



4.19.2006

## Your Door Mouse is a Wonderland

Thanks to my friends over at Comic Geek speak, I've come across a new comic worth talking about. When I first read about *Hatter M* in Previews, I made a mental note of the comic, but the cover image didn't grab me as something I had to read. The guys at CGS interviewed writer/creator Frank Beddor (a movie producer and ex-pro skier) about his first attempt at graphic fiction, and I discovered that he had crafted a thoughtful and interesting world that deserved more attention.

*Hatter M* is an extension of the Beddor's novel series *The Looking Glass War*, which depicts an alternative-reality Wonderland where Alyss is a princess who escapes to London during the late 1800s. Hatter Madigan is Alyss's bodyguard. The comic depicts his journey, beginning in Paris, to find Alyss. I believe the book, which isn't available stateside till this fall, ends with a 20-year-old Alyss returning to Wonderland to regain the crown from her evil Aunt Red.

Ben Templesmith handles the artwork for the Image-published serial, which seems to be on a bimonthly schedule, often ending up slightly delayed, probably due to the amount of work that Templesmith is currently involved with. Those familiar with his style shouldn't expect much new here. Foggy, watercolored atmospheres replace recognizable backgrounds in most cells. His hazy style makes more sense on *30 Days, Fell*, and *Silent Hill*. While his character work is as strong as ever, I can't help wanting more for Beddor's detailed world.

The first issue of *Hatter M* is rather airy, sometimes going almost whole pages without text. This may seem appropriate, but the technique rarely seems to work right with comics, especially when executed by such a stylized artist. Unlike the dark realities that Templesmith often depicts, *Hatter M* has a sense of humor and wonder, featuring "a battle to the death" with kites and an strangely enthusiastic and open-minded Jules Verne, who seems a little odd at first, but makes sense as a sort of aloof "superhero." I look forward to seeing more of him in the series.

As for Hatter Madigan himself, he's basically the typical strong-minded, short-on-words action hero. Only this action hero has a magic hat and lots of blades. The reader immediately gets the sense of a shiny knight questing for his endangered princess. I can hardly imagine any Alice/Alyss as weak, with the exception of the wide-eyed Disney version. As a side note, Beddor's Alyss eventually inspires Louis Carroll's original books.

Let your head spin.

Read *Hatter M* #1 at [IGN](#)

I didn't forget the music. Download "Alice" by Tom Waits from [insound](#), and/or buy the album.  
POSTED BY JARRET L GREEN AT 3:54:00 PM