



A Murder in Time

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Beautiful and brilliant, Kendra Donovan is a rising star at the FBI. Yet her path to professional success hits a speed bump during a disastrous raid where half her team is murdered, a mole in the FBI is uncovered and she herself is severely wounded. As soon as she recovers, she goes rogue and travels to England to assassinate the man responsible for the deaths of her teammates.

While fleeing from an unexpected assassin herself, Kendra escapes into a stairwell that promises sanctuary but when she stumbles out again, she is in the same place - Aldrich Castle - but in a different time: 1815, to be exact.

Mistaken for a lady's maid hired to help with weekend guests, Kendra is forced to quickly adapt to the time period until she can figure out how she got there; and, more importantly, how to get back home. However, after the body of a young girl is found on the extensive grounds of the county estate, she starts to feel there's some purpose to her bizarre circumstances. Stripped of her twenty-first century tools, Kendra must use her wits alone in order to unmask a cunning madman.

A Murder in Time Details

Date : Published April 15th 2016 by Pegasus (first published April 11th 2016)

ISBN :

Author : Julie McElwain

Format : Kindle Edition 513 pages

Genre : Mystery, Historical, Historical Fiction, Science Fiction, Time Travel, Fiction, Fantasy

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From Reader Review A Murder in Time for online ebook

Magdalena aka A Bookaholic Swede says

My review of A Murder in Time is now up on Fresh Fiction!

"Slipping back in time 200 years to catch a serial killer"

Read the whole review here!

Lindsay says

An FBI special agent and profiler gets flung back to Regency England to find her expertise is needed when an horrifically murdered young girl is found in a nearby lake.

I found this book entertaining and a compulsive read despite some fairly significant flaws, most of which I would classify as bad-romance-novel writing issues.

Firstly, the positives. Most of the characters are well-drawn and react believably to Kendra's presence. The mystery plot is handled well with clues to be picked up by a careful reader. There's a romance subplot, which is surprisingly understated given the romance-writing techniques used here. There's a lot of well-researched information regarding the things a 21st century woman would find jarring about living in the early 19th century.

So what do I mean by bad-romance-novel issues? Firstly, while it's not egregious, there's head-hopping throughout. In some ways that's a worse issue than if it was rampant, because it feels like something that could have been corrected with a good edit. Secondly, many of the chapters end with a foreshadowing sentence. "But little did she know how bad it would get." That can be forgiven in the first chapter or so, or if it's used only once or twice, but this happens throughout and, like head-hopping, tends to throw the reader out of the story by reminding them that it *is* a story. Finally, Kendra is very much that uber-competent too-young-for-her-position protagonist that suddenly realizes she's terribly lonely, just in time for a change of circumstances to give her life some meaning. That's not so much bad writing as overused cliche, but it probably still counts.

Ultimately these things were minor and not pervasive enough to ruin the book for me, and I really enjoyed the rest of it. Looking forward to the next one.

Poonam says

This is my Book Of the Month- September 2017, with GR group- Nothing But Reading Challenges- Category: Adult Sci-Fi/Fantasy BOM.

I also had a **lot of fun discussing this book** with Nameeta

~~I started this book without reading the blurb~~ I had read the blurb before deciding to join the group read but

did not remember a word of it, which worked out for the best as everything that happened was a pleasant surprise and I kept looking forward to the next great twist in this story.

This story is a great combination of Historical, Fantasy- time travel and Mystery. Our main protagonist(Kendra) is a child prodigy and working for the FBI, finds herself transported to a different era (nearly 200 yrs back). **Her reaction to this was believable and even after she accepted this reality, there were flashes of doubt in her mind which made the whole thing more acceptable to me.**

"Could she be sitting in some psychiatric ward, her body confined to a straitjacket, while her mind conjured up this alternative reality?"

Kendra starts working as a ladies maid in a Duke's castle and finds herself in some difficult situations which was fun to read.

"If the situation wasn't so serious or bizarre, Kendra would've laughed at the irony. Here she was- onetime child prodigy, the youngest agent ever to make it through Quantico- taking orders from two snobby debutantes."

There are also flashes of humor which we see in Kendra's thinking...

"Kendra watched the ladies with their absurdly small parasols. It took her a minute, but she finally figured out that it was meant more for flirtation than a protection from the sun. That was the root of this entire affair: the house party, the nineteenth century's version of Match.com."

But this is not all that happens. There is a murderer out there who is killing young girls and it is up to Kendra to put a stop to it. It was again fun watching her investigate with the limited access to developed technology but still being way ahead of that time!

There were some things not quite right with the story:

It was weird the way everyone lets a mere unknown servant to take control of the investigation. It is absolutely unbelievable but I chose to ignore this obvious loophole as I absolutely enjoyed reading this!

The book does not focus on the historical details and the dialect used may not be accurate but again I chose to ignore this as I enjoyed the humor and the investigation to resolve the crime.

The final reveal again was not as shocking as it could have been and till this point the book was more a 3 to 3.5 stars for me. My preferred ending would have been (view spoiler). This would have made for a much better ending in my opinion.

So what tipped the scale to 4 star? Well, after the culprit is caught with this weird confession thing that happens, there were some thoughts that came to Kendra's mind which added this extra dimension to the story which make me really like the book -(view spoiler)

The book ended on a very interesting read and this is a series and the 2nd book is already out. I am for one sure going to read this one!

Beverly says

This is a very enjoyable mystery with a sprinkling of time travel dusted on top. The modern day scenes, obligatory at the beginning and end are perfunctory and uninteresting; however the 1815 time period which encompasses the rest of the story is done well, especially the scenes in which a modern woman tries and fails at being a lady.

Only a few things annoyed me, the use of "mayhap" continuously through the narrative, and the use of anachronistic words like "sociopath" without explanations to the denizens of 1815.

Lauren (Shakespeare & Whisky) says

The novel fits in to the time-slip genre; an FBI profiler gets hauled back to the early 1800s and becoming involved in a murder case which she believes is the work of a serial killer. Her investigation is hampered by her gender, the complete lack of investigation (they don't even have a proper police force in England yet) and the biases of class.

It was well paced, the action scenes decently written and the plot kept me reading until the end. There was an underwritten romance, **I didn't have much of an opinion on it- which is sometimes much worse than hating something.**

You really only remember books you hate or ones you love. This was ok. It was pretty forgettable with one exception. It had this really odd "*male gaze*" thing going on which baffled me.

I know I sound like a whiney little bitch constantly carrying on bout "**mah feminism**"... hopefully I will get a run of good books so I don't have to keep hopelessly beating this goddamn drum.

I want to make clear that this is nowhere on the level of some other books I've recently reviewed. But it was pretty frequent and it just **didn't seem tonally consistent in novel about a woman written for other women.**

I'll give some examples:

"Fifty that I'll be the first to put nonlethal bullets into both bastards," Landon revised.

"Make that fifty and a date with Kendra."

Noone shot her a lopsided, lascivious grin. It didn't matter that he was, at forty-nine, old enough to be her father, and married, to boot.

She shot him a cool look.

"Funny. I don't remember putting myself on the auction block, Noone."

"Ah, come on, sweetheart. Everybody needs an incentive."

"You are too young and too pretty to be always business."

"They could've stepped out of the pages of a history book. Almost. If you ignored the tattoos and body piercings—most of which were sported by women.

"...thanks to a cosmetic surgeon's careful scalpel, the judicious use of Botox, and the latest collagen fillers."

"There was a lot of flirting going on, plenty of fluttering of ivory fans and eyelashes. It was weird to think that in another two hundred years people would flirt by pole dancing, twerking, and sexting."

I dunno... it just all seems really judgemental.

Like I think the author is trying to establish that Kendra is a natural beauty, hard working (rather than one of those bitches that coasts on her looks), and is also moral (because she doesn't have a tramp stamp, or date older men)... but it all just felt really unnecessary.

Why do we have to judge other people for such mild choices? It also had nothing to do with the story at hand. It wasn't used as a backdrop for Kendra's experience in the past. It was just derogatorily commented on then promptly forgotten.

Look this isn't going to be a big rage fest because it is pretty mild... but it made me tired. **Books written about women, for women should be capable of writing from a perspective that respects various women's choices, you know?**

Anyway, if you enjoy time slip mysteries this is a decent one. I had guessed what was going on but I realise I have a greater background in history (especially greek and roman) then the average reader so maybe that wouldn't have been true for others.

This is one of those two star books that absolutely earns its two stars- "it was ok."

But this tattooed, twerking slut is going off to find something better to read. ;)

Anna says

I had such high hopes for this book, and it was such an utter disappointment. Reading this book was like being promised something akin to the time period/genteel witticisms of Jane Austen and the murder mystery chops of Agatha Christie, and instead ending up with the blandness of "Death Comes to Pemberley" and the mystery-solving finesse of a little kid wearing a Sherlock Holmes deerstalker with his finger up his nose. There was just SO much wrong here that I don't even know where to properly begin.

I suppose first are the weak characterizations. Kendra Donovan is one of the most unsympathetic heroines I've ever encountered in fiction. Can't we just once have a heroine who is a badass female and is proud of that fact? Kendra speaks several languages, went to college at age 14, and is basically supposed to be a certified genius, yet all she does is whine about how much of a "freak" she is. I can think of more than a few people who would love to be able to speak several languages with little to no effort and make insane amounts of money for just being a genius... *raises hand*

Besides that, she also is an ornery, bitchy person. Almost every sentence she utters has some form of profanity in it (which, let me tell you, got old real quick). She's always snapping at the other characters. Once she realizes she's somehow traveled back in time, she doesn't even attempt to blend in with the society at large, even when it might behoove the murder investigation she's working on to fly under the radar. Instead

she barrels around using slang terms and swearing, not giving a crap about how a woman of this time period would be expected to behave, her only explanation being either evasion or saying that it's because she's "American". She tells all of the men what to do and when to do it, and they somehow never really question her on it. I'm all for women being in charge, especially in a time period like 1800s England where women's value compared to men's value was thought to be significantly less, but I'd think at least someone would be like, "Hey, you're not behaving like a lady and you've got no right to tell us what to do; leave my estate at once." But no, the Duke takes a liking to this jerk for no reason that is ever explained, except as an excuse for the author to keep Kendra around to "solve" the mystery. "Solve" is in quotation marks because despite how much of a crime genius Kendra apparently is, the mystery just happens around her and nothing that she does really ends up having any affect on anything. She's basically "We're doing everything my way because I know what I'm doing" and the rest are just "Righto Miss Donovan, we're going to just turn a blind eye to you because we're the side characters after all, carry on." She even interrogates a suspect relentlessly in an extremely cruel manner, provoking him so far as to try to strangle her - not going to lie, I didn't really blame him...

Mr. Darcy -- I mean Alec -- is just a bad copy of an idea that Jane Austen came up with first. He dislikes and is extremely suspicious of Kendra for the first half of the book, culminating in him confronting her about why she knows all this weird future stuff and she gives him no answers and he's angry about it, and then all of a sudden a couple scenes later he loves her and they're making out. Zero to sixty, no sense was made. The author is the editor of a soap opera magazine and I think this is her roots showing for sure.

The servants all speak with terrible text approximations of Cockney accents, like Hagrid from "Harry Potter" if he was Cockney: "'W'ot we goin' ter do?" "'Twas before 'er Ladyship's nuncheon. Eleven, Oi think. Mebbe 'alf past." It was extremely annoying at first but by the end when a bunch of servants are speaking at the same time and it's pages of this, I just started laughing. The author also has no idea how the upper classes speak, trying to use modern contractions combined with Austen-esque wording, like "Where'd you come from, pray?"

Even with all this crap aside, my main problem with this book is that the author, Julie McElwain, does not know how to write or how to construct a story and this is obviously her first novel. She is under the impression that the last sentence of every chapter should be foreshadowing. She thinks adding one or two random POVs of other minor characters makes her story better rather than muddling it. She names other characters in the POV of her murderer fairly early in the book, thereby giving away to the reader that that character is not the murderer and ruining any theories the reader may have thought up (I stand by my opinion that my ruined theory would have been a better ending than the actual ending, anyway). She reuses the same character descriptions and thinks her reader won't notice that every time we see them, Sam's features are "elfin", Gabriel's hair is "tousled", and something about the Duke's blue eyes. She overexplains concepts to her readers as if we are children who won't be able to follow her plot and she needs to handhold. She refers to women characters repeatedly as either "chits" or "bits 'o muslin". Her main character's hair is shaved and described as being only "a few inches" long but somehow 3 months later she has grown it to a sleek bob and it is not a wig. Most unforgivingly, she can't even remember the NAMES OF HER OWN CHARACTERS: Mrs. Griffith becomes Mrs. Griffon, Georgette becomes Georgina, and Sarah Rawdon becomes Sarah Rawlins, all just a few pages later. Like, come ON, lady. This shouldn't be this hard.

When I first got this book along with a few others from the library, one of my cats jumped up onto our coffee table and deliberately knocked it off with his paw. Now, this is the same cat who just today decided it might be a fun and not at all dumb idea to lick an electrical socket with a plug in it, so I didn't take it as any kind of sign that I shouldn't read this book. Sorry, Willow -- I'll listen to your wise judgment next time.

Because I don't like to be an entirely Negative Nancy, I will say I did like how the descriptions of the 1800s estate, rooms and foods were presented, it gave me a nice mental picture. Thank you for reading and have a pleasant day :)

Bam says

Big Library Read title--June 23-July 7, 2016.

*2.5 stars, generously rounded up. My grandmother, admittedly not a great cook in her later years, used to make a dish for me she called 'mishmash'--a mixture of ground hamburg and canned vegetables (think Veg-All). Believe it or not, at ten-years-old, I liked it; there's no accounting for taste.

I kept thinking of mishmash as I read this book--perhaps because it is a great mess of things that actually sort of work in the end (after simmering a bit.)

Special Agent Kendra Donovan is an exceptional FBI agent, a brilliant young woman who has worked in the Behavioral Science Unit and has recently been moved to a field team of several departments to try to apprehend a deadly terrorist. When the joint maneuver goes terribly wrong, a seriously-wounded Kendra plots her revenge.

In pursuit of this, she flies to England under a false identity and takes part in an historical reenactment at the ancient Aldridge Castle, where she is assigned the role of a maid of the 1800s and dresses the part. She has a plot to poison her enemy, who is one of the wealthy guests attending the party, but another armed assassin beats her to it with a well-aimed bullet. Trying to escape the killer herself, she dashes up a hidden staircase leading to the tower...where she experiences some strange and painful sensations that leave her reeling. What just happened? she wonders.

When she comes back down the staircase, she slowly becomes aware that things have changed. Is this an elaborate hoax being played on her? When she asks a young maid what year it is, the stunned girl replies, "Why, it's 1815!"

The rather curious Duke generously allows her to stay and work at the castle as a maid but she bungles everything and makes little attempt to style her speech to fit the era, using being 'an American' to cover up her mistakes.

When the body of a brutally murdered young girl is found on the estate, Kendra steps forward to offer her knowledge of forensics and serial killers to help the investigation, using esoteric terms like 'unsub' and 'vic' which leave the men scratching their heads. Who IS this bold young woman who is dressed like a maid, but speaks like a scientist? Can American science be so much more advanced, the men wonder?

The 'investigation' is really little more than a series of interviews: "No matter how complex an investigation, it always boiled down to the basics, Kendra thought. Canvassing the neighborhood, questioning colleagues, friends, family, neighbors. The techniques changed, but the approach remained timeless. There was something comforting in that."

Kendra feels a sense of guilt when two more women are killed. Why was she brought to the past if not to stop this killer?

I generally enjoy well-done time-travel fiction. This one gets low marks in that area, especially when compared to great books in the genre. It seemed remarkably silly, to tell you the truth. I also enjoy a good murder mystery--in this case, the MO of the murderer is pretty shocking but the investigation is dull--comprised mainly of shocking the gentry with pointed questions such as, Where were you on the night of...? etc.

The characterizations are cardboard, so much so that I had trouble remembering which man was which. (Is he the one whose mother is insane? Is he the one whose wife disappeared?) The author seems to feel the same confusion with her characters as she occasionally slips and uses a slightly different form of a minor character's name. Bad checking from the proofreaders to let those mistakes slip by! Kendra is supposedly a brilliant behavioral scientist and agent, but misses several clues and really, for all her expertise, doesn't do much to help catch the killer. And of course, there is a little sizzling romance thrown in, ala Outlander.

At about the 70% mark, the story picks up the pace as the killer becomes more unpredictable and Kendra senses she has made a serious mistake. Those last chapters redeemed the book for me. I will give her a second chance and plan to read book two in the series: A Twist in Time which I've gotten from Net-Galley. Will Kendra ever make it back to the future? We'll see.

CJK says

Ms. McElwain - you should demand a better editor. A better editor would have caught little things like: why end most of your chapters with a foreshadowing sentence? Why have 3 POV's when 2 weren't even flushed out - did you really need Morland's? And why include the 'Murderer's' POV so sporadically? Why not include how Kendra escaped from the chains???? Does the story really need the prologue to set up the rest of the book??? And really, romance in the last few chapters - was that really necessary?

I feel this book was such a wasted potential - great premise but weak execution. The character's attitudes towards Kendra were a tad too unbelievable - all she had to do to get people to believe her about psch evals, slang, terminology and knowledge was to either pretend she was American or evade - and no one presses her on it. Really?!? And for such a genius with almost an eidetic memory, she never figured on partners in her thought process/brainstorming? And yes, as a genius she couldn't come up with a decent cover story?!?! And the people's reaction to Kendra's proclamations - skimmed over.

I would have enjoyed more of Kendra's solving the crime process if she was actively doing investigating, but she never really did anything. She thought things through a lot, rushed to scenes and went along on questioning suspects, but nothing proactive on her part. And what was the point of Lady Rebecca? To give Kendra an equal status?

Overall - it is a decent beachside read where you don't have to think at all, in fact, thinking would be a detriment to enjoying this book.

Jess says

A modern day prodigy FBI serial killer profiler is transported back to 1815 England. She discovers a serial killer who fancies himself similar to Sir Frances Dashwood, founder of the infamous Hell Fire Club. The body of a horrifically tortured prostitute is only the first of his murders. Can a modern day FBI agent find the serial killer all the while keeping her time travel a secret?

So this is an interesting premise. I was hooked on the description. To sum it up in a sentence: I thought it was a decent book, not terrific, not awful, just passably decent. Why this somewhat apathetic of a reaction? Well, several items stood out to me that made this a novel that seems to try a little too hard. It felt like there was some overcompensation in the characters and explanations that strained the story and made me wish McElwain would have given the reader a little credit.

1. I'm not a prude and swear quite frequently with pointed flourished phrases unique to my vocabulary. However, there was so much profanity in the book. I truly get it: Kendra Donovan is a woman trying to make her place in a male dominant club that is the FBI. Swearing must really make her seem tough and like "one of the boys".-insert eye roll-

2. Kendra's explanations on serial killer profiling, psychology, and behaviors, albeit interesting, really were nothing earth shattering that a fan of any crime series (television or literary) wouldn't have known. This was probably my biggest disappointment. It seemed so elementary. And the fact that two gentlemen of peerage were able to overlook her forays so easily into the macabre was definitely a plot of fantasy. Yet, to tell this plot I can see it as a necessary piece of fantasy.

HOWEVER. If you are able to willfully suspend your disbelief, it can be an enjoyable book. I stayed up past my bedtime reading it. Simply accept the story at face value and expect to be entertained. It is a fast paced novel with many parts to recommend it. Keira's intelligence, wit, and sense of humor make her a delightful protagonist. One character who I wished received more face time.. Lady Rebecca. She was a terrific addition to the Scooby Gang. I can say I am a fan of the series and look forward to a Book Two. I mean, I hope there is a Book Two as we are left with an open ending that could really go two different directions. Well done with the ending, Julie McElwain.

Stephanie says

I'd like to start off by mentioning the whole concept of time-travel story. Sometimes it works in stories and sometimes it does not. In this story, it works and the author gives such a brilliant and believable description of Kendra being pulled through time. For me that was pretty intense. I could almost feel the physical pain she was going through.

I really dig the premise of an FBI Agent traveling through time and ending up working a case of a 19th century murder that turns into much more. You also meet some other great characters that race to help her solve the crimes. For starters, Rose, Rebecca, Molly, Alec and Duke Aldridge are about the best written supporting characters I have read in a good while. Most of all I was so fascinated with Kendra's process in trying to solve these murders and some of the other characters thought process. I believe Kendra really brought that out in them and she really got them to think outside their 19th century minds.

The killings are graphic, there is profanity in this story. Quite a bit of it in the beginning actually. I'm not one for profanity but I understand the scenario the author was portraying. Intense situations cause people to react in all kinds of ways. For many, profanity is one of them. Even though the killings are graphic, this gives you a real sense of what the victims are going through, which makes the story all the more intense. I think that was brilliantly done and gives you a real understanding of that type of evil in the world.

I found this story to be atmospheric, packed with lots of action, high-energy situations and such intense and real emotions. I couldn't put it down. I loved it and I hope there will be a sequel! I've rated this book four and a half stars.

I received a copy from NetGalley for an honest review.

Stephanie M. Hopkins

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DeB MaRtEnS says

A Murder in Time is a bit of a mess, as far as rating it on a stellar representation of Georgian England's time period, the manner of speech and the distinct class and gender divisions. The promise of time travel, too, proved one simple shift, with Kendra the FBI agent finding herself in a duke's castle in 1815 rather than the one she began with today.

However, it's a bit of improbable fun - when there is time travel, anything goes! Kendra blows into the household in a lady's maid costume, gradually being demoted as she proves her uselessness in the household. The old Duke finds her intriguing, this woman who shakes hands and treats everyone the same, and as luck would have it, a corpse is discovered.

The suspense is thick, Kendra's twenty first century verbal blunders are funny - especially those that the author herself misplaced- and all in all, I enjoyed this light, somewhat loopy crime novel.

Robyn says

3.5 that I'm rounding up. If - and this may be a big IF for some people - you can accept the central conceit of a 21st century FBI agent being transported back to the 19th century and not immediately being locked up or sent to Bedlam for her shocking behaviour, then it's a quite entertaining serial killer loose in the Regency tale.

NB: there is some sexual violence and the victims are very young.

Cordelia says

I was 1/4 way through this book before I got fed up with details that rang false and a heroine I had no sympathy for. I should have quit when her hair went from "Her scalp had been shaved for surgery, but a half inch of dark hair had grown in" to "styled with blunt cut bangs and a sleek bob that curved an inch below her jaw" in 3 months. The library Big Read committee should be embarrassed to promote such drivel.

Lori says

I really enjoyed this, though, it was a bit rough around the edges. Much of the dialogue I found unbelievable, however, the story was so well developed that I can not give this less than 4 stars. I was completely engaged and did not see the end coming. If McElwain can polish up some of the smaller details & continue developing this story there's no reason the rest of this series can't be 5 star reads.

Emilie says

The premise of this book sounded very intriguing, and I really wanted to enjoy it. I had a hard time with it, though. It seemed as though the author spent too much time setting up Kendra, the heroine, and providing background/motive for her actions. While that is important, a great deal of what went on in the first several chapters was completely unnecessary to the rest of the book. I really did not get into the story until Chapter 11. I also had a hard time relating to Kendra. She was supposed to be a brilliant FBI agent, yet once she realized she was in Regency England she for some reason was not able to filter her language or adjust her behavior to better fit in and stop rousing suspicion among those she encountered. I do not feel as though people would be so accepting of a woman using such foul language in the early 1800s. And, not to give away any spoilers, at the climax of the book, Kendra's actions do not seem to jive at all with a highly-trained FBI agent.

The mystery, murders, and suspense of the book were very well done, however. The reader was kept guessing until the end, and there were some very impactful twists and turns.

I am not sure if I would recommend this to high schoolers because of the graphic nature of the violent crimes in the book.

If one can overlook Kendra's expletives and reckless behavior, this is an enjoyable read. Just a few tweaks with the character of Kendra would make this a fabulous book.
