

# destined to become a classic

CHILDREN'S BOOKS FOR THE MIDDLE GRADES

monday, january 14, 2008

## The Looking Glass Wars by Frank Beddor

Now isn't that a great title! I've wanted to read this book for a while. Not because I read great reviews but because of the title and the tag line, "Fantasy just declared war on reality". The cover is funky, too- Dune meets Lewis Carroll. This is Alice in Wonderland on some kind of illegal substance. Alyss is a tomboy princess and heir to the throne of Wonderland. Her birthday celebrations are ruined by the assassination of both her parents by her evil aunt, Redd. Alyss escapes death by traveling through the Pool of Tears with her bodyguard. Unfortunately, traveling through puddles turns out to be as fraught with error as changing planes in Chicago O'Hare and Alyss finds herself alone in Victorian England. We now enter a kind of Oliver Twist narrative that turns in to a version of Annie when Alyss is adopted by the affluent Liddell family. Alyss becomes Alice Liddell (for whom Alice in Wonderland was written) and in another fairytale twist of fate ends up as



Queen Victoria's youngest son's fiance. This is not as great a leap of fantasy as one may think because the real Alice Liddell was acquainted with the real Prince Leopold. Meanwhile Redd has turned Wonderland in to a futuristic version of Maoist China where children turn in their parents to the authorities and "Reddisms" are broadcast from three-dimensional holographic billboards. As you can imagine, the stage is set for Alyss to return and reclaim her rightful place.

Definitely a page turner and my fantasy fans will love it. I just hope they have read the classic before they pick this one up so they can appreciate the inventive reworking Beddor has accomplished.

Other books in the series: Seeing Redd (second in the trilogy), Hatter M (graphic novel), Princess Alyss of Wonderland (scrapbook)

<http://www.lookingglasswars.com/>

posted by mme t at 9:38 am

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