



Return to Oz

Joan D. Vinge

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Author : Joan D. Vinge

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From Reader Review Return to Oz for online ebook

theBookDevourer says

Well, I really devoured that one didn't I. I bought my copy of this book years ago, for 10p from a charity shop. For some reason, I never read it. The film terrified me as a child, I could almost say traumatised. Mombi was the scariest thing ever, the Nome King coming a close second. Yet, I still count it as one of my favourite films of all time. Anyway, back to the book.

So I never read it. It sat gathering dust on the bookshelf of my old room in my Mums house until finally 14 years or so after I moved out on my own my Mum declared she wanted to redecorate so would I please come and remove the books that I wanted to keep, the rest would be heading back to the charity shop. I went back home and gazed in delight at the books that had made my childhood bearable. I packed up my Narnia collection, let out a little squee at my copy of Raspberries and other Trifles (a book in the same vein of Dahls Revolting Rhymes), grinned at my Paddington omnibus and shed a tear as I remembered my Dad reading The Complete Winnie the Pooh to me. I confess, Return to Oz never even got a look in. Around a week later my Mum appeared for one of her regular visits bearing a bag of books she was convinced I had forgotten. And that is how this book came back to me.

I'm not really sure what made me pick it up and begin reading it. Possibly because I needed to escape Westeros for a while. I found myself swept away by the story that I had loved as a child. I could picture (although I didn't need to, my copy has the lovely colour prints of the film in) every moment. My other half periodically looked over at me reading and would say in shock "You read all that in the last ten minutes??".

Yup, I devoured it. No, it probably won't be read again for at least another ten years but then i don't need to. It's a story that will stay with me forever and for that, I'm thankful.

Kristina says

For someone who has never read The Wizard of Oz and can only go off of what she's seen in the 1939 classic with Judy Garland, I must say that I did a pretty good job with keeping up with the story line! This book was a very light read and I enjoyed reading a book that didn't make me think too much about what was going on and had characters that were very much likable. My favorite character was Jack the Pumpkin, because he had such an innocence and loving nature to him that just made me feel happy whenever the narrator talked about him.

The only problem that I had in the book was that sometimes the description of the places that Dorothy went to (whether in Kansas/ Oz) was hard to picture. HOWEVER, that's such a minuscule problem compared to the rest of this book. Now I need to go find The Wizard of Oz and read that book!

YouTube Review: <http://youtu.be/o8HbVUYVYr0>

Check my channel out and subscribe if you like what you see. Thanks :)

Sati Marie Frost says

Anyone reading this should first be aware that it is not a novel like the L. Frank Baum Oz books; rather it is a novelisation of the Disney film *Return to Oz*.

I am undecided whether I think this is a good book or not, because it's hard to tell what demographic it was intended for. I vaguely remember being terrified by the movie as a small child, and it is not something that I would want my kids to watch when they are under the age of five or six (I don't currently have kids; I'm just thinking of the future) as I found some of the scenes very disturbing. However, the book as it is written is really only suitable for very young children: the writing is very basic and unlikely to appeal to older kids unless they were huge fans of the movie and are reading it for that reason.

The best thing about the book, IMO, is the photographs. They are still shots from the movie, and they are quite lovely, and surprisingly clear for a book that was published in 1985. I particularly like the pictures of Ozma, who is as beautiful as I remember.

I do find that the book is let down by the writing. It's always going to be very difficult to compress a film of a few hours into a short book, but this (only partially successful) compression has resulted in several places where sentences seemed like total non sequiturs, and I had to backtrack to see if my eyes had somehow skipped past an explanation of how we got from sentence A to sentence B. I was reading this book to myself, but I imagine that if I were reading it out loud to children older than about 3 or 4, they would likely pick up on this.

Due to this, as well as the fact that some of the scarier parts of the movie have been excluded or glossed over (like Princess Mombi's collection of heads, or the fact that the doctor at the mental clinic died in the storm), I am assuming that this was intended for very young children, and as such it is quite charming, but older kids or adults who are expecting the sparkle of Baum's novels may be disappointed.

Elizabeth says

Since I was a huge fan of The Wizard of Oz, I pounced on the sequel as soon as I saw it in the store. It was tied into a movie and both the book and movie were rather dark. I do remember reading this book the morning that I took the SSAT(Secondary Schools Admissions Test) in the 6th grade.

Matt says

I read this aloud to Melia, and we finished while on vacation. I bought this book when I saw it at a book fair because I remember seeing the movie as a child. It was pretty ready to be done with it about 30 pages in, though. Either the adaptation wasn't very good, or the story didn't age well, or I just aged out of it! In any case, Melia was enjoying it, so we kept at it.

Sarah says

This is based off of a movie from my childhood.

Margret says

I loves this book and also the movie. Good job!

Jared Barker says

I feel like the book didn't do as well of a job as the original did. Maybe it's just nostalgia, but I greatly prefer the first book.

Marion Hudson says

This book has a creepy storyline, but it's engaging.

Ethan says

The Wizard of Oz is my favorite book.

There's a bit of a funny story regarding what got me into The Wizard of Oz. When I was in eighth grade, I learned of a line by McFarlane Toys, entitled "Twisted Land of Oz." It's a gory, Tortured Souls-esque take on the Oz mythos, and after looking at it, decided to give the original book a read. It's crazy how things can get people interested in stuff, don't you think? But anyway, the moment I read the book, I fell in love with it, and it's been my favorite ever since. I'm also a fan of the Andrew Lloyd Webber musical, itself based on the classic movie.

Anyway, earlier this year, I decided to give Return to Oz a watch. I'd never seen it before, as I was more a fan of animation growing up than of live-action, nor do I remember seeing it in the aisles while wandering the video store back in the day. Which is probably a good thing, because if I'd seen this movie as a kid, I'd be pretty messed up as an adult. And not in a good way. After watching the movie, I quite enjoyed it, and when I found out there was a novelization, just had to give it a read. And what are my thoughts?

The cover says the novelization was based on a screenplay, but doesn't differ significantly from the actual movie. The book even goes into some detail on minor characters, stating that the Wheelers - you know, the freaky masked dudes who harass Dorothy and co. - were actually enslaved by Princess Mombi when she rose to power. It's also more descriptive in some scenes, such as when Dorothy finds Princess Mombi's sleeping head for the first time - makes the moment even creepier than it was in the movie. It further makes subtle references to the Nome King and Princess Mombi resembling Dr. Worley and Nurse Wilson from the hospital scenes, and them being played by the same people; in the Nome King's case, it describes his face as

“frighteningly familiar in spite of its alienness to Dorothy.” Nicely written - and the novel’s depiction of the mental hospital scenes is an appropriately chilling read. Probably the only major difference is that it includes a deleted scene, where Dorothy is initially made ruler of Oz, but turns down the position, viewing Scarecrow as the rightful one to hold that authority.

Another plus point for the novel is that it includes color photographs from the movie. Not only is it a good selection (and at least with my copy, they haven’t lost much coloration, despite the book being over thirty years old), but they’re enjoyable to look at. I’m a geek for 90’s pop culture, and to a lesser extent that of the 80’s, so I find the photographs to give off a nostalgic vibe - and does anyone not love nostalgia? I know I do. Even the captions for the photos are nicely written, if a tad spoilerific, and one caption was something I didn’t notice when watching the movie for the first time: that the Nome King looks increasingly human as Dorothy’s friends are turned into objects.

The book isn’t a particularly long read, at only 23 chapters, so it’s great if you’re looking for a book that can be finished quickly. If there’s anything I would change about it, that would be to use different cover art. It’s to be expected that the novelization would use the movie poster for its cover, but I would have used another, if only for a bit more story accuracy. Because despite being depicted on the cover, the Lion, Scarecrow and Tin Woodman actually play a far smaller role in the movie, no doubt confusing fans who read the book first. A more accurate cover, from an old Japanese VHS release: <https://auctions.c.yimg.jp/images.auc...> Granted, the movie didn’t come out in Japan until nearly a year later, so not sure if the poster would have existed then, but I still would’ve tried to use a more accurate cover, rather than one presumably based on an earlier draft. But that’s just me being nitpicky. Another detail I like is that the beginning of each chapter, when acknowledging the number, has a little picture of the yellow brick road - a nice inclusion.

So yeah, if you’re a fan of Return to Oz, or of the Wizard of Oz in general, I totally recommend the book. If only because it’s a throwback to the 80’s, and to a classic example of unintentionally scary kids’ movies.

Rating: 4 out of 5

Holly says

I love this movie and needed a light diversion when I couldn't sleep one night. It's kind of refreshing to read a story that moves so quickly, yet not too fast. Although having grown up watching the movie, it is a bit funny to read a book based on the screenplay because they're practically identical. Except there are a few added details I loved--like Aunt Em painting Dorothy's face (which Lydia loved).

Mischenko says

This book is a Shabby Sunday feature @ <https://readrantrockandroll.com/2017/...>

After Dorothy’s original return from Oz, Aunt Em and Uncle Henry tell her that Oz was never real, but Dorothy finds a key from Oz and realizes that it simply isn’t true. A wicked storm returns her to Oz, but she finds that it’s nothing like it was when she left.

I read this many years ago after watching the movie featuring Fairuza Balk. The book is way better than the movie, in my opinion, because it really gets into the characters and their feelings. It covers the entire story of the movie, but also has added extras from the original screenplay that weren't in the movie.

The writing is simple and this is a quick, easy read that's even suitable for upper elementary readers. Although I remember the movie being a little scary, the book isn't as bad and I wouldn't hesitate to read it out loud to my younger kids. There are also photographs from the movie which make it even more enjoyable. Even though I would prefer Baum's original Oz books over this one, it's still one that I'll keep on my shelf for the nostalgia. This gets a 3.5-star rating from me.
