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Alex Ness on Hatter M

I apologize for my absence. What the world pours stuff upon me that I cannot avoid I tend to shut down. My mother is in poor health, my friend died of lung and brain cancer, I learned that two projects that were promised by the publisher to come out in July were now not coming out at all. I have been sick with diverticulitis, and all my work has been creatively aimed as it is at least, a release of emotions.

People asked me, upon reading my latest works why I've begun to be or am negative or pessimistic about comic books. Here is a quick answer, one that deserves being explained but not beaten to death. I've been depressed. Over many things, but, amongst them, comics. I have tried to work in comics, and, what I write and am interested in, is not the same as the interests of publishers, and perhaps the readers of comics. I've had works get through some hoops, but, frankly, they aren't like anything most publishers have seen or publish, and with the market being in such woes, they aren't likely to be published. I am not bitter, mind you, I think being published would be nice but isn't my end all goal in life, plus I've been published. So I am not trying to be negative but, I think I am trying to understand the market, and system and the readers, just for my own peace of mind.

I plan to cover a number of books in review, which won't be as painfully wrought. Also there will be some interviews to focus on talents in the world of comics. Any publishers are welcome to send product for review, but I am trying to aim at first two volumes of a collected series. And perhaps, if after doing that there are more books in the series and a publisher sends them sure, I will consider them too.

## REVIEWS

Hatter M: The Looking Glass Wars Volume 1  
by Frank Beddor, Liz Cavalier, and Ben Templesmith

Hatter M: Mad With Wonder Volume 2  
by Frank Beddor, Liz Cavalier, and Sami Makkonen



This series is part of a broader story told in Frank Beddor's The Looking Glass Wars books. The world considered is on the surface the world of Alice in Wonderland, of Lewis Carroll, but Beddor has argued/discussed the fact that Lewis Carroll was mistaken, and told a story wrongly about a person, named Alice as a fantasy, and surreal even nonsensical place called Wonderland. Beddor suggests that Wonderland is real, that Alyss, spelled thusly escaped to this world, told her story, and Carroll tried to tell it, but presented it as fiction when in fact, it was an oral history. However that all plays out, Hatter M follows the story of Alyss, by extension but primarily through the eyes of her bodyguard. Following a coup d'etat Alyss, Queen of Wonderland is chased into exile with her bodyguard Hatter Madigan. He is equipped for battle, with a suit of weaponry, and expertise in combat. And the two become separated, while escaping from the evil new Queen's rage.

In Volume One Hatter Madigan arrives on our historic Earth separated Alyss Heart, crown princess of Wonderland. Travels through the historic past lead him to France, as part of a 13 year exile and journey, Hatter Madigan tries desperately to find and protect Alyss. His hat takes a life of its own through out. The reader learns that the only hope we see, is the "white imagination" that powers Wonderland is a clue to how to help find Alyss, in the largely dark and violent world of the 19th century. Volume Two, takes Hatter M to the American Civil war, and the world in chaos from the conflict. Deeply tragic, and without ability to utilize his best warrior's instinct, Hatter M is soon driven to madness, and his namesake, the mad hatter becomes reality.

Throughout the first book you marvel at the ability of Ben Templesmith, and you wonder how much of the wonder and beauty, however dark, is all the majesty of his artistic talent and genius. The story, however important as an ancillary work to the Looking Glass Wars, doesn't take a lot of form until the near end of book one. With book two and artist Sami Makkonen you can see more of Beddor's story, and the art, while different, is nonetheless still brilliant. And I have to say, as someone who has read the book series that this is a chapter of, the story is both important and well done.

As any creative work must succeed upon its own merits, do these two books entertain and offer a complete work to enjoy? That is, could a person unfamiliar with the book series enjoy these? Yes, but admittedly, I think less so. However, the books are really enjoyable, so go read them too.

LEARN MORE AT:

The Looking Glass Wars homepage, Another view of the Looking Glass world, Watch Frank Beddor discuss Alice/AlyssMy review of the books the series is drawn from