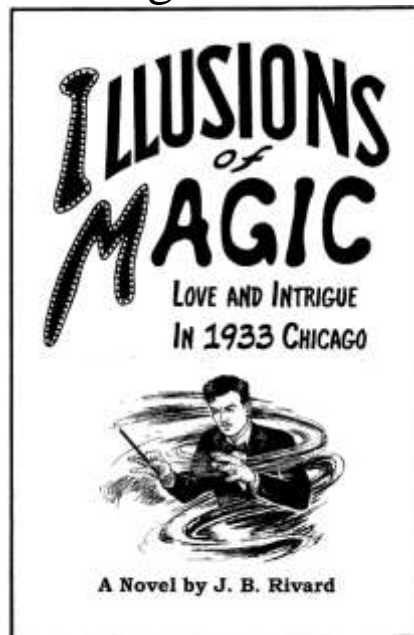


# Illusions of Magic: Love and Intrigue in 1933 Chicago



By J. B. Rivard (Illustrated by J. B. Rivard)

Reviewed by Johanna Urquhart  
(Historical Novel Society)

1933. J. B. Rivard centers part of his novel *Illusions of Magic* around a true-life and little-known historical incident: an attempted assassination of Franklin D. Roosevelt in Miami in February of 1933. The assassin, Giuseppe Zangara, had allegedly been trying to shoot Roosevelt when he accidentally shot Chicago Mayor Anton Cermak instead (Cermak later died of his wound).

This incident is part of the dramatic backdrop of Rivard's fast-paced and punchy novel about struggling professional stage magician Nick Zetner. The backdrop – and the author's excellent illustrations throughout – furnishes a good deal of the charm of the book. Nick Zetner's adventures, part screwball comedy and part Dashiell Hammett, combine with the richly authentic atmosphere of the setting to create a quick and very enjoyable read that smoothly intermingles Nick's love life with a challenging case he takes on for a corrupt banker.

The book reads like a breath of fresh air – recommended.