



Making of the Wizard of Oz, The

Aljean Harmetz, Margaret Hamilton (Introduction)

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how the film was made and describes the Golden Era of movie making in the 1930s and '40s at Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

Making of the Wizard of Oz, The Details

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From Reader Review Making of the Wizard of Oz, The for online ebook

Doyle Nathan says

The kind of book that tells you all you want to know without ruining what your original perception of the film. There's some serious ups and downs and at times (I am surprised how the film was ever even made). The Wizard of Oz has its own meaning to each of us, but I think the book teaches us an even bigger lesson..Movie buffs will love the intricacy, book worms will be through this in a few hours, and people who loved the film but wondered what went on behind the scenes and want a book that will keep you interested, this is definitely for you.

Barry says

Great behind the movie making stories.

Colleen says

The intro interview with the Wicked Witch of the West was AMAZING! But the book was so detailed I found myself skimming.

Alicia says

the wizard of oz is one of my favorite movies & i thought this book was just fascinating! it spilled juicy details about everything involved with the wizard of oz, from the munchkins & judy garland to the creation of the sets & the elaborate makeup & costumes. a great one for anyone who loved - or still loves - the wizard of oz and all the magic involved with the making of one of the greatest movie fantasies of all time

flannery says

Who am I, Erin Zona? Jk. I only read three chapters but they were great chapters: munchkins, special effects, and accidents. No mention of that munchkin suicide, must be a coverup.

Janet Licari says

Very comprehensive and well written.

Jaellayna Palmer says

Movie nerds like me will love it. And even non-nerds will enjoy the chapter about the special effects. Something for everyone in this book.

Cate says

This was an awesome read! Such detail of the movie magic that went into this movie! It is a beloved movie for all!!!

Emma Larsson says

I saw the book, I bought it and I read it! It took an hour. I was charmed by this book!

I love the Wizard of Oz; as a story, as a concept and as the movie. I also love the 30's Hollywood and stories, movies, music and actors from that time. Listening to (or well, reading) the interviews in this book were amazing! There were interesting note after interesting note and comments by the actors and working crew that made me both awe, laugh and slightly gasp.

None of it felt overly dramatic just for the sake of making it dramatic, like many documentaries like to do. Out of all the stories I've read about the making of this movie, this is one of those that feels the most authentic. It was clear and it was easy to understand, and it was wonderful to read!

McKinley Groves says

First book that I read about the studio production of a film, and what a great introduction to this type of book! Very well written, keeps your intrigue, and very factual about all stages of production. Harmetz did a wonderful job of capturing the essence of film making for all to see, a well deserved book for a classic film.

Zach Koenig says

After recently reading the Gregory Maguire novel "Wicked" and being thoroughly disappointed in its destruction of the Wizard of Oz "canon" material, I decided to give this book a read to get the REAL story behind the Wizard of Oz film. In this case, the old axiom "the truth is better than fiction" proved to be true in spades.

Put in the simplest terms, this is really the only "Making of Oz" book that ever needs to be produced. Why? Because it discusses EVERY SINGLE aspect of the film in detail that will likely never be matched. The key areas that this book focuses on include: Scripts, Music, Casting, Directors, Filming, Special Effects, and Critical Reception. In each one of those areas, author Aljean Harmetz does a truly remarkable job of understanding the "why" behind everything. Every decision made had a reason behind it, and Harmetz was

extraordinarily successful at deciphering those reasons (whether person, political, or other).

In fact, about the only "knock" I have on this book is that, at times, it would go into too much detail for just the casual "Oz" fan. For example, not only do we learn about how the four directors who worked on the picture did things differently while on the set, we also learn about their backgrounds going right back to childhood. Hard-core movie buffs will revel in this information, while others (like myself) might gloss over it a bit and again become engaged when Harmetz takes us back to the "Oz" angle.

Also, the book (as the title indicates) not only gives a history of the film, but also a sort of de facto history about MGM Studios as a whole. Having never really studied filmmaking at that time, I found it to be quite interesting how, back in those days, actors were contracted to studios and only loaned out if it was financially suited to their "lender". In fact, most of the "Oz" cast was taken right from the MGM lot, so to speak! This is in stark contrast to today's filmmaking, where actors are "free agents" of sorts, signing with whoever will give them a star vehicle and the most money.

Thus, I would recommend this book to anyone with even a passing interest in how "The Wizard of Oz" was created, from mind to page to screen. History buffs will savor every fact about the directors/actors pasts, while the casual fan (because of the way that book is paragraphed) can skip over some of that to get to the "Oz parts". So, don't waste your time with "Wicked" and its tangled philosophical/political web...this is the true history of Oz.

Don LaFountaine says

I really enjoy behind the scenes books, especially about movies I really love. The author really researched the movie and added interviews to the story. It went beyond what one would expect about a "Making of..." book. This book is thoroughly detailed and each chapter breaks down major points of the making of 'The Wizard Of Oz'. Though I found her ready dismissal of sentimentality a little "put-offish", I enjoyed reading this book. I learned the movie had 10 writers and 4 directors, amongst other facts that had me muttering "wow" and/or sometimes chuckling. I would recommend it to anyone who likes the movie or is simply interested what it was like to make a movie at MGM in the late '30's.

Crystal says

As an avid fan of the movie, I've been wanting to read this book for a while. I was fortunate to be able to find a copy. For anyone who loves the movie, I highly recommend. It's amazing all the details the author has incorporated, including her interviews with the ever popular late Margaret Hamilton, whose 12 minutes on the screen in this production, has indelibly made her the most famous wicked witch of all time! I truly enjoyed her. May the story live on forever!

Sozie says

I love Wizard of Oz and this was so much fun to read, great background, stories you may not know and an inside look at how the movie was made. I only gave it 4 stars because there are some sections I just wasn't interested in (a LOT on the politics between the studios/directors/producers etc and the heavier technical

pieces like audio/backgrounds, etc) - these parts were interesting, I just didn't want to read quite as much about them, a little too long. Otherwise awesome!

Tristan Robin Blakeman says

Super-fun fast read - some rather stilted and awkward prose now-and-again, but that's not the reason one would be reading this book anyway! This book is just chock full of anecdotes and trivia tidbits about the making of the universal favorite "Wizard of Oz" film. Also, there is a lot of background on the studio politics regarding the production of the film which I found fascinating. Definitely not a book for "fangirls" - there are few photographs, etc. A well-researched and fascinating read.

Jim says

The best book I have ever read on the studio system, this takes you inside MGM to witness the creation of the now-beloved classic. Shows how movie studios of the day really were factories, turning out a movie a week like clockwork, 52 movies a year, sometimes mercilessly at the expense of the talented people who oiled the machine.

Sean says

Funny thing is, I hadn't seen this movie for 30 years or so, probably because Margaret Hamilton's wicked witch and her freaking flying monkeys scared the green you-know-what right out of me.

But the family, including my 8-year-old, sat down the other day to watch. The verdict from the adults: Hmm, this is much worse than we expected. Emma's judgement was harsher: it's lame.

So I picked up this book to try and remember what all the fuss was about in WofO, which had (has?) successful TV returns annually since the mid-50s.

The book gives a good glimpse of the movie-making world in the last 1930s, and includes many interviews with cast members, including Hamilton. Great behind the scenes deets about the munchkins (they weren't as raunchy as everyone says!), the actors (the gentleman who played the Wizard smuggled in martinis in his briefcase each day), and the special effects (how do you make a witch on a broom skywrite, anyway?).

Melody says

I remember so well the nights the Wizard of Oz would be scheduled to come on TV. We planned our week around it. It was so magical and year after year it retained its spell. I enjoyed reading about the process and challenges encountered while making the film. Glad I took the time to read this book.

Justin Decloux says

I expected a puff piece and got a wart and all looking into the studio system instead! Good compelling stuff.

John Haake says

WAY too much MGM politics (straying far from the topic of all things Oz). That was quite a bit of boring stuff to wade through for all the good stuff.

When on topic -- and personal interviews, this book was excellent.

My wife and I read it together and both felt the same way. At 50% of the way through we were going to take a vote to see if we should skip it and move on. We decided to continue. The continues with its on-again-off-again style -- but the little nuggets along the way were good enough to keep us reading.

After reading the book we watched the film once again ... and now with a lot more appreciation for the grand accomplishment that the film was.
