



Interview with Looking Glass Wars Author Frank Beddor

By [allaboutduncan](#) on Dec 1, 2009 in [Interview](#)

Recently SRU had the chance to ask **Looking Glass Wars** and **Hatter M** author Frank Beddor a few questions about his series in general, now that the third book in the trilogy is on shelves.

In researching this post, I discovered the fact that Beddor is not only a talented author, but a movie producer as well (*There's Something About Mary*). Even more amazing—at least to me—he started out as a stunt man and includes the cult-classic John Cusack film **Better Off Dead** in his list of credits. In the interest of staying on topic, I refrained from asking about the film—although I had to think long and hard about it. I've loved that movie since I first rented on VHS.

Anyway, a big thank you to Mr. Beddor for taking the time to answer our questions. Be sure to check out [The Looking Glass Wars trilogy](#) and the [Hatter M graphic novels](#).

Read the Interview after the break...

1. For those unfamiliar, setup the world that *The Looking Glass Wars* takes place in.



The Looking Glass Wars saga is set in a far different Wonderland than Lewis Carroll would have anyone believe. The basic premise of the trilogy of prose novels and the graphic novels is that ‘Alice’ (as Lewis Carroll chose to call her) did not GO to Wonderland she CAME from Wonderland. She was born Princess Alyss Heart and destined to become Queen but on her 7th birthday her evil Aunt Redd invaded and staged a coup forcing her to flee Wonderland accompanied by Royal Bodyguard Hatter Madigan and travel to our

world via the Pool of Tears (the portal connecting our two worlds). Tragically the two were separated and Alyss emerged through a portal into London 1859, while Hatter Madigan emerged in Paris. Alyss eventually met Lewis Carroll and told him her harrowing story hoping he would write a book so her bodyguard would find her and bring her home. But Lewis Carroll wrote “Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland” and changed everything! He even changed Royal Bodyguard hatter Madigan into...the Mad Hatter! Essentially, the first book in the Looking Glass Wars trilogy is the book that Alyss had begged Lewis Carroll to write.

2. Why rework or re-imagine an existing world as opposed to creating a new one?

Inspiration is a big part, if not the primary part, of creation. I was inspired to explore and share this unknown Wonderland I discovered via the cards at the British Museum. Writing is a long, arduous process and if you lack inspiration there isn’t much else that will keep you going. The fact I was inspired is the only reason I was able to write this series.

3. What's your favorite part of world building? Do you enjoy creating the characters and the environment or do you prefer to write the story, once the environment is complete?



My favorite part of this process has been working with artists to try and visualize both characters and environments. So it's not just words on the page waiting for images in a movie to bring them to life, there have been images since I first began writing the series. As time went on the process of adding art and writing story became an ongoing methodology where one would build off of and influence the next. So I would be inspired by a piece of art, expand upon it in the writing and then off of this, commission more art.

4. Are you a fan of re-imagined worlds and stories? If yes, what are some of your favorites that served as inspiration?



Yes I am because when done well they invite people to re-enter a fantasy world that had seemed closed to one interpretation or one dimension. This innovative genre of 're-imaginings' allows writers and fans to build upon what is already established in the collective imagination. They are simultaneously a reunion centered on something beloved and an exploration of how the new story elements unfold. One of my favorites is Gregory Maguire's Wicked, which really set the bar for those who followed.

5. Aside from the works of Lewis Carroll, what other writers inspired you while working on The Looking Glass Wars trilogy of books?



In terms of creative ambition and scope I was certainly inspired by fantasy authors like Tolkien, Rowling, Lewis and Pullman who were able to construct such vast and believable worlds. But science fiction authors like Frank Herbert also inspired me. So my inspiration came from both fantasy and science fiction and I think that is reflected in the LGW and Hatter M series where you will find steampunk conventions and holographic billboards as well as the conjuring power of

Imagination and singing flowers.

6. Now, three books deep into the series, how has your writing process changed from the first book?



Interesting question because a lot has changed. When I first started writing it was like being alone in an empty land and trying to populate and build a world. But as I wrote each book and completed each graphic novel I was 'joined' in the process by my creations. For instance writing book 2 I had all the characters from book 1 in the room with me...whispering their thoughts on how something should go or arguing for more of a presence in a chapter! And I now had a vast world to travel. I could go and sit by the Pool of Tears

and contemplate just how a battle would unfold in this environment. So rather

than being creatively depleted as the books continued to be published and the series unfolded, my imagination was being enriched and inspired by my characters and world.

7. Did the series end up where you thought it would when you originally planned it?

I knew I would do a trilogy and I knew the ending. But a lot of what came in between surprised me as I wrote. The characters do take on a life of their own and they threw me quite a few twists and challenges. All for the best.

8. ...And, was it harder starting the series off or harder bring it to an end?



It's all hard. The beginning is like setting off on an odyssey in the desert with a little canteen of water and hoping you've got what it takes to get to your destination. There will be so much ground to cover, the odds are so great against you're making it and the sun is merciless. And then there's the end, you've written and written and it has turned into this amazing living thing that fans are invested in, with characters that live and breathe and now you are pulling the whole thing behind you still trying to get

to that destination. You dare not leave anyone behind or they will die in the desert! If you can just keep everyone together you can complete the odyssey. So you see what I mean...it's all hard.

9. Now that you've wrapped up the Wonderland trilogy, do you see yourself revisiting the mythology anytime soon or are you ready to move on to something new?



Even though the prose trilogy is complete with ArchEnemy, there is still work to be done. The Hatter M series continues with Volume 2 MAD WITH WONDER available now.

I plan to complete a total of 5 Hatter M geo-geographic novels to document his 13 years searching our world for Alyss. I'm not sure if you are familiar with the Hatter M Institute for Paranormal Travel, but even as we speak this group of radical cartographers and astral historians are working non-stop to piece together the arc of Hatter's travels. Through the Institute's work and communiqués from readers around the world new evidence of Wonderland's existence and effect on our world continues to mount so you never really know where the portals will take you.

Since the beginning of this journey I have repeatedly uncovered lost and hidden evidence of Wonderland. It seems the more I write the more I discover which naturally leads to additional material to be written. Through a series of fortunate discoveries I released Princess Alyss of Wonderland, which features the lost art and journals of Princess Alyss Heart while she was exiled here in our world. In turn, the information uncovered in these journals opened several fascinating pathways, which lead me to deduce Alyss was not the only princess to have been exiled; in fact, evidence suggests that there is actually a league of exiled princesses spread across our world right NOW.

10. What are your three favorite trilogies (literature or film)?

Big question that I will try to briefly answer. For films...The Star Wars original trilogy, Lord of the Rings, and Mad Max. For literature...Mervin Peake's Gormenghast fantasy trilogy. Peake had planned to do more than 3 but he became exhausted which does not surprise me! And of course, the Great Dune trilogy...Dune Messiah and Children of Dune by Frank Herbert along with his other Dune books.

11. What's next?

Well I am currently working with Chuck Roven who produced The Dark Knight to do the first in a series of The Looking Glass Wars films. As for writing, in addition to Hatter M, I am investigating some new information that has recently come to me with regard to Redd possibly having an heir and Hatter's school records from his boyhood days as a cadet at Wonderland's Millinery Academy. So there is still plenty to come. Thanks for asking!