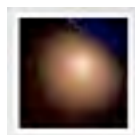


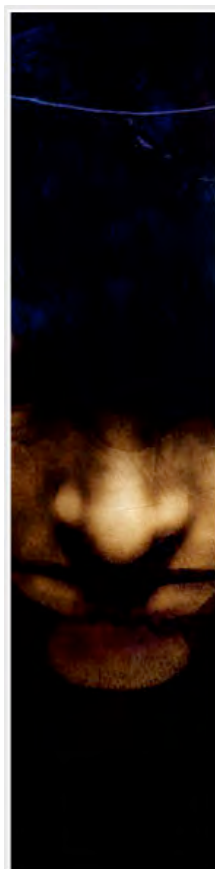


HATTER M #3

Written by Moya Dawson (Cammy)
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Poor Hatter Madigan never gets a break. After run-ins with zombies and malevolent monkeys, he now has to track down an evil baroness. All he wants to do is retrieve Princess Alyss and bring her back to where she belongs, her rightful place on the throne as the Queen of Wonderland.



The Story Thus Far ...

Hatter Madigan has had to forge ahead despite several tough obstacles to find the young Princess Alyss. From the moment they were separated, Hatter M began his search for her and travelled to different places in the hope that he would find her. While following the Glow of Imagination map, he has come across a young girl in Budapest who he suspects is Princess Alyss.

However, as soon as he goes to investigate, she is quickly snatched away in the hands of an evil woman and Hatter M is forced to give chase to the woman in order to rescue the girl. He comes across Magda Pushikin, a journalist who is also searching for the child mainly because she believes the story of the century is about why Hatter M is madly dashing about to save a girl he doesn't know.

Plot/Story

Hatter M confronts Magda Pushikin and demands that she tell him all she knows about the woman who kidnapped the girl. She is reluctant at first, but eventually spills the beans. She points him in the direction of the Baroness Dvonna's retreat. He leaves Magda fuming as she

wanted an exclusive story on Hatter's journey.

The mysterious ladies pop up once again and they intend to stop him from continuing his hunt. This leaves the reader wondering why they seem to know so much about Hatter's perilous adventure? Strangely enough, they only appear in reflections, mirrors and water surfaces. Hatter M learns of Queen Genevieve's death, something he had no idea about, as he was thrust from the Wonderland world into the Pool of Tears (which seems to be a bridge between the two worlds) before she died.

This issue really takes off in terms of pacing. It's much easier to follow what's happening, as the story has become clearer. The flashback sequences, where the witches are examining Hatter Madigan's last time with the Princess Alyss before they were separated, really explain in-depth the full nature of Hatter M's quest.

The flashbacks also clear up exactly what happened to the Queen of Wonderland, who was murdered by her own sister and explain Hatter M's fear of cats.

The magical realm of **Hatter M** has me enthralled as it's science fiction with a fantasy edge to it. There are vast possibilities for him to explore as our world is a large one indeed. He jumps from place to place and the travels test Hatter's limits of endurance. Hatter M seems to be bordering on the obsessive in this particular task that he has set himself. He makes an interesting and unique character with his peculiarities and, as he's the main character, what we do see of his personality makes up for the fact that there are no other main characters alongside him. His quest is his and his alone.

However, unless you are familiar with the Wonderland concepts that Frank Beddor has formulated for the purpose of his own novel, **The Looking Glass Wars**, the story is not easy to follow. This story is a far cry from the story that I remember so fondly, and this account is what Frank Beddor firmly believes to be the real story behind the classic one. Don't expect a darker version of **Alice in Wonderland**; this is a completely different story altogether that is only loosely based on the original work.

There are some parallels to the source material, such as Hatter Madigan having a similar name to the Mad Hatter, a cat that transforms like the Chesire Cat, and there are the Queen and King of Hearts. However, they are just slight references and the story is only related through those parallels.

Art

This issue was delayed for some time, but I see no decrease in quality so the wait was well worth it. I feel that Ben Templesmith has a real grasp on the characters and it really shows in this issue with his fantastic and unique style of artwork.

The art has a gritty and dream-like quality to it and the colors as suited to the story. I love the use of the dark colors in our world, and the way the Glow is highlighted to

stand out so it's easy to follow. He did a particularly ingenious job of drawing a scene that reflected into Hatter's past that seemed all distorted on one page, as if it was a distant memory. It really stood out for me.

Templesmith's art style reminds me a little of a film in the way it is presented on paper, with smooth scene transitions and stunning visuals. His artistic technique is also perfect for this title as he has a knack for using colors effectively to show brightness, and in this case, a Glow much like an aura that radiates from certain individuals that possess a high level of imagination.

Conclusion

While tinkering with the well-known **Alice in Wonderland** story is not an entirely unique idea, it still took a great deal of creativity on the author's part to re-invent the story and make it seem possible that his version is the real story behind the classic. Frank Beddor wanted to further expand the story of Hatter Madigan, who is only briefly mentioned in his book, and he chose to do it in a visual medium. The **Looking Glass Wars** universe is an immensely large one with Hatter M's investigation only covering a limited part of the overall story. He has also included historical references in the story, indicating that Hatter M has indeed travelled to our world while continuing his pursuit for Alyss.

The mini-series is set between the first and second **Looking Glass Wars** novels. There's even a special issue #2.5 available for download from the **Looking Glass Wars** Web site that answers readers' questions about the **Hatter M** comic.



Frank Beddor, Julie Cavalier – writers
Ben Templesmith – artist