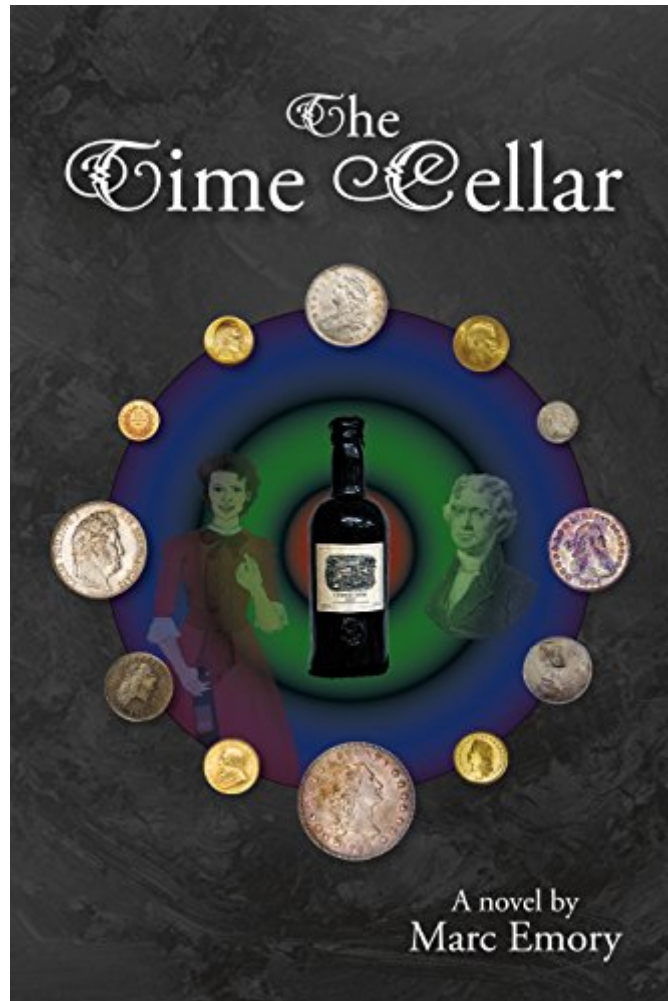




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The Time Cellar



Synopsis

Robert Packard, born in Los Angeles in 1974, love-starved wine nerd, frustrated physicist, and over-qualified gofer for a California law firm in the year 2010, suddenly gets two accidental windows to the past: Chateau Lafite in 1860, and Monticello, Virginia in 1818. They appear courtesy of the proverbial "Dark and Stormy Night." Not yet knowing if animate beings can cross through unscathed, he enlists the help of a local coin expert, and obtains the vintage coins to buy impossibly fresh wine from the Bordeaux vineyards in 1860 and "30 year old" wine from the 18th century directly from the cellar of his new friend, Thomas Jefferson. Hearing Robert is from California, and knowing only the geography of 1818, Jefferson compliments Robert on his English ("You speak impeccable English for a Mexican"). Robert has some history to fill in. Fluent in French, Robert also falls in love with a 28 year old vineyard worker's daughter in 1860 Bordeaux, France, born in 1832 ("You may start in with the 'older woman' comments any time"), but doesn't know if it's safe to go visit her in person. She helpfully offers the involuntary services of "Minou" to test the portal's tolerance of animate beings. Robert (now "Ro-BAIR") sells the rare vintage wine from his non-existent secret "cellar" to a crooked expert whose shop is on Rodeo Drive in Beverly Hills, and becomes an instant multi-millionaire. This brings with it the irritating consequences of a visit from the IRS, divorce proceedings from his soon-to-be ex-wife, and credible threats from thugs hired by the wine dealer, who can't stand not knowing the true owner of Robert's fabulous wine cellar. Coping as best he can, Robert's only friends are a 75-year-old retired Thomas Jefferson, his genius Guatemalan assistant Juanita Chang (whose ex taught her Cantonese), her brother, who knows the secrets of "maa shalats," whatever that might be, and the owner of the local rare coin shop. Robert gets a crash course in rare coins, 21st century legalities, and 19th century rural French etiquette. His wit and humor sustain him through his journey from contented mediocrity to sudden wealth and danger, with a surprise appearance by the Little Old Lady From Pasadena, who turns out not to be from anywhere near Pasadena. His wild whirlwind journey through a few dozen changes in life culminate in a surprise ending that is anything but obvious. Readers are offered fair warning from none other than Spider-Man creator, Stan Lee: "Hey, Marc - I hate you! Now I can't even look at a glass of wine without thinking of your furshlugginer story!!!"

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Customer Reviews

As a fan of time travel stories I never thought I'd ever find a novel that could rival the classic "Time and Again" by Jack Finney. I stand corrected. I can't compare the two stories since they are so very different in nature, but for sheer enjoyment as well as thought-provoking wonder, "The Time Cellar" is quite simply a fantastic companion to Finney. Which is as it should be; I've seen some stories that hew too closely to Finney's model. It's a treat to read a book with an entirely different approach, but no less excitement and equal plausibility. Every permutation of the time travel paradox is addressed, often brilliantly. The writing is delightful, with a casual tone that only a very skilled wordsmith could pull off so successfully. Like a talented dancer, Emory makes it look easy. But the more you read, the more you realize how hard it really is to write so well, with so many subtle hints of things to come. I was also impressed with how artfully he integrated impeccable French with translations of such dialog so that it seemed all the more real, without becoming awkward. It all flows together. It's a book which I quite literally could not put down. I read it in one sitting, and was very sorry when I reached the end. I would have loved for it to go on for several hundred more pages. I'm glad I bought it as a hard-copy, this is a book I intend to re-read often in coming years. I couldn't recommend this more highly. (I've already started shipping off copies to my friends!)

Seldom have I encountered a book that is such an absolute delight to read. It is captivating. I tend to read books quickly. However after having read a few pages, I knew I wanted to slow down and enjoy every sentence. The author has an excellent writing style. I really felt I was in the mind of the main character, understanding his thoughts, feelings, frustrations and joys. There is more than sufficient depth in the plot to firmly hold your attention without the use of countless characters and contorted subplots. Without giving a lot away, this book should make special reading for anyone that collects coins, enjoys wine, or has an appreciation of history. Even for someone not into these areas, it should make good reading. As a scientist, I found the book enthralling and accurate. It incorporates a number of concepts of science and even a little science fiction.

Marc Emory's book is a delightful little page turner with an interesting plot, making it a good and easy read for the beach or a long flight. Who wouldn't love to have a conversation with a famous former American President? Who wouldn't love the chance to travel back in time--using the knowledge of today--to create a family fortune? Who wouldn't love the chance to visit an idyllic location long before pollution from industrialization changed the world forever? I always enjoy reading novels set in locations where I've lived--in this case, Los Angeles--but having lived there I will say you'll have to search far and wide to find any houses in the San Fernando Valley with basements. One strike there for plausibility-- which isn't much-- since I was quite willing to believe in the circumstances of time travel! The only editorial criticism I have to offer about the book has to do with the problem of translating for the reader the French spoken by the characters . It was definitely fun--and made the setting more real--to read the French, but the format of translating the French in parentheses following every conversation had the effect of slowing down the story. All in all, though, it was an amusing story, well plotted, and nicely written.

As my title of my review indicates, The Time Cellar was a fun read that keeps you turning the pages. I especially enjoyed the characters Juanita and her brother, Miguel. I could picture them in my head and "hear" their chatter and tone, which made me chuckle each time they were mentioned in the story line. I also enjoyed Robert's (main character) poise, "matter-of-factness" and clever approach to problem-solving. If you enjoy a good romance-history-suspense-science-fiction-y story with some great tongue-in-cheek lines that will make you laugh out loud while reading it on a plane (yes, I did that), then this is a great choice for you.

Good read for the beach, a plane trip or as part of your e reader load for a cruise. This was a fun bit

of fluff fantasy, with a likable 1st person narrator and a good adventure. The author has a good sense of humor which is passed on to the main character/narrator; I think this was my favorite thing about him.

I heard Thom Hartmann rave about this book, so I decided to give it a try. What an enjoyable read! Marc Emory wrote a great loop of circumstances that was believable, educational, and entertaining. This was a kindle book, and I had no issues with the publication. But I do plan to buy this in print so I can share it with family and friends. I am hoping that Marc writes a sequel to this!

Who can resist a time travel tale involving gold coins, spectacular wine, Thomas Jefferson and the protagonist's assistant who speaks pidgin English and writes prose worthy of Spenser? The story is somewhat predictable, but a fun read nevertheless.

This book was so much fun! Emory's lead character, Robert, is a good soul, and the problems he encounters don't change that about him. It's romantic and left me envying Robert's special opportunity. I'll wait a year or so and then read it again. It made me feel good.

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