



## Silent Melody

*Mary Balogh*

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## **Silent Melody** Mary Balogh

Lady Emily Marlowe was beautiful, wild, and unspoiled. She could not hear or speak, though she listened with her eyes and answered with her smile. She was betrothed to a man who would have her as a pretty possession, a captive listener. But there was only one man for her—the dark and reckless Lord Ashley Kendrick, the childhood amour who inspired her fantasies—then left for India and found another love.

Seven years and countless dreams later, he returned to her, and love was born with a dance, a minuet that stirred her soul, a song so passionate it has no words.

## **Silent Melody Details**

Date : Published August 1st 1997 by Berkley

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Author : Mary Balogh

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# From Reader Review Silent Melody for online ebook

## Laura says

Quite often, in a romance novel, one of the main couple will get married and then return. This provides a lot of conflict, which is nice, and then something has to happen to remove the wife or husband that is in the way. Usually gives you lots of delicious angst to work with.

So in this book, the Hero Ashley leaves the Heroine Emily, when she is a young girl in love with him and goes to India. He gets married, has a kid, and comes back.

Oh, but of course, the wife and child are dead. A usual conceit to provide the needed angst. Oh but of course the wife never truly loved him and his love for her died quickly. Another usual conceit, but to have them both??? BUT WAIT THERE'S MORE!

He only had sex with his wife ONCE! She wasn't a virgin when they married! And the kid's not his! And his wife is still majorly in love with someone from her childhood! BTW that love was her BROTHER! Who she had incestuous sex with! And then murdered! And she married Ashley because they vaguely look alike! And she cheated on him constantly!

Could she have been any more of a one dimensional villain character? OF COURSE he falls for sweet Emily who is desperately in love with him!

I had many more problems with the book, including the depiction of Emmy, Ashley's desire to have Emily be the girl he wants her to be instead of the girl she is (only slightly resolved), and the DRAMATICS that seemed unnecessary to me.

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## Grecia Robles says

QUE  
BONITO  
LIBROOOO!!!

La historia de Ashley y Emily es de las más bonitas cada vez que estaban juntos me hacían suspirar forman una pareja súper tierna.

Su historia comenzó en el libro anterior Emmy es hermana pequeña de Anna la prota de Sin corazón y es sordomuda y Ashley el hermano menor de Luke también prota de ese libro. Cuando se conocen ella tiene 14 años es una niña dulce, libre y un poco rústica y Ash tiene 22 años es rebelde a tomado malas decisiones y no sabe qué hacer con su vida pero tiene un encanto.. ella desde que lo ve se enamora de él y se vuelven los mejores amigos, él le cuenta sus problemas y ella siempre lo está escuchando. Descubren una manera para comunicarse con señas y gestos que ellos sólo saben.

Cuando Ashley se va a la India un año después de conocerse le promete que va a volver pero a ella se le rompe el corazón porque siente que se le fue su alma gemela la única persona que la entiende y que la conoce de verdad al igual que ella lo conoce a él.

Él regresa 7 años después viudo, con toda su familia muerta en la India, atormentado, roto y escondiendo un secreto, él sólo quiere refugiarse con su familia y encontrar la paz que sabe que está en la casa de su hermano pero no tiene idea que es. Se encuentra con una Emmy que es toda una mujer y comprometida. Él no sabe porque la olvidó todos estos años si era su mejor amiga.

Este era un libro para ser un 5 estrellas pero hubo cosas que no me gustaron como el misterio de la familia de la esposa de Ashley le quitaron mucho protagonismo al romance que era lo mejor del libro y algunas actitudes de los protagonistas sobre todo de Emmy pero que a la vez entendía porque lo hacía.

Y todavía no me puedo acostumbrar a la ambientación y vestimenta del siglo XVIII con pelucas, polvos en la cabeza y peinados extravagantes prefiero la regencia.

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## Lady Wesley says

Here's another Mary Balogh classic (from 1997) now available in audiobook format, and of course Rosalyn Landor does her usual excellent job.

It takes a courageous author to write a deaf heroine who can neither read nor write. We know from the previous book in this series, *Heartless*, that Lady Emily can read lips fairly well and that she has devised hand signals to communicate with Lord Ashley, whose brother the Duke of Harndon is married to Emily's sister Anna. As this book opens, Ashley has been in India for seven years, and Emily is on the verge of marrying a proper young man who is fond of her. But then, Ashley returns unexpectedly, in a most dramatic manner, without his wife and infant son.

With a hero and heroine unable to speak with one another, it is inevitable that a lot of the story takes place in Emily's mind, which consequently makes for rather slow going in the first half or so of this book. With Balogh's expert characterization and Landor's beautiful narration, however, I found myself completely immersed in the story.

Eventually, though, things do pick up, and there are good secondary characters and plotlines, including a mystery and an adorable senior-citizen romance (the older I get the more I enjoy those!).

I thoroughly enjoyed listening to this book, although not quite as much as **Heartless**. I recommend both of them to all Mary Balogh fans.

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## Anna D. says

4.5 stars

I'm a sucker for books where I feel connected to the characters - so even if there are a lot of strikes and annoyances with the plot, the writing style, etc etc..if I connect with the characters – then it's a winner for me. That is the case with this book. I say this so anyone reading this review knows that my opinion of it might be a little swayed and even nonsensical since there were plenty of strikes in this book for me as well.

Some of the strikes:

- 1) The pace of the book, especially in the beginning, was like quicksand. There were so much repetitive internal monologues! Perhaps it was necessary since Emmy couldn't talk, but there was a lot of it for Ashley too!
- 2) Anna still annoyed me. She meant well but her coddling of Emmy was both irritating and insulting (and she just didn't see that.) The only people who I thought really understood Emmy were Ashley (of course), Luke, Lady Sterne, and Lord Quinn.
- 3) I didn't like Ashley insisting that he wished Emmy was still his little fawn and that he was fond of her like a brother would a sister or that he thinks of her as the little girl of fourteen. After the night they spent in the falls..I wish he would stop referring to these incestuous, pedophilic thoughts.
- 4) The only thing that kept the H/h apart after that night was really all a misunderstanding. What they believed about their love for each other was far from the truth because they were both not being honest with each other and were trying to protect each other in a wrong way. This point is a strike and a hit. I like the angst this created for both the H/h, but as with most misunderstanding plots, it also creates frustration for the readers.

### **WHAT I LOVED!!**

- 1) I absolutely loved Ashley and Emmy in this book as I knew I would when I read Heartless! The connection they had was so sweet and tender. Although there is that ick factor in that Ashley had started to feel stirrings towards Emmy when she was only fourteen and he was a man in his early twenties – I was able to forgive it because his feelings for her up to his leaving for India was purely innocent. It was that goodbye kiss when she was only fourteen that made it icky...but by the time he came back, Emmy was an adult so it was acceptable for his to be attracted to her then. I loved it when Ashley would just give her a light kiss, almost a peck, and he seemed almost lost in it as if the action was involuntary. SO SWEET!!
- 2) Lady Sterne and Lord Quinn's love story and matchmaking schemes were once again so entertaining to watch. They are an adorable couple even without their sneaky plans.
- 3) The mystery behind Lady Alice's past and death was intriguing and unexpected turn of events at the end of the book. This captivated me in the second half of the book and the truth was a little shocking.
- 4) I liked the characters we met at the end, especially Sir Henry and I thought Katherine's little boy, Eric, was adorable – and I want a book about him when he grows up (will probably not happen considering how old this book is.)
- 5) Luke's part in all of it as the head of the family was well done. I liked how he handled both Ashley, Emmy, and everything else – with command, understanding, and compassion.

When the story left Bowden Abbey and it started to become almost like a courtship in London and then Penhurst. I enjoyed it even more at this point because we got to see jealousy, longing, and more shared moments between the H/h as man and woman without being shadowed by their relationship as man and child as it seemed to happen in Bowden.

To be honest, the writing style was a little difficult to get through compared to other Balogh books because the internal monologues slowed me down (again, it felt repetitive and at times boring.) Though the delivery left something to be desired, the crux of the story, however, was great, our H/h were enchanting, and the mystery and new characters added a lot of flavor...so as much as I can understand why others didn't love it like I did, I have to disagree with them and say it was so worthwhile. I would hate to have missed out on these unforgettable Balogh characters.

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## Sarah says

I don't know. This book fell flat for me. I've read a couple romances now where the heroine has a disability, and it always results in my feeling kind of icky about the entire set up of the novel. The relationship between the hero and heroine always ends up feeling coercive to me, as the hero generally doesn't head into the relationship thinking of the heroine as a "whole" woman. He generally views her as some sort of woman-child, but he has sex with her anyway. Um, ick. It especially unsettled me in this book, as the it opens with the hero kissing the heroine in a very sexual manner, and she's only 14 or so and he's 20-ish. And the heroine just *idolizes* him. That's . . . hmm. They're on very unequal footing as far as empowerment and ability to maneuver in the world goes, and that goes much deeper than just their gender roles in the historical period this is set in. Mary Balogh usually navigates disparities like this fairly well, but I got a very strong woman-child vibe off the heroine, and I just can't tolerate that anymore in my romance. I want to read romance about *women*, not innocent sex sprites. And I usually get that from Balogh's novels! Just not this time.

If Balogh can't do it well enough to satisfy me, then I think I'm going to have to stay away from romances where either the hero or heroine have a disability, unless someone whose judgment I trust recommends the book to me. It just leaves me unsettled otherwise.

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## Caz says

**I've given this an A+ for narration and a B for content at AudioGals, so I'm calling it 4.5 stars rounded up.**

**Silent Melody** is the sequel to **Heartless**, which was one of my favourite audiobooks of 2015. In that story, Lucas Kendrick, Duke of Harndon, gradually reconnects with the family he had fled from a decade earlier, and I particularly enjoyed listening to the way the author has Luke repairing his fractured relationship with his wayward younger brother, Lord Ashley. Towards the end of **Heartless**, Ashley leaves England to take up a position with the East India Company, eager to make something of himself and of his life. Even though he leaves behind him a family he loves and who loves him dearly, he is in good spirits and ready to take on the new challenges he is sure to face.

You can read the rest of this review [AudioGals](#)

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## SheLove2Read says

I love Mary Balogh but for me this story had a strong ick factor. Emily seemed to be treated as less than a full person by most of her family. Ashley didn't do anything for me. DNF.

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## Vintage says

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It's seven years since Ashley went

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### **Preeti ♥? (Romance She Reads) says**

[Many reviewers have gutted Ashley for forgetting his 'little fawn' and even for lusting after a 14-15 years old. For the first, I may buy the argument of sublimation as he felt guilty about her age. As f

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### **Lara says**

\*sighs\* I get very tired of heroines with disabilities being super intuitive and in tune with the natural world and compared to nymphs and sprites and fey things. If there had been one more line about Emily's "speaking eyes" and how Ashley could just naturally understand what she meant, I would have gently pitched the book across the room. She's just too perfect. Annie's Song by Catherine Anderson, although not without flaws, had a better portrayal of a deaf heroine and the issues it raises with both the heroine and hero.

On a technical note, the book suffered from what a great many mystery novels suffer from--that you can guess the villain simply because he is the newly-introduced stranger who has no other reason to be present.

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### **Crista says**

Maybe had I been in a different mood, maybe if I hadn't loved *Heartless* so much, maybe if I would've identified with Ashley as a tortured hero, maybe if I would've loved Emily liked I loved Annie in "*Annie's Song*" by Catherine Anderson....maybe I would've loved this book....but I just didn't.

This is the first Mary Balogh book that I haven't really liked. I just never really felt any kind of love connection between these two. A fondness yes...a commitment yes....a history yes...but nothing else. They were a perfect brother and sister, and I just never quite made the leap that I think Balogh needed the reader to make in order to give this book raves.

I really enjoyed catching up with Luke and Anna from "*Heartless*". Now there is a couple that defines "match made in heaven". I only wish I could say the same thing about their siblings.

If your looking for a GREAT deaf/mute heroine story line try *Annie's Song* by Catherine Anderson....I guarantee that one will not disappoint.

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### **Bj says**

4.5 "There is More to Love Than Just Words" Stars for the story and the narration!

What a unique story line! This little gem of a historical romance grabbed my attention from the very beginning and kept me enthralled throughout the entire story. Moreover, in addition, to a touching romance and the empathetic handling and portrayal of a disabled heroine as a capable and loving woman which

genuinely tugged at my heartstrings, Mary Balogh also manages to infuse an interesting and intriguing suspenseful arc into this already stellar romance. Moreover, this is a great title to pick up in audiobook format as Rosalyn Landor's experienced and well-done narration further enhances the magic of this story.

First off, for those that are wondering if this book can be read as a standalone, yes it can. Although this is book 2 in the Georgian series, and the hero and heroine are the siblings of the main characters from book 1, *Heartless*, the romance is fully contained in this book and I had no trouble following the background without having read or listened to *Heartless*.

Lady Emily Marlowe is deaf and mute. While many would think this fact devastating, Emily has actually led a pretty free and independent life as a result. Unconstrained by the typical customs of the day that prohibited women from running around with their hair down and otherwise being free to do what they wanted to do, Emily has spent many years running around her sister's estate and painting. Interestingly, the one person who never viewed her as limited and always understood her better than anyone else was Lord Ashley Kendrick, the younger brother of Lucas Kendrick, Duke of Harndon, who married Emily's sister.

But Emily's romantic fantasies are shattered when Ashley decides to leave for India to build his own wealth. After a while of being gone Emily's hope for a future with Ashley is further dashed when she finds out that he has married another woman. It is amongst this backdrop that seven years after he left, Emily is finally ready to try to find a husband. She quickly finds herself with suitors, bearing their own unique reasons for wanting to pursue a deaf and mute woman, when Ashley returns to the vast surprise of his family and carrying a number of closely held secrets. Will his reappearance dash her family's well orchestrated efforts to find Emily a husband, or will Ashley's secrets render possible a HEA that could rival Emily's childhood dreams?

The experienced and well-known historical romance narrator, Rosalyn Landor, performs an above average narration in *Silent Melody*. Ms. Landor is a pro and she always manages to create easily distinguishable voices for each one of the cast members making it easy to sit back and enjoy the listen. In *Silent Melody* I was particularly impressed with Ms. Landor's depiction of Emily. Managing to sound just like a deaf person learning to talk for the first time, Ms. Landor brought an extra sense of authenticity to this inspiring tale.

All in all, *Silent Melody* is a creative and inspiring tale with a rock solid narration, making this a must listen audiobook for the historical romance enthusiast.

Source: Review copy provided in exchange for an honest review.

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## **Gabi Grace says**

My review here: <https://gabigraceauthor.wixsite.com/m...>

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## **herdys says**

I love that Balogh explored the idea of having a mute/deaf heroine but she failed in the hero department. I don't usually care for wounded and brooding heroes and this one wasn't an exception.



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## **Dinjolina says**

Oh the drama!!

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## **Bark says**

There were many good things about this book and I am glad I read it (the first part was fantastic). I liked the fact that even though this book was a sequel to a book I haven't read it wasn't bogged down with lots of boring back story, also I loved the fact that Ashley had the compassion to look past Emmy's affliction and see her true self as no one else did. I just wish the book was more centered on those things than all of the crazy outside conflicts. My main complaint is that it started out so darned good and I truly cared about the characters and could not put it down but towards the end I wasn't feeling much of anything, I didn't laugh, I didn't cry, I didn't truly care and just wanted to get the book over with. I was left feeling very disappointed. I'm sure I'm in the minority on this one, ah well, we can't all like the same things all the time, I guess.

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## **Keri says**

I wanted to love this as much as my friends did, but I just didn't. I don't know if it was the writing or what, but I didn't feel the romance between Ashley and Emily. I thought their love scenes were awkward and one-sided. Nor did I feel that Emily was ever engaged in the act.

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## **Ana T. says**

We first met Emily and Ashley in Heartless, she is Anna's youngest sister and he is Luke's younger brother. Emily is deaf mute, in Heartless she knew a lot of things but had trouble expressing herself. She felt quite at ease with Ashley and hero worshipped him. She was naturally devastated when he decided to grow up a bit and travel the world.

A few years have passed between the end of Heartless and the beginning of Silent Melody. Anna and Luke are happily married and Emily lives with them. Luke has tried to offer her the same opportunities other young girls have and so she has had some suitors and is now thinking of accepting an offer from one of them.

Ashley has been in India, he got married and had a son there. Now he has returned to England and his arrival coincides with the ball announcing Emily's engagement. Ashley's past has made him a bitter and unhappy man. It is not easy for him to speak about what happened in his life but he and Emily still share a special bond. Feeling his pain she tries to help and that leads them to an intimate moment who seems more about comfort than love. Because of that Emily refuses to marry him, she knows he still sees her as the young girl he left behind.

Ashley will have to deal with his demons and to see Emily in a new light for them to find a HEA and the journey towards that is a memorable one. I think Balogh did a superb job portraying Emily's disability, she is never a lesser character because of it, she doesn't have special treatment and in fact she doesn't feel less than the others. The only thing I didn't much care about was the villain. I would have been quite happy just to have Emily and Ashley dealing with their feelings and, of course, to see how well Luke and Anna work as a couple a few years after they had their own story.

Grade: 4.5/5

PS. Balogh has an old book being reissued this month, it's called A Christmas Promise and I haven't read it yet. It might be just the thing to get me in the right mood for the holidays...

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### **Sababa says**

I will say this, every Mary Balogh fan should read this book. Very simply because its different from her other writings.

I have always known Mary Balogh to write about unusual characters, sometimes she pulls it off rather magnificently and sometimes it just feels it didn't live up to the expectation.

For me, Silent melody started in a very good way. This is the first novel I have read where the girl is deaf and mute, and so my expectations were very high from the beginning. I was specially eager to see how Mary balogh would write a story without dialogues the female can't hear or speak. Love is always expressed in words. And I wanted to see how she expressed it beyond that.

As usual her characters were remarkable and her plot was engaging, but I felt she could not portray love beyond words.

I confess my knowledge may be very little regarding this, but as far as my limited knowledge goes I found Emmy's ability to be so normal a bit queer. I will do some research on it, but I think Emmy was a bit too mature for a deaf and mute girl, who is just 23-24. I am not saying it in a bad way. But I felt her ability to be normal, even at 15, was exaggerated. And I kept thinking to myself, 'it just happens like this in a novel!' Apart from that I have to say this as well, I didn't like Ashley. His guilt, his remorse everything make me want to pity him. And I don't want to read about a hero I pity. I would rather just read about a rake who would bring out different emotions in me than read about Ashley ans how guilty he felt about everything he did.

Things I did like about this was Luke and Emmy's relationship. I think it was the most beautifully expressed relationship between a girl and her brother in law that I have read till date. Their closeness, their ability to read each other, the way he helped her everything was just too perfect. I completed love Marj and her husband!! They were the sweetest couple ever!

Most of all I liked the little descriptions of how Emmy could use her other senses to make up for her deafness and muteness. Like how she could feel the vibration of the carriage, how she learned to talk slowly and so on.

It kind of left me with mixed feelings.

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### **Bill says**

It is unusual for me to not be caught up in a Mary Balogh book. But this one just did not grab me. There is a mystery involved in the story and I got more involved in the mystery than the romance. Well Mary, you can't please everyone all the time. I will say that I am impressed that she took on the challenge of this story about a deaf-mute heroine. I think she did a good job of getting into the head of the heroine.

Part of the problem is I couldn't believe she was holding back from marriage with the hero.

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