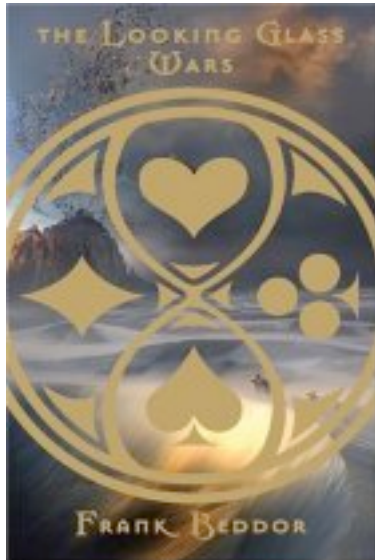


# THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.



## **The Looking Glass Wars**

**By Frank Beddor**

*Dial, 358 pages, \$17.99*

Most children know the story of Alice in Wonderland, even if they've only seen the Disney movie version of Lewis Carroll's book: An English girl tumbles down a rabbit hole and things get "curiouser and curiouser" as she encounters the enigmatic Chesire Cat, a hookah-smoking caterpillar and the crazy, furious Queen of Hearts. But what if everything we know about Alice is wrong, including the spelling of her name? In Frank Beddor's radical, clever and rather violent re-imagining of the familiar tale, Lewis Carroll turns out to have been not a writer of fiction but a very imperfect amanuensis for young Princess Alyss Heart of Wonderland. Alyss has been forced to flee Wonderland after her bloodthirsty Aunt Redd mounts a coup and murders her royal parents. After escaping through the Pool of Tears, Alyss finds herself in Victorian England, where eventually she confides her tragic story to Carroll. To Alyss's horrified dismay, Carroll mangles the details almost beyond recognition; for example, he anagrammatizes her albino tutor Bibwit Harte into the White Rabbit and turns her faithful bodyguard, Hatter Madigan (he fights with a razor-sharp top hat), into the host of a mad tea party. Fortunately, Madigan himself has been loyally searching the earth for Alyss. When Carroll's book is published, it's just the clue Madigan needs to find the princess and bring her back ton Wonderland, a place where the most powerful in any armory is Imagination. This is an exciting story—the first in a planned trilogy—that will set hears pounding in children age 10 and up.

—*Meghan Cox Gurdon*