

FRANK BEDDOR INTERVIEW

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**AUTHOR OF THE
LOOKING GLASS WARS
TRILOGY AND HATTER
M GRAPHIC NOVELS.**

Frank Beddor is a guy that has dipped his foot in a little bit of everything. If you do a search for him, you might think you're actually seeing the biography of multiple people. He really has been a world champion freestyle skier and yes, he did produce major motion pictures like *There's Something About Mary*. Most recently, he's made it to the New York Times Best Seller list with *The Looking Glass Wars*. The fact that he's made a success of himself in so many different outlets is enough to make you want to get to know the man a little bit better.

Being able to hear firsthand all about his adventures and how he came about working on his best seller was eye opening and very interesting. Read on to find out about the steps he took and what the future holds for his career.

What made you make the jump from movie production into writing and, eventually, graphic novels?

I found a story I wanted to tell. At the same time I wanted to be a creator and not just a facilitator for other people's creative visions which is what I did as a producer. So I started to create my own worlds and characters and these became *The Looking Glass Wars* trilogy and *Hatter M* graphic novels.

I've read that you hated the works of Lewis Carroll. What made you decide to eventually work with them?



My change of heart regarding Lewis Carroll's work began when I visited the British Museum during a business trip to London about 10 years ago. Down one rather deserted corridor I 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 antiquities 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 be 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 this is when I became passionate about telling the story of Alyss of Wonderland.

How do you feel about the *Alice in Wonderland* movie recently released?

Without having seen the movie...the incidental similarities are that she's the same age as my lead character, she's going to marry a man she is not in love with, she returns to Wonderland not remembering that, in my case, she's from there or in Tim Burton's case that she had been there at an earlier time. She's destined to banish the Red Queen, in my case Her Imperial Viciousness aka her aunt Queen Redd. And it takes place in Wonderland with lots of big mushrooms. What's different in my story is that Alyss did not go to Wonderland...she was born in Wonderland and Lewis Carroll chose to change her harrowing adventure into a whimsical, nonsensical fairytale. As I said, I haven't seen the film but my sense is that Burton was dealing with the issue that everyone has had with the book - Lewis Carroll's story is very episodic with a passive protagonist which does not make for big cinematic films so he had to find a way to make the book into a movie.

What is the biggest point that you want to come across in the work that you do, in order to make it different from other types

of Alice in Wonderland pieces?

Everyone has a powerful Imagination. Not just Queens. I would hope that readers of my books see this as the primary point of the series and run wild with it.

Rumor has it there is a potential movie in the works. How do you think The Looking Glass Wars will translate to the big screen?

Even if I started production today it would be 3-4 years before the *Looking Glass Wars* came to the big screen and time alone would give enough distance between Tim's interpretation and my mythos. However, having said that, I have the option of starting with the *Looking Glass Wars* or with my *Hatter M* graphic novel series. Hatter's 13 year quest in our world to find the lost princess is a natural entry point because he is such a cool action hero figure. Right now I have scripts for both the *Looking Glass Wars* and the *Hatter* film and am in discussions with some high profile directors.

Do you have any actors that stand out in your head as "perfect" for a certain character?

Well I'm going to turn this over to some of LGW's ardent fans who have been writing in with their opinions...

Nicole Kidman, Angelina Jolie or Tilda Swinton as Her Imperial Viciousness Queen Redd; Emily Mortimer, Cate Blanchett as Queen Genevieve; Andy Serkis (aka Golum!) as The Cat; Joe Anderson as Dodge; Clive Owen, Robert Downey Jr. as Hatter Madigan; Mila Kunis as Homburg Molly. And then there is Alyss...though I have had suggestions for actresses I am holding this one back and not putting out any preconceptions because my plan is to do a search for an unknown to star as Alyss.

I hear that you visit a lot of schools regularly. How did this come about?

Initially, librarians and teachers and students I met at the comic cons around the country brought a lot of enthusiasm for my books back to school. So it was sort of launched that way. Also I visited schools on my book tours and the typical visit evolved from there to the point that I do these visits whether or not I am on a book tour.

What would you tell someone that's looking to make a career out of creative writing?

Make sure you enjoy the actual process of writing more than the reward of being published and paid and you will be certain of finding some joy in life.

If anyone would like more info, they can contact me at <http://facebook.com/frankbeddor> and <http://twitter.com/frankbeddor> or visit <http://www.lookingglasswars.com>.

Beddor has made it clear in his personal accomplishments that he is definitely someone to be taken seriously. He has succeeded in many different things, and it will be incredible to see how he uses his many skills to take his books further (and hopefully to the big screen).