

## “A FINE AND PRIVATE PLACE” (Comic Review)

Written by Svetlana Fedotov

Tuesday, 25 September 2012 14:46

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Cemeteries have always held a mysterious place in the human heart. It is a place where living souls come to mourn those who have passed on, while waiting for the next person to die. Though the cemetery itself is nothing more than headstones and rot, many people have come to avoid them and fear them, while some use them as sanctuaries.



A FINE AND PRIVATE PLACE, based on the novel by THE LAST UNICORN's Peter S. Beagle and adapted into a comic by IDW Publishing and writer Peter Gillis, takes the latter attitude and paints a world of strange and mournful ghosts that never quiet moved on and the man who can see them. Delicately handling issues of death and mourning, the comic moves into places past the grudges of spectral rage and delves into the solemn area that lives inside all of us—a place where all our memories are stored, and only death can ever tear them away.

The story begins with a man, Jonathan Rebeck, who lives by himself in a cemetery. He spends most of his days talking to dead people and hanging out with crows, while camping out at night in an old mausoleum. One day, a new ghost arrives by the name of Michael Morgan, who, like anyone in his situation, is thoroughly confused about where he is and what is he doing in a graveyard. As Jon begins to explain the situation, the comic launches into a tale of love, death and memories. It explores the philosophical side of death, and what life really means to those who now exist beyond the confines of daily existence. Michael and Jon are soon joined by other characters, and a new world begins to open up to them, of others who felt the pain of loss.

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A classic, Gothic-toned tale of ghosts, A FINE AND PRIVATE PLACE mixes the supernatural with the human stubbornness to live to create a story truly worth reading. This is by no means a “scary” comic; there are no blood or monsters, nothing that will jump out from under your bed and eat you. But what it dramatizes is the core of those horrors: the fear of dying and the life, or lack thereof, that comes afterward. Though reminiscent of TV’s GHOST WHISPERER, the comic stands on its own when it comes to addressing these issues. The story is solid and translated beautifully into this medium, while the art, though a bit choppy in parts, faithfully recreates the feel of the writing. Be sure to grab the first issue when it hits stands this week.

