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## GOOD COMICS FOR KIDS

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### Hatter M Volume 2: Mad with Wonder

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*Royal Bodyguard Hatter Madigan's mad search to find Alyss continues. In Volume 2, MAD WITH WONDER, Hatter follows the low from London to the battlefields of America's Civil War in search of the Princess who must some day be Queen. The America that Hatter encounters is a sprawling, wounded, boiling landscape of innocence and energy run amok. The war is tearing the country apart and yet Hatter must maintain his sanity in this maelstrom of holy rollers, child healers, prophetic snake handlers, deranged outlaws, passionate southern belles and rational men. As Hatter searches he learns he is no the only Wonderland presence that has found its way to the Promised Land. Queen Redd's Black Imagination is fueling the Civil War and threatening our world with her evil.*



*"In a mad world, only the mad are sane." – Akira Kurosawa*

*Hatter M Volume 2: Mad with*

*Wonder* Authors: Frank Beddor and Liz Cavalier Artist: Sami Makkonen Genre: Action/Adventure Rating: 15+ Price: US\$24.99

This second volume in the *Hatter M* series continues everything that the first did right. Lush, yet gritty, artwork packs the pages, without ever seeming crowded. The plot jets along at a brisk pace, making great use of a wonderful and accurate historical setting. The brief glimpse into Madigan's past is also enlightening, and adds flesh to a spooky subplot. Overall,

the book works well as a continuation of Hatter M's search for his royal charge, and proves an excellent read on its own.

Did I mention that the art is fantastic? The art is fantastic. I liked it even better in this volume, having been slightly surprised and taken aback by its intensity in the first volume (this is possibly due to the change in artist) Each character, though drawn in the same scratchy style, has its own feel and design, making the task of differentiating between a fairly large cast of characters extremely easy. The use of light in landscapes and backgrounds turns every page into a joy to look at, as opposed to a dark and dismal display of Madigan's suffering and searching.

The plot, as always, is a tiny bit formulaic, but never falls into a rut. Hatter M is on the search for Alyss, true heir to the throne of Wonderland, and possessor of an unimaginable control over "White Imagination". She and Hatter M, her mother's royal bodyguard, were displaced from the kingdom by the traitorous Redd, who steals the throne for her own. Madigan and Alyss are separated during their fall to Earth. The regular *Looking Glass Wars* novels follow Alyss in her journey to return to her homeland. The *Hatter M* graphic novels follow, as suggested by the title, Hatter M. In this volume, the author works in a bit of American Civil War mythos, and showcases a bit of the depravity associated with insane asylums in that era. We even get a little peek into Madigan's past, providing a bit of validity to his rationale.

This is not your average Alice in Wonderland story. Frank Beddor, teamed up with Liz Cavalier and Sami Makkonen, created a twisted tale that can be enjoyed by teens who read Lewis Carroll's Alice stories as a child, or even by teens that don't really enjoy reading. I would not recommend it to anyone younger than about 14 or 15, seeing as how Hatter M encounters some unsavory chaps, and some thematic material is touched upon. However, if you can handle some violence and distasteful moments, *Hatter M: Mad with Wonder* is not to be missed.

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