

Film producer Beddor finds new career in books

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NEW YORK, Oct 31 (Reuters Life!) - Frank Beddor, best known for producing the comedy film "There's Something about Mary," began writing seven years ago -- and says there's no looking back.

His debut novel, "The Looking Glass Wars," claims to tell the truth about Alice in Wonderland, or Princess Alyss, who fled with bodyguard Hatter Madigan to the real world after her mother, the queen, was overthrown by her older sister Redd. Alyss is later sucked back into Wonderland.

Published in the UK first in 2004, it has just been released in the United States - with a trailer, a card game, and a successful comic spin-off.

Los Angeles-based Beddor, who spent five years on the U.S. ski team and was twice crowned freestyle world champion, spoke to Reuters about films and books:

Q: How did you get into writing?

A: "My interest began during my short acting career that failed. While studying acting they always want you to write the scene before the scene you are going in so I would write these scenes and I found I really enjoyed it. With "Something About Mary" I made some money so I decided to try to write."

Q: When did you start to really focus on your writing?

A: "About seven year ago but I didn't tell people. In Hollywood writing a book is like a step down and for five years I literally fell off the face of the planet while I worked on this book. People were surprised that I was not producing any more movies and would ask me what I was doing. I'd just tell people I was working on lots of different films and that satisfied them. I didn't want questions about writing a book because as a first time author I could not take that pressure.

It took me about two years just to sort out the logic, the rules of this world. I needed to understand how the pieces would fit together before I could write the narrative. But this really has now become my real love."

Q: What is the appeal of writing for the young teen market?

A: "Eleven and 12 year olds don't come into the room with their arms crossed waiting to be entertained. They are interested and get involved. When I speak to schools I will say I'm about to make my book into a movie and do they know anyone who might be interested in playing in the main roles? Hands shoot up and I get them up on stage, reading out of the book and playing the characters."

Q: Why the interest in Alice in Wonderland?

A: "It started with a trip to London for "Something about Mary." I went to the British Museum and there was a remarkable exhibition of cards. At the end of the exhibition was this incomplete deck of cards that were dark like Alice in Wonderland. I was fascinated and went to an antiques dealer who specialized in cards and he had this deck that he laid out and explained to me. This story was the foundation for The Looking Glass Wars. I convinced him to sell me the cards and I keep them in a kind of vault that I carry with me to show to the children when I tour schools."

Q: Will you make this into a film?

A: "I will but I wanted to get my book to stand on its own two feet first and then I will find the perfect creative partner."

Q: How is your next book in the trilogy, "Seeing Redd" going?

A: "It is finished. The plan is for it to be published next fall with a graphic novel or comic book."

Q: What do you see as your biggest achievement to date?

A: "Other than completing the book, it has been connecting with children. I feel like I know how to talk to them. I can engage them in an exciting and creative way."