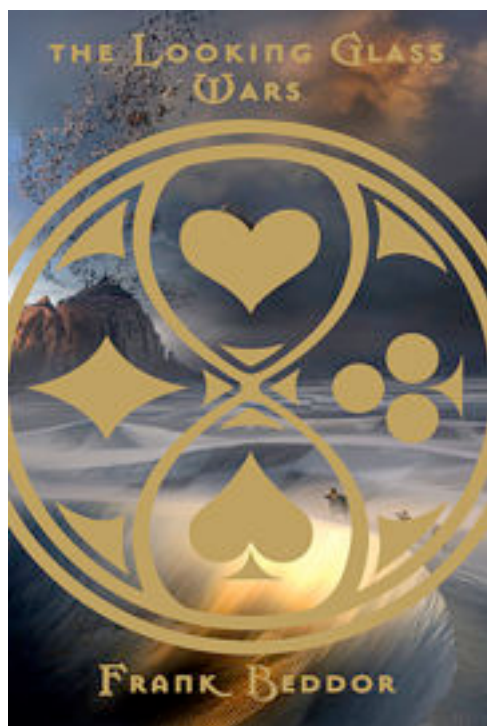




The Looking Glass Wars



by [Frank Beddor](#)
Series Title: [Looking Glass Wars](#)
Number in Series: 1

Bibliographic Data

Original Publication Date: September 2006

Publisher: [Penguin Putnam Inc.](#)

Imprint: [Dial](#)

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Hardcover Price: \$16.99

Paperback Price: \$

Number of Pages: 384

[Best for ages](#): 10 up

[Library of Congress Descriptor](#): When she is cast out of Wonderland by her evil aunt Redd, young Alyss Heart finds herself living in Victorian Oxford as Alice Liddell and struggles to keep memories of her kingdom intact until she can return and claim her rightful throne.

Summary

Forget what you thought you knew about Alice and Wonderland -- this book purports to tell the truth behind the fairytale.

Alyss, princess of the Queendom of Wonderland, barely escapes with her life when her aunt, Redd, kills her parents in a bloody coup. Pursued by The Cat, an assassin created by Redd, a witch-like practitioner of Black Imagination, she jumps through the Pool of Tears, and ends up in Victorian London, where, after living as a street urchin and in an orphanage, she is adopted by the Liddell family of Oxford.

Frustrated that no one will believe her story of her past, she is at first thrilled when family friend Charles Dodgson seems to believe her. But when he turns it into a fairytale, she is devastated, and resolves to forget Wonderland and assimilate as a normal British person. Eventually she grows up and forgets about Wonderland, or sees it only as a childish fantasy. But back in Wonderland her persecuted followers, the Alyssians take up a guerrilla resistance to the harsh rule of Queen Redd.

Reviews

A [sea-change](#) is happening in children's book publishing, taking nearly a decade to come to its logical culmination in this book. Written by a movie producer, a reimagining of a classic work,

plotted and paced like a movie, and [promoted](#) like one too, it's a book designed for one thing -- to grab kids by the seat of the pants and keep them excitedly turning the pages -- and it accomplishes its goal with verve and imagination.

[Alice in Wonderland](#) purists shouldn't even open the book -- this is not for them. Beddor has said, "I guess I didn't realise how beloved Lewis Carroll's classic was. I was just seeking revenge. My grandmother and my mother made me read this book when I was 10 or 11 and I thought it was a terrible girls' book. This is my revenge; I wanted to rewrite it as a book boys would also enjoy."

It's presented, not as a rewrite of that classic work, but as the awful truth that the fey Dodgson turned into a fairytale, much to Alyss's horror and chagrin. Using snippets of the real Alice Liddell's biography, Beddor fashions an alternative history, in which Alice is really Alyss, the escaped and hunted princess of Wonderland.

That Wonderland depicted here is both more horrific and more exciting than the surreal place Dodgson imagined. Filled with monsters, magic, and a mixture of technologies it is at once more fantastic and more grounded in the reality of war and totalitarian repression than its predecessor.

Though it is filled with topics for discussion, from literature to politics to history and biography, and many parallels to events in today's world, this is just fun -- well-written, well-constructed, lovingly thought out and produced fun. It will do no harm at all to Lewis Carroll's classic, which has always had more appeal to adults than children anyway, and may interest a new generation of readers in the original.

This review is based on the galleys, which I don't normally do, and for just this reason: it contain only hints of illustrations. The website has gorgeous color pictures -- I don't know at this point whether they are intended for the final book, or for the related comic book series. I'll revise this review when I get a final copy. -- Matt Berman

Excerpt

Before General Doppelganger or Sir Justice Anders had time to act, before even Hatter Madigan could tumble into blade-spinning action, there came shouts and an explosion from outside the dining room. The heavy double doors blew apart, a wall crumbled, and a horde of Redd's card soldiers charged through the blasted opening with swords raised.

Standing amid the crumbled stone and splinters of wood was a nightmare version of Genevieve, a woman Alyss had never seen before.

"Off with their heads!" the woman screamed. "Off with their stinking, boring heads."