

## Lost Soul, Be at Peace

**Maggie Thrash**

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Maggie Thrash follows her highly regarded memoir *Honor Girl* with another graphic-novel memoir, *Lost Soul, Be at Peace*, which paradoxically incorporates mysterious fictional elements to create an autobiographical story that's innovative and thoughtful.

The book introduces young Maggie, who's grappling with studying *Hamlet* in school, the departure of her brother Drew to college, and the mysterious disappearance of her beloved cat Tommi. Add depression to the mix, and the sudden appearance of a ghostly teenage boy becomes an almost welcome distraction.

Thrash expertly misdirects around the identity of the ghost, tossing out details that seem insignificant at first but later reveal themselves fully, fitting into place with Maggie's own life. There are parallels to *Hamlet* and other cleverly disguised clues; combined with the weight of its emotional impact, *Lost Soul, Be at Peace* rewards a second reading on several levels.

Thrash's art keeps it simple but never skimps on the details that give the story a sense of verisimilitude, grounding its fantastic elements. Maps of Maggie's house, newspaper articles, websites, and movie scenes are all recreated in the context of Thrash's natural, sometimes even crude drawing style, which shuns perfectly straight, ruled lines in favor of an organic, freehand approach.

The clever addition of the ghost to the story raises an otherwise solid and affecting memoir to something more memorable, a genre-defying "fictional memoir" that fulfills its literary ambitions and never betrays the story's underlying truths.

PETER DABBENE (September/October 2018)

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