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Frank Beddor is a jack of all trades - except he's up there with the A-listers when it comes to Hollywood notoriety. An acclaimed film mogul in his own right, Frank produced the hit gross-out movie *Something About Mary* and he was previously a world champion skier and stunt man! He claims he always wanted to write a book inspired by Lewis Carroll's classic fairytale, *Alice in Wonderland*, because as a child he found the story too insipid and girly. His version, called *The Looking Glass Wars*, is a full-on tale of treachery and ferocious ambition, complete with weapon-wielding heroes and villains. Alyss, the protagonist is one sassy chick and she wouldn't be caught dead in a pinafore and pigtails like Alice from the original story. We caught up with Frank for a chat, who lives and works in LA.



You have worked as an actor and you trained as a freestyle skier, is there anything you can't do or anything you would hate to do?

FB: Sing. All pleasure was ruthlessly drained from this simple human activity by the command performances for my grandparents at Christmas. Each family (parents and children) was expected to perform separately and our family was inevitably the worst. Ill-prepared and tone deaf. We were much better at sports.

I hear that *The Looking Glass Wars* is to be made into a movie. Who would you cast as Alyss?

FB: We will launch a worldwide search for Alyss. Not since Scarlett O'Hara was cast in "Gone with the Wind".

the Wind" will there be such an exhaustive event. There is a very high probability the actress cast will be English so to all those interested I suggest you buy the book and begin preparing now.

Do you think that classic 'fairytales' (CS Lewis's Chronicles of Narnia for example and Lewis Carroll's Alice in Wonderland) are too old fashioned for today's youth?

FB: Truthfully I think these books bore the youth of today. We live in a much smaller world where kids experience entertainment at an accelerated pace. Video games, cell phones, the Internet, and movies. It's a visual world that did not exist during C.S. Lewis and Jane Austen's era. However, for the readers of today's youth, the true readers gravitate towards quality, density and richness in prose whether they read William Gibson, William Shakespeare or both. Great writing does not go out of style.



Your book is very much about war and retribution, how do you feel about teenagers watching slasher movies and playing violent computer games? Is literature more acceptable means of communicating this?

FB: Fact: Slasher movies and violent computer games reflect our world and how teenagers relate to it via entertainment. Teenagers are very present - they are not standing back and judging like adults do. Is this good for me? Is this bad for me? They just connect to the present energy cosmos and plug in - this is what IS. So, in terms of games/movies, they are experiencing their 'now'. It's all part of their world just like hotrods and soda fountains defined the 1950's. You cannot deny them their present. There will always be the few who cannot differentiate between fantasy on screen and reality. Movies, games, the Internet, and literature are all equally 'acceptable' as long as they are trying to do something more with violence than simply exploiting it.

Did you encounter much criticism about your book on this side of the pond? Lewis Carroll is after all one of Britain's best-loved authors...

FB: I enjoyed the criticism, as it was both articulate and passionate for the most part though there was the occasional shrill 'scolding' from traditionalists for breaking the rules. What surprised me was the power of the Lewis Carroll Society and the intensity of the members. When I arrived at Heathrow for my press trip in September there was a group of LCS protesters linking arms on the tarmac with a banner declaring, "off with Frank Beddor's head!" Amazing! You don't get that sort of passion in the USA about books, only politics and Janet Jackson's slip up.

You produced the smash hit movie *Something About Mary* and you are also an illustrator, do you think that it is best to sideline as a writer so that you always have something to fall back on?

FB: To set the record straight I'm not an illustrator. I hired a number of illustrators (incl. Doug Chiang of Star Wars fame) to help create my vision of Alyss and Wonderland. Writing and producing are hardly secure things to "fall back on" - selling insurance or being a plumber - those are both good solid fallback positions. Unfortunately, I am skilled at neither.



Speaking of *Something about Mary*, have you had any embarrassing gross-out moments yourself? Is Ben Stiller as funny in real life as he is on screen?

FB: On the set of *There's Something About Mary* on the day Ben Stiller was meant to catch his private parts in a zipper the stunt double quit out of fear. We had to get the shot. Nobody else was willing to do it, so I sacrificed myself for the team. It was a painfully embarrassing day. It's a mistake that I will regret for the rest of my life. Ben can turn the comedic turbo chargers on whether he's on camera or off camera. The difference is whether he is being paid millions of dollars to do it.

Alyss, the heroine of your book, is one sassy lady. Are there any female personalities that you particularly admire?

FB: Nicole Kidman - a remarkable actress, so versatile. I hope that one day she will consider being Queen Redd [a character in *The Looking Glass Wars*] on the big screen. Alisha Keyes is a huge talent. Very special. [She] stands out as a true musician. It would be wonderful to have her write a song for the movie.

Gwen Stefani's new video 'What Are You Waiting For?' is based on *Alice in Wonderland*. Do you like her quirky vision of *Wonderland*?

FB: Gwen Stefani is a huge talent. The "What are you Waiting for?" video is truly inspired. I loved it. It's imaginative. It's sexy. Thanks to Francis Lawrence, the director, it has a remarkably fresh vibrant visual style. I don't know about the UK, but this week it was ranked number five on VH1's top twenty video countdown. How bogus is that? Clearly it should be at number one.

Imagine co-mingling a book written 150 years ago by a Victorian Oxford scholar who taught mathematics at Christ church with the most modern and contemporary musicians. The moral of this story is great art inspires great art. She's not the first to be inspired by Charles Dodgson, a.k.a. Lewis Carroll. Let us not forget there has been a number of musicians over the years inspired by Alice, Jefferson Airplane's "White Rabbit", Bob Dylan's "Tweedle Dee and Tweedle Dum", Elton John's "Mona Lisa's and Mad Hatters", and Tom Waits "Alice".

Any tips for budding writers out there?

FB: LET YOUR IMAGINATION RUN WILD.

Lastly, what can we expect from you next?

FB: I will be launching the www.lookingglasswars.com website very soon - featuring the first ever 'book trailer'. The site will be filled with visual delights including a web comic entitled HATTER M, depicting the fantastical 13 year search of Hatter Madigan for his lost Alyss.

The site will be filled with concept art from Ben Templesmith (30 Days of Night) to Doug Chiang (Star Wars). The site's 'future attractions' will unveil my mad plan for the looking glass maze rollercoaster. Please check us out at www.lookingglasswars.com ...LONG LIVE ALYSS!