

Book Review: Seeing Redd (The Looking Glass Wars)

by [R.J. Carter](#)

Published: October 10, 2007

Publication Date: August 21, 2007

Publisher: Dial

Author: Frank Beddor

Grade: A



[Frank Beddor](#) is back, and badder than ever with the newest installment of his intriguing reimagining of the *Alice in Wonderland* mythos. In Beddor's telling, Wonderland is a real alternate realm, and it's hardly a cutesy place of talking flowers and sleepy dormice. It's a queendom, ruled by the Heart family, of which Alyss Heart is the current heir. When Alyss's aunt, Redd, overthrew the throne occupied by Alyss's parents, the royal bodyguard, Hatter Madigan, evacuated with Alyss through the Pool of Tears, which took them to Earth, where they were separated, and where Alyss was adopted by the Liddell family, which brought her into contact with

Lewis Carroll, who told her story but with fanciful embellishments.

Hatter eventually recovered Alyss, and returned with her to Wonderland, where they worked with the outcast Alyssians to finally overthrow Redd and her assassin, the Cat.

But life after Redd isn't easy, as Alyss struggles to use the power of her imagination to bring back a semblance of order to the lives of the Wonderlanders. Making things more difficult are the underhanded workings of King Arch, who rules the infighting nomadic tribes of

Boarderland. He'd like nothing more than to take over Wonderland himself, believing that any country ruled by a woman must be a weak one, and he uses weapons left behind by Redd to disguise the origin of his attacks. But his master stroke comes when he tricks Alyss's bodyguard, Homburg Molly, by taking advantage of her zeal to prove herself, causing Molly to accidentally disable the entire Looking Glass transit system, ejecting all the current travelers and leaving them temporarily drained of their imagination -- the force on which all of Wonderland operates.

Meanwhile, as Arch works his machinations, Redd and the Cat reappear -- on Earth! There, they find there are other former Wonderlanders, all of whom gave up on their lives and dove into the Pool of Tears. Black Imagination practitioners all, their number include an albino tutor, Vollrath, who is much like Alyss's own Bibwit Harte, and an Earth inhabitant named Sacrenoir who can resuscitate bones into flesh-eating zombies (whom we first met in the graphic novel, *Hatter M*). Recovering from her losses, Redd gathers these people under her to reform an army with which to reconquer Wonderland, all while terrorizing the masses -- which includes capturing the author Charles Dodgson to force him to write a story about her that will exceed the popularity of the one he wrote for Alyss.

Seeing Redd is an imaginative epic tale of war and subterfuge, love lost and found, and families reunited. Hatter Madigan returns and continues to be one of the more intriguing characters of the novel series, as he sets off on his own quest to mourn his losses and learn more about who he is. The whole thing ends with a bang, setting the stage for the third (and final?) novel of *The Looking Glass Wars*.