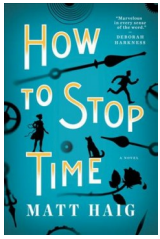


How to Stop Time



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Despite being over four hundred years old?alive in the time of Shakespeare?Tom Hazard (one of his many *non de plumes*) is still learning how to live life.

Recently, he relocated to London, and became a history teacher in a secondary school. While lecturing about Elizabethan England or Mussolini during World War II, Tom gets tripped on things he actually saw, versus things he should only be familiar about through books. The students notice and look at him quizzically.

Tom and a few of the other characters in this wild romp of a novel suffer from Anageria, a disease that slows down aging to an incredible degree, and protects the person from many contagious illnesses. This is not all for the good. For instance, Tom marries once, to the beautiful and intelligent fruit-seller, Rose. As she grows older, Tom starts to look more like the age of her son, and the neighbors start talking, believing in witchcraft or evil magic. The family is forced to separate. They move to France, and the same thing happens but now the angry neighbors threaten their daughter, Marion.

The book bounces back and forth between time periods: now and Suffolk, England; 1599, France, and Australia, now; Tahiti in the 1700s and Sri Lanka, now; New York in the 1890s and Paris in the roaring 20s. Tom meets Shakespeare, Scott Fitzgerald and his wife, Zelda, as well as Captain Cook.

Despite all the peregrinations of time and place, the reader can follow the story line easily because the lonely, lost voice of Tom connects everything. As a middle-aged man, he suffers from wracking headaches?too many memories?another person with his disease tells him. What keeps him going is the search for his daughter who reportedly has Anageria too, although he has not seen her since she was a child.

In 1891, in New York City, Tom meets Hendrich, president of the Albatross Society, a group set up to protect people with the same condition as Tom. The Alba president also searches for Marion, or so he says. Every seven years or so, he arranges paperwork and jobs so that Tom can begin a new life.

In New York, he introduces Tom to hot dogs and the music of Tchaikovsky. He also gives Tom the main rules of the society, ?No falling in love. No staying in love. No daydreaming of love.?

Of course, love comes knocking in London by Camille, the French teacher. Read to see what path Tom chooses: the protection of the Society or the love and possible heartbreak provided by another human.

The book brims with wisdom, angst, adventure, and good storytelling. Deeply-drawn characters make the story highly believable. One named Omai surfed in Tahiti in the 18th century, and still rides the waves a couple of centuries later. For summer escape fiction that will keep surprise and intrigue you, try this wonderful novel.

Posted by Dory L. on June 27, 2018

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