



The Mystery of the Magic Circle

M.V. Carey, Jack Hearne (Illustrator)

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Is former movie star Madeline Bainbridge an innocent victim--or a target of revenge? Thieves have just stolen her valuable old films. And her memoirs have mysteriously disappeared before they could be published. Why would anyone want the aging actress to suffer? When The Three Investigators look into her hidden past, they begin to understand. The lady is a witch--and her spells can kill.

The Mystery of the Magic Circle Details

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Author : M.V. Carey , Jack Hearne (Illustrator)

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From Reader Review The Mystery of the Magic Circle for online ebook

Quentin Wallace says

This was one of the better Three Investigators novels. This one involves a reclusive movie star, a witches' coven, and a trio of dastardly villains. This one was a little more "real world" than some of the Scooby Doo type monster stories (which I do enjoy.) Adding the witchcraft angle into old Hollywood really made this an enjoyable read. I could picture this as an old film starring Bette Davis and Joan Crawford. If you're a 3 Investigators fan I don't think you'll be disappointed with this one.

Saddaf Afrin says

this book is awesome....

Mark says

2010 review - The boys are working part-time at Amigos Press, run by the smart but clumsy Beefy Tremayne. He's just taken receipt of the potentially explosive memoirs of Madeline Bainbridge, an actress from Hollywood's Golden era, who might or might not have been a witch. When the Amigos offices are burned down, the memoirs stolen and Bainbridge's films snatched from a TV studio next door, it's up to the boys to get to the bottom of things. Starting with a bang, this has a terrific pace and is a real page-turner, with some great supporting characters and a nostalgic appreciation for old Hollywood. The boys' interplay was excellent, the plot was watertight and some of the set pieces were inspired. This is great fun and a terrific read, very highly recommended.

2014 update - I completely agree with the 2010 review, this is an excellent mystery, very well written and with a great pace to it. I've always had the impression that Carey was writing the boys as slightly older with this (whether it's because they're working or not I don't know) and I still think that and it works a treat (as Bob says "the private detective business is slow this summer, we thought we'd get some experience with office work"). I liked the way Madeline's history was constructed, the set pieces are strong and it's a great read, very highly recommended.

Robyn says

WKKPL | Surprisingly accurate depiction of witchcraft for a book of its time, worth reading for those who enjoy the series but it's part of the middle set that aren't as strong as either the early books or the later ones. Should really be The Jupiter Jones Show, not The Three Investigators, because there wasn't much use made of Bob or Pete.

SmokingMirror says

[She was more similar to Miss Hawthorne from *Doctor Who*'s "The Daemons," only less effective. (hide spoiler)]

Jeff Stephenson says

AH&T3I Update: 27 read, 1 lonely hardback left to go--and the 15 paperbacks will be on a short hold before I get to them.

Mary Virginia (M.V.) Carey wrote several of the Three Investigators books. She seems to like and therefore dwell on and use things like witchcraft, the occult, and supernatural phenomenon in a number of the Three Investigators books she wrote. That is not necessarily a bad thing--especially when she explains those magical happenings by using some not so magical explanations. She did not do that in the Mystery of Monster Mountain (Book #20) where she left a supernatural occurrence go unexplained. Perhaps though, she learned her lesson, because everything in this book, The Mystery of Magic Circle, seems to be firmly grounded in what could be reality. Of course, all of these books are fiction, but it is somewhat realistic fiction even if magic is used to attract and hold the interest of the reader. The book was a typical Three Investigators book. Most of the normal elements present in most T3I books are present in this book as well. The story itself was nice and tight with a number of plot twists. Carey even educated readers, to a certain degree, about witchcraft. Even today, many people think that witches worship the devil and call on Satan to do evil things. That is not really the case, and without using the name of Wicca (Carey called the witchcraft in the book as the Old Religion), Carey described witches in a way that most witches would accept. That is, most witches are pagan and worship Mother Earth using ceremonies that have nothing to do with Satan at all. I am not Wiccan myself, but I do believe that it is important that people understand the true nature of witches and not the evil version in which some people believe. Carey does a good job of making that distinction with this book. Overall, this is a good book and a fun read. It is short and can be read quickly by readers of almost any age. Now, onward towards the last of the Three Investigator hardbacks!

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2017 update - Another favourable re-read. The mystery works well, I love the atmosphere, it's well written and has great pace, it's a terrific story and a great addition to the series.

Autumn says

This is the first Three Investigators book I've read. I never read these as a kid, but recently learned about them and wanted to check one out. This was enjoyable enough as a quick read, but probably wouldn't be anything someone would want to read who hadn't gotten into this series as a kid. I was hoping for more interaction both between the three investigators (Jupiter, who seems to be a mini Hitchcock, dominated the story) and between the three and the main source of the mystery, Madeline Bainbridge. Also, Bainbridge's story was interesting but it was only told from the perspective of others, she didn't have much of a chance to explain herself. All in all this was just ok. I might read another three investigators book if I come across one.

Allan says

I have always maintained that if you are on the lookout for a book that at the same time satiates your thirst for a thriller and quest for more knowledge, then the Alfred Hitchcock and the Three Investigators in *The Mystery of the Magic Circle* is just the kind of book that you want. When I first set my eyes on the title I felt like as if the magic circle would be some kind of witchcraft, but as usual I was mistaken. The magic Circle, though it deals with witchcraft is not the kind of witchcraft that we are prone to knowing about. It is about some kind of an Old Religion which is connected with fertility and growth. A reclusive actress who is the central character of the plot is a ring-leader of one such practice and the way in which The Three Investigators save the actress from being swindled by her own chauffeur turned manager forms the crux of the story.

Spencer says

Been taking a lot of nostalgic trips through some of the books I used to read as a child. And the Three Investigators were always some of my favorites. I loved the idea of three teenagers being able to solve crimes before the police, very in vein of *Scooby Doo* or when I was really really little, the *Mary Kate and Ashley Detective* series (I'm a little embarrassed by remembering those books lol), and *Nancy Drew* or the *Hardy Boys*. The Three Investigators always had plot twists and scheming characters, but the teenagers always sorted it out in the end.

This mystery didn't exactly hold to standard the typical Investigators stories. Or at least it fell a little flat for me. I thought that an old movie star, Madeline Bainbridge, that had basically had no contact with the outside world was a little bit of a stretch for me. I mean, yeah, she relied on Marvin for the day to day, but she also had Clara, her secretary, with her every day, too. Are you telling me that Clara never mentioned someone in passing to her? That everyday Clara would just be like, "oh that couldn't possibly interest Madeline in the least. Best just not say anything to her about the outside world."

Even though I had a few issues with the plot itself, I still enjoyed the read. It's a quick trip for me, but it was a great blast from the past to reread about the Three Investigators and an old mystery.

Lea says

Auch wenn mir bisher nicht alle Fälle von M. V. Carey gefallen, ist sie auf jeden Fall die amerikanische Autorin der Reihe, deren Stil mir am besten gefällt. In den alten Büchern kommen die drei oft sehr verstaubt rüber, und auch wenn man auch Careys Büchern anmerkt, dass sie viele Jahrzehnte alt ist und man sie kaum als zeitlos bezeichnen würde, wirken Justus, Peter und Bob bei ihr mehr wie echte Menschen. Nicht nur wie Menschen, sondern teilweise sogar fast wie Jugendliche... Es macht das Lesen wesentlich angenehmer, wenn nicht jeder Dialog einem vollkommen an den Haaren hervor gezogen vorkommt.

Jesse says

Reading one of the *Three Investigators* books is always a happy, nostalgia trip. I think, as a child of the '80s, I was likely on the tail end of this particular nostalgia trip, but I always used to look for these books when I went to the library and I'm having a lot of fun re-reading them. They remind me in a way of *Scooby Doo* episodes, somewhat. A perplexing mystery with lots of twists and turns, lots of sneaky, devious characters, and the truth is all laid out in detail at the end.

I was surprised at the pagan/witch angle in that it was treated with much more respect than I would have expected for a book written almost forty years ago. That *wasn't* particularly "Scooby Doo" at all - no cackling old crone with a broomstick, but rather candles and ceremonies on hallowed ground all while drawing a clear distinction between the "old religion" and "evil" witchcraft.

The plot is a bit muddled at times and it definitely isn't the most solid of the *Three Investigators* stories...nothing award-winning here (and the fake Alfred Hitchcock angle is campy and annoying) but the story itself was still a pleasure to read and a definite nostalgia trip. It is always a blast to follow Jupiter, Pete, and Bob on their adventures.

Rex Libris says

Back in the days of my loathsome youth, I was a big fan of the Three Investigators series. My daughter then picked them, and just recently finished all of the books that I had bought for myself. This was probably the first 26 books in the series. For some reason, I don't know why, I stopped buying the books. But they were still be published.

So, my daughter hit the library catalog and did an ILL for the next book in the series beyond what I had bought, and this book was it. Picking up this book was like seeing an old, long-lost childhood friend. I can't wait to find the rest of them.

Robert Stewart says

I loved this story. MV Carey wrote some pretty weak 3I stories, but when she put her mind to it she could

produce some gems. Magic Circle is a great story full of sabbats and witches. I give it a 5, even though she finds it increasingly hard to find useful things for Pete and Bob to do in her books. Her later writings could arguably be renamed the Jupiter Jones books.

Nicole says

It isn't the strongest installment in the series, but at least it made me nostalgic for a time when former movie stars actually faded out of public life after thirty years. That was the single most anachronistic thing in the whole book.
