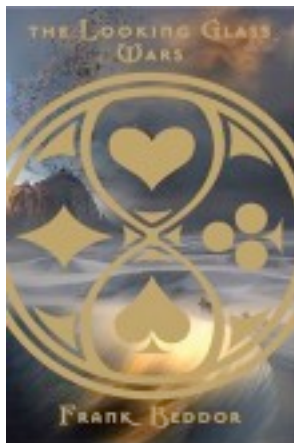




The Looking Glass Wars

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an exciting version of a classic story that is both instantly familiar and completely original



Alice in Wonderland by Lewis Carroll is a favorite of people everywhere. It's also one of the most re-imagined books ever written. The latest retelling of the Alice story takes in a new direction entirely. It turns out that Lewis Carroll was the biographer not for Alice Liddell but for Alyss Heart, the princess of Wonderland and the heir to the throne. It was through Carroll's

creative flourishes that we have the story we're all familiar with today.

In Alyss' story there are no mad hatters, white rabbits and tea parties. What we do have is an epic battle for power where the crazy Red Queen has taken control of Wonderland after a bloody Coup. The first book in the trilogy, author Frank Beddor has crafted an exciting version of a classic story that is both instantly familiar and completely original. All the familiar characters are here but slightly changed. The Mad Hatter is Hatter Madigan, part bodyguard, part assassin that has pledged to protect Alyss. The Cheshire Cat is a shape-shifting feline assassin who has nine lives and the ability to shift between cat and humanish form. The Red Queen is a tyrant that takes over Wonderland in a bloody Coup and rules with an iron fist.

Alyss is now Alice and lives in Oxford England for thirteen years before being returned to Wonderland. While on Earth, Alice tells her story of Wonderland to Reverend Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, a.k.a. Lewis Carroll. Eventually Alice decides to forget Wonderland so she can live a normal life in England. Meanwhile, Hatter Madigan scours Europe looking for her and eventually learns that a book was written about her. Eventually he finds her. She's now in her early twenties and about to marry the son of Queen Victoria. After years of trying to forget about her life in Wonderland, Alyss is now

forced to return to her homeland and depose the evil Queen.

Written for pre and young teens, *The Looking Glass Wars* hits perfectly. It's not written on an elevated level for adults but it is perfect for a quick read for all ages. Beddor isn't the next J.K. Rowling. He packs every chapter with lots of action and keeps the book moving quickly. Younger readers will find it a fun way to view a classic story that isn't a Disney version.

Beddor has created a complete package for *The Looking Glass Wars* series. Not only do we have the first book in the trilogy but the comic book *Hatter M* and a CD of music to listen to as you read the book. The CD, which may or may not be attached to the book release I'm not sure how it's being sold, sounds like an early 90's alt. band collection of Cure inspired music. It's moody, pop-ish and works well as a counterpoint to the book.

Thanks to the popularity of *Harry Potter*, pre-teen fantasy books are really popular right now. It's not on the level of the *Potter* or *Eragon* books but it does have a lot going for it including solid pacing and a fun re-imagined world. I will be interested to see where Beddor takes the story and what he has in store for the next two books. *The Looking Glass Wars* is a fun adventure fantasy book that will hopefully encourage children to seek out the original material.