

THE X-AXIS

The X-Axis, 19 March 2006

HATTER M #2 - When I reviewed issue #1, I said that this title would probably make more sense to me if I'd read Frank Beddor's original novel - *Looking Glass Wars*, an inversion of *Alice in Wonderland* which claims to be the true story that Lewis Carroll bowdlerised. A review copy of the novel has duly arrived, which I'll cover shortly over at *If Destroyed*. Suffice to say that it's pretty damned fun and, as I expected, it does put this series in better context - partly because it contains some necessary exposition about why Alyss and Hatter M were on the run which wasn't actually in issue #1, and partly because it fleshes out the importance of imagination in Beddor's Wonderland, where it pulls double duty as the equivalent of magic. While none of this is strictly necessary to follow the story, it's also fair to say that the book does a better job of establishing Hatter's character. Anyhow, Hatter is racing around 19th century Europe searching for Alyss, and ending up having other adventures instead. This month, vampires prey on a violin prodigy, and Hatter fights them with his lethal hat. It's all very deadpan, and it features one of my favourite lines of dialogue in ages: "Now go and drink your humble libations and make simple love to your scrubwoman wife." I'm still bemused by the intended audience for this book - the novel doesn't go on sale in America until the autumn, and in any event it's aimed at a younger readership. Weirdly compelling nonetheless, though. **B+**