a very smart move on Jane's part. I liked that she tried to hide their emerging relationship behind the contract. It was nice to see Jocelyn be the one uncertain of Jane's feelings. Did she really want him or was it only because she knew he wanted her? Why was she so ashamed of him? Watching him try to work through insecurities like that without revealing how much it meant to him was sweet.

I really liked the very last chapter. Watching how the status of their relationship was revealed made me smile. One thing I didn't like was the end of the chapter just before that. I was really confused. When Jane admits something really important to Jocelyn and he says that it changes everything the chapter just ends. What happened there? Did he pressure her? It's very frustrating. If anyone cares to explain it feel free to leave a comment.

Other than that slight confusion I loved the book.

Rane says

More than a Mistress is just one of those books that capture you from the start and doesn't let you go until long after.

One of the most unlikely meetings to take place in both their lives. Jocelyn Dudley, Duke of Tresham is faced with another duel as he's accused to have been the lover of a married woman. A gentleman through and through takes up the duel instead of calling the woman a liar. So when a young woman runs toward the duel to stop them, Jocelyn is annoyed when he's shot in the leg.

Jane thought she was doing the right thing in stopping the duel, but when her efforts go astray things get a little tricky and she becomes the nurse of the infamous Duke of Tresham and later his mistress.

Jocelyn runs from the demons of his past, taught that kindness and love were a weakness, those emotions if shown were beaten out of him or hid away behind his gentleman armor. Slowly his armor cracks as the kindness and understanding of Jane opens his heart and sees the world like never before.

Jane runs from the demons of the present, after protecting herself from her cousin who would have raped her in order to gain her money, she runs away thinking she killed him (with a book no less) in order to find help,

then to hide knowing it wouldn't last forever. When she starts to work for Jocelyn she starts to see a great man behind the society mask he dons to wear. Falling in love with the man inside.

I adored Jocelyn, thinking like Jane he was some stuck up peer, but you see, like her, he's much more than that and the pains from his past run deep. Jane slowly heals his wounds not only the shot through his leg, but on his heart. Jane was a great female lead, very straight-forward taking no lip from Jocelyn and giving it back ten-fold. Showing wisdom beyond her years and love and trust.

Jocelyn and Jane don't fall head over heels in love with each other at first sight, but get to know each other, slowly falling in love with one another, but fighting and hiding it tooth and nail. You can see moments where both feel the connection between each other.

The sensual level is like a warm burn making the moments feel special and magical (except for one time).

The pace of the book never stumbles or slows keeping pace as the story unfolds of the truth behind Jane and the struggles of Jocelyn.

The secondary characters each shined in their own way, but not outshining either Jane or Jocelyn.

While at the end I did want to smack Jane and Jocelyn up-side the heads for being so mule-headed and short-sighted, they do come to their senses in time for their wonderful happy ever after!

Overall: I adore Mary Balogh's books as she makes these wonderful complex imperfect characters, making them human and real. Making a special place in your heart for them. More than a Mistress does that and so much more.

Lea's Audiobooks Hensley says

First listen - I have listened to two versions of this - both unabridged. I enjoyed the second much more than the first.

Second listen - I plan to write a full review but for now, I'll say that this is my favorite Balogh. It's old school in many ways but is laugh out loud funny with the Duke's reactions to the heroine. But I think it best to add in here that I enjoy books with mistresses and the heroine here is a mistress in the truest sense of the word. No playing around with a "possible" mistress or a "supposed" mistress but yet it doesn't stay there.

Although not a Landor fan when it comes to her voicing of male characters, this one worked for me.

Vintage says

Witty banter, matched adversaries, spine of steel. The 4 star drought is over. Kind of, I am rounding up because the relationship between the Hero and Heroine is so much fun as well as their verbal give and take.

On her way to her menial job, Jane, the on the run heroine, stops a duel in process. The Duke of Tresham has been challenged by a supposedly cuckolded husband, and Jane's interruption results in the Duke getting shot in the leg.

Jane ends up becoming the Duke's nursemaid and she gives no quarter to his loftiness and arrogance. Hints

of St. Vincent's charm and arrogance minus his utter debauchery color the Duke personality. Yes, he's arrogant, but it's a fun arrogance as he is more than amused by Jane's prim demeanor.

I'm not going to get into the reasons why she's on the run as they are a little ridiculous, but this story is worth reading for the actual *relationship* and *conversation* between the two main characters which is something you don't get to read as often as you'd think. The Duke grows a little and sheds some of his I'm-not-worthy-bad boy-ness, and while the heroine is attracted to the Duke she doesn't completely fall apart in a mindless, spineless puddle. I am sorry to say that the Duke's name is Jocelyn. Yep, Jane and Jocelyn. Oh well, can't have it all.

It falls apart a little at the end(hated the ending), but definitely readable.

Caz says

4.5 stars

This review is of the audiobook version, narrated by Rosalyn Landor.

This was, I think, one of the first of Mary Balogh's romances I read and I remember thinking at the time that it was something a bit out of the ordinary.

Our hero is Jocelyn Dudley, Duke of Tresham. He's rich, arrogant and jaded, doesn't suffer fools gladly and while accepting deference as his due, is secretly tired of all the toadying he experiences day after day.

He has a reputation as a rake, one who doesn't draw the line at having affairs with married women – and at the beginning of the book, is participating in a duel, having been called out by a furious husband. What the husband doesn't realise is that Tresham's highly developed sense of honour will not permit him to call a lady a liar, even to prevent a duel – and in any case, the usual practice in these matters is for both parties to delope (fire into the air).

All would have gone according to plan had not Tresham's opponent been distracted by screams – and instead of shooting wide, he is startled and accidentally shoots Jocelyn in the leg.

The imprecations to stop had come from Jane Ingleby, a young woman passing by on her way to work. She is immediately summoned to the scene to help – although Tresham is rather rude to her (not surprisingly) – but this means she is late to work and is dismissed from her job as a seamstress. Her employer, sceptical of her explanation of her lateness as being due to having provided aid to the Duke of Tresham tells her she can have her job back if she gets proof, signed by Tresham, that her explanation was the truth, and Jane, having no other alternative, angrily determines to get it.

Jane confronts Tresham – and instead of giving her a letter, he offers her a job as his nurse for three weeks.

The thing that marked this book out for me as being something a little different was the way in which the relationship between the hero and heroine is developed. Jane will not allow Tresham to browbeat her, and although he pretends to be put out, it's clear that he rather likes having someone stand up to him. I got the sense of an *hommage* to Jane Eyre in this aspect of their relationship, and later, in the scene where he instructs her to play the piano for him.

As the days pass, they find themselves more and more drawn to each other, and the author does a magnificent job with building the romantic tension between them. Then, in a scene late at night where Jane discovers Tresham playing the piano like a virtuoso (being a musician myself, I always like a musical hero!) - they share a kiss and admit to themselves (if not to each other) that they feel far more for each other than friends should, and that it will be hard for them to part at the end of Jocelyn's three-week convalescence.

His solution is not marriage; rather, he asks her to be his mistress.

They have fallen very deeply in love – and what I adore here is that Balogh has written a romance in which the protagonists are true soul-mates. I know that's a rather hackneyed term, but I really can't think of any other way to describe their deep connection to one another. The time they spend together at Jane's house in their "den", where they can be themselves without the need for conversation or any of the trappings of society is a delight to read, as we get to see Tresham as he really is, rather than the façade of the haughty duke he presents to the rest of the world. The scene where he finally lets go and tells Jane about his childhood and how his father ruthlessly beat every artistic, creative feeling out of him because he thought such impulses were emasculating; and later, how his father arranged for his 'deflowering' at the hands of his own mistress – is absolutely heart-breaking.

Despite the very real and deep love between them however, Jane is guarding a secret. She is not Jane Ingleby at all, but Lady Sarah Illingsworth, and she is suspected of the murder of her cousin, a widely disliked fellow as it turns out, who was attempting to rape her in order to compromise her into marriage. At first, Jane keeps her secret because she does not want to be caught, and as time goes on, she realises that she should ask Jocelyn for his help. But she cannot bring herself to do so – she is so much in love, and having gained his trust, feels unable to tell him the truth and shatter his belief in her when he has at last begun to believe he is worthy of love for himself and not his position.

Unfortunately for Jane, Tresham discovers her secret before she has steeled herself to tell him, and is furious – at both her, for what he sees as her betrayal, and at himself, for being stupid enough to fall for her and trust her.

My one complaint with the story is that the resolution seems to happen rather too quickly. One moment, Jane and Tresham are arguing with each other and he is saying some rather unpleasant things to her; then that chapter ends and the next begins at a completely different place, with Jane and Jocelyn still seemingly separated. While I can appreciate why this is, and quite liked the reveal, I nonetheless felt a bit cheated out of some sort of reconciliation scene.

Still, that's the one complaint I have about the book, the rest of which is well-paced and which feels very real in terms of the emotional content. Jocelyn and Jane are both superbly written and the depth of feeling and the sexual tension between them fairly jumps off the page.

As I said, I read the book years ago, so listening to the audio version was almost like coming to a new book, because I'd forgotten many of the details of the plot.

My girl-crush on Rosalyn Landor continues; she's quickly become my favourite narrator because not only are her character voices so distinct (in the one I'm listening to now, she's voicing three sisters who appear in scenes together and managing to make them all sound different so there's no confusion as to which character is speaking), they're also distinct from her normal, beautiful speaking voice, so you almost feel like you're listening to at least two different people.

I've read a number of criticisms about her voicing of the heroes in the books she narrates, which say she

makes them sound older than they should and rather stuffy. I can certainly understand the criticism; her natural voice is quite deep anyway and she usually deepens it further for the male characters. Personally, I don't mind and I don't find it unattractive (seriously, there have been times I've felt like opening a window even though I know I'm listening to a woman!), but each to their own, I suppose.

But of course, the narration is make or break when you're listening to an audio book, and if Ms Landor isn't to your taste, it's going to make it harder to enjoy or even listen to it. But I certainly have no hesitation in recommending her audios and am on a continuing quest to acquire more of them.

Mo says

3.75 stars

First time reading this author and I did enjoy it. I found it dragged a little bit in the middle and towards the end but, overall a good, solid read.

I really liked Jane. She was spirited and not afraid to voice her opinion. Of course, Jocelyn was your typical Duke of the era. Felt he was entitled to anything he wanted and how dare a little upstart like Jane question him and dare to answer him back.

He was not handsome, she decided. Not at all. But there was a raw masculinity about him that must make him impossible attractive to any woman who liked to be bullied, dominated, or verbally abused.

He was playing something hauntingly beautiful. Something Jane had never heard before.

"Well, well," he said, "the butterfly has fluttered free of its cocoon."

I will definitely return to this series and this author in the future.

"Books!" Jane said almost in a reverential whisper, her hands clasped to her bosom ...

His heart ached.

The heart he had not known he possessed.

Ingela says

Written September 23, 2014

3.8 Stars - A perfect enjoying historical with a cold-hearted hero ... gasp!!

My first historical by Mary Balogh is a "Regency" story written 2000. An, as it so often is when it comes to me, completely unplanned impulse "click and buy" book. In retrospect, a successful one. Certainly not my last by this author.

Good spent book-time in all ways. Quality in my ears (listened on the audio) makes me happy, very happy.

More Than a Mistress feels like an classic HR in the good old school. We get a proud, and at times very sarcastic and cruel, hero, a genuine ideal young beautiful lady heroine and a amusing heartwarming romantic drama. Also tastefully and comfortably enough with the right amount of heat and steam and I must say that I liked that.

Twenty years old **Jane Ingleby** is far too bold for her own good and after she try to stop a duel is she stucked with a rake, **Jocelyn Dudley, the Duke of Tresham**. After a bit of fuss about who hurt who is he hiring her as his nurse for three weeks.

But Jane has more than one secret and the Duke begin soon to suspect that this saucy young woman is not just who she tells. Her fine talents, good conversational ability and beautiful blonde hair get our hero to crave more than just his nurse help with his footstool (needed as a result of the gunshot wound).

Three weeks are not much when you have fun.

She needs a job, housing and security (a hiding place?).

He needs a warm body and a woman to visit some nights.

An agreement is signed.

'Now she realized she had never been kissed before. Not really. Not like this.
Ah, never like this.'

Gosh yes, yet another lovely audiobook. I will never be able to return to just reading books.

I've listened to the audio narrated by Rosalyn Landor.

A narrator voice I knew I would once again like. *Ms Landor* is fantastic with this kind of stories with much dialogue and slightly melancholic heroes.

You could say that I'm in both a huge *audio-binge* AND a, big but not huge maybe, *HR-binge* right now. A romance genre which does (fits) very good in the audio format. So it seems to me in any case.

A lovely HR with a well thought out intriguing story plot. I more or less fell in all of these cleverly-made (for good romances so needed) emotions-traps.

...My heart ached and chafed painfully. I laughed and giggled, cried and snorted. I almost hated the hero and had the urge to pat the heroine on her head. I had to wait for the kiss and hear them bumping hot in the bedroom - rightly, as it should be.

"Everyone should know what it is like to be called by name. By the name of the unique person one is at heart."

Perfect in so many ways. ~ Just what a historical romance should be to make me happy. ~ Tempted me to want to read more books in the series. We will see.

I LIKE - these gorgeous memorable rake-heroes...

Dina says

I'm going to start repeating myself, but I just love Ms. Balogh's writing! No other modern author is as apt at "transporting" me to Regency London as her. All it takes is the first paragraph, and the setting is crystal clear in my mind and I find myself in another time and space. More Than a Mistress was no exception: I was captivated from the start, and Jocelyn and Jane were another great couple to be added to my all-time favorite H/h in Romancelandia.

Let me admit that I thought I would have some difficulty adjusting to the hero's name, Jocelyn, since it isn't a name I'm used to associating with a man. And I remembered complaining about the heroine's name in another book I had read recently, so I knew I was shallow enough to care about that, LOL. Well, Ms. Balogh could have named Jocelyn anything she wanted and I would still not be bothered! Yes, I was that entranced by him and Ms. Balogh even managed to make the first time Jane said his name a special and touching moment. **sighs**

This was neither a love-at-first-sight or lust-at-first-sight tale. There wasn't even a spark of physical attraction between Jocelyn and Jane when they first met. This was a story about two people getting to know each other, opening up emotionally and falling steadily in love. And the build up was fully packed with emotion and sensual awareness: their first kiss, their first waltz... I could *see* them falling in love before my eyes, and I couldn't have been happier. They were just perfectly matched!

Now, I have to make a special remark about the ending... There's an unpublished epilogue on Ms. Balogh's website that should have never been cut during editing, IMHO. Okay, the epilogue wasn't really necessary to give closure to the story - everything was pretty much wrapped up by the end of the book the way it was published - but that "extra moment" with Jocelyn and Jane gave the *certainty* that he had truly conquered his past "demons" and was finally at peace. Not to mention that it was more than nice to see them frolicking in the grass... ;)

Summer says

I liked this book a lot up until the big reveal of the heroine's secret around the last 1/3 of the book. It was then that the hero did the big 180 degree turn around and suddenly became retarded and irrational. He didn't do anything terrible, it's just that you would think he would understand why the heroine didn't tell him the big secret (even though he could have figured it out on his own if he'd look in front of his face). And of course, instead of being rational about it he takes it as a huge betrayal. Now, granted I can understand him feeling somewhat betrayed with his background but he took it a bit far in my opinion. He redeemed himself by the very end of the book but it was too late for it to save the book for me. I just have a problem reading about hero's who have these 'big misunderstandings' or make irrational conclusions about the heroines in romance books. I know it's really common but it drives me up the wall. I don't mind a hero who makes a mistake or does something wrong, no one's perfect and sometimes it makes for interesting drama. It's just that I think sometimes it goes too far. I know I've made this rant before, but it's one of my bigger pet peeves. I really did like the first 2/3 of the book though, and the hero didn't go completely silly at the end so I had to give it a decent rating. It just could have been a lot better without the hero suffering from temporary insanity.

Adrienne says

Oh. I loved this story so much!!

Hero Jocelyn who's hidden his emotions behind a wall of arrogance and disdain, and heroine Jane a Lady on the run from a crime that may or may not have been committed. They meet up in the most unlikely of ways and quite by accident whilst Jane walks to work one morning, a lady with a conscience, she sees fit to interfere in a situation which she really should not have. And so the story is set in motion. A series of events mean that Jane and Jocelyn spend a lot of time together and during those hours Jane and her intelligence slowly break through Jocelyn's hard outer persona. This isn't a love at first sight story nor is it Soul Mates or even friends to lovers, these are just two people who fall in love with each other through knowing one another for who they really are, although there are times when they both accuse each other of not being honest/truthful/ forthcoming with personal details and you feel like giving them both a shake. I actually re-read some of this because the ending is quite a surprise and I wanted to go over some of the story with a

different *eye*.

Anyway Jane is loveable, intelligent and not one to let someone get one over her, she speaks her mind. And whilst I initially thought Jocelyn to be brusque, rude and arrogant I later realized that he also has (IMO) a really wicked sarcastic sense of humour. These two banter and argue with each other, which is fine with me as this is precisely why they are so compatible!

The between the sheets scenes are in a different context to most romance novels and are not explicit.

A great Regency Romance!

Katharina says

In all honesty, I can't wrap my head around what I've just read. I mean, I like Baloghs books. She has written some fantastic stories and yes, also some mediocre ones (especially all those series, seriously, not a fan over here). But even her worse books are still Baloghs, they have solid storylines and that sound to it, that makes a Balogh, they have her style.

This book, I don't know, was it her debut or something?, it felt nothing at all like a book of hers. For the most part, the storyline was weirdly off, the characters felt stiff and unreal and the historic setting was not quite right. There were some moments when her talent shone through and the story picked up and got me all emotional, but that wasn't enough to save the book. It makes me sad because the story had a lot of potential and especially because I know what a talented writer she is- it could have been so much more, so much better! But nope it wasn't so two stars it is. I am still mega confused about this book.

KatieV says

Why haven't I been reading Mary Balogh? I suppose I'm leery of the herd of Regencies/Victorians, most of which tend to be fluffy-fluff with characters who seem like they're 21st century minds dressed in costumes. Thank heavens I've broken my latest dry spell of 2 star reads.

This book made me happy :) I felt like I'd been transported. Rosalyn Landor was a fabulous narrator (as usual). Sometimes I do admit to finding her hero's voice to be too pompous, but in this case it fit the role to a tee.

Jocelyn, Duke of Tresham was a nightmare. He was a pompous, self important ass who I alternately wanted to strangle and laugh at (especially every time he raised his quizzing glass aka 'monocle' to intimidate some unfortunate someone). Good heavens, I never thought I'd enjoy a HR with a hero that self important, snobbish and absurd. 'Absurd' was the exact word the heroine, Jane, used to describe him on more than one occasion.

I loved Jane, she was a fantastic heroine. She was smart, practical, and refused to play the martyr/victim. She was the perfect foil for Jocelyn who tried to bully her from the start (thinking her a mere serving girl). She put him in his place each and every time with a ladylike flair I envied and he grudgingly respected. Also, she did not immediately fall into his arms when he apologized for being an ass (which he was - spectacularly so).

I also felt the secondary characters were enjoyable. The Duke's sister was hysterical.

I'm so excited that Balogh has released some extended scenes her publisher removed the first go around (Now a Bride). I can't wait to read them. Sometimes publishers do not know best. There have been many novels (from pre-self pub days) where I cursed that a publisher/editor had not taken a pair of scissors to 200 pages of mind numbing crap, then they take a talented author and cut what I'm sure is going to be perfectly enjoyable. I suppose it can be a hard call to make.

Carol *Young at Heart Oldie* says

I loved this book! Mary Balogh captivated me from the start with this unusual, intelligently written, emotional and sensual love story.

When we first meet Jocelyn, he is arrogant, cynical, bad-tempered and domineering and revels in his rakish reputation even when it is undeserved. He treats lesser individuals with disdain including his long-suffering servants.

Joselyn jerked impatiently on the bell rope beside his bed and vented his irritability on his vale, who had not brought his shaving water up.

'I thought you would wish to rest this morning, your grace, 'he said.

'You thought! Do I pay you to think, Barnard?'

'No, your grace,' his man replied with long-suffering meekness.

Despite the desperate situation she finds herself in, Jane is a strong-willed, clever and independent woman who isn't afraid to speak her mind, their verbal sparring providing some delightful dialogue. I love how Jane refuses to be intimidated by Joselyn, even at his most toplofty, and it brought a smile to my face when Jocelyn's brother, Ferdinand, receives a scolding from Jane regarding the duel, prompting the following observation from Jocelyn...

'She comes equipped with a mind, you see, Ferdinand,' Jocelyn explained with studied boredom, 'with a double-edged tongue attached.'

I love how Ms. Balogh develops the relationship between Jocelyn and Jane and I could feel their attraction and the growing sexual tension as they spend time together during Jocelyn's convalescence. When Jane discovers Jocelyn playing the piano one night, she sees a sensitive and artistic side he has kept hidden from the world. I felt a subtle change in their relationship when Jocelyn confides in Jane that his father had considered his artistic talent effeminate and had been determined to beat it out of him, and Jocelyn discovers that Jane has a beautiful singing voice. It creates an intimate moment between them leading to their first kiss.

As the end of Jocelyn's convalescence draws near, Jane does not want to leave any more than Jocelyn wants her to leave. Jocelyn's solution is to ask her to be his mistress in his typical autocratic way.

'I am offering you a proposition, a business one, if you wish. You need a home and a source of income beyond what you already have. You need some security and someone to take your mind off your loan state, I daresay. You are a woman with sexual needs, after all, and you are sexually drawn to me. And I need a mistress...'

I like how Jane still gets the last word by stipulating that there would be a contract drawn up between them.

I love how Jane describes the house that Jocelyn provides for her as *sleaze* and *fluff* and sets about making the house a home. The time they spend in Jane's 'den' is my favourite part of the book. Jocelyn sees the den as a haven where they can be themselves; where he can do all those things that he longed to do as a boy. I loved the charming picture Ms. Balogh creates of Jane embroidering and Jocelyn playing the piano and painting in companionable silence. Jocelyn confides his innermost secrets to Jane and I could understand how they had shaped him into the man he became and tainted his life. Jane sees behind the mask to a vulnerable man in need of friendship, acceptance and love.

I could feel how deeply in love they were but Jane still harbours a secret but, before she can tell Jocelyn the truth, he discovers her real identity. I could understand his anger and sense of betrayal; he had trusted her enough to confide his innermost most self and she had shared nothing of herself but most of all...

She had taken everything from him, even the love of which he had though himself no longer capable. He hated her for fooling him into hoping that after all life was worth living.

My one criticism is that I found the ending rather confusing, as though something was missing. When I discovered that the editor had suggested that certain scenes be deleted to provide a more effective ending, I bought a copy of **Now a Bride**, in which Mary Balogh has provided readers with the three missing scenes. I understand the element of surprise the editor was aiming for but, having read the deleted scenes, personally I feel that the book would have benefited from the emotional punch of The Proposal scene where Jocelyn finally expresses his feelings for Jane.

I liked Jocelyn's sister, Angeline, a veritable whirlwind of chatter, with terrible dress sense and an even worse taste in bonnets and his carefree, charming younger brother, Ferdinand, with his penchant for wagers. I also enjoyed the banter between Jocelyn and his circle of friends.

MY VERDICT: As always, Mary Balogh delivers a beautifully written, emotionally satisfying, character driven romance. Highly recommended.

Mistress Trilogy (click on the book covers for more details):

- Contains never-before-published scenes from More than a Mistress and No Man's Mistress — plus Mary Balogh's new epilogue for the series.

This review was first posted on my Rakes and Rascals Blog:

<https://rakesandrascals.wordpress.com...>

Nefise says

4.5 stars

It was almost a 5 stars reading. I liked the plot and mostly story progressing. As usual Ms Balogh's

protagonists were charming and added good enjoyment to story. Especially, I would love to read a story about Lord Kimble who is one of The Duke's close friend and Lord Ferdinand who is his brother.

I love how MC's relationship developed into a sensual love. Although, almost everything very good, I didn't like last quarter of the book. I felt that it was lack of some excitement and their HEA was not too cheesy but also it was not what I expected from a fierce and passionate hero.

Overall, it was very well written, very rich and very enjoyable read. I think, its development and story progress, except the last part, one of the best product of Ms Balogh.

Lisa Kay says

Regency painter's easel, by Theodore Alexander

★★★★★ (This is a review of the audiobook.) Rosalyn Landor has an amazing ear and an ability to deliver the accents of England's social strata. This raises her reading of Historical Romances to the upper echelon. There are lots of characters from different class levels in this novel, and her talent makes it that much more fun. She is fast becoming my favorite narrator for this era, though she does modern day beautifully, too. My eyes light up when I want to revisit one of my favorite "comfort reads" via my ears and I see she is the narrator.

It isn't easy to switch back and forth between male and female voices, especially when they are in the heat of passion; it takes a deft tongue and a sharper mind. She does all this effortlessly and with perfect enunciation; I'm sure because she understands the characters so well; I never find myself being pulled from the story by any blunder.

Of course, it is worth listening to Ms. Landor reading *More Than a Mistress* just to hear the combination of love, understanding, and gentle reproof in the tone of the heroine when she says the hero's name, after he makes a defensive comment – born from a mixture of new, bewildering, and hurt feelings – while slipping from the bed where they just made sweet love.

I adore this book! Mary Balogh is one of my favorite authors and this is one of my all-time favorites "comfort read." Jocelyn Dudley, Duke of Tresham, is a brilliant combination of rake, haughty arrogant duke, and dangerous wounded hero – marvelously unaware that all he needs is love in his life. He has been callously and efficiently molded to perform his aristocratic duty, but Ms. Balogh's heroine breaks his stiff reserve. Jane Ingleby delightfully stands up for herself, but manages to stay true to the Regency era. She calls Jocelyn on his male chauvinism with lady-like grace, all while keeping her secrets close to her chest.

P.S. I love this musical CD cover picture, which I think nicely depicts Jane and the room she decorates. It is easy to image the above painter's easel within this Regency setting:

Mistress Series on Audio
