



SmartGirl Editor Megan reviews:

The Looking Glass Wars
A book by Frank Beddor
& the accompanying soundtrack



At first, I felt that *The Looking Glass Wars* was targeted for a younger audience, but I was mistaken. Everyone has heard the story of Alice and Wonderland, a children's fairy tale. To recap, a young girl falls into the make believe world of Wonderland, making many discoveries. *The Looking Glass Wars* takes a spin on this fairy tale, looking through the story lens of Alice and Wonderland but transplanting the character into the real world.

The beginning of this story reviews a bit of the original Alice and Wonderland, showing the difference between the real world setting of the story and the fairy tale setting of the fairy tale. It takes a dramatic spin when the queen-to-be of Wonderland enters the world of the story, the "real world." So now to the audience, a fairy tale character has just entered the "real world," and she's searching for her way back.

Let me back up for a second to explain how this fairy tale character made it into the real world. Alyss Heart - not to be confused with Alice from the original fairy tale - was the next in line for the Wonderland throne. She was going to be the queen of Wonderland. Her aunt Redd would also like to be the heir to the throne, but is unable due to her niece being next in line.

Aunt Redd sets up a murder, forcing Alyss to flee Wonderland. By doing so, Alyss gets lost in Victorian, London, many many years ago. She is lost and alone until she befriends an author who is set on helping her back to Wonderland, or so Alyss thinks. The author, Lewis Carroll, is not sure whether or not he should believe her. He thinks she is crazy. He agrees to write her story regardless. Alyss hopes with her truthful part of the story, someone will find her and set things right in Wonderland.

Needless to say, Lewis Carroll was not the most reliable author, getting many details (including the spelling of her name) incorrect. So it took some

time to be found. Alyss had to adjust to her new surroundings. She had to be a proper English woman, while waiting to be found - just to fit in.

Luckily, Alyss's Royal Bodyguard Hatter Madigan had been searching everywhere for Alyss, and found her. The two of them make their quest back to Wonderland in order for Alyss to take her place as the Queen of Hearts, but before that she must remove her Aunt Redd from the position.

The rest of the story will give away the ending. However I can say that this story is a thriller with many different twists and turns. I absolutely love how the two different worlds intertwine, and the adjustments the characters must go through. Another cool thing is that the book also comes with its own soundtrack, so you can listen while you read. The/soundtrack for this novel is very fitting.

Many of the songs have a mysterious feel to them. There is almost a medieval sense to the music - almost the same feeling as in the *Harry Potter* soundtracks. They start out calm and work through the situations in the story line. The use of the entire orchestra and not just the basic drums and guitar makes the soundtrack more unique than that of the songs heard on the radio today. The themes of each song fit into the story. They have names such as "Wonderland," "The Looking Glass," "Courier Heart," and even "Sea of Redd." All of the songs suit different events in the novel.

The soundtrack moves through the music in the same order as the book. After reading the novel, I listened to the soundtrack and recaptured the events. They are all in chronological order even in the soundtrack. If there were to be a movie for this novel, this soundtrack would be fitting for all of the scenes.

The lyrics are fitting for the storyline, but also would be something heard on the radio. The words have more of a contemporary rock/pop feel. The soundtrack is relaxing, yet meaningful for me. I have been using the soundtrack as background music for my study times. It is calm enough for me to be productive, yet not so calm to be so dull to put me to sleep.

The whole album has a relaxed feeling throughout many of the songs. Some have a climax, but always come back to this relaxed, mysterious feel. It is a great album that is appropriate for all ages. There is not any provocative language, or swearing. This is good for younger audiences as well, or even for a car ride with the parents. All in all, I feel that this is a great soundtrack for a great book!