

## Book Review: *The Looking Glass Wars* by Frank Beddor

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El Bicho

*The Looking Glass Wars*  
Frank Beddor

*The Looking Glass Wars* is a rollicking literary reinterpretation of the *Alice in Wonderland* universe sure to cast a spell on its targeted young adult audience as well as older readers. In this version, Alice is a magical princess who tumbles from Wonderland to our world, setting off a string of adventures in both realms.

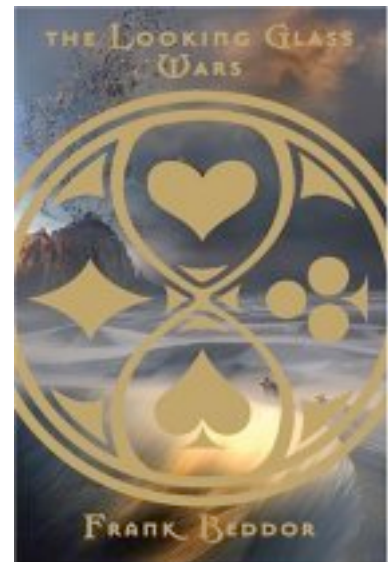
Young Princess Alyss Heart witnesses a gruesome Wonderland palace coup by her evil Aunt Redd before being hustled to safety in our world by her family's loyal and deadly bodyguard, Hatter Madigan. Unfortunately, their unstable transportation portal to our world results in Alyss ending up alone in England, while Madigan lands in France. Over the next dozen years, Alyss learns to forget about Wonderland and accept her adopted family while Madigan carries out a fruitless, worldwide search for her.

Meanwhile, Wonderland endures the tyrannical rule of Redd and assumes that Alyss is dead, with all residents losing hope except for a small band of rebels. Alyss recounts her Wonderland days to a local author who twists her stories into mere shadows of the truth and publishes them as bestselling *Alice* books under the pen name Lewis Carroll. The resulting unwelcome success of the books and her advancing age cause Alyss to repress her Wonderland memories and eventually believe that they were just a fantasy after all. Ultimately, the future of Wonderland hinges on Madigan's ability to locate and convince Alyss to return to her rightful place as the savior of the kingdom.

This is the projected first chapter of a trilogy, but the arc presented here is a fully contained story that doesn't leave viewers hanging at the end. While the initial setup is slightly protracted, the ensuing fast-paced action and interesting twists make this a real page-turner sure to keep many young readers and their parents up past their bedtimes. It's especially interesting to see characters we know from the books and Disney film in completely different, darker permutations. The Mad Hatter is a brutal bodyguard, the Cheshire Cat is a huge and vicious henchman for the evil self-appointed Queen Redd, and even the playing card soldiers are chilling, robotic constructs that pose a serious threat.

Author Frank Beddor has designs for turning this into a feature length film, and it most assuredly would rate a PG-13 if mirroring the source material. It's not exactly scary, but readers fearing a sappy fantasy foray filled with unicorns and rainbows should rest assured that this hews much closer to the darker *Harry Potter* adventures. That undercurrent of danger as well as its strong characterization and thrilling plot all contribute to make this a pleasantly surprising and accomplished work.

Beddor envisions this as a multi-faceted property and has already co-authored the ancillary comic book miniseries *Hatter M* in addition to production of a soundtrack and online card game. He's currently working on completion of the second volume of the trilogy as well as the movie script, check *The Looking Glass Wars'* [website](#) for additional news.



Written by Caballero Oscuro