

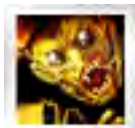


# REVIEW:

# HATTER M #2

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In a grim fantasy world, Hatter M continues his quest to find Princess Alyss and hangs onto his prized hat for dear life!

## The Story Thus Far ...

In Wonderland, Queen Geneviene is dead, killed by her own sister. Hatter M of the Royal Bodyguard had been assigned to guard Princess Alyss for the royal title but failed in his duty. In an attempt to keep his promise, he goes out in search of Alyss who has gone missing. Hatter M has travelled to another mysterious place far away from Wonderland in search of her. However, he still has not found her and is quite disheartened.

## Plot/Story

This second part of a four issue mini-series is a spin-off of Frank Beddor's novel, **The Looking Glass Wars**, which is due out in September this year. Hatter M realises he's no longer in Wonderland. When he sees a glow on the horizon he follows it, as he believes it is the path he needs to take to find Alyss. He comes across a young girl playing the violin before an audience. But before he even has a chance to react, the girl is kidnapped and Hatter M decides to follow the kidnappers. His powers are being drained by being in our world, more specifically in France, and he is no longer quite as sharp as he was in Wonderland. Nevertheless, he continues to battle those who



would get into his way of reaching Alyss using his wonderful hat which turns into blades when thrown at people. And just who are the mysterious pair of ladies who seem to know Hatter M's true origins and appear at very odd intervals?

This is an alternative dark look at the original **Alice in Wonderland**. There are just enough parallels to the original story for you to recognise the source of inspiration for the writer, but it has its own story. Instead of seeing Alice in a different world, we see Alice and the characters of Wonderland enter our world. The center of the story is Alyss whom Hatter M is seeking so desperately. Along the way, Hatter M comes across many obstacles in his quest to find her.

There is a cartographer and a historian working on the issue as well as two writers. The subtle historical references are evident throughout the issue, as well as the references to Lewis Carroll's **Alice in Wonderland**. The pacing is slow to begin with, but builds up momentum as it reaches the end. I'm enjoying the harsh dialogue between the characters; it's so reflective of the moodiness of the comic. There's not much dialogue compared to some other comics, but what dialogue is there is really important to the story.

## Art

Ben Templesmith's art stands out from other mainstream artists. He has his own unique technique where he draws lines and fills in the areas with soft watercolours. He uses a limited amount of color in each scene so you see an object that is clearly meant to stand out. Facial expressions are very nicely detailed showing the emotion of the character well. You get the feel of being in a different world entirely, especially with the sepia and dark blue tones he uses. When there is action, the painting becomes blurred to show motion. The art reminds me of very old photographs that have faded with time. Templesmith has captured the gloom and sombre feel of the place Hatter M is currently in.

The lettering is very similar to the style the comic has taken. It blends in well. The text that is directly translated from French is lettered differently so you can recognise the

difference. The sound effects for what's happening in a scene are painted in the scene itself, rather than being separated and put in a different box. I like this because it doesn't feel as if a narrator is telling you there are sound effects happening.

## Conclusion

A very entertaining read with interesting twists and turns in the comic. Although I was hesitant about the new art style, it eventually grew on me, and the story piqued my interest. I'm looking forward to seeing the next adventures of the mysterious Hatter M and his top hat. As a fan of the original **Alice in Wonderland** books, I had mixed feelings about this new comic because the original still has a place in my heart and I didn't want it to be tainted by a new take on it. However, you should look at this as a unique story separate from the original, and you'll be all set. It might also be a good idea to read **The Looking Glass Wars** if you want to get thoroughly invested in this universe. Not to mention if you like evil monkeys... well that says it all doesn't it?

Frank Beddor, Liz Cavalier – writers  
Ben Templesmith – artist

