



## FRANK BEDDOR

Writer of Looking Glass Wars: Hatter M

by Paul Dale Roberts - (Posted: 11/8/2005)

Frank Beddor, Writer of the Looking Glass Wars: Hatter M.

**PDR:** Tell us something about yourself.

**Frank Beddor:** I was born and raised in Minneapolis, MN, went to college at the University of Utah and spent five years on the U.S. Ski Team.

**PDR:** What was the first comic book you ever read?

**FB:** Spider-Man

**PDR:** What were your favorite comic books growing up?

**FB:** Other than Spider-Man, I wasn't a major fan of comic books growing up. But much in the same way as I re-discovered Alice in Wonderland, comics hooked me as an adult. Beginning with Alan Moore's *The Watchmen* and Neil Gaiman's *Sandman* series I became enthusiastic about the visual worlds and storylines being offered. It was partly a natural extension of my work in film, but at the same time the enormous potential for creative expression was extremely exciting. Collaborating with artists in such a graphic, expressive medium is a whole new world for me. Getting to meet the fans at the different comic cons has been fantastic. Their enthusiasm, knowledge and loyalty is amazing. I hope that *Hatter M* is something that they will feel deserves their attention.

**PDR:** Please brief us about your new comic book "The Looking Glass Wars: Hatter M".

**FB:** The comic book mini-series (*Geo-Graphic Volume 1*) *Hatter M* tells the parallel story of Alyss's 13 year exile through the travels of her Royal Bodyguard, Hatter Madigan, as he crisscrosses the globe in a desperate non-stop search to find the lost princess after they are separated in the Pool of Tears while escaping a bloody coup in Wonderland. For those unfamiliar with the first book of the Looking Glass Wars trilogy, the bigger story reveals the true history of Wonderland based upon a stunning discovery which unmasked the ultimate literary lie, a twisted fabrication that had existed for nearly 150 years.

While universally accepted that Lewis Carroll was inspired to write his classic children's books to entertain 7-year-old Alice Liddell it is far from true. Lewis Carroll did not tell Alice Liddell the story of Wonderland, she told him! Alice was not born into the Liddell family, she was adopted. Her true identity was Alyss Heart, the future Queen of Wonderland. Lewis Carroll had changed everything and everyone including the identity of her royal bodyguard. *Hatter M* is not the story of a Mad Hatter. Hatter Madigan is an expert bladesman, a ranking High Cut of the Wonderland Millinery and not the tea guzzling madman of children's lit.



Aggressively focused on the one purpose in his life, Hatter's search for Alyss commences immediately and continues incessantly leaving the whispers and totems of myth in the wake of his non-stop quest.

Coming from Wonderland, Hatter must learn to navigate our world. Since Wonderland's language consists of a system of energy and rhythm, Hatter faces no language barriers and is able to transmute and translate everything from Zulu to dolphin as he crisscrosses the globe in search of Alyss. But while he begins his search intent upon the single purpose of finding the lost princess, he gradually comes to discover that his travels have a purpose above and beyond this initial motivation and that purpose is to protect and serve Imagination.

As revealed in *The Looking Glass Wars*, Wonderland's great gift to our world is Imagination. As a traveler from the source of all wonder, Hatter will continually find himself facing off against those who wish to either suppress Wonderland's gift or channel the flipside of Dark Imagination for their own diabolical use. This discovery and service to humanity will act upon Hatter and his own humanity as he continues to develop throughout the series.

**PDR:** What made you decide to create more stories in regard to the universe of Alice in Wonderland?

**FB:** Writing *The Looking Glass Wars* had zero to do with creating more stories about Alice in Wonderland. The whole point of LGW was to reveal the truth that I happened to stumble upon in the British Museum. 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.

**PDR:** Why is there a war going on in Wonderland?

**FB:** There have always been wars in Wonderland as the powers behind White and Dark Imagination have struggled for control. The civil war that sent Princess Alyss Heart fleeing through the Pool of Tears to safety in our world erupted over succession to the Wonderland throne. Alyss's mother, Queen Genevieve, ruled Wonderland but her elder sister, Redd, believed the throne belonged to her. Civil war raged between the sisters for several years before Redd's bloody coup killed both Alyss's parents and left Redd to rule Wonderland until Alyss could return to claim the throne.

Why is the war called *The Looking Glass War*?

I named the trilogy *The Looking Glass Wars* because the battles occur not only in Wonderland but in our world as well with the combatant characters traveling and fleeing back and forth via the Looking Glass portals as the war, retribution and bloodshed escalate.

**PDR:** Do we have any new characters in *The Looking Glass Wars*: Hatter M?

**FB:** Yes. Beginning with the first book of *The Looking Glass Wars* trilogy and continuing with the comic

series Hatter M, readers will both re- discover Lewis Carroll's 'classics' and be introduced to entirely new characters.

After my discovery of the cards in the British Museum and the true story behind Lewis Carroll's Wonderland books 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 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 is a lot of truth to be uncovered. I felt I owed it to Alyss.

As for Hatter M, in issue one Hatter meets Sacrénoir, an evil black magician performing in the ancient catacombs beneath Paris and his army of zombies, raised from the dead, as a bloody cabaret show. Many more characters will be introduced as Hatter M circles the globe from 1859-1872 in a non-stop quest to save the future Queen of Wonderland and redeem himself. Hatter Madigan is wracked with guilt and shame over having lost Alyss in the Pool of Tears after her mother had elicited what amounted to a deathbed promise that he would keep her daughter safe and make certain that she someday return to Wonderland to rule.

Heavy stuff for a Royal Bodyguard to feel he has failed at. But as in most quests, the end-point is not the entire point. As he travels, Hatter M will meet many of the era's famous and infamous characters. He will influence historical battles, save lives and leave behind a legacy of service to Imagination.

**PDR:** How did the concept of your comic book come about?

**FB:** HATTER M the comic just seemed like a necessary, organic progression from all of the work I did with artists on THE LOOKING GLASS WARS.

In LGW Book 1, Hatter M was introduced but his story was only explored for about four chapters. There was so much more to tell about his mad search for Alyss that I realized he needed his own forum -- and comic books would allow this dark, compelling, more mature story to be told best.

Hatter M is a classic, archetypal comic book hero with his angst, his loss, his barely suppressed rage as he searches the world. Also, by doing Hatter M as a comic book series I am able to connect to and expand upon the universe of THE LOOKING GLASS WARS as it was introduced in Book 1 and as it will continue in Books 2 and 3.

So for those fans of the series in the UK and other countries who have read Book 1, the comic is a great way to deepen, enhance, and bridge the world. Of course, since LGW Book 1 will not be available in the states until next year, Hatter M's adventures will be what introduces American readers to the LGW universe. It's a total reversal – but the bridge will be there for anyone wanting to experience more of the world.

**PDR:** Who are the creative staff for "The Looking Glass Wars: Hatter M"?

**FB:** Ben Templesmith is the artist and my co-writer on the series is Liz Cavalier. C.J Wrobel is our editor, he's a former Automatic Pictures employee and a huge comic fan, Jason Hanley our awesome letterer

and rounding out the team Greg Cook historian and Nate Barlow analysis.

**PDR:** How can someone order “The Looking Glass Wars: Hatter M”?

**FB:** At your local comic shop, it’s currently in the Previews book. It comes out December 2nd.

**PDR:** What is your URL website address?

**FB:** [www.lookingglasswars.com](http://www.lookingglasswars.com) - check out the preview pages.

**PDR:** How can someone contact you?

**FB:** Sign on at our website, [www.lookingglasswars.com](http://www.lookingglasswars.com) or email [automaticpictures@hotmail.com](mailto:automaticpictures@hotmail.com) or send a note to my production company, Automatic Pictures, 5225 Wilshire Blvd, #525, Los Angeles, CA 90036

**PDR:** How long have you been involved with the comic book industry and what other projects did you work on in the past?

**FB:** This is my first adventure in comics.

**PDR:** Your thoughts on the comic industry?

**FB:** I’ll let you know after the Hatter M mini-series is published.

**PDR:** What cons are you going to?

**FB:** We were in San Diego and Chicago and will be at Booth #424 at the upcoming GenCon in Anaheim in November. We’ve developed a card game drawing on characters and elements in Hatter M and LGW and this is going up first as a web based game. We’ll be previewing the game and giving out playing decks in Anaheim. Please stop and play a hand of Hatter M with us if you get a chance. Of course looking forward to a full con schedule.

**PDR:** What movies, cartoons and TV shows are your favorites?

**FB:** Chinatown, Johnny Quest, Seinfeld.

**PDR:** What books do you read?

**FB:** Right now The March by E.L. Doctorow, I admire his writing and it’s excellent research for the Hatter series, The next mini-series takes place during the Civil War.

**PDR:** What are your hobbies and recreational activities?

**FB:** Collecting maps, traveling, and I still love to ski.

**PDR:** What comic books do you read now?

**FB:** Recently I’ve been reading The Amazing Adventures of the Escapist, Mark Waid and Alex Ross’s Kingdom Come and a copy of the Oz-Wonderland War Trilogy starring Captain Carrot and his amazing Zoo Crew that I found on eBay.

**PDR:** That ends the interview, any last words of wisdom?

**FB:** Recently in Hatter Madigan’s journals I read how he had re-created Wonderland foods on Earth during his travels because he missed them so much -- he had written the recipe for tarty tarts and I baked my first batch last week -- absolutely my favorite food so far.