



## Graphic Novel Review: Hatter M, Volume 2

Submitted by brennan on Mon, 11/02/2009 - 22:36



**Hatter M, Volume 2: Mad With Wonder**, as the title suggests, is the 2<sup>nd</sup> part of Frank Beddor's story of Hatter Madigan, royal bodyguard of the missing Princess Alyss, the only hope for his beloved Wonderland. Hatter, separated from his princess during their escape through the Pool of Tears, has been searching all of Europe for Alyss, chasing down leads, following the Glow, and encountering a full cast of exotic and often demented characters along the way.

This second installment features a change in the creative team, with Sami Makkonen taking over Ben Templesmith's role as illustrator. In keeping with my typical behavior of not reading comics cover to cover, I first cracked open this handsome hardbound graphic novel and, after soaking in the menacing (*and familiar...I had previously read the Looking Glass Wars novel*) figure on the cover bristling with both blades and potential violence, I skipped around through the length, sampling the art and style of the frames. I immediately remarked on the similarities to Templesmith's art. Following that I delved into the story, skipping over the introduction. Later to my chagrin I discovered,

upon reading said introduction, the matter of the change in artists. Suddenly all was clear. Amazing what one can learn after taking the time to read info provided by the author.

On the art itself, is infinitely appropriate for the subject story: dark and moody. In the words of the Doors, "people are strange, when you're a stranger". Hatter Madigan is certainly a stranger in Victorian England and post-colonial America, and the denizens he encounters are most certainly strange. Characters are often rather ugly, even mal-proportioned, but this merely heightens the sense of bizarre "like" yet "not like" the protagonist must feel as he moves through his encounters. Makkonen's use of a muted color palate and stark surroundings keep the reader's attention fixed on the most important features, the characters.

The narrative, while subtle, is easy enough to follow, and keeps pace with the frame sequence of the art, speeding up in moments of action as needed and slowly appreciably to lay down storyboard.

**Mad With Wonder** transitions almost seamlessly from novel to graphic novel, making me aware I need to pick up a copy of Volume 1 of *Hatter M*. Beddor's prose blends with Makkonen's art to tell a compelling tale of the relentless bodyguard's search for his princess.

ComicsOnline gives **Hatter M, Volume 2: Mad With Wonder** 5 out of 5 whirling blades of Wonder land forged steel.

