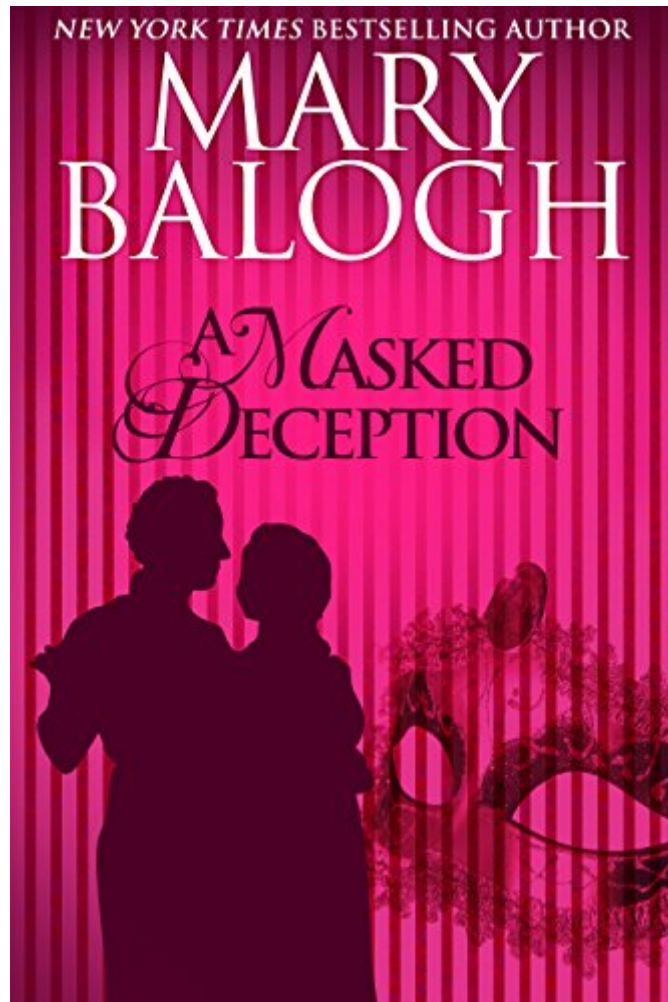


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A Masked Deception



Synopsis

"A Masked Deception is the digital reissue of a previously published and long out-of-print novel by New York Times Bestselling author Mary Balogh. Margaret Wells has been deeply, hopelessly in love with the handsome, dashing Richard Adair, Earl of Brampton, since she met him at a masquerade ball six years ago. Passion had flared between them then, but she had fled before the time for unmasking. Now Richard merely needs a wife to give him an heir, and the quiet, demure Miss Wells seems as suitable as anyone else. Margaret, longing to ignite some sort of passion in her dull marriage, wonders what would happen if she were to become that masked enchantress once more and met her husband by chance in some secluded, romantic setting. Little does Margaret suspect that Richard has never forgotten the nameless charmer for whom he had searched in vain for weeks and months after the masquerade ball. And little does she suspect that he is falling in love with his wife."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book was Mary Balogh's first, and the one which won her an award as Best New Regency Author, if I am not mistaken. At that time (1985), most of the Regencies were pale imitations of Heyer or were Gothic in the style of Victoria Holt (aka Jean Plaidy or Philippa Carr). Balogh used an

innovative plot (not taken from Heyer or any other author that I know of) and added in a moderate dose of sex, to show the inner motivations and needs of the hero and heroine. If I had come across this romance earlier (when I first started reading Regencies other than Heyer) I would have rated it higher. As it now stands, this first work by Balogh must compete both against her later works and the very best works of other authors such as Carla Kelly and Sheila Bishop, as well as newer authors. I won't go into the details of the plot, except to say that it turns on something slightly improbable - that a man would not recognize his wife when she is masked and disguised, even when having intercourse with her. And the premise is slightly improbable as well, although I have swallowed more improbable stories by Dodd and Quinn. Those facts, and the fact that this is not Balogh at her best (when she really twists your heartstrings in her later Regencies), is why I have awarded this book only 3 stars (3.5). Others might rate it higher. The hero is not particularly admirable at the beginning. Like most of Balogh's later heroes, he is a rake, well-to-do, and about to marry only to set up his nursery. We learn relatively little about his life as a landlord or his political activities (in the House of Lords), or very much about his inner life, except that he fell in love with a disguised lady at first sight, but consented to marry another lady when his love could not be found.

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