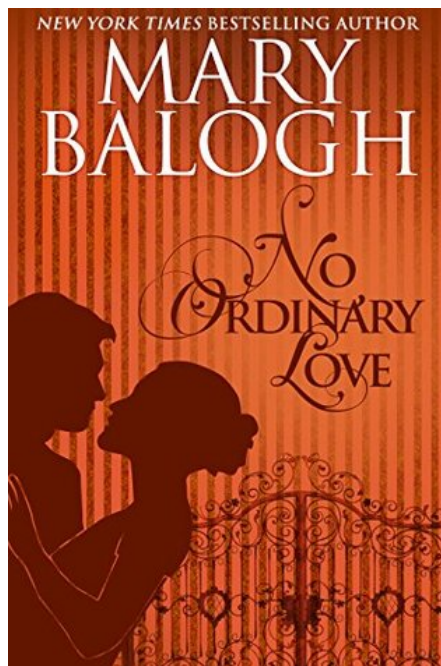




No Ordinary Love

Mary Balogh

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The North Tower

Daphne Borland has inherited an old castle from her grandfather—provided she marries the earl of Everett, whom she has never met. She has never seen the castle either, yet she feels a deep connection to it as soon as she arrives there. As she awaits the arrival of the earl with trepidation, she gets caught up in the events and passions of long ago and finds herself falling deeply in love with a man who has been dead for a hundred years.

The Dark Rider

Malvern is an ancient house haunted by ghosts, but only a few people can actually feel and see them. Dinah Riddings, sent there to avoid the measles that have attacked her younger siblings, is one of them. As she feels the pain and longings of the dark rider and his lady, cruelly separated two centuries before, she also feels the pull of attraction to the master of the house, who looks incredibly like the dark rider.

The Heirloom

In order to celebrate his engagement, John Chandler drives his girlfriend from London to a remotely situated hotel in West Wales, once the home of his ancestors. However, when John produces her ring, an old family heirloom, and fits it on her finger, he finds himself catapulted back in time to become the John Chandler of Regency England, newly arrived at the house with his new wife—and dying of consumption.

No Ordinary Love Details

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From Reader Review No Ordinary Love for online ebook

Danielle says

A very different collection of Mary Balogh novellas, but I really liked them!

Nicole Wilson says

I never rate Mary Balogh below 4 stars but these stories went from odd but okay, to bad, to so terrible I actually debated not finishing it (which I never do!)
Sorry, but there's a reason she doesn't write supernatural love stories anymore.

Mum says

Three light stories about time travel romance. It is a quick read.

Peg Hughes says

Lovely

What an unusual and delightful selection of stories. There was a common supernatural/time slip theme running through them . Really strong tales of enduring love.

Barbara Ostarch says

I found this book disappointing. It lacked the character development of Balogh's other books and the story lines of the three novelettes were preposterous.

Lu says

This book is quite different from other Mary Balogh's works as it brings three novellas with a paranormal element.

I specially liked The North Tower, where love survives centuries and the couple meets again after life. I liked the fact that the contemporary person felt and thought like her ancestral counterpart and all the drama that unfolds from that. I'm also particularly fond of hidden doors to secret towers ??.

Dark Rider was a sweet read, but not that good (the plot was a bit obvious).

The Heirloom was the second best, a Somewhere in Time with a happy ending. John and Adele were such an emotional and romantic couple.

SidneyKay says

Sometimes goddesses have a snafu or three.

As I have mentioned before, my goddess Mary Balogh is in the process of releasing some of her old novels and novellas. I am over the moon about this, especially because this brings new readers into the fold. I was pleased with the first anthology group *A Rogue's Downfall*, but the next group, *No Ordinary Love*, I'm not so over the moon with. *No Ordinary Love* has all the earmarks of author experimentation. Yes, it seemed Ms. Balogh once dipped her toes into paranormal romance. If I may be so bold, I'm glad she decided to stick with what she does best - historical romance (sans ghosts).

I like paranormal romance stories, I've been a big fan of them for a long time. I'm just not as obsessed with them as I am with historical romance. As with historical romance, I have created many rules my authors must abide by. Sure they don't know them, but it's my dime. Anyway, over the years I have adopted some rules paranormal romance books need to follow for me to enjoy them. One of the biggies is they have to make sense. Yes, yes, I know we are dealing with a world where the boundaries are pretty shaky and beliefs are stretched quite far. But the reasons for these far-fetched storylines/beliefs must make sense and loose ends have to be tied up. At least for me they do.

Let's start with *The Dark Rider*. This story has a bit of Gothic romance feel about it. You know the theme - a sweet nosy heroine, Dinah Ridding, visits a dark foreboding castle which is inhabited by an enigmatic, brooding hero, his secretive mother and creepy servants. Our hero, Edgar Neville, doesn't want the heroine at the castle because...???? He tries to get rid of her by telling Dinah ghosts stories. But Dinah wants to meet ghosts, explore the family portrait gallery and just suck up the scary atmosphere. She even spots the mysterious ghostly rider who amazingly looks a lot like our hero. This story might have worked if a big misunderstanding blow-up toward the end of the story hadn't been inserted. As a romance, this story didn't work and as a paranormal it was mediocre.

The second story is *The North Tower*. Probably when Ms. Balogh wrote this story she didn't know that the main device of this story is my least favorite paranormal theme - possession. Yes, as soon as our heroine, Daphne, enters the spooky castle she feels things. She's having a hard time sleeping at night because she's having vivid erotic dreams. Dear oh dear, those dreams seem so realistic - she keeps going into a door which isn't there anymore. Like all haunted heroines she starts snooping around and eventually solves an old murder. Spoiler - then we have the type of paranormal ending I haven't been fond of since the days of *A Knight in Shining Armor* by Jude Deveraux - almost at the end of the story a guy shows up who looks exactly like the man Daphne has been snooking in her sleep ... and they live HEA.

The last story in the group, *The Heirloom*, is a time-travel-body-possession tale. I can be a little persnickety. Here's the deal. I like time-travels, but not when they involve traveling back and landing in a body which doesn't belong to "moi." I have a reason for that, you know - I always wonder what's happening to the soul who was kicked out, unless there are two in that body and that gets really confusing. So, where did that other soul go? How are they adapting? Are they still alive? It can be quite distracting. Well, this is a short story and all the way through my reading of this I was concerned whether Ms. Balogh's would have enough time to tie up any loose ends. Well, she did tie it up. Spoiler, she sort of gave the historical couple a happy ending but then jumped to modern time and gave them their HEA. Giving two couples in a short story a HEA doesn't leave much time for character development. I liked the historical couple and would have liked to see some kind of an epilogue for them, but was not to be. This story could have been better served if it had been in a longer format.

Bottom line, all the stories were weak, both the romance and paranormal theme. I'm glad Ms. Balogh doesn't dabble in this genre very often.

KaysBlog

OLT says

Not for me. These are three previously released short woo-woo stories, one from 1992, one from 1993 and one from 1996. The last one is from 21 years ago and let's hope she never tries woo woo again. It's not her forte. Leave time-tripping historical romance to Susanna Kearsley, please, Ms Balogh.

I downloaded this without thinking, as a reward to myself for having finished all my Hurricane Irma preparations early. Only thing left is to give myself some psychological pep talks and look for my Starck's Prayer Book (last seen during some particularly evil tornados in 1960s Indiana).

But enough about me and Irma. Back to this anthology of old stories. (I'm adding in here a possible SPOILER alert because, when I checked over what I've written, there may be TMI as far as plots are concerned.) The first is mostly a ghost story with the heroine in tune with some old starcrossed lovers' ghosts. She can see the man and feel the melancholic presence of the woman. Somehow she manages by the end of the story to uncross those lovers' stars and find True Love for herself.

Second story is a ghostly, time-trippy one. Heroine wakes up at night in a dream state and actually seems to then inhabit the body of a long-ago woman on her way to her newly-wed husband, who is hiding because of being falsely accused of a crime. The heroine, as she inhabits the other woman's body, falls in love with the husband. Luckily enough when she is not dream-state inhabiting another body, she meets up with a contemporary hunky reverse doppelganger of the long-ago husband for some insta-True Love for herself.

Third story is also a time-slip one and is beyond tedious, unless you're interested in trying to figure out how the contemporary hero and the long-ago man somehow are one and the same (kind of) and manage to cure the tuberculosis of the old-timey guy with the immune system of the more contemporary one. There's a romance for both, BTW, neither particularly interesting, except for the fact that at one point they seem to be sharing the same long-ago woman.

So no more Mary woo woo for me. She spent too much time on the paranormal to give us any really lovely romances of H and h. In addition, although the stories are short, two of them in particular have too many pages of sexual encounters. Sex in romances is fine and all that, but Balogh sex is often not very enjoyable to read. It's never titillating, it's often awkward, and it's sometimes cringeworthy. She almost manages to turn me off sex sometimes.

AMP says

3 novellas about ghostly love. Interesting. Different from her other writings but still well written and engaging stories.

Linden says

I love Balogh, but these were waste-of-time awful. The ghost story/time travel aspect (something I've been known to enjoy) just had me scratching my head. I had hoped the titles would improve and kept on plodding through, but regret the decision. Just don't bother - her other titles are far more enjoyable to read!

Diane Bowden says

Super-natural

This is a trio of extraordinary love stories with ghosts, time travel and love surviving death. Interesting experiments in writing and done well, as always, by Balogh. Not quite my cup of tea though.
