

The Order of the Circle

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A woman undertakes a plan to get revenge on a secret order of magic users in the graphic novel *The Order of the Circle*.

In 1952, Dorothy is a widow of sorts. Her husband John was framed for murder by corrupt mages and witches in the Order of the Circle; he was given to the demon Astaroth as punishment. As Dorothy seeks vengeance, she meets others who were mistreated by the Order; they help her collect the essential components of the Demon Blade, which is capable of killing Astaroth. In a final confrontation, Dorothy battles Astaroth and is presented with an even greater challenge.

The book begins in medias res and uses flashbacks to provide backstory, heightening its intrigue. Its pace is quick and propulsive. Creepy elements abound: There's grave robbing, blood stolen from babies, and a mouth sewn shut through magic. But there are also touching moments as Dorothy reflects on the loss of her husband and their unfulfilled dream to have children. Historical elements, as with references to Winston Churchill and London's Great Smog, result in playful realism. And the art is moody and dynamic, its colors and lettering contributing to the atmosphere of this alternative world.

Inhabited by magic at every level, the thrilling graphic novel *The Order of the Circle* follows a quest to deliver justice to a powerful group of magicians.

PETER DABBENE (January / February 2025)

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