

# Absolute Anime

## Comic Review: Hatter M: The Looking Glass Wars

Saturday, March 4, 2006

If you've never heard of [The Looking Glass Wars](#), then you and I are in the same boat. Apparently it's a novel by Frank Beddor based on the Lewis Carroll novel *Through The Looking Glass*... or, actually I don't know if "based on" is the right term. I don't think calling it an "alternate universe" would be quite right either. It's more like a completely unique story that references characters from the book, and claims that the book was written by Lewis Carroll after he heard the fascinating tale from Alyss, except that Lewis Carroll changed the story to turn it into a children's fairy tale. Confused yet? Well, perhaps this synopsis (a slightly altered version from the [official website](#)) will help to clear it up:

*Alyss Heart, heir to the Wonderland throne, was forced to flee through the Pool of Tears after a bloody palace coup staged by her murderous aunt Redd. Lost and alone in Victorian London, Alyss is befriended by an aspiring author to whom she tells the surreal, violent, heartbreaking story of her young life only to see it published as the nonsensical *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. Alyss had trusted Lewis Carroll to tell the truth so that someone, somewhere would find her and bring her home. But Carroll had gotten it all wrong. He even misspelled her name! If not for royal bodyguard Hatter Madigan's nonstop search to locate the lost princess, Alyss may have become just another society woman sipping tea in a too-tight bodice instead of returning to Wonderland to fight Redd for her rightful place as the Queen of Hearts.*

*Meet the heroic, passionate, monstrous, vengeful denizens of this parallel world as they battle each other with AD-52s and orb*

My Score: ★★★★★



*generators, navigate the Crystal Continuum, bet on jabberwock fights and travel across the Chessboard Desert.*

*The Looking Glass Wars unabashedly challenges our Wonderland assumptions of mad tea parties, sleepy dormice, and a curious little blond girl to reveal an epic battle in the endless war for Imagination.*

Okay, make more sense now? Yeah, definitely sounds like an interesting read. But I'm not here reviewing [The Looking Glass Wars](#), I'm here reviewing the comic book based on the book, called *Hatter M: The Looking Glass Wars*. The comic features Hatter Madigan, who is one seriously badass dude. Besides having knives coming out of places I don't even want to know about, he's also got this top hat which "when hurled by his expert hand, instantly unfolds into a circle of polished blades". Unfortunately, he loses his hat at the beginning of the issue.

Hatter M is on a mission to find Princess Alyss, whom he swore to the Queen that he would protect. But now she is lost in our world, and he is lost as well. I guess that kinda thing is just bound to happen when you step through dimensional portals. Thankfully, Hatter M has a unique ability to see wonder, shown to him as a glowing light. So our career soldier figures that all he must do to find Alyss is find the brightest glow, as surely Alyss has the strongest amount of wonder. But is he even close to the right place? The right time?

So far I've read the first two issues, and man are they cool. They are dark and fierce, and like nothing I've ever read. The first issue finds Hatter M looking for his hat, getting caught by police only to escape from the courtroom as he's about to stand trial, and fighting some madman magician who brings the dead back to life (aka zombies). The second issue finds our expert bladesman locating a girl with a glow, only she gets kidnapped by gypsies before he can get to her, and he ends up having to fight not just the gang that took her, but a ferocious knife-wielding monkey as well. And who are these other people that want the girl? Are they friend or foe?

Besides an intriguing story, this comic also has some really great artwork drawn by Ben Templesmith. It has a unique kind of sketch-quality to it which reminds me of the original *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* comics. I know it's not the same, but that's what it reminds me of, much more than say *Spawn* or any of the McFarlane books. Those books look like they might have been inked by some kind of precision laser or something, whereas *Hatter M* looks more like it was done with watercolors. Definitely different from any comic I've read, but definitely very effective in engaging the reader into their

universe by providing just the right sense of atmosphere.

*Hatter M: The Looking Glass Wars* is bimonthly, which unfortunately means that it comes out every two months, not that it comes out twice a month. Other than that, the only other disappointing thing about his comic is that it's too short, especially for \$3.99 an issue. It's been awhile since I've collected comics, but shouldn't they be closer to \$2.50 or \$3.00 an issue? If you haven't started reading this series yet then I'd recommend waiting until all the issues are out and then buying the graphic novel. Two months between issues to find out what happens is a long time to wait, and you WILL want to know what happens after you start reading. If you have already started in on this saga, then you don't need me to tell you whether you should pick up the next issue or not.

*Hatter M: The Looking Glass Wars* is published by [Desperado Publishing](#), and the second issue, originally slated for March 8, will now hit the streets on March 15.