



**Forum: Movies, TV and Entertainment**

**Topic: The Wizard of Oz**

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The Wonderful Wizard of Oz is a children's book written in 1900 by L. Frank Baum and illustrated by W.W. Denslow. It was originally published by the George M. Hill company in Chicago, and has since been reprinted countless times, sometimes under the name The Wizard of Oz. The story chronicles the adventures of a girl named Dorothy in the land of Oz. It is one of the best-known stories in American popular culture and has been widely translated. Its initial success led to Baum's writing and having published thirteen more Oz books. The book has been in public domain since 1956.

Historians, economists and literary scholars have examined and interpreted the sources and possible meaning of the book. See Political interpretations of The Wonderful Wizard of Oz.

**Plot summary**

Dorothy Gale is a young girl who lives on a Kansas farm with her Uncle Henry and Aunt Emily ("Auntie Em"), and her little dog Toto. (Although her last name is only revealed in later books in the Oz series.) One day a cyclone appears outside and before Dorothy can reach the storm cellar, the farmhouse is caught up in the cyclone and deposited in a grassy field in the country of the Munchkins. The falling house kills the Wicked Witch of the East, who had established a reign of terror over the Munchkins.

The Good Witch of the North comes with the Munchkins to greet Dorothy, and gives her the Silver Shoes the Wicked Witch of the East had been wearing when she was killed (her death is explained in The Tin Woodman of Oz as due to her being old and dried up before Oz became a fairyland). In order to return to Kansas, the Good Witch of the North consults a magical blackboard which recommends: "Let Dorothy go to the City of Emeralds" and ask the Wizard of Oz to help her. The Good Witch of the North also kisses Dorothy on the forehead, stating that no one will harm a person who has been kissed by her. On her way down the Yellow Brick Road, Dorothy meets some remarkable characters: she liberates the Scarecrow from the pole he's hanging on, restores the mobility of the rusted Tin Woodman, and encourages the Cowardly Lion to journey with her and Toto to the Emerald City. The Scarecrow wants to get a brain, the Tin Woodman a heart, and the Cowardly Lion courage; and they are convinced by Dorothy that the Wizard can help them too. Together they overcome a pair of ravening Kalidah and escape from a field of sleep-inducing poppies.

When they arrive at the Emerald City, the companions must wear special spectacles to keep the brilliance of the Emerald City from blinding them; wearing them, everything appears in different shades of green. They are told that the Wizard will only see one of them a day, and that the guard himself has never seen him. When each traveler meets the Wizard, he appears each time as someone or something different. To Dorothy, the Wizard is a giant head; the Scarecrow sees a beautiful woman; the Tin Woodman sees a ravenous beast; the Cowardly Lion sees a ball of fire. The Wizard agrees to help each of them, but his help is conditional; one of them must kill the Wicked Witch of the West, who rules over the Winkie Country.

As Dorothy, Toto, the Scarecrow, the Tin Woodman, and the Cowardly Lion travel across the Winkie Country, the Wicked Witch sends wolves, crows, bees, and then her Winkie soldiers to attack them; but each threat is dispatched by the travelers. Then, using the power of the Golden Cap, the Witch summons the Winged Monkeys to destroy all the travelers except for the Cowardly Lion. The Winged Monkeys dare not attack Dorothy due to the mark of the Good Witch's kiss upon her forehead and decide to carry her and Toto back to the castle of the Wicked Witch. This was the third and final time that the Wicked Witch could command the Winged Monkeys due to the Cap's enchantment.

Dorothy is forced to work as a maid to the Wicked Witch, while the Lion is starved in an effort to make him agree to pull the witch's chariot. But the Lion refuses to do so, because Dorothy sneaks him food every night. Dorothy is also left unharmed because of the Good Witch of the North's mark and the Silver Shoes. When the Wicked Witch gains one of the shoes by trickery, Dorothy in anger grabs a bucket of water and throws it on the Wicked Witch, who begins to melt. The Winkies rejoice at being freed of her tyranny, and they help to reassemble the Scarecrow and the Tin Woodman. So enamored are the Winkies of the Tin Woodman that they ask him to become their ruler, which he agrees to do after helping Dorothy return to Kansas.

The long walk from the Wicked Witch's former palace to the Emerald City is alleviated by Dorothy's use of the Golden Cap, which summons the Winged Monkeys to carry her and her companions to the Emerald City. The King of the Monkeys relates how he and his mischievous people were forced by a powerful sorceress to choose between submission or annihilation; through the Cap, they obeyed first a man named Quelala, then the Wicked Witch, and now Dorothy herself.

When Dorothy and her friends meet the Wizard of Oz again, he tries to put them off. Only under threat of seeing the Winged Monkeys again (who under the Wicked Witch's command attacked him in the past) is the Wizard convinced to allow the travelers in to his throne room. Toto accidentally tips over a screen in a corner of the throne room, revealing a wizened old man who had journeyed here himself long ago from Omaha. He once rose high in a hot air balloon, was swept away in an accident and finally landed in Oz; when the people saw the letters "OZ" on the balloon (in Dorothy and the Wizard in Oz, we find they are his initials), they presumed he was their ruler and at his direction began building the Emerald City. Finding himself in a country of witches, the soon-to-be-designated Wizard saw the need to maintain anonymity—hence his appearances to Dorothy and the others, which are revealed as clever (for the dawn of the 20th century) special effects.

The Wizard tries to persuade the Scarecrow, the Tin Woodman, and the Cowardly Lion that what they lack are not brains or a heart or courage, but faith in themselves. But he still agrees to meet each of them and to give them (without their knowledge) a placebo which brings out the qualities they had all along. In order to help Dorothy and Toto get home, the Wizard realizes that he will have to take them home with him in a new balloon which he and Dorothy fashion from green silk. Revealing himself to the people of the Emerald City one last time, the Wizard appoints the Scarecrow, by virtue of his brains, to rule in his stead. Dorothy chases Toto after he runs after a kitten in the crowd, and before she can make it back to the balloon the ropes break leaving the Wizard to rise and float away alone.

Dorothy turns to the Winged Monkeys to carry her and Toto home, but they cannot cross the desert surrounding Oz. The citizens of the Emerald City advise that Glinda, the Good Witch of the South, may be able to send Dorothy and Toto home. They, the Scarecrow, the Tin Woodman, and the Cowardly Lion journey to Glinda's palace in the Quadling Country. Together they escape the Fighting Trees, dodge the Hammerheads, and tread carefully through the China Country. The Cowardly Lion

kills a giant spider which is terrorizing the animals in a forest, and he agrees to return there to rule them after Dorothy returns to Kansas.

At Glinda's palace, the travelers are greeted warmly, and it is revealed by Glinda that Dorothy had the power to go home all along. The Silver Shoes she wears can take her anywhere she wishes to go. She tearfully embraces her friends—all of whom will be returned, through Glinda's use of the Golden Cap, to their respective sovereignties: the Scarecrow to the Emerald City, the Tin Woodman to the Winkie Country, and the Cowardly Lion to the forest. Then she will give the Cap to the king of the Winged Monkeys, so they will never be under its spell again. Dorothy and Toto return to Kansas and a joyful family reunion.

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