



## Mystery Society

*Steve Niles , Fiona Staples (Illustrator) , Ashley Wood (Co-creator) , Robbie Robbins (Letterer) , Chris Mowry (Letterer) , Shawn Lee (Letterer)*

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Nick Hammond and Anastasia Collins are the Mystery Society -- and bring new meaning to "underground cult" status! Stealthily avoiding the authorities, this skulduggery duo spend their time and money righting wrongs committed in the world's underbellies.

### Mystery Society Details

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Author : Steve Niles , Fiona Staples (Illustrator) , Ashley Wood (Co-creator) , Robbie Robbins (Letterer) , Chris Mowry (Letterer) , Shawn Lee (Letterer)

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## From Reader Review Mystery Society for online ebook

### Jason says

Nearly perfect little mishmash of action, scifi, and the supernatural. I'm so bummed that, aside from a one shot in 2013, Niles has never returned to these characters. I think it's my favorite of all that he's written. I collected this in single issues but reread it because Fiona Staples wasn't on my radar, it being pre-Saga and all, and I wanted to compare her earlier work to what she's doing now. The art has a different texture--it might just be the coloring--but it's just as wonderful as everything else she's done. Bring back the Mystery Society, Steve Niles! Please!

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### Steve says

1.5 stars, rounded down.

Not much to say about this one, except "Avoid it".

*Edit:* Actually, I'll say a little bit more. If you are looking for a (very) cheap knock-off/modern retelling of Alan Moore's *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*, Vol. 1, then this graphic novel is right up your alley. I'm not sure if author Steve Niles intended that, or if he even knew what he was going for (modern-age steampunk?) as he wrote this, but it didn't really work for me at all. The artwork was sort of \*bleh\*, too.

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### Kirra says

Mystery Society was an incredible little read because hello, it's illustrated by Fiona Staples! That brilliant artist couldn't do a bad drawing if she tried. I also love that no matter what she draws for any story you can always see her personal touch on the people's faces and the lines of everything she draws.

This book is a collection of the five issues compiled in this story and it's all very quick moving and to the point. It's a great short story about a mystery loving couple, a dead woman, twins with superpowers and a brain of a man in a robot.

I don't think the story itself was completely fantastic because as I said it was super fast so it was patchy and fast-forwarded to the point where none of it really made sense. So if you don't mind things not making sense then just relax and read a beautiful graphic about sensible, honest people that also happen to be going head to head with the top government agencies of the country!

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### Caprice says

2.5 stars

Overall I was just disappointed with this graphic novel. The art was beautiful (which is to be expected since Fiona Staples illustrated it) however the plot and characters felt rushed, underdeveloped and two-dimensional. Something just kind of felt missing to me like there was more to the story/world that we just didn't get to see. At times it felt like certain scenes were just cut and paste from another bigger and better

story. Anyway there was a bit of humour which was nice ...I guess.

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### **Trike says**

I've had this book lying around for years and had forgotten I had it. I discovered it while searching my office the other day and was surprised by its existence. Steve Niles! Of 30 Days of Night, Vol. 1 and Criminal Macabre! Fiona Staples! Of Saga, Vol. 1! Why has this been languishing?! (Because I have too many books, is why.)

So I devoured it before work today, and it definitely improved my mood after the downer that was The Fifth Season. Which is good, but oh so depressing.

This is just a fun romp that combines all sorts of secret world stuff like Area 51, androids, psychic powers, killer robots, human experimentation, the works. This is lighthearted adventure that cleanses the pallet, like a refreshing summer sorbet.

Our main characters are a couple who are into arcane mysteries and cryptozoology and wacky conspiracy theories, but none of it dark, just fun. They are inexplicably suddenly wealthy, so they go whole hog into exploring all of these things, rescuing a couple of girls who were experimented on back in the late 1940s and then put into suspended animation, and recruiting various other oddities, such as the previously-created character Secret Skull, who is an undead woman, as well as Verne, the brain of the writer preserved in a robot body. Like I said, goofy.

Unfortunately it seems these 5 issues are all that were ever made. So while we do get a complete story here, we don't get all the answers of how these characters came to be, and not how our heroes secured their new-found wealth. It's not important to the story, but I'm sure Niles had a fun explanation for it.

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### **Jakub Kvíz says**

Maximalni hodnoceni davam jen vecem, který me absolutne nadchnou a hltam kazdou stranku. Nerikam, ze sem si ze Mystery Society sednul na zadek, ale jednoduse tomu neni co vytknout. Uzavrenej kompaktni pribeh, ktorej pekne odesejpa a je plnej skvele napsanejch postav, originalnich napadu a humoru. A cokoliv, ceho se dotkne Fiona Staples je proste golden.

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### **Wendy says**

A sexy couple with the means and the motivation to solve some of the more unusual crimes are recruiting members for their new Mystery Society. Conveniently, a ghoul named Secret Skull and Jules Verne's brain encased in a quirky robot body apply for the job. Add the atomic twins that Nick Mystery rescues from Area 51 and we have the makings of a really fun team.

Unfortunately, in spite of Fiona Staples' fantastic artwork, this great concept falls flat with sub-par plotting, sub-par subplotting, a lack of mystery, an annoying antagonist and rather lame attempts at wit and humour. This comment is very negative, but I'd like to think that it's a negative with a lean to the positive. As in, I can see a lot of potential for good old fashioned tongue-in cheek mystery wagon fun with this book, if it can stop

trying so hard and just relax and enjoy itself.

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## **Eoghann Irving says**

So close!

This had all the elements lined up to be a great book and yet it just doesn't \_quite\_ come together.

Admittedly the biggest draw initially for me was the art by Fiona Staples because I love the work she has done on \_Saga\_. And she doesn't let me down here.

But there were other exciting elements here. Jules Verne's brain in a giant robot? Yup that's cool. A husband and wife mystery solving team? Yeah I'll go for some of that.

You see this book really wants to be wacky and crazy and it throws out some big ideas. The husband and wife team are ridiculously, crazy rich, so they've got a UFO shaped escape craft and a jet that actually has bubbles for 5 people. Like I said, it wants to be wacky. There's a character whose last name is *\*Culprit\**

But maybe it's trying too hard. Maybe it's trying to do too much. In this volume there's the main plot and a B plot. The B plot doesn't get enough time to justify its existence. Calling it a plot would be overstating it. So it wastes the characters that are involved in it.

And that time could probably have been better spent on the pacing of the main plot and fleshing it out a bit more. Because we're left with some terrible cliches, like the old dog general and the spoilt military brat. Stuff we've seen a million times before. I'd also be happy if we never saw Area 51 again in fiction. I'm tired of secret government committees. It's been done to death.

But it's *\*so\** close. So close. The repartee between the husband (who looks rather like Cary Elwes in \_The Princess Bride\_) and wife team is delightful. The character designs are great. And the possibilities set up here are boundless.

I enjoyed it. But it didn't live up to its potential.

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## **Sean Gibson says**

On balance, *Mystery Society* is a fun frolic, a high-speed romp through a world where talking skeletons, disembodied science fiction writers, and nuclear powered little girls can simultaneously take on the full strength of the United States army and locate the missing skull of Edgar Allen Poe. Fiona Staples' artwork alone makes this worth the price of admission. She is to drawing comics what Egon Spengler is to dropping references to obscure, arcane texts.

But, while the high concept is wonderful, the execution isn't always as superb. Willing Suspension of Disbelief is such a core element of the plot that it's required that you capitalize it when referencing it in

reviews of the book, and there are a lot of potentially thorny story challenges that are resolved with the nonchalant toss of a semi-witty bon mot. Then there's the recovery of Poe's skull, which plays like the B (or even C) plot of a Tim Allen sitcom—in the context of a long-running series, you might shrug and say, "Hey, not one of the best subplots the gang at Mystery Society has ever done, but it made for some fun moments." In the midst of a five-issue limited series, however, where storytelling space is at a premium, it feels distracting and illogical (like the basic premise of a Tim Allen sitcom).

Still, there's more than enough delightfulness here to make it a worthwhile diversion—it's like watching a dog eat peanut butter. We'll call it 3.5 stars and round up.

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### **Eric says**

This book was made just for me. It's about a mystery super-team that solves paranormal cases, complete with supernatural allies, secret hide-outs and high tech gadgets, and references Area 51, Jules Verne and Edgar Allen Poe. Sign me up.

This graphic novel -- which on top of everything else, was beautifully drawn -- is the perfect blend of The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen, The Losers, Scooby Doo, The X-Files, and Buffy the Vampire Slayer. So, if that doesn't sound like your cup of tea, well then you've been warned. Otherwise, maybe this is made just for you, too. I only hope there will be more than this five-issue mini-series, because all it's done is whet my appetite for more.

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### **sj says**

This was cute, and would be a kickass movie. With 1987 Cary Elwes as Nick Mystery. Someone find a time machine, go back and grab him and bring him back just for this, 'kay?

Much like North 40, this is another Staples story that should have continued. [sigh]

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### **Sanaa says**

[3.5 Stars] This one was quite enjoyable, but it wasn't quite as whimsical or action-packed as I was expecting. The climax to the story just didn't hit as hard as I wanted it to! The artwork is really beautiful though! I adore Verne!

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### **Sche says**

De très beaux dessins, un scénario un peu facile ...

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### **Lauren says**

So many wonderful things to say. Where to begin?

The art is fantastic and I was loving every moment. Fiona Staples does a wonderful job, and I love the look she gives to the characters. The color palette and "sketchy" look of everything adds to the feel of the book as much as the writing does. I would love to see her do another book with these characters.

The story was amazing. Not ground breaking literature, but still amazing. I liked the story's pace and the easy dialogue between Nick and Ana. The way each character got their own personality across was great, and they each had moments to shine. I personally really liked Ana's character; she was tough, secure in her sexuality, and feminine. You don't get many female characters who exhibit all those qualities in a comic book; let alone a book sans pictures.

My only complaint, and it's huge, is that this series is TOO SHORT. I need more Mystery Society, and I need it now. Forget "want". This is a NEED.

All in all, two thumbs way way up, and a gold star for the great dialogue and kick ass art.

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## **Sesana says**

Fiona Staples is a really, really talented artist. Her art is just so beautiful to look at, and she gives her characters so much life. I would be happy with a book that had only her art and no text. I actually got this book for the sole reason that I knew it had her art in it. As far as that goes, I got what I was looking for. Because as far as the story goes, Fiona Staples is a really, really talented artist.

Niles really wanted this to be a Weird and Quirky book, and he oversells. Constantly. Over and over, Niles writes the characters to emphasize their weird quirkiness, at the expense of characterization or plot or anything more interesting than how weird and quirky they are. The main characters have almost nonexistent motivation. They want to be the Indiana Jones of paranormal and conspiracies, and they have the money to do it. Why? I don't know, they just do. Likewise with their comrades. Why exactly does Jules Verne want to join their little group? And why is his brain in a robot body anyways? What little defining characteristics the Mystery couple has (yes, their last name is really Mystery) is an overwhelming need to be dramatic.

Which can lead to odd grandstanding, some of which doesn't even make sense. Much of the volume has the framing device that Nick Mystery is telling his side of the story to the press while he's being transferred between prisons. Really, how likely is that? There's a lot of grandstanding all over, including from the truly annoying villain. And it all doesn't really add up to much of anything.

I'm not entirely sorry that I read this. Fiona Staples, you guys! But if not for her, I really don't think that there'd be much of anything to recommend this.

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