

THE WIZARD OF OZ

Retold by Pauline Francis



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Introduction

Lyman Frank Baum was born in 1856 in New York, one of seven brothers and sisters. His father owned many businesses and theatres. At the age of seventeen, Baum became a reporter on the *New York World* magazine.

Baum married at the age of twenty-six and had four sons. He earned his living in many ways: as a salesman for his father, as a magazine journalist – and as a writer.

The Wonderful Wizard of Oz was published in 1900, and is Baum's best-known book for children. It tells the story of a girl called Dorothy who is blown to the Land of Oz by a tornado. She sets off to find the Wizard of Oz to ask him to help her return home. As she walks along a yellow brick road, she meets some strange characters.

L. Frank Baum wrote in 1900: "*I wrote this book just to please children. I have tried to make it a modern fairy tale, but I have left out the horrors of the older fairy tales.*"

The book was turned into a musical and many films. The most famous film was *The Wizard of Oz*, which appeared in 1939. An actress called Judy Garland played the part of Dorothy – and she wore ruby red shoes.

L. Frank Baum died in 1919, in Hollywood, at his home called Ozcot.

CHAPTER ONE

The Tornado

A young girl called Dorothy went to live with her aunt and uncle because she was an orphan. They lived on a farm right in the middle of the Kansas prairie. There were no trees or other houses: just the baking hot sun, the whistling wind – and the tornadoes which often blew across this part of America.

One day, the sky was greyer than usual. From the north came the wail of the wind. The corn swayed. Then the air from the south whistled.

‘There’s a tornado coming, Em,’ Uncle Henry shouted to his wife. ‘I’m going to check on the cattle. You take Dorothy down to the cellar.’

Aunt Em was so frightened that she ran to the cellar, leaving Dorothy to follow her. As Dorothy went to pick up Toto, a little black dog, the wind shook the house hard. Then a strange thing happened. The house whirled round and round and rose slowly into the air.

‘I’ll stay here and see what happens,’ Dorothy told herself as she sat down on the floor.

Hour after hour, the house moved and swayed gently until Dorothy fell asleep. Suddenly, the house gave a big