



★★★★ Looking Glass Wars: Hatter M

HATTER M  
THE LOOKING GLASS WARS  
PUBLISHER: IMAGE/DESPERADO  
ISSUES #1 AND #2 (2006)  
ART: Ben Templesmith  
STORY: Frank Beddor  
Liz Cavalier  
Format: Glossy, full colour [www.lookingglasswars.com](http://www.lookingglasswars.com)

In a word...remarkable... and just about any other single superlative you can think of could be aptly applied to this left-of-centre take on Lewis Carroll's land beyond the mirror. It's inventive, creative and imaginative in it's look in on the "reality" of Wonderland. The Wonderland that the Lewis Carroll Society wanted repressed or so we're told.

Both of the first two issues are fully painted, water colours would be my guess and populated with scratchy, inked backgrounds and characters.

I have never really been a fan of the 'new look' generation of artists like Ted McKeever, Jae Lee and Kyle Baker but Ben Templesmith's renderings are catchy enough that I soon began looking forward to the very human range of expressions he's able to give us with a minimal of clutter. Unlike many artists that prefer the minimal approach, Templesmith's settings and backgrounds have enough flavour to send one back to 1859.

The story is a clever one and needs a full two issues to get the reader onboard, so do yourself a favour and snag the first two issues and go get a cup of hot chocolate and turn off the tv, you'll need your full concentration to pick up on everything that comes your way. Not many word balloons to help explain the happenings and a lot is left to you to find simply through soaking up the art and the action. You won't find any long needless narratives either, as you're left on your own to gather the information that's left for you to find and piece together.

One of the best things the Image Publishing House could have done is to add to it's stable this kind of solid independant effort and given it a home strong enough that we don't have to wade through another black and white hopeful. This kind of published work truly gives both Image and Desperado credibility in being able to tell grown up stories and still manage to keep the kid in us alive.

No fights in tights here kids, look elsewhere. Mind you I do have one complaint, it's a small one and it has to do with the arm blades the main character Madigan uses. Too reminiscent of a certain Xman if you ask me, Bub. Ah well. As I said, minor. Fans of Gaiman's Sandman and Garth Ennis's run on Hellblazer would appreciate this series. My wife was a huge fan of DC's Vertigo line of books when she was reading comics regularly and this...she liked.

Would I reccomend this to a friend? You bet. Would I buy it for a friend? You bet. Would I buy it for myself? You bet. Would loan it out? Not a chance.

Rating 4 out of 5