



The Emerald City of Oz

L. Frank Baum (1856 -1919)

Read by:	Phil Chenevert	Format:	MP3 CD in DVD case
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Genre:	Children's Fiction		

The Emerald City of Oz (1910) is the sixth in the series of Oz books by L. Frank Baum. We learn that Uncle Henry is saddled with debt from repairs to the farmhouse from the original story, so Dorothy arranges for Princess Ozma to relocate them to Oz, where they are given lodgings, wardrobes and luxuries. They tour the realm with the Wizard, where we meet a menagerie of new characters – the Fuddles, the Rigamaroles, the Flutterbudgets, the living kitchen tools in Utensia, and the civilized rabbits of Bunbury. In the meantime, in a parallel plot, the Nome King Roquat is plotting an invasion of Oz, and enlists allies from the nations of the Whimsies, the Growleywogs, and the Phantasms. Ozma's Magic Picture gives the people of Oz an advance warning, and Princess Ozma concocts a shrewd plan to defeat the Nome King and another to defend Oz from any future invasions.

Originally intended to be the last in the series, descriptions of the somewhat Utopian social organization of Oz are more extensive than in the preceding stories. Gregory Maguire, author of *Wicked* and *Son of a Witch*, has said that *The Emerald City of Oz* is “suffused with an elegiac quality”.

L. (Lyman) Frank Baum (May 15, 1856 – May 6, 1919) is best known as the author of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. Born in Chittenango, New York, his early interest in writing was encouraged when his father bought him a printing press; he and his younger brother Harry wrote and published produced several journals. His father established a theatre in Richburg, NY, where he wrote, produced and appeared in numerous productions. In 1882 he married Maud Gage, daughter of suffragist Matilda Joslyn Gage. After the theatre was destroyed by fire, the couple moved to South Dakota and opened a dry goods store, which went bankrupt. He then worked for newspapers, moving to Chicago in 1891. In 1897 he wrote *Mother Goose in Prose*, with illustrations by Maxfield Parrish. He followed in 1899 with *Father Goose, his Book*, a collection of nonsense poetry with illustrations by W.W. Denslow, which became the best-selling children's book of the year. Baum and Denslow followed with *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* in 1900, which was an immediate hit.

With the success of Oz Baum moved to Hollywood and produced thirteen additional Oz novels with John R. Neill as illustrator. He wrote numerous other works – 55 novels, 83 short stories, over 200 poems, and an unknown number of scripts. His plans for an Oz amusement park never came to pass. In 1914 he founded the Oz Film Manufacturing Company, but failed to achieve success with films made for a largely non-existent children's audience. Baum was deeply influenced by the fairy tales of Hans Christian Andersen and the Brothers Grimm, and hoped to develop a uniquely American mythology. The Oz books show his imagination and vision, anticipating such things as television, computers, wireless telephones, and augmented reality. His business instincts for theatre, film, and theme park were equally visionary.