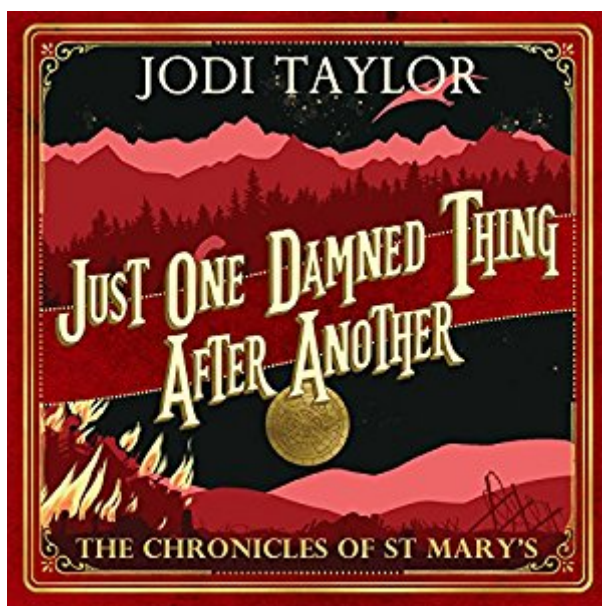


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Just One Damned Thing After Another: The Chronicles Of St Mary's, Book 1



Synopsis

"History is just one damned thing after another." Behind the seemingly innocuous facade of St Mary's, a different kind of historical research is taking place. They don't do 'time-travel' - they 'investigate major historical events in contemporary time'. Maintaining the appearance of harmless eccentrics is not always within their power - especially given their propensity for causing loud explosions when things get too quiet. Meet the disaster-magnets of St Mary's Institute of Historical Research as they ricochet around History. Their aim is to observe and document - to try and find the answers to many of History's unanswered questions...and not to die in the process. But one wrong move and History will fight back - to the death. And, as they soon discover - it's not just History they're fighting. Follow the catastrophe curve from 11th-century London to World War I, and from the Cretaceous Period to the destruction of the Great Library at Alexandria. For wherever Historians go, chaos is sure to follow in their wake....

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Like all decent time travel books, this gets a bit twisty at times. The plot is enjoyable and entertains while leading the story forward while keeping tension high at times. People aren't too perfect, and in general are on the bit flawed side (as people are) while still keeping the right balance of humor. I would give this a strong 4.5 stars out of 5 if they allowed this a more granular rating system. The only problem with finding a first good book in a series that has just been published is remembering to check back repeatedly over time for the next in the series, which with a new author is hard to remember. I really wish the Kindle app allowed you to flag authors so you would be notified when a

brand new book came out. I mean it would drive up sales and make customers happy. It makes no sense that hasn't happened yet.

To begin with the author's particular talent, she can write amusing and sometimes witty dialogue. These little conversations have charm, but don't in themselves constitute a book - not even the screwball comedy with moments of gravitas that seems to be her intent. Still, she does have talent and, unlike most self-published authors, she should be encouraged to continue writing. So far, though, the overall impression is of flimsiness, lack of a real plot, characters who are not fully developed and are difficult to distinguish from each other. The witty dialogue is simply not enough to carry the book. Other problems are as follows: Occasional sudden forays into bodice ripper territory. These incidents seem out of place and have an uncomfortable vibe about them, as if someone compelled her to write them in hopes of attracting the bodice ripper crowd. Instead, they have the effect of repelling more discerning readers who will not fail to notice the strange aroma that emanates from these portions of the book. Broadcasting what is about to happen by pointedly telling the reader that some apparently delightful turn of events is about to flop over and display a nasty, wormy underbelly. I'm not sure why she does this EVERY SINGLE TIME, but the insertion of spoilers at every plot turn does nothing for her story and is actively annoying. A Deus Ex Machina who conveniently turns up whenever the author needs a wrench tossed into the machinery, thus relieving her of the need to construct a real plot with real motivations and real consequences. The time-traveling person with a grudge just turns up periodically to screw things up, then leaps back into the time stream. Characters act astonishingly out of character at some critical moments in order to drive the plot where the author wants it to go, deep into angst territory. Anyone who reads through these books will be in no doubt about the plot points to which I'm referring. This kind of thing is always a danger when writing what is intended to be a series. In this case, it's obvious that the author considered letting the characters do what their natures would dictate, and then realized that - if she did that - a critical part of the story would be resolved and could no longer be driven into the plot territories that still lay vacant, waiting to be exploited. All that witty, angsty, sexually tense potential dialogue gone to waste! So, instead of appeasing the characters (if they had been characters from Dickens, they'd be likewise standing at her elbows as she typed, demanding their due) she seized hold of the plot and drove it relentlessly, protests to the contrary. It appears that later books in this series continue to have the same problems noted above, the absence of a real plot becoming even more noticeable, and the author leaning yet more heavily on her ability to write cute conversations and one-liners. I think she could do much better, but she has found a formula

that some readers like and doesn't seem inclined to stretch herself.

I was 40% through the book and had the epiphany that they just wouldn't do it the way the book describes. These history agents change history all the time--they help people to survive that wouldn't, they potentially kill people who would have lived (at one point the main character opens a door and starts a fireball that burns down a hospital, if the door had opened later others might have left their shifts or the grounds), no agency could allow that willy-nilly meddling in the past to happen. Historical meddlers could not be allowed. Also tiny drones disguised as insects could already observe history better than these folks trampling right through the middle of it. But that said she seemed a nice character and all, and it is an interesting premise.

I hate time travel stories, but I loved this one because it's not time travel the way we often read it. This isn't silly, accidental time travel, this is time travel with a purpose, and that purpose is to study humanity's past, to finally get the answers to some of history's greatest mysteries. But don't for one second think this is a boring book, because it's not. It's action packed, laugh-out-loud funny, and at moments incredibly poignant. We get to know the people of St. Mary's who are amazing, and this story revolves around them. But the settings, the situations they explore... I can't explain it. I can't put it into words, but it's a fantastic story! So fantastic, in fact, that I restarted my subscription to audible so I can get them all. The story itself is amazing, but the narrator is every bit as amazing and I can't wait to read more. If you're interested, the prequel to this story is available for free at audible. This freebie is narrated by the author, and it's good, but the narrator for this book, Zara Ramm, blew me away!

I really enjoyed this book. It's not the greatest bit of literature, granted and many of the minor characters are underdeveloped as the author only spends time on the main characters and uses the minor characters and their brief glimpses of personality to move some plot points along. Several things I did like about the book. One are the MAJOR turns of plot running throughout. Hence the title. Any other book on time travel would have spent one entire book building up to any one of the nearly half dozen major plot turns this one book has. Just when you think the book has reached a climax, we keep on going, breathlessly, wondering what could possibly be next? Second, I love that the main character is extremely career-oriented. She's young, adventurous, intelligent, not afraid of risks and indulging her libido and is too busy living life to the fullest that thoughts of marriage, kids and settling down have not even crossed her mind. In other words, she's much like male characters

you read all the time in adventure stories, not preoccupied with relationships and domesticity, but on career, adventure and having lovers. I'm looking forward to the next installment.

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