



The Road to Oz

L. Frank Baum (1856 -1919)

Read by:	Phil Chenevert	Format:	MP3 CD in DVD case
Length:	4 hours and 17 minutes	Catalog:	DB-1107
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Genre:	Children's Fiction		

The Road to Oz is the fifth of L. Frank Baum's Land of Oz books. Published in 1909, it recounts Dorothy's fourth visit to Oz. The journey begins in Kansas, where Dorothy and Toto meet a wandering hobo called the Shaggy Man. The road splits seven ways, and they meet Button-Bright, a little boy who loses his way, and the fairy Polychrome, the Rainbow's Daughter who danced off the edge of a disappearing rainbow. They find themselves on another "fairy adventure" in the rival communities of Foxville and then Dunkiton. They reach the Deadly Desert surrounding Oz and are transported across the perilous sands in a sand-boat to Oz, where they are greeted by their chums Billina, Tik-Tok, the Scarecrow, the Tin Woodman, and Jack Pumpkinhead, who accompany them to the Emerald City for a celebration of Princess Ozma's birthday, which is attended by just about every character from all the preceding books. After feasting and gift-giving the Wizard sends everyone off in bubble transports.

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.