



# Not your average tea party

## 'Hatter M' makes over Carroll's 'Wonderland'

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We know the Mad Hatter from "Alice in Wonderland" was a bit, well, insane. But what if he was really, really good with a knife, had a killer wit that was almost as sharp, and could make all the girls go, "Ooh la la!"

The Mad Hatter - or, excuse me, Hatter Madigan - in Frank Beddor's literary reimagining of Lewis Carroll's fairy-tale saga, "The Looking Glass Wars," isn't the squat little dude you remember from the old Disney cartoon. Hatter is tall, strapping, a bit trigger-happy and well-deserving of his own comic-book spinoff, the new Desperado/Image Comics series "Hatter M."

Like "Wicked" and other alternate versions of children's tales, "The Looking Glass Wars" is both intriguing and preposterous. The "story" goes that instead of writing "Alice" from his own imagination, Carroll found young Alyss Heart, the princess of Wonderland, when she escaped to our world (maybe she fell up a rabbit hole?) in an attempt to escape Redd, the evil Queen of Hearts who killed her parents. Alyss tells him of her adventures as a civil war breaks out in Wonderland and of



Wonderland resident Hatter Madigan gets transported to 19th-century France in "Hatter M," a comic-book spinoff of Frank Beddor's "The Looking Glass Wars." *Image Comics artwork*

the strange characters she knows - for example, the Cheshire Cat is an assassin and Hatter Madigan is her loyal royal bodyguard. And of course, once the Lewis Carroll Society hears of this conspiracy theory, it does its best to keep this new plot twist on the down-low.

Got all that? Let's move on to the good stuff.

Drawn exquisitely by Ben Templesmith ("30 Days of Night"), "Hatter M" fills in the blanks of what happened to Hatter as he travels to this world through a rain puddle in search of Alice and ends up in Paris circa 1859. And before you can scream, "Off with her head!" the well-dressed, fish-way-out-of-water guy has already been deemed "Le Monstre" when he freaks everybody out with his blades. He can't find his hat, though, which is important since - when thrown - it turns into a lethal combination of boomerang and Swiss Army knife. (And you thought Oddjob had the most dangerous headwear.)

Beddor's humor is readily apparent throughout the book as Hatter attacks innocent kites rather maliciously; goes to a hat shop ("An armory!" he thinks) and takes a few for a test throw; and gets rounded up by police, brought to court rolled up in a carpet and escapes the building as onlookers shout, "It's a pigeon! It's a dirigible! It's Le Monstre!!"

Hatter does encounter the antagonist with his secret weapon, a moustache-twirling type who conjures man-eating skeletons, and makes off with his possession as the evildoer promises, "I will have that hat!"

And comic readers are lucky to have this book, as well as great proof that, at least in this case, the hat does indeed make the man.

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## 'HATTER M: THE LOOKING GLASS WARS'

- Publisher: Desperado/Image Comics
- Creators: Frank Beddor and Liz Cavalier (story), Ben Templesmith (art)
- Price: \$3.99
- Recommended if you like: "V for Vendetta," "Fables" and fairy-tale conspiracy theories