

## Faceless and the Family

**Matt Lesniewski**

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A former gang member seeks a new start in the surreal science fiction graphic novel *Faceless and the Family*.

On the Hand Planet, a former gang member, Faceless, has been in hiding for ten years, ever since he decided to quit being a criminal. Faceless keeps his head covered and wants to get facial reconstruction surgery to prevent the gang from identifying him and harming the family he left behind. He meets and bonds with other individuals who are wandering, running from, or searching for something; they accompany him on his quest to reach a surgeon in Pinky Town. Faceless gets the surgery, but is soon faced with a difficult decision: his friends are threatened by his old gang. He can either intervene and risk being discovered or abandon his newfound family.

Bizarre and fascinating, the book adopts an exaggerated style and a freewheeling, dynamic sensibility. Faceless and the others encounter obstacles that require both bold action and thoughtful problem-solving, and elements of mystery and humor flesh out the emotive cast. But the main attraction is the art—a marvel of black-and-white visual storytelling, making use of incredible details, keen shading, and line strokes that range from thick and heavy to light and delicate. The page and panel compositions are inventive too: one places dialogue lines on varying faces of rectangular stones.

*Faceless and the Family* is a raucous, imaginative graphic novel in which a man learns about the joys and responsibilities of being part of a chosen family.

PETER DABBENE (July / August 2024)

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