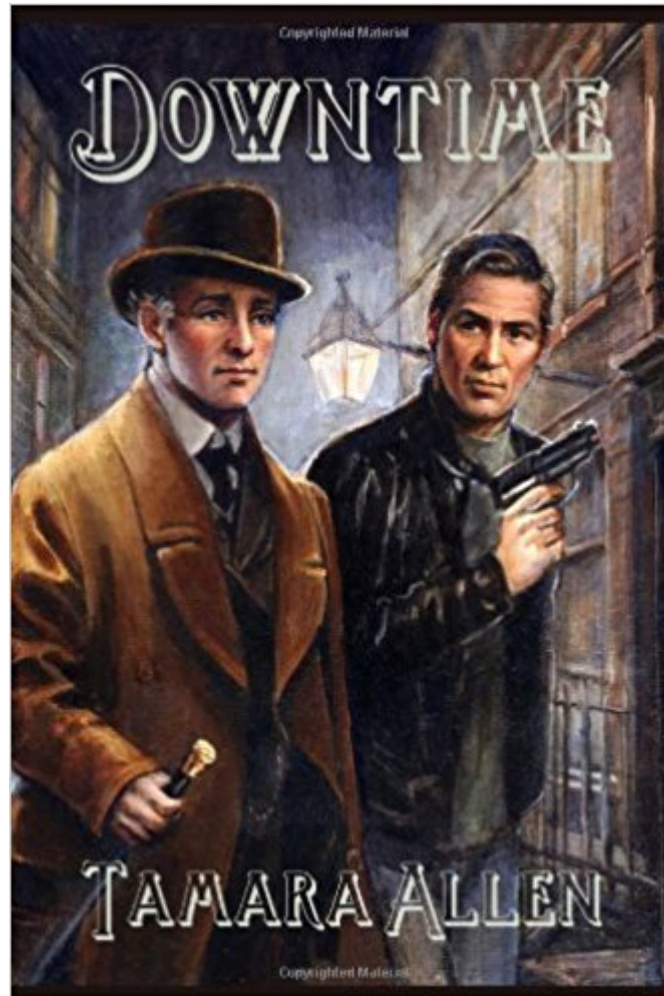




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Downtime



Synopsis

This title is no longer available for purchase on in either print or Kindle.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Tamara lives in the piney woods north of Houston, Texas, where she spends her time on administrative work, taking care of her family, and writing when she gets the chance.

DOWNTIME is a totally engaging Victorian period piece M4M romance mixing time travel, the occult and a sweet "gay" male romance, flavored with great friendships as well as late 19th century London serial killings and their resultant rather primitive police procedures. Too, because we're occasionally - and carefully - taken back and forth between the late 19th century and the early 21st century, there is a soupçon of double-agent spy thriller content that could have been taken from current headlines. I loved it - even though there might have been a bit too much time devoted to the legendary "Jack the Ripper" case - the telling of which did leave some unanswered questions. FBI agent Morgan gets knocked unconscious while doing a modern-day stakeout trying to catch a spy. Because of a supernatural spell "gone bad" he wakes up in 1880s London surrounded by awe-struck British Museum employees - including Ezra, with whom Morgan is destined to fall in love. The two main characters (Morgan and Ezra) find their way to each other's hearts though there are lots of rocky paths along the way - including 1888's infamously cruel "Jack the Ripper." They are helped in so many ways by their wonderful friends (and, ultimately, "adopted family" of choice): Hannah, Derry and Derry's sister Kathleen, proprietress of a delightfully comfortable boarding house

in which almost all of the main characters live. Although the book calls for a super-sized portion of "suspension of disbelief," it really is well written, romantic and quite appealing. I enjoyed it a lot. Tamara Allen does a beautiful job on period gay romances - see especially her 5 star book, **WHISTLING IN THE DARK**, an M4M romance set during radio broadcasting's earliest, pre-license era. Brava!

This story needs ten stars! I am hardly fond of time travel romances but this was one that drew me in from the first word. I was never confused as to what was happening or who was who. This is a gay romance but neither hero fits the stereotype I've come across growing up. Morgan (from the present) is an FBI agent who is virtually married to his job. It seems he is always on call to chase down the bad guys. Ezra (of the past) is a young man who is a bookish sort and works in a museum cataloguing old books. He loves Tennyson and is kept flush by a father that disapproves of him. Furthermore, Ezra's father has political aspirations and it does not suit his career and social life to have both a deviant son, and also one who claims to speak to ghosts. Ezra seeks to placate his father by getting engaged. Derry, brother to the woman that owns the boarding house where Ezra lives, knows Ezra's secret desire of men, and knows that if Ezra were to marry according to his father's wishes it would hurt him and his intended bride. Morgan arrives in the past due to a spell found in one of the books Ezra is working upon. Morgan is not convinced of his time travel at first but evidence is irrefutable. In the course of falling in love with Ezra, Morgan chases after a serial killer, and falls in love with several folk in the boarding house. Of course, they grow to love him, too. There is not graphic sex in this story but their assignations are handled very beautifully. I was also impressed at the length of this story -- over 500 pages. I find it a little disappointing that most gay romance books are under 200 pages. Almost as if they have a bit of story to gloss over the graphic sex.

I completely love this story. I have been in search of a great gay historical romance for some time. Typically these stories are either all erotica, paying no mind to time or place and just showing not telling any conflict to focus on the more explicit aspects of the story (which there is nothing wrong with, in and of itself, but when it is a romance and not an erotica there should substance) or they have a plot a kin to everyone in the past is so ultra liberal and accepting that there is no conflict. And B-stories, when included, are entirely transparent. This book, however, nails it. It has a perfect balance of awareness that what they are doing could land them in serious trouble with actual threats balanced with some characters rising above the homophobia associated with their time. While there

could be more characters objecting to the protagonists being gay, since there seems to be a large collection of accepting characters, the book does not suffer from it. There are many that are accepting, but they are close to the gay characters which helps to justify the acceptance. The B-stories in *“Downtime”* are also contrary to past gay historical romance experiences. The B-stories are almost all entirely fleshed out and could almost probably stand as their own short stories, if aspects of the main story were added here and there. There are a few places though where they thin, but they are B-stories. That depth, though, in a few places chokes the main story. The story seems to drag in multiple places when some of the b-stories take on a life of their own and are followed through for multiple chapters. The sheer number of subplots, which I believe nearly all are resolved, are interesting, but do seem to halt forward momentum. Some parts are even abandoned for several chapters before they return. Whereas others are woven through multiple stories or simply exist only in one chapter. This is both positive and negative for the story. The characters in this story also are able to wonderfully avoid the cliché so many mm romances fall in, the cliché of the non-versatile men. They are typically rigid in their gender roles and they could easily be substituted for an m/f romance. The top will always be masculine, manly, and the epitome of all things testosterone. He will be the protector and (when applicable) provider for the bottom. The bottom is blushing and timid, he will be the *“Damsel in distress.”* This book wonderfully avoids that in spades. Morgan and Ezra each have great fluidity. Neither one of the two is overly masculine or feminine. I worried about that when reading the description and editorial reviews which described the FBI agent and the poem lover. *“Downtime”* has Morgan save Ezra only for Ezra to save Morgan, several times. They each have their strengths and weaknesses and very well fleshed out. A few things were stated, though that never really had much follow through, but the book doesn't show every second of their lives, so it's not harmful, but it would have been nice to see. They both make a nice couple and seem to complement each other. The author doesn't simply throw them together and have them start a relationship nor is it a complete case of them meeting, hating each other, and then falling in love. They have resistance and initial misunderstandings about each other, but they're not heavy-handed. They simply allow the romance time to bloom. They both start to realize what they want and how they feel and it builds up to the relationship. I did have a bit of a minor hitch with why Morgan was so instant that Ezra not pursue his engagement, when it was 1888 and even if Morgan was from the 20th century, Ezra was not. With the secondary characters, they are well rounded. They don't have as much depth as the main characters, obviously, but they each

have their own quirks and some back story and are well formed. It is a very satisfying build. It also seems like it would take awhile at the time. Tying in with the next point is slang. Both the various characters' native accents, both from time and country, and cultural reference seem to be inconsistent throughout the book. While granted, they might try to be accommodating of the other for their cultural references; they seem to waffle on this accommodation. The accents on the other hand seem to rub off on one another for the main characters, and other characters who are said to have accents seem to lose them and regain them intermittently. Also, Morgan doesn't claim to be lofty (he is college educated), but will go from normal, every guy speech, to a more elevated speech pattern. He also tends to use British euphemisms, which might be Ezra's influence, but they do seem unusual for a New Yorker. Another genre this amazing book has its foot in is time travel. Time travel novels I've read before also seem to breakdown in predictable ways. There is usually the fruit salad historical novel, where an author does no research and goes by an impression they've had of the time and throws a few use of "thou" and "art" and other things and just hopes that a reader is of a similar stereotype of the time and doesn't care all their inaccuracies. The alternative to this is the author who researches every single aspect of their time and setting and wants the reader to know the hours they poured into research and will have several paragraphs which seem to just show off this meticulous research. This seems to manifest in characters speaking in exposition or the occasional paragraph of just description. Some inaccuracies can be tolerated; even the most persistent fact checking authors can slip occasionally.

"Downtime" is good balance of research with story; there might be a few rare places where slightly iffy, by and far, though the story has a great balance of history and story. Then, in time travel there is the awkward entry and exit; as well as, the disbelief of travel, and language barriers. The aspect of language barriers, each being unfamiliar with phrases and cultural references, I touched on earlier, but now specifically phrases. The phrases seem to primarily all modern phrases befuddling the Victorians. They only rarely will say something beyond Morgan, but he can almost infer their meaning. He also, with his vast reserves of future knowledge, seems to take little caution while saying things or doing things that are straight from his, the modern, era. The editing, grammar, spelling, and other mechanics had the occasional error, but in no way did it inhibit the read. The book is a larger read and kept me reading until I realized it was 5AM, I couldn't put it down. There is a lot of humor, mostly in the main characters' banter and almost the rest from their different approaches. A lot of mm

historical romances, as I stated before seem to just have smut with a little story, but this story with its large size doesn't even feel like it. Each chapter has you so engrossed you don't realize the hours passing as you read it. The amorous scenes are as romantic as they are titillating. They are not explicit, per se, but they are enough that it enhances the romance. There is also eroticizing common tasks. The story is full of twists and turns. It is exciting and yet believable. Overall, it bears repeating, I loved this book!

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