

## The Witches of World War II

**Paul Cornell**

**Valeria Burzo**

**Jordie Bellaire**

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People known for their involvement with the occult take up the mantle of defending England during wartime in the entertaining historical novel *The Witches of World War II*.

Doreen Dominy, a witch who also happens to work at England's Bletchley Park code-breaking facility, is called to her country's service for a top-secret mission. Motivated by the death of her husband after a German U-boat attack, she accepts. Along with Aleister Crowley and several other masters of magic, she works to use the occult beliefs of Nazi leaders against them and attempt the capture of a prominent member of the party.

The story is based on actual events, though exaggerated and embellished for effect. The result is an exciting adventure in spycraft that makes use of the substantial legend surrounding Crowley while introducing readers to Dominy (later known as Doreen Valiente) and Gerald Gardner, considered two of the founders of modern paganism. Other key members of the occult anti-Nazi team include Violet Firth (alias Dion Fortune) and Rollo Ahmed. The group member's differences in beliefs, methods, and ethical guidelines feed internal distrust and antagonism, creating a tense undercurrent to their larger, mutual goals.

The art is excellent, with accurate period details, convincing likenesses, and clear storytelling throughout. Afterwords by history professor Ronald Hutton and Paul Cornell illuminate the truths behind the story. *The Witches of World War II* is a graphic novel tale of high-stakes espionage with the unique, fascinating addition of magic.

PETER DABBENE (January / February 2023)

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