

# School Library Journal

## Interview with Frank Beddor! November 1, 2008

I had the supreme pleasure of interviewing Frank Beddor, the author of *The Looking Glass Wars*, the "true" story of Alyss' adventures in Wonderland, and the co-author of *Hatter M*, the tale of Alyss' faithful bodyguard. *Hatter M* is the first graphic novel release from Mr. Beddor's company, Automatic Pictures, but it was serialized in single issues as a mini-series. He was gracious enough to answer a few of my questions, and provided a review copy of *Hatter M* for me to peruse. So, without further ado...Frank Beddor!



**Sabrina:** Can you describe the plot of *Hatter M* as it crosses over with *The Looking Glass Wars*?

**Frank:** Geo-Graphic Novel Volume 1 of *Hatter M* tells the parallel story of Alyss's 13 year exile through the travels of her Royal Bodyguard, Hatter Madigan as he crisscrosses the globe in a desperate non-stop search to find the lost princess after they are separated in the Pool of Tears while escaping a bloody coup in Wonderland. For those unfamiliar with the first book of the *Looking Glass Wars* trilogy, the bigger story reveals the true history of Wonderland based upon a stunning discovery which unmasked the ultimate literary lie, a twisted fabrication that had existed for nearly 150 years. While universally accepted that Lewis Carroll was inspired to write his classic children's books to entertain 7-year-old Alice Liddell it is far from true. Lewis Carroll did not tell Alice Liddell the story of Wonderland, she told him! Alice was not born into the Liddell family, she was adopted. Her true identity was Alyss Heart, the future Queen of Wonderland. Lewis Carroll had changed everything and everyone including the identity of her royal bodyguard. *Hatter M* is not the story of a Mad Hatter. Hatter Madigan is an expert bladesman, a ranking High Cut of the Wonderland Millinery and not the tea guzzling madman of children's lit. Aggressively focused on the one purpose in his life, Hatter's search for Alyss commences immediately and continues incessantly leaving the whispers and totems of myth in the wake of his non-stop quest.

**S:** Can *Hatter M* stand alone from the novel, or is there continuity that has to be

understood in order to enjoy the plot?

F: Hatter M does stand on its own as an adventure with LGW's storyline woven throughout via flashbacks, journal entries and spontaneous memory download but for those desiring every bit of story the ideal would be to read both series.

S: Why did you choose Ben Templesmith to do the art for this volume? Why not go with something more traditional?

F: Initially I was attracted to Ben's use of color and how he conceptualized his characters. I'd liked what he had done in 30 days of Night and saw that he had the ability to do horror which occasionally pops up in Hatter's fantastical journey. But it was all luck and intuition that really brought me to Ben. Since working with him I have discovered his sense of humor and this is coming out more and more. It's not all shadows and solitude for Hatter – much of who and what he encounters is bizarre, twisted and funny. Ben's art nails it every time.

S: If you ever plan on doing a graphic adaptation of *The Looking Glass Wars*, would you choose a different artist?

F: Since working with Ben I have met a number of other very talented artists and am in the middle of geo-graphic novel volume 2 with a young artist I think could join the realm of greats. I will reveal the mystery identity of my new artist when the book is finished so no one tries to poach him midway. Should I do a graphic adaptation of LGW I would most likely work with another artist to see what flows from their imagination.

S: Did you find any difficulty in making the jump from writing novels to writing graphic novels?

F: From being the king in my own sandbox I had to learn to share and depend on others so I suppose that was a consciousness jump I am happy to have made. It actually made the writing process less lonely and isolated to have Liz and Ben Templesmith working with me so I would have to say it wasn't difficult in any sense of the word. It was a non-stop pleasure.

S: How did you feel about working with Liz Cavalier?

F: Overall, our writing process is combative yet symbiotic. While we both prefer to dominate we also have a lot of fun cooperating and this really propels the energy in the writing partnership.

S: What were your influences, if any, in writing this book?

F: The madcap optimism and energy of Victorian era adventurers who hurled themselves out into an unknown world in the interest of exploration, geography and Queen.

S: What gadget or invention from Alyss' world would you most like to have in your daily life?

F: The Crystal Continuum. Instantaneous travel through a pathway of multi-faceted crystal shoots and tunnels – it's hyper-fast, aesthetically pleasing and CLEAN!

S: Do you feel like there are any lessons to be learned from Alyss and the Hatter's adventures?

F: Both Alyss and Hatter are faced with soul crushing odds in an unfamiliar universe of strangers...and yet they don't give up. I guess that's the only lesson anyone needs. Don't give up.

S: Do you have any ideas for stories after your Alyss and Hatter M saga is finished?

F: I am working on a musical based on the Looking Glass Wars that will open up some of the sidebar storylines only touched on in the novels and graphic novels so in this way the saga will continue to expand.

Much thanks to Frank for the interview! Volume 1 of Hatter M is available now in stores.

Posted by **Sabrina Fritz** on November 1, 2008 | **Comments (0)**