



Soma

Fernando Llor

Carles Dalmau, Illustrator

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A young artist is drawn into an epic battle for Earth's survival in Fernando Llor and Carles Dalmau's graphic novel *Soma*.

Maya, a cigarette-smoking comic book artist, is stressed out by her deadlines, low pay, and dissatisfaction with her latest projects. One afternoon, an alien in a damaged exoskeleton crashes through her apartment window. The alien, Soma, establishes a rapport with Maya and reveals that his people intend to destroy Earth's population and claim its water. The aliens invade inside huge walking tripods as Maya and Soma attempt to stop them, leading to confrontation and a final, emotional sacrifice.

Maya's adventure is enhanced by side plots and tangents. Maya's shy and insecure friend Juu aids two bystanders during the alien attacks, and there's a humorous doomsday cult interlude. Other sequences depict the story Maya was assigned to draw. At all times, the illustrations tell the story, with techniques like using different colors for different characters' word balloons resulting in kineticism and precision. Influenced by anime, the art is quirky and strange, as with the depiction of dripping nostrils. And there's comedy in Maya's reaction to a cold cup of coffee and the expression on Soma's one-eyed face when he's deposited into a dirty pot.

Soma is an action-packed graphic novel in which an artist and an alien bond in their efforts to save Earth.

PETER DABBENE (January / February 2025)

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