



Walker Books Classroom Ideas



Lost Soul, Be At Peace

Maggie Thrash
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*Notes may be downloaded and printed for regular classroom use only.

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Outline:

A year and a half after the summer that changed her life, Maggie Thrash wishes she could change it all back. She's trapped in a dark depression and flunking eleventh grade, befuddling her patrician mother while going unnoticed by her father, a workaholic federal judge. The only thing Maggie cares about is her cat, Tommi . . . who then disappears somewhere in the walls of her cavernous house. So her search begins — but Maggie's not even really sure what she's lost, and she has no idea what she'll find. *Lost Soul, Be at Peace* is the continuation of Maggie's story from her critically acclaimed memoir *Honor Girl*, one that brings her devastating honesty and humor to the before and after of depression.

Author/Illustrator Information:

Maggie Thrash is the author of the graphic memoir *Honor Girl* as well as the *Strange Truth* books. She is a former staff writer for *Rookie*. Maggie Thrash lives in Delaware.

How to Use These Notes:

This story works on many levels. The suggested activities are therefore for a wide age and ability range. Please select accordingly.

These notes are for:
• Ages 14+

Key Learning Areas:
• English

Example of:
• Graphic Novel

Themes/Ideas:
• Loneliness
• Friendship
• Depression
• Pets



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Discussion Questions and Activities:

Please note – in these classroom ideas the name “Maggie” refers to Maggie Thrash the character and the name “Thrash” refers to Maggie Thrash the author.

The title of this graphic novel has several meanings. What are your interpretations of the meanings? Write a paragraph about each interpretation.

Lost Soul, Be at Peace is a memoir by Maggie Thrash and is a companion to her earlier memoir, *Honor Girl*. What is a memoir? How is it different to an autobiography?

Describe the culture of Maggie’s family and home. What is her relationship with her parents like? How does Maggie feel about the house? What do we learn throughout the memoir that might explain why the family culture is the way it is?

Thrash has woven elements of fiction and non fiction together to create this memoir. What opportunities for storytelling does this create for an author?

How does Thrash use the graphic novel format to convey how she feels about her mother? Examine pages 22, 32 and 178 for examples.

Discuss the significance of dialogue from Hamlet being interspersed through the scene where Tommi disappears. Why do you think Maggie has recurring dreams of coyotes? What else appears in her dreams? What do you think they signify? Have a class discussion on the significance of dreams – do you think they hold meaning?

In the time period of *Lost Soul, Be at Peace*, Maggie is going through some very significant emotional changes and believes she is suffering from depression. Find examples in the text that show how Maggie feels the following:

- Loneliness/isolation
- Depression
- Uncertainty (of the future)
- Fear
- Love
- Hope

Maggie uses Ask Jeeves to search the internet for help when she is feeling depressed. How useful is this information? What do you think someone should do if they are feeling depressed? Refer to the list of helpful organisations at the end of this document.

Maggie finds her dad’s “K.Y.D.M.S.” plaque on his desk (p 83). How do you think this plaque (and its motto) affects how Maggie thinks about her father?

“People will always believe they’re special, despite overwhelming evidence that they’re just like everyone else.” (p 87)

What do you think Maggie’s dad’s intentions were in saying this to her? How do you think Maggie interpreted it?

In Chapter 6. Maggie has an argument with a group of boys in her class after they learn about the Constitution. What is the argument about? This argument frustrates Maggie for a number of reasons – discuss the different ways this affects her.

Maggie’s father somewhat casually tells her and his wife that his mother died, Maggie also finds out her father has a brother she didn’t know about. This scene also shows Maggie’s mother choosing to go to the cathedral flower show rather than join her husband at the funeral. Discuss the significance of this scene with regards to Maggie’s family dynamic.

“There’s a part of you that dies when you grow up. A ghost you have to leave behind.” (p 160-161)

Maggie learns the truth about the ghost when visiting her late grandmother’s home. What are the implications of this with regards to her relationship with her father and her own coming-of-age?

Thrash ends the novel with a line from Hamlet: “All that lives must die, passing through nature into eternity.” (p 188-189) Why do you think she chose this quote?

Helpful contacts

Depression (or any other mental wellbeing issues)

Emergency: dial 000

www.beyondblue.org.au 1300 22 4636

www.blackdoginstitute.org.au

www.lifeline.org.au 13 14 11

www.kidshelpline.com.au 1800 55 1800

www.mensline.org.au 1300 78 99 78

www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au 1300 659 467

LGBTQI+ Issues

www.minus18.org.au

www.qlife.org.au 1800 184 527

www.lgbtihealth.org.au

www.twenty10.org.au

Other Great Titles From Walker Books:



Honor Girl
Maggie Thrash
9780763687557 PB



Snow White
Matt Phelan
9781536200553 PB



Life on Earth: Losing the Girl
MariNaomi
9781541510449 PB



The Assassination of Brangwain Spurge
M. T. Anderson
Eugene Yelchin
9780763698225 HB