

The Flutist of Arnhem: A Story of Operation Market Garden

Antonio Gil

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Antonio Gil's graphic novel *The Flutist of Arnhem* tells the story of World War II's Operation Market Garden, a 1944 Allied attack in the Netherlands that met with mixed results.

The big successes of Allied efforts in World War II get plenty of attention, but not every plan worked out: Operation Market Garden didn't succeed in its attempt to create a path to Berlin through the Netherlands, but it did free several Dutch cities and towns. Drawing on meticulous research, this book utilizes a large cast to portray the leaders, soldiers, civilians, resistance fighters, and agents of espionage who were involved.

A flute serves as the crucial link between the modern day and 1944, framing the story through the eyes and fading memory of Harry, a veteran of the operation. As a young soldier, Harry is ordered to find and retrieve his father, John—a spy who's hiding out in Holland with secret documents that provide important intelligence about the German army. A relentless Gestapo agent pursues John, while the German military machine makes every movement life-threatening.

With an ambitious sense of scale, the book includes many views of, and perspectives on, the proceedings. At times, it is dense and overloaded. But most of the book strikes an effective balance between maps and military plans on one hand, and the actions and emotions of the characters on the other. The art is notable for its attention to detail, from uniforms and equipment to fine-tuned facial expressions.

The Flutist of Arnhem is an epic, exciting tale from World War II.

PETER DABBENE (May / June 2021)

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