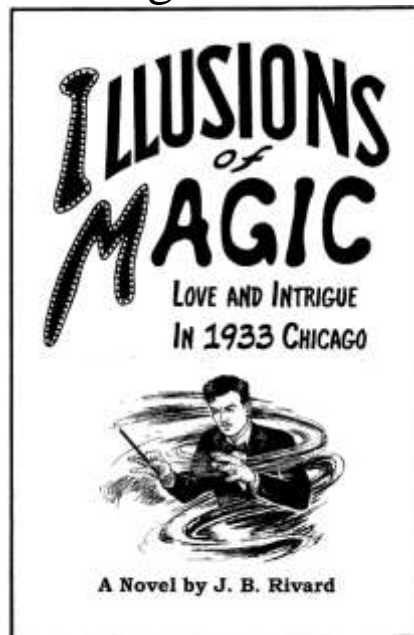


Illusions of Magic: Love and Intrigue in 1933 Chicago



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.

Reviewed by Esther J. Hildahl

Illusions of Magic tells the story of an unemployed magician in Chicago during the Great Depression in the year 1933. He is eventually hired by a banker to get some compromising photos back after they were taken in a bank robbery. Thus, the adventure begins as he is drawn into the underworld of Chicago, which eventually leads to finding his lost love of twenty years. The setting of the story takes place during the fatal wounding of the city's mayor who took a bullet meant for Franklin D. Roosevelt.

I enjoyed reading this story. The characters are well-defined and interesting. The story is fast moving and exciting right to the end, which has a surprise ending. I also liked the book cover and the black and white illustrations. It was a good read.



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