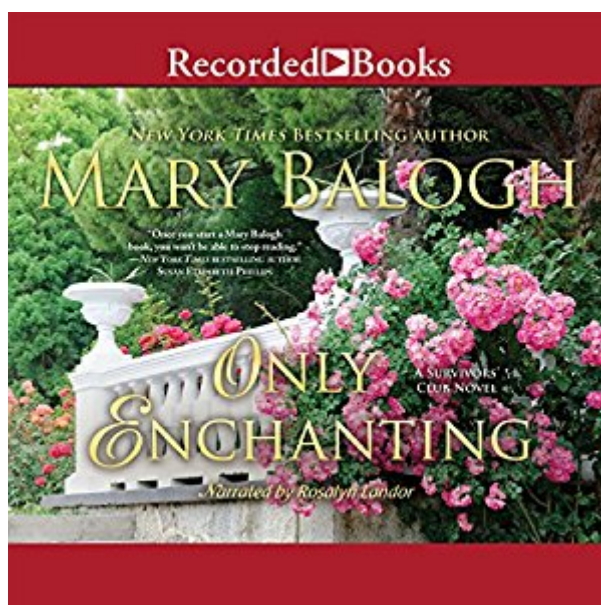


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Only Enchanting



Synopsis

The Survivors' Club: Six men and one woman, all wounded in the Napoleonic Wars, their friendship forged during their recovery at Penderris Hall in Cornwall. Now, in the fourth novel of the Survivors' Club series, Flavian, Viscount Ponsonby, has left this refuge to find his own salvation - in the love of a most unsuspecting woman. Flavian, Viscount Ponsonby, was devastated by his fiancée's desertion after his return home. Now the woman who broke his heart is back - and everyone is eager to revive their engagement. Except Flavian, who, in a panic, runs straight into the arms of a most sensible yet enchanting young woman. Agnes Keeping has never been in love - and never wishes to be. But then she meets the charismatic Flavian, and suddenly Agnes falls so foolishly and so deeply that she agrees to his impetuous proposal of marriage. When Agnes discovers that the proposal is only to avenge his former love, she's determined to flee. But Flavian has no intention of letting his new bride go, especially now that he too has fallen so passionately and so unexpectedly in love.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"what do you want of me, Lord Ponsonby?" "What do you want of me, Mrs. Keeping?" "No, I asked first." "Your company." "And that is all? You have the company of your friends, do you not?" "I do." "Then what do you want from me that they cannot give?" "Does there have to be an answer? Can we not just walk here and enjoy the afternoon?" "Yes. But I seem to be the last sort of woman a man like you would seek out for company." "A flirt? A libertine?" "Well. Yes. Are you?" This conversation just sums up how they are. She's daring and just speaks her mind. Him trying to

answer all her questions and at the same time steals kisses here and there. And he's so honest and sweet. "I will see to it that you're never sorry. I promise, Agnes." "Good-bye are the most wretched things in this world," he said. "Never say good-bye to me, Agnes." Or just honest.... "One could not imagine reciting a sonnet to the delicately arched eyebrow of sweet Agnes, could one? Or weeping over the immortal tragedy of Romeo and Agnes. Parents really ought to be more careful when naming their children." Very entertaining if you're looking for a historical romance to pass the time. Historical romance with some steamy actions.

ETA When Balogh is at her best she is hard to beat and *Only Enchanting* delivers Balogh at her very best. It is beautiful, sensitive, heart-breakingly passionate and even poetic. The intensity of this story - with the brain-damaged H and the heart-damaged h - is relentless throughout. Balogh creates a fateful meeting between the outwardly handsome but inwardly tortured H and the outwardly plain but inwardly beautiful h. It is initially innocuous, even if the h is smitten at first sight. So far so good. Not much different from many other Regencies. Almost ho-hum. Five months later they meet again, passing one another on a country lane and the earlier relative calm of the ballroom scene is replaced by tension, both physical and emotional. And that tension grows and grows as two damaged souls learn to support and understand and love one another - and, for those who need this with their romances, have multitudinous episodes of passionate sex. In my view this book is successful for a whole range of reasons. Just a few are:

1. The writing is lovely.
2. The escalating tension is well delivered.
3. The treatments of the H's brain injury and memory losses and guilt and grief are all sensitive, empathetic and realistic.
4. The gradual understanding of how abandonment has impacted on the h is just as well depicted.
5. The love affair is gorgeous.
6. The sexual obsession for one another is totally credible and Balogh delivers that without falling back on clichéd details of what goes where.
7. The reader gets to identify with and admire two wonderful siblings. David - who loved his brother enough to save him. And Dora - who loved her sister enough to become her mother, to set her free and to expect nothing in return for the sacrifices she made.
8. The h - Agnes - is gutsy (how else could she have survived the truly awful first meeting with her in-laws) and refuses to be victimised. And, very importantly, she loves her sister with great depth and admiration. And, when it matters, after some useful pre-knowledge from the H, she saves herself.
9. The H is cleverly revealed by Balogh to be much more than a handsome flirt with, as he describes it, a "cheese-hole" brain. He acknowledges, for example, that he passionately, albeit not sexually, loves the man who rescued him from madness and that he loves and relies on all the other members of the Survivors' Club, as well. He is evidently out-of-this-world handsome, but can also

laugh at himself. Most importantly, he moves from using Agnes to help him feel safe, to an escalating need for her sexually, to wanting to make her happy, to admiring her integrity and courage and finally to loving her. I could go on and on. There is so much about the h and H that is more than enchanting. I know this won't be everyone's cup of tea, but I loved it. Loved it. Having decided that this series was a bit of a hit and miss for me, I am now eagerly awaiting the next instalment. I bought this book from . I have NOT received a free review copy.

This entire series has been enchanting. This entry is Flavian's story and his continual efforts to piece together his life after a traumatic brain injury. Both handsome and damaged, his public persona is detached and wry, but his sense of survival remains intact. In meeting a young widow, who similarly tries to piece together and control her life, Flavian finds enchantment, safety and love. A truly lovely book with appealing and memorable characters. Highly recommended.

I came to Balogh late, but happily, with the Survivors Club regency novels, and Agnes and Flavian's story is among the best of them. Flavian's backstory, what happened at home before he was almost fatally wounded on the Peninsula (with not just a bullet to his head, but also further serious brain trauma from being trampled by cavalry), serves as a complex and engaging mystery here. Fortunately Flavian, Viscount Posonby's instincts are good and he impulsively marries the calm, kind, and compassionate Agnes, whom he first met and danced with 6 months earlier as a courtesy to friends to keep Agnes from being a wallflower, and meets again when the Survivors Club gathers for their annual visit. Flavian finds safe harbor with Agnes before he recalls what made him flee his beloved brother's deathbed, for a very London-tonnish betrothal party announcing his own coming marriage to a seemingly sweet and demure young woman, only to hare off back to the battlefield before the wedding. The tensions and misunderstandings between Flavian and Agnes are ultimately gently resolved because Balogh is smart enough to grace characters like Agnes with keen intelligence, a strong will and ready courage to stay the course -- precisely what a wounded soul like Flavian needs. You will never be disappointed in a Balogh novel. I look forward to reading the rest of this series, especially, but *Only Enchanting* is the first regency romance I can recall awarding a full 5 stars.

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