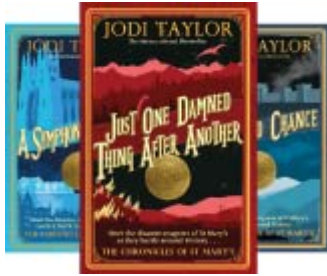


**June**



**Jodi Taylor**

*Just one damned thing after another*

**Alix**

I don't enjoy Time Travel stories much but liked the first 5 or so Chapters and reading about the travel to the Somme .Travelling to Cretaceous period 67 million years ago – Dinosaur Period I did not enjoy much. Very bloodthirsty and treacherous people trying to kill each other. A lot of conspirators in the Institute of Historical Research at St. Mary's! There was humour in the book and the relationship between Max and her Boss was explicit to say the least! The book ended well as Max went back to the Cretaceous period in her pod and rescued 4 of the historians who had been abandoned there including "The Boss" so they are back and ready to start the 2nd book!

**Angela**

I had definite reservations about reading this book, and at first I found my fears confirmed as Max, the heroine of the tale finds herself at the St. Mary's Institute of Historical Research where the atmosphere is that of jolly japes in a boarding school with some love interest thrown in. However, I can see why many people find these books so addictive. The story, while nonsensical and a time travelling cross between Harry Potter and Jurassic Park, was well written and a real page turner. The historical content, whilst not exhaustive, was sufficient to maintain interest. It was an undemanding read and I gobbled it up in a few days with much enjoyment and quite a few laughs, not least in the tongue in cheek sex scenes, although some of these had well written darker moments too. One did get the feeling that the baddies always had to get their comeuppance, one of those ploys that seems to appeal to a rather immature emotion within us, however satisfactory it might feel. I can't say that I would be tempted to read more in the series as I did find the whole experience rather two dimensional, and the characters somewhat stereotypical, but I enjoyed the story much more than anticipated. On the whole, good fun!

**Angie**

When I started this book I didn't know quite what to expect. The story is narrated by Max (Dr Madeleine Maxwell) who states there were two defining moments in her life which changed everything. Wayward by nature, the first is at school when her Head Teacher, Mrs De Winter, asks her to write 1500 words on the precise nature of Ma'at (the Ancient Egyptian Goddess of Law, Morality and Justice) as an opportunity not a punishment. The second comes 10 years later, after graduation as a Historian, when Mrs De Winter emails her details of a job opportunity at St Mary's Institute of Historical Research. Being recruited by St Mary's changes Max's life. She is

now working for an apparently innocuous scientific research establishment specialising in historical archaeology but which in fact is trying to answer some of History's unanswered questions. The plot is light and the reader is expected to accept the fact of time travel without any of the science behind it. This story is pure fantasy and there is considerable chaos as the Historians travel back in time – they are expected to observe and document but definitely not interfere as if they do History will fight back and it does with sometimes disastrous consequences. The book was easy to read but I felt the plot became almost farcical and more and more unbelievable towards the end. This is the first book in the series and I may read the second book to see how the story develops.

### **Ann**

I have read “Just One Damned Thing After Another” by Jodi Taylor and enjoyed it immensely. Science fiction and time-travel are not something I usually go for, and the only other book I have enjoyed in this genre was Douglas Adams “Hitch Hiker’s Guide to the Galaxy” and I found some similarities in both these two books, probably due to the humour and imaginative adventures in both books. All a bit whacky and fantastical! The trips to the past evoked interest and speculation about historical events and the problems of returning to the past without changing the actual history. The fight to preserve history against the evil Ronan brought drama and the hidden enemy brought mystery. It had a touch of romance and the cast of characters was appealing. Though whether the heroine, Miss Maxwell, will ever manage to survive the adventures in the sequels to this book in which she appears as a member of the staff of St. Mary’s Institute of Historical Research, puzzles me, as I was surprised that her amazing body was still in tact at the end of this book of adventures and catastrophes! Loved the characters and it was an exciting read.

### **Chris**

I enjoyed this book, it's a bit of a Girl's Own time travel adventure story, a yarn, Dr Who meets Horrible Histories, with more sex and violence. I got a feeling this was meant for young adults, but that doesn't mean us older adults wouldn't like it - I did, it's quite a page turner to take you literally out of this world. The female lead character Madeleine Maxwell is a historian who charges through a number of disparate short stories from history, loosely strung together by the main characters, who are all heading for disaster, chaos and heroics. Its sometimes laughingly comic style was forgivable if you just enjoy the ride, and don't worry too much about the loose ends or the superhero scenarios!

### **Gill**

I haven't read Jodi Taylor's books before and am not really a time travel fan. So, not a good beginning! But to begin with, I thought it ('Just onedamned thing after another') would be a good read, The idea was good and approach original, a bit 'irreverent' but that's fine. I enjoyed some of the book, but once I'd got into it, I found it quite superficial; the characters weren't great, and the author seems to be trying to cram too many 'things' into the story, even when they don't actually move the plot along. Some of the writing was clumsy and it seemed a bit adolescent. Many of the reviews on this were very positive, finding it funny; I think my sense of humour must be a bit old, certainly different. It hasn't improved my opinion of time travel, but it obviously appeals to many.

### **Margaret**

It is not my sort of book at all but I did get hooked on it and wanted to read on, fascinated by the time travel. The idea of the travel was for research purposes and Max (employed by St Mary's, a historical research organisation with a difference) and the historians landed up in the Cretaceous period and noticed 'a small town with tents, people, pop music and cages' and men were trying to get a young T. rex into a cage - so there were other pods there as well. They witnessed the destruction of the Great Library of Alexandria, burnt down in 48 BC and the characters were thrown into a trench during World War I. However, by chapter eleven it was getting more and more complicated and I got rather lost. The main character of the book Max, was sacked from the place where she was employed by the dreadful woman Barclay who had been willing to leave the people left in a past era to die, Max had disagreed with her and some time later travelled in a 'pod' to rescue them - yes, they were still alive. I struggled to work out who all the characters were. There didn't appear to be any link or reason for the different time travel places they chose to go to. There was an obsession though 'with getting a good cup of tea'. I probably won't read any more of Jodi Taylor.

### **Sharon**

I read the Jodi Taylor book, *Just One Damned Thing After Another*. I wasn't too keen to start on this and thought it might be a bit "chicklit" but that was very judgy of me and very quickly I realised that it was intelligently written and fun. The premise of being able to actually travel to historical events was engaging, although obviously far fetched in places. Still, once you accept that, as the author says at the beginning, she just made it all up, it was a good read and food for thought at times. I would now like to read the next one, so thank you to whoever recommended it.

### **Stephanie**

This was based on the very interesting idea that historians could study historical events by transposing themselves back in time to the events with the proviso that it was not possible to alter history or to bring any historical object back to present times. At the beginning of the book I found it totally engrossing, it was easy reading (although certainly not beautifully written) and a page turner, however by about page 200 I began to get frustrated. I felt that, although the initial idea was interesting, the follow through lacked both consistency and thought. I did not understand how the 'baddies' were able to profit from their plundering of past times when it was neither possible to bring artefacts back nor to change the course of history. I also found the jumping from one historic incident to another unsatisfactory partly because the thread of the story became very disjointed and also because there was far too little historic detail. Overall I felt that the book failed to live up to its initial promise and I will certainly not rush to read the other 10 books in the series.

### **William**

Previously I had never heard of the author or the genre. Commenced reading the book without much enthusiasm but very soon started to enjoy it and the very interesting literary concept it offered. In fact I found it quite fascinating and have since read the sequel '*A Symphony of Echoes*' and also '*A Second Chance*' I thought that the characterisation was brilliant, although

when only forenames were used I lost the ability to distinguish their separate identities and their relationship, and sometimes the historical content could have benefitted from more detail. Overall the book provided much more than I expected. There is no attempt to explain the mechanics of time travel and very little effort to make sense of what the missions are being used for and the reason for their selection. It did spark my imagination as good books do. I liked the principal character being a strong feisty female. I also enjoyed the use of language and the employment of words seldom found in current literature. I keep repeating to myself the quotation lifted from Lisa Simpson. *'It is better to remain silent and be thought a fool than to open your mouth and remove all doubt'*. Add to this the aphorism: 'Extraordinary people achieve extraordinary things'. Words to live by.

### **Jean**

I've now read '**A Trail Through Time**' so here is my review.

Not having read the first three books in the St. Mary's Chronicles, it took some time to adjust and to empathise with Max and Leon, who are reunited and looking forward to a peaceful lifetime together. However, once drawn into the novel, I found it a page turner, fast moving and a fascinating journey from 17th century London and the Frost Fair, to ancient Egypt ( which brought back memories of my visit to Egypt, many years ago ) and then on to Pompeii and 14th century Southwark. I found it humorous at times but frightening, too, as a scared Max tries to outrun the Time Police as they all hurtle through time. I found Taylor's book well-written, exciting and sexy, too! I shall probably read another of her books in the series.

I recall reading 'The Time Machine' by H.G. Wells, which was surely an introduction to this genre.