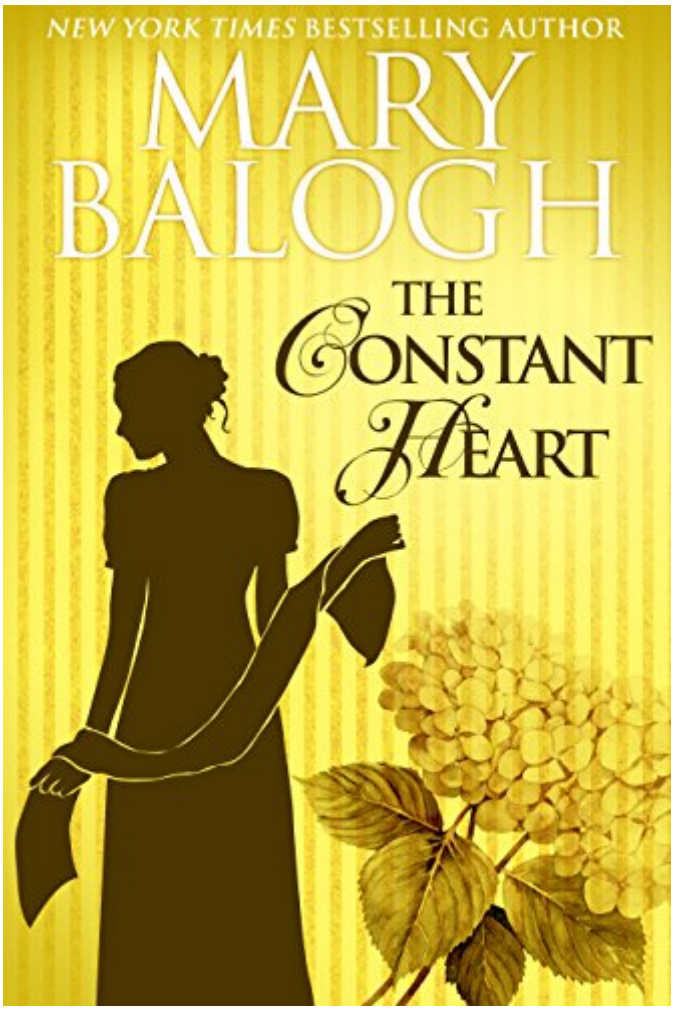
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The Constant Heart



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Synopsis

Rebecca Shaw was heartbroken when Christopher Sinclair, whom she had loved passionately and who had sworn that he loved her in return her, left her without explanation to marry a far wealthier woman. Rebecca has since found consolation and peace as the fiance of the local vicar, whose worthy work and dreams she shares. But Christopher, now widowed, is back and Rebecca has to keep reminding herself that he once betrayed her and must never be trusted again. Her heart, however, tells her otherwise.

Book Information

File Size: 3885 KB

Print Length: 279 pages

Publisher: Class Ebook Editions, Ltd. (July 30, 2017)

Publication Date: July 30, 2017

Sold by:Ã Â Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B074FFN8H1

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Enabled

Screen Reader: Supported

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #2,756 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #40 inÃ Â Books > Romance > Historical > Victorian #50 inÃ Â Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Romance > Historical Romance > Regency #57 inÃ Â Books > Romance > Historical > Regency

Customer Reviews

I enjoyed this book. I was a little disappointed in the character of Christopher. I liked the other characters and the story very much. I am a big fan of Ms. Balogh's later books, but not so much of her earlier works. I appreciate how much she has improved over the years.

These characters draw so much from both Jane Austen and Georgette Heyer. It is possible to see characters and plot elements from Persuasion, Emma. Pride and Prejudice, Bath Tangle and more. A charming read.

In The Constant Heart Mary Balogh again visits the themes of young love betrayed, major angst and second chances. These themes are my favourites and I therefore expected to be totally enraptured by this most recent re-release into Kindle.And yet, I'm not.I can't blame the writing, which flows well. I can't blame the long list of supporting characters, the passionless engagement, the villainous seduction, or even the secretive romance. They are all delivered in Balogh's customary/competent style.I can and do blame the relationship between the h, Rebecca and the H, Christopher. It left me cold. As I mentioned previously, in this story young love is betrayed - by Christopher.Seven years later he returns, breaking yet another promise to Rebecca. (Strangely enough, it is that latest betrayal of her that strengthens my dislike of him and, to mind, this story is weakened when Balogh devotes too little attention to remedying that selfishness/weakness on her hero's part.)Another reason why the romance doesn't work for me is that we don't see Christopher suffering from the day of his return.Instead, The Constant Heart is all about the suffering of the injured party. Balogh's readers are treated to screeds and screeds of Rebecca's thoughts and reactions and emotions. Well and good. The title of this HR is The Constant Heart, so I imagine Balogh meant us to get the message that the constancy was singular and definitely not plural.Christopher makes no pretence of having been constant. Despite having made love to a young, innocent girl he knew he should leave alone, and having made secret promises of marriage to her (that he knew he couldn't keep) he knowingly betrayed her. So not constant. Of course, the story is more complex than that, but it isn't until the last few pages that we learn the truth about Christopher - and that just doesn't work for me. Too little too late. Until then he remains, at best, an enigma and, at worst, a treacherous rat. Even once his story is told in toto, he still seems a coward, for not having told Rebecca the truth when he abandoned her, for coming back into her life when she is about to be married and then for seeking her out.Then wham, bam, he bleats a bit and she throws herself at him, forgiving all. In other Balogh titles she makes such scenarios (or even worse ones, like in Dancing with Clara) work successfully. Not this time. Instead, the final scene is rushed and unconvincing.SpoilersFinally, I dislike the depiction of Christopher's wife. Too glib. Too too convenient. Too easy.I also hate the convenient solution to the secret romance. Another spouse annihilated. Too, too convenient. Too easy.And Rebecca's reaction to the scene in the garden? No resentment towards Maude? I don't think so. Still agrees to marry Phillip? I double don't think so.Three stars.

This was excruciating to read. I can't believe it was written by Mary Balogh. It had several good possibilities in the story line, but the Hero and Heroin were made to look like idiots both. How many

ways can a character agonize over a subject and still come to the wrong answer. Just painful and disappointing.

Good read, although I think the ending was a bit abrupt.

A really good book,one to add to my collection

I confess to grabbing up these older Balogh books as soon as I see them become available on Kindle. Although this book was a bit too slow for my enjoyment, I did like the characters. There was much to be admired in Rebecca in that she was a true servant of the people in her community. Raised as a vicar's daughter, she was accustomed to serving from her childhood. She and the neighbor boy, Christopher, had been friends pretty much their entire lives. He was the first boy she kissed and eventually the two fell in love and made promises to one another - serious promises.After promising his devotion which included marriage, Christopher departs for London. He never returns. Rebecca does receive a letter from him stating he will never return, but there is no explanation given except that he is betrothed and will be married. After seven years, Christopher returns to the neighborhood, now a widower. By this time, Rebecca is betrothed to the local vicar, Phillip.Phillip is handsome, but a quite a slowtop who has a much different world view of life than Rebecca - especially when it comes to the roles of women - so the reader can immediately see this will not be a happy marriage. Christopher's return into the neighborhood will serve to turn Rebecca's world upside down. Although the story sssslllloooowwwwllllyyyyy (was that slow enough for you?) develops, I quite enjoyed it. I particular enjoyed the manner in which Balogh reveals Christopher's story.At the end of the day, one must ask the question: Did Christopher have a good reason to make the decisions he made? Should he have explained everything to Rebecca? This might be surprising to some who have figured out my seemingly revengeful heart when it comes to "heroes" who are cruel, thoughtless, unfaithful, liars and pretty much anything else you can think of when it comes to outright weaknesses. But... in the end, I liked Christopher. Lord knows he suffered enough for whatever decisions he made.PS. For any of those who follow my reviews, I haven't been as active as usual because I have 42 students from China I'm trying to get securely placed in homes for the school year. My life is no longer my own. But, I'm still managing to read - choosing to spend my free time reading over writing reviews. Hopefully, I'll be back in the game soon.

The main plot of this novel involves the protagonists discovering they have a second chance at love

after years of separation. This is a character-driven plot and only works with well-developed characters. Fortunately, the author has a talent for writing interesting and colourful characters. The majority of them, including the secondary characters, are complex and realistic with strengths and weaknesses; they have good days and bad. The exception to this was the male protagonist, Christopher Sinclair. I never felt I knew him very well. Despite this, the reader is quickly pulled into the lives of this small group of people. Overall, it is an enjoyable novel.

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