



# Finding Oz: How L. Frank Baum Discovered the Great American Story

*Evan I. Schwartz*

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**Finding Oz: How L. Frank Baum Discovered the Great American Story** Evan I. Schwartz

A groundbreaking new look at an American icon, THE WIZARD OF OZ.

Finding Oz tells the remarkable tale behind one of the world's most enduring and best loved stories. Offering profound new insights into the true origins and meaning of L. Frank Baum's 1900 masterwork, it delves into the personal turmoil and spiritual transformation that fueled Baum's fantastical parable of the American Dream. Prior to becoming an impresario of children's adventure tales--the J. K. Rowling of his age--Baum failed at a series of careers and nearly lost his soul before setting out on a journey of discovery that would lead to the Land of Oz.

Drawing on original research, Evan Schwartz debunks popular misconceptions and shows how the people, places, and events in Baum's life gave birth to his unforgettable images and characters. The Yellow Brick Road was real, the Emerald City evoked the Chicago World's Fair of 1893, and Baum's mother-in-law, the radical women's rights leader Matilda Joslyn Gage, inspired his dual view of witches--as good and wicked. A narrative that sweeps across late nineteenth-century America, Finding Oz ultimately reveals how failure and heartbreak can sometimes lead to redemption and bliss, and how one individual can ignite the imagination of the entire world.

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