

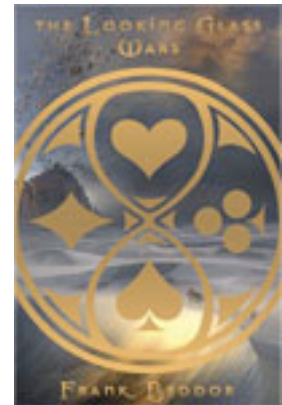


Epic Fantasy News: Frank Beddor Interview

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Not too long ago we wrote about Frank Beddor's *The Looking Glass Wars*, a true story of behind "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland". Frank has kindly agreed to answer few questions about his career, his books and plans for the future.



So if you're a fan of *The Looking Glass Wars* and would like to find out more how it came to be, read on!

Fantasy Fan: Frank, can you tell us how does one go from ski champion, stuntman, actor and successful producer to a writer? What made you jump from one occupation to another?

It all began when I was suddenly, shockingly, irrevocably confronted with the TRUTH...

A number of years ago I was in London for the European premiere of *THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT MARY*. I went to the British Museum and saw an exhibit of ancient cards. For instance, Napoleon hired artists to hand paint depictions of his many victories in battle. But what caught my attention, at the very end of the exhibit, was an incomplete deck of cards illuminated by an unusual glow, almost as though they were alive. I was intrigued by the exhibit and captivated by the images on the cards. This was a very, very different version of Wonderland.

For the remainder of my trip I was preoccupied with the images and told several friends, one of whom suggested I meet with an antiques dealer he knew who specialized in collecting all sorts of ancient playing cards.

The next morning, on the way to the airport, I stopped at the dealer's shop. When I told him about the unusual exhibit, he revealed that he in fact owned the cards

missing from the deck. I was stunned. He brought out this old, worn leather box filled with cards and told me the story as he flipped one card over at a time, revealing the saga of THE LOOKING GLASS WARS. It was a darker Alyss from a darker world and I knew I was meant to tell the story. Once I discovered the truth behind the deck of playing cards it soon became clear that Lewis Carroll had changed everything.

I began putting all the pieces together and weaving the revelations of just how different the real Wonderland and its inhabitants were compared to the children's lit version the world had known and accepted for nearly 150 years. Carroll's choices in how he changed Alyss's story were so fascinating (he even changed her name!) - the monsters and heroes of her lost world became these cheery reinventions. It was such a betrayal on Carroll's part and was in fact, the reason for the rift that eventually occurred between the writer and his muse. For instance - the characters we know as the White Rabbit, the Red Queen, the Cheshire Cat and of course, the Mad Hatter all appear in The Looking Glass Wars as they were intended to by Alyss when she told Carroll her harrowing tale.

The White Rabbit was in fact Bibwit Harte, the six foot tall albino royal tutor for all Wonderland Queens (Carroll had anagrammed his name to create the White Rabbit), while the Red Queen was in truth Alyss's Aunt Redd, the revenge maddened usurper to the throne ably assisted by her top assassin, The Cat, a man size feline who morphs from adorable kitten to giant mutant feline when called upon to kill.

So you see, there was a lot of truth to be uncovered and you might say, I felt the CALLING!

FF: Was writing your childhood dream or was it another thing that you tried and decided that you love it?

I always loved stories and I suppose the childhood dream was to somehow tell stories, which is why I went into acting and then into producing. I was helping to tell stories but ultimately it wasn't what I really wanted to do. When I started writing I suppose you could say it was a retroactive childhood dream that I had finally woken up to.

FF: Why Wonderland? Were you not tempted to create your own world, something no one could call a spin-off?

Inspiration is a big part, if not the primary part, of creation. I was inspired to

explore and share this unknown Wonderland I discovered via the cards at the British Museum. Writing is a long, arduous process and if you lack inspiration there isn't much else that will keep you going. The fact I was inspired is the only reason I was able to write this series. It wasn't a personal choice of venue or a desire to avoid dismissive labeling such as 'spin off'. You really can't stop the process and worry about ramifications or egoistic outcomes. If you want to create I believe you have to honor the process and flow with what comes to the best of your ability.

FF: When you first thought about writing The Looking Glass Wars did you think about how it will be received by admirers of Lewis Carroll? Did you plan for your novels to be a tribute to Alice or was there something else behind it?

No and No. I was not concerned about admirers of Lewis Carroll or his creation 'Alice'. My only concern was to take this alternate version of what we had all grown up reading as far as I could. Many of the most ardent fans of LGW are also big fans of Lewis Carroll's 'Alice'. My version does not stop anyone from reading or loving what Lewis Carroll wrote. It simply offers MORE Wonderland to explore and ponder and enjoy. I would have to answer my only plan for my novels was to expand what people thought they knew about a little girl named Alice and Wonderland.

FF: It started off as one book, but now you have a trilogy, graphic novels, card game and movie in making. How did it all happen? Was it all your idea, or do you have an army of agents working day and night on promoting your work?

None of this happened over night by an agent waving a magic wand. I started writing 10 years ago and have been assisted by many, many people in building, expanding and sharing Alyss' story. I often talk about the artists I have engaged to help me visualize characters and environments. Doug Chiang, Vance Kovacs, Chris Appelhans, Catia Chien, Sami Makkonen, Tai Young Choi among many others. Their efforts are integral to so many of the visual aspects of the series, from book covers to posters to playing cards. The graphic novels are co-written with Liz Cavalier who has also worked with me at Automatic Pictures since the beginning of LGW to help coordinate the ever-expanding Wonderland mythos. Artist Ben Templesmith illustrated Volume 1 of the Hatter M graphic novel and was a huge boost to introducing the series to comic book fans. The list of names goes on and on and I don't want to even attempt to name everyone since it's impossible to do so. To wrap this question up I'll just have to say it has taken a village of talented, motivated and hardworking people to raise the Looking Glass Wars.

FF: What can you tell us about the movie? Are you excited about it? How does it feel knowing both worlds, do you think a movie can do justice to the story you told on paper?

I am very excited to report the film is moving forward. I have partnered with Chuck Roven who produced 'Dark Knight' to bring Looking Glass Wars to the big screen. I have always felt the LGW had profound cinematic scope and quality. Film is my first 'creative language' and the one I rely on to envision, communicate and entertain. I think that in part, this has been why the story and characters have caught the imagination of the reading public. It is easy to SEE these bigger than life characters, Alyss, Dodge, Redd, Hatter Madigan, Homburg Molly, on a big screen and I know I will do everything I can do to make sure the movie does justice to their story.

FF: The Looking Glass Wars trilogy is finished. What now?

The Hatter M series continues with Volume 2 MAD WITH WONDER available now. I plan to complete a total of 5 Hatter M geo-graphic novels to document his 13 years searching our world for Alyss. I'm not sure if you are familiar with the Hatter M Institute for Paranormal Travel, but even as we speak this group of radical cartographers and astral historians are working non-stop to piece together the arc of Hatter's travels. Through the Institute's work and communiqués from readers around the world new evidence of Wonderland's existence and effect on our world continues to mount so you never really know where the portals will take you.

Since the beginning of this journey I have repeatedly uncovered lost and hidden evidence of Wonderland. It seems the more I write the more I discover which naturally leads to additional material to be written. Through a series of fortunate discoveries I released Princess Alyss of Wonderland, which features the lost art and journals of Princess Alyss Heart while she was exiled here in our world. In turn, the information uncovered in these journals opened several fascinating pathways, which lead me to deduce Alyss was not the only princess to have been exiled; in fact, evidence suggests that there is actually a league of exiled princesses spread across our world right NOW.

Thank you for the interview Frank!

Find out more about The Looking Glass Wars on the website
www.LookingGlassWars.com.