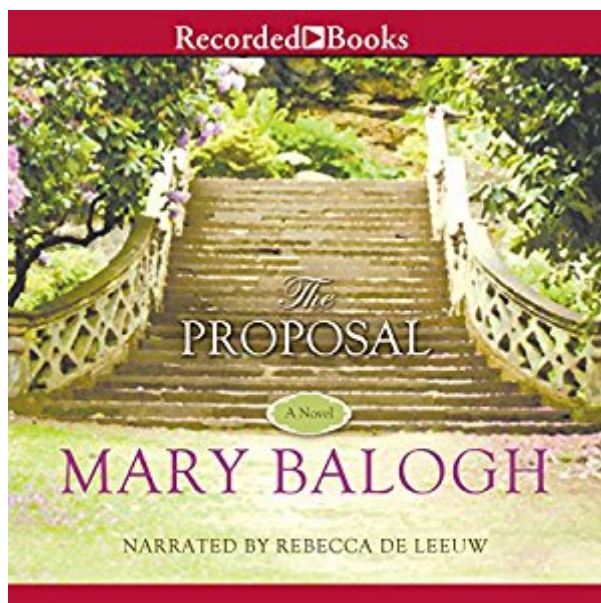


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# The Proposal



## Synopsis

Award-winning and New York Times best-selling author Mary Balogh delights fans with historical romantic tales that touch the heart. After her husband dies in a freak accident, Lady Gwendoline Muir never dreams she'll love again. So when soldier-turned-nobleman Lord Hugo Trentham stirs feelings in her that have lain dormant for years, she can't help but imagine his strong embrace. Hugo finds himself drawn to Gwen, but he's never courted a woman before. Can he muster the right words to make Gwen open her heart and love once more?

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Although this is the first in the Survivor's Club series, it is by no means the best. I enjoyed later books in the series (Only a Promise and Only Enchanting) much better. After reading about Gwen as a background character in other Mary Balough books, I was looking forward to reading more about her and discovering if she gets her HEA. The Proposal was a bit of a letdown. The biggest problem for me was Hugo, the hero. He is literally a war hero, also wealthy, strong, and newly-titled from a merchant class family. He has the ingredients to make a swoon worthy hero, but he falls flat. He is wishy washy, telling Gwen, "I will court you." Then he changes his mind, "I will not court you." Repeat and repeat. I want a man who goes after what he wants. Also, the premise of the two being from different worlds and the resulting difficulties just didn't work for me. Hugo was not some impoverished farmer...he is titled and well-to-do. While this one is a bit lacking, I encourage reading other books in this series.

Read the Survivors's Club Series. I liked all of them. When ever I finished one, I thought it was my favorite. Then I read the next and it was my new favorite. Really liked the story of two people people from different classes, each tortured by their pasts, who fall in love. Stoic war hero Hugo meets widowed Lady Gwen. Love, reluctantly, blooms. Very likable H&h, no horrible villain's but enough angst to satisfy the historical romance lover. I loved the blunt Hugo. This book introduces the Survivors Club. Members of the Club have been damaged in one way or another during the Napoleonic Wars. They have been brought together to heal and learn to continue with their lives.

A gentle, sweet romance with enough chemistry between Hugo & Gwen to keep the tension ticking along. I love complete books that are part of a series - and The Proposal is not only the first in a new series but also the love story of an old friend. We first met Gwen in One Night Of Love and I'm so glad she met Hugo, the gentle giant, whose scowling countenance hides a deep emotional intensity. As always with Balogh's stories there are gentle philosophical comments on love and life seamlessly woven into her story, adding depth and strength. Perhaps at times there was some repetition, but that's to be expected when the characters we meet in this book have peopled her stories for so long. The cameo appearance by the delicious Wulfric Bedwyn was great, and as A Summer to Remember ranks in my top 6 Balogh stories I was pleased at Lauren's role in The Proposal. A slow soft read which exactly suited my reading mood today.

I did things a little backward with this series and read books two through five first. I love the series and was always curious about how it all got started with Hugo and Gwen's story. The book started slow as it set up the series with the background of The Survivor Club. Then in alternating perspectives Gwen and Hugo contemplate their quiet, serene existence. Gwen discovers that she is lonely as a widow seven years after her husband's death and decides that it might be time to finally rejoin life. She has a loving supportive family, dear friends, and a comfortable financial situation, but as she looks at the loving couples around her, she dreams of more. She decides to find a quiet, easy man who just wants companionship nothing of passion and nothing like before. She still bears the guilt and the scars from her last venture into matrimony. Unfortunately, a trip to a friend, a twisted ankle, and a huge, large man with a scowl and a blunt way of speaking confuses all her plans. Hugo has had his year of mourning and knows he needs to fulfill his promise to his father to care for his step-mother and half-sister, take care of his father's business, and continue the family legacy with a son of his own. He is fine with the first two tasks even though he prefers his quiet,

home away from people, but getting the son involves getting a wife and that would mean sharing his home with another. Hugo has a lordly title that was bestowed on him for heroic services to the Crown, but he grew up middle class and it is to that class that he plans to turn for his wife. With the help of his friends in The Survivor Club, reconnections with his family, and a most blue-blooded aristocratic woman that is all wrong for him, but he can't get out of his head, Hugo is forced to rejoin life and embrace living. As I said, this one starts out slow and takes a while to set up. In fact, it is guilty of rehashing the same ground a few times making the pace stutter. Fortunately, the characters are worth it and their situation kept me reading through the end. They are most definitely an opposites attract across the social classes romance. I loved reading their story. Hugo was the best. He reminds me terribly of another Hugo from an older book and I do wonder if the author was paying her own tribute to such a fantastic, engaging male hero. Because with his big rough ways, blunt speech, and gentle heart under his forbidding appearance, Hugo had my heart early on in the story. The situation was teased out slowly and carefully with nothing coming fast and easy. These two people have been through so much. I loved watching them help heal each other as they shared their dark, tragic secrets for the first time. They were antagonistic and struggled through misconceptions for much of their early acquaintance even while the attraction sizzled between them, but then the understanding and commonality came and I was swept up in their romance that they felt was doomed to go nowhere. The surrounding characters were a strong secondary layer to the romance. Hugo's friends and family and Gwen's family, even bad guy of the piece added something. I loved seeing Hugo with his friends, but also his younger sister. And that big confrontation scene with his nemesis had me holding my breath. I haven't read the Bedwyn Saga and its prequels, but for those who have, this would be a special treat reuniting with those characters and seeing Gwen as a crossover figure. So, it was a slow and steady read with some spice in the romance, nice balance to the historical backdrop of post-Napoleonic war, and a solid group of characters. I would most definitely recommend it.

This was an emotional read even if it got off to a slow start. This subject was really different to anything I've read for awhile and I liked the way the author handled it. The H and h coming from such seemingly different backgrounds and yet finding common ground. I'd been intrigued by the glimpses I'd had of this h in previous Balogh books and I now think it's quite fitting that her story was complicated. In fact if she hadn't been complicated she would've remarried much sooner. I absolutely loved the H even though at times I wanted to kill him, especially earlier in the book when he seemed so reluctant to open his heart to the h. Anyway the last quarter of the book was so

immensely satisfying to read and of course I needed loads of tissues. I can't wait for the next book in this series and have already pre-ordered it. One question I still have though and I'm not sure if anyone else has asked this - is what is Hugo's mysterious title???

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