



Hatter M

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Frank Beddor reinvents Lewis Carroll's classic Wonderland as a darker, more dangerous world in **Hatter M: The Looking Glass Wars**

Review by John C. Snider © 2009

You can be excused if you've never heard of Frank Beddor: he's a former professional skier turned Hollywood player, probably best known as the producer of Ben Stiller's hit comedy [There's Something About Mary](#). But for the last five years or so, Beddor has spent his time reinventing Lewis Carroll's classic [Wonderland](#) adventures. The keystones of Beddor's dark fantasy are the books of the trilogy [The Looking Glass Wars](#), [Seeing Redd](#) and [ArchEnemy](#), in which Princess Alyss Heart flees her murderous Aunt Redd, hiding in Victorian England under the assumed name of Alice Liddell. During her flight from Wonderland, Alyss is separated from Hatter Madigan, a royal bodyguard assigned to look after her.

There are many facets to Beddor's franchise, including a card game, a CD of music inspired by the books, and a feature film reportedly in the works.

But the story of Hatter Madigan, lost in our 19th century and desperately seeking Alyss, is reserved for a comic book miniseries called Hatter M, released by Automatic Pictures Publishing. Madigan is a sort of steampunk samurai, a trenchcoated master of blades, armed with a top hat that makes Oddjob's bowler look like a Frisbee. Madigan follows the "glow," a tell-tale sign of the magical Imagination the Princess possesses—but for various reasons her whereabouts always elude him.



Madigan searches the great cities of the late 1800s: London, Paris, Budapest—even New Orleans. He fights crazed killer monkeys, vampires who feed on Imagination, and a grinning feline assassin with nine lives called "the Cat." He even finds himself in the American South during the height of the Civil War, committed, appropriately enough, to a madhouse.

So far two graphic novels (out of a planned four) have been released: [Hatter M: The Looking Glass Wars](#) and [Hatter M: Mad with Wonder](#). Beddor wrote both with an assist from Liz Cavalier. Artwork on the first volume is by Australian Ben Templesmith ([30 Days of Night](#)); the second volume is drawn by Finland's Sami Makkonen. Each artist brings a distinctive look to his respective volume, but what they share in common is a dynamic, visceral, impressionistic sensibility; part sketch and part watercolor, with some computer enhancement.

Those unfamiliar with [The Looking Glass Wars](#) will find their curiosity piqued by the Hatter M comics—they'll want to "follow the glow" into the more detailed world of the novel trilogy. A new, darker, more dangerous Wonderland awaits.

Hatter M: The Looking Glass Wars is available at [Amazon.com](#) and [Amazon.co.uk](#).

Hatter M: Mad with Wonder is available at [Amazon.com](#) and [Amazon.co.uk](#).

Links of Interest: [The Looking Glass Wars Official Website](#)