



Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West

By Gregory Maguire

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This is the book that started it all! The basis for the smash hit Tony Award-winning Broadway musical, Gregory Maguire's breathtaking *New York Times* bestseller *Wicked* views the land of Oz, its inhabitants, its Wizard, and the Emerald City, through a darker and greener (not rosier) lens. Brilliantly inventive, *Wicked* offers us a radical new evaluation of one of the most feared and hated characters in all of literature: the much maligned Wicked Witch of the West who, as Maguire tells us, wasn't nearly as *Wicked* as we imagined.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Born with green skin and huge teeth, like a dragon, the free-spirited Elphaba grows up to be an anti-totalitarian agitator, an animal-rights activist, a nun, then a nurse who tends the dying?and, ultimately, the headstrong Wicked Witch of the West in the land of Oz. Maguire's strange and imaginative postmodernist fable uses L. Frank Baum's *Wonderful Wizard of Oz* as a springboard to create a tense realm inhabited by humans, talking animals (a rhino librarian, a goat physician), Munchkinlanders, dwarves and various tribes. The Wizard of Oz, emperor of this dystopian dictatorship, promotes Industrial Modern architecture and restricts animals' right to freedom of travel; his holy book is an ancient manuscript of magic that was clairvoyantly located by Madam Blavatsky 40 years earlier. Much of the narrative concerns Elphaba's troubled youth (she is raised by a giddy alcoholic mother and a hermitlike minister father who transmits to her his habits of loathing and self-hatred) and with her student years. Dorothy appears only near novel's end, as her house crash-lands on Elphaba's sister, the Wicked Witch of the East, in an accident that sets Elphaba on the trail of the girl from Kansas?as well as the Scarecrow, the Tin Woodsman and the Lion?and her fabulous new shoes. Maguire combines puckish humor and bracing pessimism in this fantastical meditation on good and evil, God and free will, which should, despite being far removed in spirit from the Baum books, captivate devotees of fantasy. 50,000 first printing; \$75,000 ad/promo; first serial to Word; author tour. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From School Library Journal

YA?Elphaba, the future Wicked Witch of the West, has gotten a bum rap. Her mother is embarrassed and repulsed by her bright-green baby with shark's teeth and an aversion to water. At college, the coed experiences disapproval and rejection by her roommate, Glinda, a silly girl interested only in clothes, money, and popularity. Elphaba is a serious and inquisitive student. When she learns that the Wizard of Oz is politically corrupt and causing economic ruin, Elphaba finds a sense of purpose to her life?to stop him and to restore harmony and prosperity to the land. A Tin Man, Cowardly Lion, Scarecrow, and an unknown species called a "Dorothy" appear in very small roles... The story presents Elphaba in a sympathetic and empathetic manner-readers will want her to triumph! The conclusion, however, is the same as L. Frank Baum's. The book has both idealism and cynicism in its discussion of social, religious, educational, and political issues present in Oz, and, more pointedly, present in our day and time. The idealism is whimsical and engaging; the cynicism is biting. Sometimes the earthy language seems appropriate and adds to the sense of place; sometimes the four-letter words and sexual explicitness distract from the charm of the tale. The multiple threads to the plot proceed unevenly, so that the pace of the story jumps rather than moves steadily forward. *Wicked* is not an easy rereading of *The Wizard of Oz*. It is for good readers who like satire, and love exceedingly imaginative and clever fantasy.?Judy Sokoll, Fairfax County Public Library, VA Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Review

"It's a staggering feat of wordcraft, made no less so by the fact that its boundaries were set decades ago by somebody else. Maguire's larger triumph here is twofold: First, in *Elphaba*, he has created (re-created? renovated?) one of the great heroines in fantasy literature: a fiery, passionate, unforgettable and ultimately tragic figure. Second, "*Wicked* is the best fantasy novel of ideas I've read since Mervyn Peake's "*Gormenghast* or Frank Herbert's "*Dune*. Would that all books with this much innate consumer appeal were also this good. And vice versa.""--Los Angeles Times""An outstanding work of imagination.""--USA Today."". [a] magical telling of the land of Oz before and up to the arrival of Dorothy and company.... A

captivating, funny, and perceptive look at destiny, personal responsibility, and the not-always-clashing beliefs of faith and magic. Save a place on the shelf between "Alice and "The Hobbit --that spot is well deserved."--Kirkus Reviews""A magnificent work, a genuine tour de force."--Lloyd Alexander, author of the "Chronicles of Prydain "Maguire combines puckish humor and bracing pessimism in this fantastical meditation on good and evil, God and free will, which should...captivate devotees of fantasy." "Publishers Weekly"Listen up, Munchkins. Stop your singing, stop the dancing. The Wicked Witch is no longer dead. But not to worry. Gregory Maguire's shrewdly imagined and beautifully written first novel, "Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West, " not only revives her but re-envisions and redeems her for our times." "Newsday"Children - children of all ages, as Maguire reminds us in this splendid novel - need witches. Gregory Maguire has taken this figure of childhood fantasy and given her a sensual and powerful nature that will stir adult hearts with fear and longing all over again. It's a brilliant trick - and a remarkable treat." "The Times-Picayune"It is to [Maguire's] everlasting credit that he has succeeded so admirably that his book stands as an independent and inspired whole; it is also very close to being an instant classic.... Maguire has hit a home run his first time at bat. That "Wicked is a first novel is remarkable because it is so fully realized, so rich and involving. It is the most seamless interweaving of fantasy and reality since John Crowley's peerless "Little, Big, written in poetic language as graceful as a Ray Bolger tap-dance." "The Commercial Appeal"It is for good readers who like satire, and love exceedingly imaginative and clever fantasy." "School Library Journal

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Patricia Vasquez:

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Sam Stenger:

Reading can called head hangout, why? Because when you find yourself reading a book specifically book entitled Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West your thoughts will drift away trough every dimension, wandering in each aspect that maybe unknown for but surely will end up your mind friends. Imaging every word written in a guide then become one application form conclusion and explanation which maybe you never get previous to. The Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West giving you yet another experience more than blown away your head but also giving you useful data for your better life with this era. So now let us demonstrate the relaxing pattern this is your body and mind will be pleased when you are finished studying it, like winning an activity. Do you want to try this extraordinary shelling out spare time activity?

Avery Thomas:

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