*Book Talk The Looking Glass Wars*

Shannon Loi



<http://frankbeddor.com/biography/>

**Frank Beddor:** Frank Beddor grew up in Excelsior, Minnesota. He was born on July 31, 1958. He is an American former world champion skier, film producer, actor, stuntman, and author. He is best known as producer of *There’s Something About Mary* and *Wicked* and author of New York Time’s best seller Through the Looking Glass Wars*.* He has also written sequels Seeing Red and Arch Enemy*.* He currently lives in Los Angelas.

**Sources:** <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frank_Beddor>

**Summary:** The Looking Glass Wars is Beddor’s take on Lewis Carroll’s novel Alice in Wonderland. Before Alyss Heart, princess of Wonderland, was born, there was a massive civil war between her mother, Genevieve, and her aunt, Redd, over the rightful place to the throne. Genevieve won her place as queen and banished Redd out of Wonderland. Years pass and Alyss is heir to the throne. However, on her seventh birthday, her aunt Redd turns her world upside down by landing a surprise attack on the kingdom. Alyss manages to escape from Wonderland and travels through a different dimension. She learns valuable life lessons and manages to come back years later as a mature adult, able to claim back her rightful place as queen.

**Quote #1:**

When she emerged from her room the next morning--a room perfectly clean, no confetti on the floor, no sign of the violence done to it hours earlier--the Liddells were at breakfast in the dining room. The immediately noticed a change in Alyss without being able to pinpoint what it was. Edith and Lorina fell still, mid-chew, their open mouths revealing a mash of scrambled egg. Dean Liddell paused in the midst of buttering his scone, and Mrs. Liddell continued pouring tea into her cup even after it spilled over onto the saucer. Not until the servant started to clean it up did she notice what she’d done.

 “You’re wearing the dress,” Mrs. Liddell said. The dress she had purchased months before by which Alyss had always refused to wear because she feared it would make her appear common.

 “Yes, Mother.”

 But that wasn’t it, didn’t account for the change.

 “You look… rather lovely,” said Dean Liddell.

 “Thank you, Father.”

 The change was in subtler things--the tilt of Alyss’ head, the particular sweep of her arms, her careful step forward. The Liddells were so taken with her appearance that they failed to realize it was the first time she had ever called them by those most intimate of endearments: Mother and Father. (150-151)

**Commentary:** This is Alyss’s breaking point where she finally gives in to live a “normal” life. After a mental breakdown, she finally gives up and forces herself to leave her past behind. Up until now, we can see that Alyss is a very stubborn yet brave girl. However, even the bravest characters have weak moments before they rise victorious again. I chose this quote because it is the moment where she finally hits rock bottom.

**Quote #2:**

 The man in the mask remained silent. The orchestra swelled into another tune and he led her out to the dance floor. With an arm around her waist and a hand at the small of her back, he moved her easily this way and that, twirling her here, dipping her there. They were in perfect step with each other, as if they had been dancing together all their lives. The guests couldn’t fail to notice; they cleared a space for the couple and applauded.

 Alice realized that whoever she was dancing with, it certainly wasn’t her fiance. “You’re not Leopold,” she laughed “Halleck, is that you?” she asked, naming the prince’s friend.

 The stranger said nothing.

 “Who is hiding behind that mask?”

 Still, the stranger remained silent. Alice reached up and removed his mask, revealing the face of a handsome young man with almond-shaped eyes, a nose that had probably been broken more than once, and dusty, disheveled hair.

 “Do I know you?”

 “You knew me once,” the stranger said. He turned his right cheek to her, showing the four parallel scars that shone pink and ragged against his pale skin. (192-193)

**Commentary:** Alyss’s childhood friend, Dodge, is sent out to find her in the other dimension. During Redd’s comeback, Dodge tried to protect his father from the Cat who ended up slashing his cheek leaving four scars. After Redd took over Wonderland, Dodge was mentally scarred and is shown to not be the same person as he was before. However, when he dances with Alyss it feels as though everything is back to normal.

**Quote #3:**

 But how could Alyss be sure that, if she sacrificed herself, Redd would allow her friends to live, let alone live freely? Wasn’t it more likely that once Alyss was dead, Redd would kill the Alyssians because she could? But what if, because of some unknown leniency in Redd, she did allow them to live? They had fought on behalf of White Imagination for thirteen years without Alyss. If, by sacrificing herself, she could secure for them the promise of longer lives, didn’t duty demand her sacrifice? They might yet manage to escape; Hatter might find a way. The spirit of White Imagination would live with them. It lived only so long as they did.

 Thinking in the final act in her short, troubled life, Princess Alyss Heart knelt down before her aunt. (314-315)

**Commentary:** Alyss is in the Looking Glass Maze. It is a maze that princesses must pass before becoming a queen. The maze plays many mind tricks on people. Alyss sees her friends in danger and at this point she offers to sacrifice herself to save them and the queendom. It was unknown if she died in the maze whether or not she would die in real life as well. She has grown so much since the beginning and this marks the event that officially makes her from a princess to a queen.

**In the Classroom:** I would give this book to 5th and 6th grade classrooms because this is a crazy, fun, and imaginative book to read. The language is not difficult at all. Although the book is quite long, I feel as though students will not want to stop reading it because of how fun it is. I think it is a good practice to prepare for the longer texts in middle school. I would teach this book by asking students how Alyss developed as a character. I could also mention how Beddor has two sequels to this book and have them brainstorm what they think will happen. I could present the book by having a full day to watch one of the Alice In Wonderland movies.

**Text Complexity:**

Lexile: 1010L

Level: 4-5th graders

Atos: 6.7

Level: 4-5th graders