



★ **Celestia**

Manuele Fior

Jamie Richards, Translator

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A pair of telepaths fight for their lives, and the future, in the surreal, poetic science fiction world of the graphic novel *Celestia*.

Celestia is an island that once served as refuge from a great invasion. Now, it's inhabited by criminals and a group of telepaths, among others. There, Pierrot is a telepath who has distanced himself from the group and his father, who serves as their leader. He connects with Dora, a disillusioned member of the group who declares, "No more telepathy."

Pursued by Pierrot's enemies and the telepaths searching for Dora, the two make for the desolate mainland and meet a child with amazing telepathic abilities and intelligence. They deliver the child to a nursery, where a host of nameless children waits, preparing to build a new future.

The impact of memory and intimacy is central to the story. Pierrot and Dora grow closer as she shares in a traumatic memory from his past. But the desire and need for privacy also weighs on the plot, resulting in questions around commitment and compromise. With a prevailing aura of mystery, and unanswered questions about the details of the Great Invasion, the story is rich, satisfying, and complex.

The book features striking, haunting visuals, like a prostitute wearing a Venetian moretta mask, the geometric maze architecture of mainland dwellings, and the symbolism of the drawn-on tear that Pierrot wears on his face. The art shows a practiced breadth of skill that encompasses tender emotions and dynamic action scenes. *Celestia* is a thoughtful, beautiful graphic novel.

PETER DABBENE (July / August 2021)

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