



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

*Gregory Maguire*

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

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## **Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West** Gregory Maguire

When Dorothy triumphed over the Wicked Witch of the West in L. Frank Baum's classic tale, we heard only her side of the story. But what about her arch-nemesis, the mysterious witch? Where did she come from? How did she become so wicked? And what is the true nature of evil?

Gregory Maguire creates a fantasy world so rich and vivid that we will never look at Oz the same way again. *Wicked* is about a land where animals talk and strive to be treated like first-class citizens, Munchkinlanders seek the comfort of middle-class stability and the Tin Man becomes a victim of domestic violence. And then there is the little green-skinned girl named Elphaba, who will grow up to be the infamous Wicked Witch of the West, a smart, prickly and misunderstood creature who challenges all our preconceived notions about the nature of good and evil.

## **Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West Details**

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Author : Gregory Maguire

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**Gregory Maguire**

# From Reader Review Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West for online ebook

## Max Ostrovsky says

From the first page, I couldn't put the book down. I loved it! And as my love for the book Wicked and the Wicked Witch of the West grew, my hatred for George Lucas grew in direct proportion. How could he have gotten it so wrong?

I never pretended to like the new trilogy. It could have been a new story. It could have really delved into the character of Darth Vader, or rather Anakin Skywalker and truly made him tragic.

Instead of trying to fool the audience into liking Anakin by hiring cute kids and bad actors, George Lucas could have created an interesting character. He could have told an actual story.

With Wicked, we get that.

Either a person has read the book or since we live in a culture of anti-reading, most likely has seen the movie. Regardless of which one, the Wicked Witch of the West is a pretty clear cut character.

She is evil. She is green. She is scary.

What Wicked does is take this evil, green and scary witch and turn her into a person we can like and love. And it doesn't do it in a cutesy way where we say to ourselves, "oh what a cute green baby."

She is born a freak. She was not only green, but she had teeth like a shark. And used them! Lost fingers, oh boy! And forget breast feeding!

She had a severe allergy to water.

Her upbringing wasn't too much better. She was outcast. She had to help raise and take care of her beautiful and crazily religious armless sister (who would eventually become the Wicked Witch of the East).

She was ostracized in school. Her roommate Galinda, who would eventually become Glinda, the good witch, could barely stand her.

And despite all that, we grow to like her. She's smart as a whip. She's funny and witty. She's sarcastic and actually quite fun. And she cares for all living creatures. Can you believe that? She even gets involved in a cause to help protect the capital A Animals (like the Lion, those that can talk), who are being rounded up, Nazi like, by the real bad guy of the story: The Wizard.

We see her take a lover and fall in love. We see her lose her lover.

The progress that leads to her becoming the Wicked Witch of the West is natural and logical. And even at the end, crazy as she became, we understand her and pity her, making her that much tragic.

What a treasure trove George Lucas could have used to truly show us a young Anakin Skywalker.

How about this (and I know I'm pilfering from Wicked a bit): What if Anakin Skywalker wasn't a cute kid? What if he was born disabled? What if to be mobile, he needed prosthetics to begin with? Oh sure, we'd still have that battle with Kenobi where he loses a whole lot more to become that scary guy in the black suit, but maybe he had to suffer his entire life being part machine. That'll make Kenobi's later line of "He's more machine now than man" even more poignant.

And maybe he's just a little angry about having mechanical parts? Maybe his first awareness of the force is through his anger. Of course, the beginning would be about how, on his own, through his own strength and integrity, he overcomes the anger and the dark, and chooses the light side of the force.

And he comes to grips with his deformity. And works on his charm and personality to such a degree that he wins a princess (or a queen, whatever).

He could even have a cause that he fights for. Anakin built C3PO, so why not take up for droid rights or some such? After all, he is part machine.

Why, oh why George, did you give us such crap?!

It could have been possible. And then we could have had a sci-fi examination and analysis of the origins of evil. We could have brought more depth and substance to a classic space opera.

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## Amy says

I don't remember the original impetus for reading this book - I do recall discussing it with a particular friend, but whether I read it on her recommendation or because I wanted to all on my own I don't recall.

As is evident from my star-rating, I can't say that I liked this book. I did really like the first chapter, when Elphaba was this awful baby, with her terrible teeth and who would only say 'Horrors', as though she were an infant Kurtz. But each successive chapter I liked less and less, until I finally reached a point where I was reading the book only to finish it, not because I enjoyed it.

One of the main things that didn't work for me was that I felt the author did an inadequate job of introducing people to the world of Oz. While of course there the original Oz books for that, Gregory Maguire had to know that the majority of people who read this book were only familiar with the movie (or nowadays, I guess, the play). No doubt, this is why he kept the slippers ruby instead of silver (which they were in the original book). So an explanation of why it mattered that Turtle Heart (or whatever his name was - it was a while ago that I read this) was a Quadling, or what a Quadling actually is, would have been very much appreciated, and would be something that a more skilled author would have found a way to work into the narrative. Ditto an explanation of the tick-tock clock from the first chapter. If these things are not references to the L. Frank Baum books (which I never read; I'm a movie girl), then it is a double failure on Maguire's part that there is no explanation in *Wicked* as to what these things mean.

Also, while I thought that the premise of the book was interesting - the life and times of the Wicked Witch of the West - I don't think that Maguire really brought anything substantial to Elphaba's story. Her portrayal in *Wicked* does not jibe at all with the character from the movie. The idea that she would have been an outcast because her skin was green isn't terribly original - "It's not easy being green" having been done somewhat famously elsewhere. Besides being derivative, it doesn't make a whole lot of sense on its own, that in a land of Munchkins, talking Animals, Quadlings (whatever they may be) and magic, she would be outcast simply because she is green. Even if one were to accept that, the story presented in *Wicked* does not in any way explain the behavior portrayed by the same character in *The Wizard of Oz* - the one does not lead naturally to the other. While it must have been difficult for Maguire to write the book, that no matter where he wanted to go with the character, her ending was would always be the same, as an explanation of How She Got There, *Wicked* is a total failure.

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## Jason says

I've pretty much stopped buying lunch at my work cafeteria because no matter how often the description of the day's entrée induces those salivary glands into action, the end result is always terribly disappointing. The food *looks* like it should be good—braised beef that seems savory, fresh-looking tomatoes to impart a robust flavor, colorful specks of herbs that hint of a certain deliciousness and make the tummy grumble. So it's a fresh shock to the system almost every time when it turns out to be nothing but a ruse. Doesn't it takes a special kind of talent to start with what appear to be such promising ingredients and to produce with them a dish as utterly bland and as pitifully uninspiring as that cafeteria food invariably turns out to be?

Well, doesn't it?

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## David says

I have a confession: I wanted to read this book because I saw the Broadway show, and the idea of a Broadway show based on a book based on a movie based on a political satire intrigued me. I heard the book and the show were quite different, so I wanted to see the difference.

The biggest difference is that the show is good, and the book is not. I don't want to be mean to the poor author (Gregory Maguire), who has made a fortune and franchise from this book and ones like it, but it's absolutely terrible. It's a fantastic idea, mind you, but the execution is... embarrassingly bad.

Oftentimes, I read a book and see ways I could never be a writer: the word choice, the cadence, the picture and world and emotions the author paints with language -- the distance between my ability to write a little song and, oh, Mozart.

This book, however, had me thinking differently. It had me thinking, "um, dude, I could totally do that." The characters are flat and stereotypical, the plot is jumpy and contrived, the dialogue is ridiculous, the tone is wildly inconsistent... when it tries to be funny it winks too much, when it tries to be a political tale it's too obvious, and... I could go on and on about its badness.

Take this passage, for example. Not only does it read like the author is framing each paragraph around a \$5 word, but also the construction is, well, a little juvenile:

"Journalists, armed with the thesaurus and apocalyptic scriptures, fumbled and were defeated by it. 'A gulfy deliquescence of deranged and harnessed air'... 'a volcano of the invisible, darkly construed'..."

To the pleasure faithers with tiktok affections, it was the sound of clockworks uncoiling their springs and running down at a terrible speed. It was the release of vengeful energy.

To the essentialists, it seemed as if the world had suddenly found itself too crammed with life, with cells splitting by the billions, molecules uncoupling to annihilation, atoms shuddering and juggernauting in their casings.

To the superstitious it was the collapsing of time. It was the oozing of the ills of the world into one crepuscular muscle, intent on stabbing the world to its core for once and for all.

To the more traditionally religious it was the blitzkrieg of vengeful angel armies, the awful name of the Unnamed God sounding itself at last--surprise--and the evaporation of all hopes for mercy.

One or two pretended to think it was squadrons of flying dragons overhead, trained for attack, breaking the sky from its moorings by the thrash of tripartite wings.

In the wake of the destruction it caused, no one had the hubris or courage (or the prior existence) to lie and claim to have known the act of terror for what it was: a wind twisted up in a vortical braid.

In short: a tornado."

I mean, dear god! This is what trying too hard reads like.

The thing that really hurts about this book is that it's such a great IDEA. It \*could have been\* really really good. I think I finished it because I wanted to see if it ever got good. [It didn't.]

What it did do, however, was make the Broadway show that much more remarkable. First of all, the show changes some crucial details to make it, well, better (and shorter), but more importantly, it demonstrates that

the musical theater folks saw something through Maguire's dreadful storytelling -- they saw that the crispy, chocolatey center was worth exploring. So they're already better musicians than me. Given the arc of the Broadway show, they're better writers than Maguire.

I put this book down when I was finished, a bit disappointed in myself for persevering. I picked up Rushdie's *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* and read the first page. That first page was, by itself, better written than the entirety of *Wicked*.

If you have any interest in this book, watch the original movie, read the book, then immediately go see the Broadway show with the original cast. That's right, the only decent way to experience this book is with time travel. Good luck.

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### **Jen says**

Don't waste your time! And don't let your teen read it. I kept reading to the bitter end of this book hoping that suddenly it would all come together in a glorious flash of beautiful, meaningful allegory that would make all the crap worth it. Not even. I was just really mad when I was done that I'd wasted so much time on it hoping that it'd pull through.

Not only did it delve into the kinky, it was just plain boring and didn't make sense to me.

If you're interested in it because of the broadway musical, don't bother either. The only similarity between the musical and this book are the basic identities of the characters. The storylines aren't even the same.

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### **Lyn says**

Dostoyevsky meets Frank Baum.

This was not as much fun as *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* maybe because it is more revisionist than mash-up, parody or spoof.

This is actually, strangely a very mature work but set in Oz and from the perspective of Elphaba the wicked witch. But it was amusing, entertaining, thought provoking, head scratching, etc etc.

Published 2 years before Harry Potter and 4 years before *Phantom Menace*, the influence on both series is apparent. I did not love it, but this was a fun book and I may read more from him.

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### **Jason Koivu says**

Busting out my born-and-raised Bostonian accent, let me just say, this is *Wicked* awesome!

Without taking itself too seriously, Gregory Maguire's *Wicked* takes Frank L. Baum's original work quite seriously, using reverential satire, witty wordplay and just plain silliness to tell a fan's version of the Wicked Witch of the West's backstory. Like a roaster lightly and lovingly giving the roastee a tender "going over", coddling his target out of a deep love and respect, Maguire delicately prods Baum's material, for instance, giving unintended meaning to or investing heavy with innuendo scenes and situations that the originator probably unintentionally left open to interpretation.

The book hinges upon the descent of the central character into a kind of madness. Maguire's Witch becomes a sort of Raskolnikov character, over thinking herself into believing her own mania, such as Dostoyevsky's anti-hero in *Crime and Punishment*. She is propelled by emotion, which she attempts to suppress, and an ideological movement, which she wholly embraces to the point of being enveloped by it. By the end, both have her wrapped within their choking grasp. Maguire's handling of this descent is relatively subtle. He takes his time to lay down some of the important breaking points in the Witch's life that eventually transform her from a little girl into a monster, a very real monster if not for the reasons she is perceived to be one.

I've read *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* only once and have seen The Wizard of Oz movie countless times, so my ideas of how the story goes is skewed towards the Hollywood version. That's good and bad. Good, because this is one of those times when the movie improved upon the source material. Specifically, the movie cuts out a lot of unnecessary fluff that bogs the book down. Bad, because the movie distorts some parts of the book. That's not really a problem, unless you're trying to remember what's what and who's who in this Land of Oz Frank L. Baum created. Maguire relies heavily on the reader already knowing this stuff. If you don't, you'll be a bit lost in a wealth of new characters and creatures coming from Baum's pre-existing fantasy world. Maguire's layering on of politics will probably drag down the story and bore you. Plus you won't be in on some of the jokes! So yes, I'm suggesting you read *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* before attempting *Wicked*.

It's taken a while for me to get around to reading it myself. I was under the impression that its appeal was directed towards women, since they were the only ones reading it. Certainly it has a feminine slant. Most of the principle characters are female. The other inhibitor was that *Wicked* had been turned into an extremely popular Broadway hit, heralded by a seemingly undiscerning, Disney-loving mass. The number of reviews right here on Goodreads by folks who first saw the show, then read this book and gave it a scathing review, seemed to back that theory up. However, that they lambasted it as "too vulgar", "not like the show at all", "too long" and that the musical "summed up the first half of the book in an 8 minute long song!" made me realize this was probably a really good book worth reading. If it makes non-readers hold their nose and back away, that's the book for me!

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### **Nina says**

As far as fairy tales are concerned, adults recall them to be simple moral stories of how things go wrong if you want the wrong things. As fond of them as adults may be, the stories aren't often dissected, interpreted, or believed in for much farther than that.

The brilliance behind Maguire's books, is his capability of understanding that both the fantasy world and the real world can be united by infiltrating the mystical with hard situations, realistic emotions, and simple human spirit. Even in the realms he creates (some which are fantastical, others which are rather simple, and common earthly places) he manages to prove that no matter where you are, life happens. People get jealous, people feel resentments, and hurt. There isn't a sugarcoat and there isn't always a simple solution to

everything.

He does not intend to create a pretty or perfect world. It seems rather, that he intends to take the perfect pretty worlds we are used to, and turns them into something we hate recognizing about ourselves. He fills his pages full of the things humans refuse to admit about themselves and in several cases he actually makes us sympathize with characters who we as children once hated.

It's easier to believe that there is a very blatant line between good and evil, do or don't do. In reality if things were so simple, wouldn't human beings find less struggles?

I love Wicked. The once negatively portrayed green queen of evil from Oz (as I liked to call her) is thrown into very sad situations, situations that seem so bizarre and yet, she feels things the same way we all do. It allowed me, to look at people I had once considered enemies, and see they had human nature built into them long before they became my "enemies", they had feelings that led them to wherever they happen to be now.

Many people might not find a cut and dry moral in this book, they may think it's dry, or that it fails to meet the standards of The Wizard of Oz. I'm not afraid at all to say this darlings... but we're not in Hollywood's Oz anymore.

Fact is, if you properly read Baum's original Oz books, Oz was a pretty morbid and cynical place. Aside from names and places; Wicked, The Wizard of Oz movies, or Baum's Oz books really don't have much to do with each other. They have their own missions.

Just like Elphaba and Dorothy had their own missions.

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### **Keith says**

This book has become increasingly popular, mostly due to the success of the musical by the same name. The truth is however, it's not very good. There are many interesting and intriguing plotlines in the book, and you wait for them to be clarified, and expanded upon, but many never are. Many fantastic characters are introduced, and are hinted at playing an important role later in the book.. doesn't happen. The book doesn't even really give you the background you want on the witch. It is made clear from the beginning that she has an aversion to water, but you never find out why. There are some vague mentions of some connection to the ocean, but it is never followed through. You never even get a really good explanation to why she is green!! That part of the story is very quick, and pretty uninteresting. The book is full of cool little interesting things that you swear will play a part.. but don't. I really wish someone would take this book and expand it to its true potential. The idea for the story is so cool, but the ideas are just so unorganized that it was truly a letdown. My advice, borrow the book, see the musical. It is completely different from the book, but the story is much more thought out. The most disappointing part of the book for me, was the ending. Just awful. Very lame. It's like the author gave up, and just let her melt. No explanation, no insight into the witch. Now, I'm being pretty harsh. I should say that I loved the beginning of this book.. the first half even. But.. well.. the last half.. what a letdown.

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## Claire Greene says

I hated this book. Maybe it was because I was expecting so much with all the hype, maybe because I thought the original idea was so great, whatever. End result, I fucking hated this book. This is a book that makes you want to sit down and re-write it yourself because it is such a shame that such a great idea was so mishandled. I loved the idea of delving into the witches and their past and seeing them from a different view point. I loved the idea of the politics of the different realms of OZ. There was so much source material to interpret in so many ways. But no - the biggest thing I hated was the timeline. It would start with the witches childhood and get really in depth into it - chapters of the family and their day to day lives and the family dynamic. And then it was like the author realized that if they continued on this way, the book would have to be a series and every book in it a tome. So the next thing you know, abruptly, he jumps forward in time. And the explanation of what happened in that gap is only briefly described - if that! It is so jarring. I also felt that the characters were fleshed out during those brief times, but after the jump, And then it would seem almost like they were different characters. Or a variation of the character you had come to know. If there were life altering events during the gap that changed the character's personality, you can't just skip it! Don't spend that much time making the reader get to know the character and then change them without showing how and why! I hated the way the author would spend enormous amounts of time describing certain places or characters or situations in a way that gave the reader the idea that it would be significant and play into the main story. Nope. Which makes you feel so unsatisfied. Imagine an entire chapter (and a long wordy one at that) devoted to a certain character or group of people and then then just drop out of the story completely. Where did they go? What happened to them? Why spend so much time on them to just go no where with it??

Also, after awhile, it really seemed like the author had a definite AGENDA and he spent so much time forcing the characters and the plot to fit that agenda, that it disrupted the flow and felt forced. I often felt like the characters wouldn't have acted that way - given his own description of them! I don't like being preached to. If you want to really write a political book with obvious leanings, then do so. But don't package it like this. And this book could have been a great vehicle for a basic statement on many different things - animal rights, our ideas of "others", our treatment of people different from ourselves, a broad idea of what is good and evil as opposed to what people often label good and evil - but didn't have to be so skewed to the author's personal beliefs. (Animal Farm, 1984, and many others come to mind - I really believe that this story COULD have had the potential to be a classic, had it not been so mishandled.) So many of these concepts were brought up and then abandoned. Or they were brought up and dealt with in a talky soliloquy, and without any real opposing view or anything. It was like the author was determined to present every possible political view he had and, one way or the other, force it into the story. But as he got writing and trying to actually write a STORY as opposed to an editorial opinion piece, he lost track of what he was saying or the point he was trying to make.

So many themes and ideas were a complete mess. Not explained fully, explained too fully, so vague and complicated they were impossible to understand, or more often than not, forgotten altogether. I would have appreciated ANY resolution - even skewed to the author's opinions - rather than what he often offered, which is nothing. It also felt so smug and superior - it seemed like he referenced things for the sake of feeling smart or proving he was informed- like a college student mentioning Nietzsche in conversation, not because he really wants to discuss the ideas or whatever, but because it sounds smart and proves he's beyond such things as keggers.

I just didn't like anything about this book. I stuck with it to the end, hoping that maybe things would change, or maybe things would come together in a way I didn't expect - but nope. I can only assume that it was so popular because of the interesting concept of the book or the fear to admit that they didn't get it or the

broadway play - which I have heard is great and might better explain of the popularity of the book. (People loved the musical and bought the book thinking they would like that too.) Anyway, I wouldn't recommend this book to anyone.

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### **Polly says**

I've been trying to get through this book since last summer, and THANK GOD ON HIGH I finally finished it last night. Given that Wicked was popular with both critics and lay people, AND the fact that there's a wildly successful stage play associated with it, I figured this book couldn't possibly disappoint. And yet...

First, the themes/motifs were all over the place. Animal rights, "otherness", gender, good v. evil, and religion were the major players underlying the plot. And when I say underlying I mean thinly veiled by a meandering story. I kept thinking, he's not really talking about animal rights or religion. He wouldn't be that obvious. But he is. So much so that at times the story appeared to be merely a vehicle for positing his theories on that laundry list of Big Questions. Even then, I'm not sure what his theories are. It all seemed a bit pointless. I never could figure out where he stood on any of the issues, except for animal rights. He also seemed to jump from one theme to the next without any clear transition. Like the animal rights issue. It's all over the first half of the book and then you don't hear one single word about it until the last 40 pages or so. It's like he thought, "oh yeah! I still need one more animal right allusion to make quota..."

Second, this book was toooooooooooooo long. The editor should have worked harder to reign in Gregory Maguire's meanderings. I know I used that word about three sentences ago, but that's what it felt like. He was rambling through his thoughts with me as the unfortunate tag-along.

Finally, this book told me absolutely nothing (save a few gossip-worthy details) about the Wicked Witch of the West that I couldn't have figured out on my own. If it had ever crossed my mind to consider how the Witch ended up so Wicked, I could've saved myself the 406 pages and chalked her behavior up to the classic little girl lost. Poor WWW, she was so misunderstood and mistreated. Now she doesn't know how to behave as an adult because she grew up with a very unsatisfying home life. It's the story half of the current prison population could blame their troubles on, and quite frankly I expected more out of a book that received so much critical praise.

My advice: See the musical. I hear it's fantastic. But then again, that's what they said about the book.

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### **Beth F. says**

Here is yet one more instance that supports the old adage that "hindsight is 20/20," because had I known how much I'd have enjoyed this book, I'd have read it sooner. I have no one to blame but myself for taking all the negative reviews so seriously.

For starters, there are several types of people who should not read this book because it will make them angry. The biggest one is that group of folks who are opposed to S-E-X appearing in books. The sexy scenes in this book are not graphic. They aren't hot. They aren't anything except ye olde average sex scene that for most of us (who are over the age of consent) isn't worth getting bent out of shape for.

And on top of all that, the book is also jam packed with all kinds of issues that make people uncomfortable: Politics. Religion. Science. Racism. Magic. The Occult. Sexism. Class-based societies. Etc.

Mix that with a cherished fairy tale that a majority of us have some childhood history with and you've got a sensitive subject. The story and the characters are one we're all familiar with: Dorothy, the Wizard of Oz, the Wicked Witch of the West, the Scarecrow, Tinman, Cowardly Lion, etc. But in this novel, Maguire has taken these beloved characters and *twisted* them to suit his purposes. The final product is something you will either love or hate. As if the rating didn't already say it, clearly I'm a fan.

I picked this book up because of the hype and had no expectations for reading any of the subsequent novels Maguire has published. But now that the book is over, I find my curiosity has been piqued and I wouldn't mind following up with Son of a Witch to find out what happens next in the political fiasco in Oz and the surrounding territories.

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### **Simona Bartolotta says**

GREEN EDGES.

Is it normal that it makes me so excited?

#### ***One week later.***

Maybe the green edges set too high expectations.

I may or may or may not have skimmed through the last 150 pages (out of 520).

And now I really don't know what to say about this.

The **writing** is very **rich, substantial**, and the story seems, initially, to absorb such qualities itself, but right after you close the book you just *know* that, actually, it left you nothing. And while I know -I experienced- that this story is anything but flimsy, I wonder what went wrong. It's not even that I found it boring as many reviews say, it just told me *nothing*.

I think I will pick this up again in the future. But this time around, it **uninterested** me so much that I am speechless. For the wrong reasons.

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### **Madeline says**

Instead of my usual griping style, we'll do this review in list form.

Things That I Really Wish Gregory Maguire Had Bothered To Explain That Might Have Made Wicked Worth Reading:

- Why Elphaba is green
- Why Elphaba cannot touch water
- The "Philosophy Club" which seemed to be some sort of bizarre sex club which was introduced towards the

middle of the story, and then never mentioned again

-How it's physically possible that Elphaba gave birth to a son, but may actually not have, because she doesn't remember it. (Maguire's explanation is that she was drugged up on sedatives for the entire pregnancy and therefore cannot tell if she actually had a kid. Um...listen, Greg, I know you're a guy, but I assure you, there is no drug on this earth or on Oz that makes a woman *unable to remember giving birth*)

-What the hell the Clock of the Time Dragon was, and how it's able to give puppet shows revealing the Deep Dark Secrets of characters' pasts

-Why Elphaba wanted the magic slippers so much

-The backstory of the Scarecrow and why he hated the Wicked Witch of the West. (The Tin Man and Lion are explained, but I guess by the time he had to come up with a story for the Scarecrow, Maguire had used up all his creative juices. As a result, the Scarecrow just appears with the others at the witch's castle, and even Elphaba can't figure out why the hell he's there)

UPDATE: I didn't want to be a jerk about this, but I am forced to deliver the following public service announcement.

ATTENTION POTENTIAL COMMENTERS: I appreciate the fact that you wish to take time out of your busy day to offer explanations for some or all of the questions I posed above. HOWEVER, before you do this, I advise you to read through ALL THE OTHER COMMENTS THAT HAVE ALREADY BEEN POSTED explaining various aspects of the book that I am too stupid to grasp. IF, after reading every single comment, you still feel that you have something really original and startling to say that has not already been pointed out a million times, then please be my guest and post your comment. If not, please be aware that the book's many flaws have already been explained to me by dozens of people, and one more person telling me "it's a really good book, you just have to read it twenty times before you understand MaGuire's genius!" will not convince me to alter my one-star rating in any way.

Thank you, and have a nice day.

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**Alejandro says**

**I love my physical edition of this novel...while the reading experience wasn't as good as always thought that it would be.**

#### **MANY SHADES OF GREEN**

A thing that I got amazed when I started to "label" this book, in the process of my review, in my virtual shelves of *Goodreads* was how many different genres the novel touches... Politics, Religion, Romance, Humor, Fantasy, Magic, Mystery and even Espionage.

And I was very tempted to select Military too but I opted not.

And certainly the mood and themes of the story embraces all those genres and maybe more.

I knew about this book series some years ago while I was researching about the topic of *Oz* in general and since then I thought that it could be good to read it.

## **LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT... FOR A BOOK'S EDITION**

Some months ago (2013), by chance, I found this edition in a shelf of a local bookstore. I recognized the title of the book and I took it by impulse. The cover was gorgeous with the poster of the musical version **BUT** what stunned me was the detail that this particular edition has the edges of the pages colored in green...

### **GREEN!!!**

Ah?! Honestly I can't think in something cooler to make irresistible this edition.

Those marvelous green edges on the pages of the book sold me the novel right away and I couldn't take back the book on the shelf. Thanks goodness the wicked magic of the credit card allowed me to go out of the bookstore with the novel.

## **THIS IS NOT KANSAS!**

Certainly when I started to read the book, I knew that I wasn't in Kansas anymore! Geez! The Cowardly Lion and the Tin Woodman kiss their mothers with those filthy mouths?! The introduction of the book is like a slap to the readers to make them understand quick and hard that this is indeed an adult book.

You know? I am not a prude, not in the least, but I think that Maguire made a hard effort to make sure that this will be an adult novel since I think that many of the issues touched here could work just the same without the need of some big words and sex scenes, while the drugs had to stay, hehehe, since indeed here the drugs played an important purpose on key moments.

It was like: "well since we have sex, drugs and rock n' roll (well no, no rock n' roll, really, not even on the musical version) this is a story for only we, the adults, sorry kids, you will have to keep busy with the Baum's cute books meanwhile you grow up some years."

Well, C.S. Lewis said that any children's tale that it can't be enjoyed by adults just the same, it's a poor children's tale.

So, facts of life... first, kids aren't dumb, they can understand heavy topics, even more the new generations that grow up with internet as nanny, and second, adults don't need sex, drugs and r... (you got it) to enjoy an intelligent story.

## **IT'S NOT EASY TO BE GREEN**

Since this is a really smart tale, but maybe I had some expectations that affect my final rating of the book.

First, there are really big "jumps" between the chapters and while there some unexpected turns and twists (that one can think that it's something good) but some of those twists were... ah? With him? Really? Geez! And romance left the building!

Later, I really expected an explanation of how a person can turn to be evil or be seen as evil, but Elphaba turned out to be wicked not as evil but as crazy and for reasons really odd.

Also, since the beginning there is something that I don't understand. Elphaba born with green skin, okay, **HERE**, in our beloved Kansas and the rest of the Earth around, it could be a real trouble but hey, they aren't in Kansas anymore, that's Oz, a land where animals can talk and people can do magic!

How odd really can be a person with green skin over there?

Honestly I could be more freak out for a talking goat or lion than watching a person with green skin.

Also, the green skin resulted an odd issue again at some point, you see, Elphaba is in hiding, but hey, she is walking around the city... how good can be in hiding for "several" years if she is supposed to be the only woman with green skin in all Oz?!

What? The Gale Force recluted colorblind people?! Geez!

Also, I have my theories about the physical problem of Nessarose (Elphaba's sister) but since it wasn't approached beyond of being just a birth defect, I don't see the point of her problem.

Even I think that the story was evolving quite fine until Maguire tried to put together his own story with the original story when Dorothy arrives to Oz.

### **WICKED READING**

Besides all my complaints, the book is still a smart vessel to touch sensitive topics of politics, religion and social interaction without worrying to be subjected to harsh critique since he smartly uses characters and themes in Oz and you have to deduce those allegories on your own and at the end, they will be your own ideas and not necessarily what the author wanted to say.

However, the book lacks of some action, all stuff happened in a very appeased tempo.

Nevertheless, I want to try in the future the other books by Maguire, on this *Wicked* series and his other stand-alone novels based on retellings of classic children's books.

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