

The Wizard of Oz

Originally written by L. Frank Baum in 1900

Story Summary from Britannica.com

Dorothy is a young girl who lives in a one-room house in Kansas with the careworn Uncle Henry and Aunt Em; the joy of her life is her dog, Toto. A sudden cyclone strikes, and, by the time Dorothy catches Toto, she is unable to reach the family's storm cellar. Dorothy and Toto are still in the house when the cyclone carries it away for a long journey. When at last the house lands, Dorothy finds that she is in a beautiful land inhabited by very short, strangely dressed people. The Witch of the North informs her that she is in the land of the Munchkins, who are grateful to her for having killed the Wicked Witch of the East (the house having landed on the witch), thus freeing them. The Witch of the North gives Dorothy the silver shoes of the dead witch and advises her to go to the City of Emeralds to see the Great Wizard Oz, who might help her return to Kansas. The witch sends Dorothy off along the yellow brick road with a magical kiss to protect her from harm.

On the long journey to the Emerald City, Dorothy and Toto are joined by the Scarecrow, who wishes he had brains; the Tin Woodman, who longs for a heart; and the Cowardly Lion, who seeks courage. They face many trials along their route, but they overcome them all, often because of the Scarecrow's good sense, the Tin Woodman's kindness, and the bravery of the Cowardly Lion. At last, they reach the Emerald City, where the Guardian of the Gates outfits them with green-lensed glasses and leads them to the Palace of Oz. Oz tells them that no favors will be granted until the Wicked Witch of the West has been killed.

The companions head to the land of the Winkies, ruled by the Wicked Witch of the West. The witch sends wolves, crows, bees, and armed Winkies to stop them, all to no avail. So, she uses her Golden Cap to summon the Winged Monkeys. The Winged Monkeys destroy the Scarecrow and the Tin Woodman and cage the Cowardly Lion, but they bring Dorothy and Toto to the witch, who enslaves Dorothy. The witch wants Dorothy's shoes, which she knows carry powerful magic. She contrives to make Dorothy trip and fall, so she can grab one of the shoes. An angered Dorothy throws a bucket of water at the witch, who then melts away to nothing. Dorothy frees the Cowardly Lion and engages the help of the now free Winkies in repairing and rebuilding the Tin Woodman and the Scarecrow, and the friends return to Oz.

Oz does not summon them for several days. When he at last admits them into his presence, he seems reluctant to grant their wishes. Toto knocks over a screen, revealing that Oz is only a common man. However, he fills the Scarecrow's head with bran and pins and needles, saying that they are brains; he puts a silk-and-sawdust heart into the Tin Woodman; and he gives the Cowardly Lion a drink that he says is courage. He and Dorothy make a balloon to carry them out of the Land of Oz, but the balloon flies away before Dorothy can board; Oz leaves the Scarecrow in charge of the Emerald City.

At the suggestion of a soldier, Dorothy and her friends go to seek the help of Glinda, the Witch of the South. They encounter several obstacles but at last reach Glinda's Castle. Glinda summons the Winged Monkeys so that they can take the Tin Woodman back to rule the Winkies, the Scarecrow back to Emerald City, and the Cowardly Lion to the forest to be king of the beasts. Then she tells Dorothy how to use the silver shoes to take her back to Kansas. Dorothy gathers up Toto, clicks her heels together three times, and says, "Take me home to Aunt Em!" She is transported back to the farm in Kansas.