

Interview: Frank Beddor, author/film producer

## Pages filled with Wonder(land)

By Crystal Patriache / Star correspondent Posted: December 6, 2009



There's something about Frank Beddor.

Maybe it's his easy Midwestern charm and athleticism; he's a former world-champion freestyle skier from Minnesota. Maybe it's his success in producing the popular films "There's Something About Mary" and "Wicked."

Maybe it's the fact that as founder of Automatic Pictures and author of "The Looking Glass Wars" trilogy, aimed at young adults, Beddor has created a fascinating, fresh and ultra entertaining Alice in Wonderland-esque world.

Readers of all ages, even the most reluctant ones, will be sucked down Beddor's rabbit hole.

"The Looking Glass Wars," which debuted in the U.K. in 2004, suggests Lewis Carroll misrepresented the story of 7-year-old Alyss Heart, betraying the exiled princess by turning her painful history into a mere fairy tale.

Beddor's story is a captivating tale of danger,

family treachery, thwarted love and the power of imagination.

"The books follow Alyss, from the time she's 7 years old to 11 and then 20 and getting married," he said.

Beddor just released "Arch Enemy," the final installment in the trilogy. He used input from fans and created a series of graphic novellas, "Hatter M," depicting the journey of Hatter Madigan, Alyss' bodyguard.

Reluctant readers can also immerse themselves through a card game and an online multiplayer role-playing video game. A film is in development.

Beddor said the "Looking Glass Wars" world he created began with a deck of cards.

"I was at the world premiere of 'There's Something About Mary' in London and took a day off to go to the British Museum," he said. "There was this incomplete deck of cards with hand-painted images that reminded me of Lewis Carroll's fairy tale, but they were dark and Goth and I was so intrigued.

"I wanted to create a visual sense of storytelling and cliffhanger endings, so it would engage kids with the need to turn the page," Beddor added.

With the final book in the trilogy released, Beddor said he feels both satisfaction and apprehension.

"In one sense, there's tremendous relief. I wanted to deliver to readers. . . . The three books can stand on their own two feet."

On the other hand, Beddor added, it's been part of his DNA for many years.

"It's kind of like the empty-nest syndrome," he said. "I got (Alyss) through school and she's grown up. She's got a queendom to run and I hope it all goes well."