



Sitting around the Campfire, telling the story, were:

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About the Author

Lyman Frank Baum was born in New York on May 15, 1856.

As a child, Baum was shy and was often schooled at home. He was also known to retreat into his father's library, and spend hours reading his favorite books. When he was thirteen years old, Baum was admitted into Peekskill Military School. He soon left the school as he found the atmosphere oppressive, and the daily exercises too much of a physical strain.

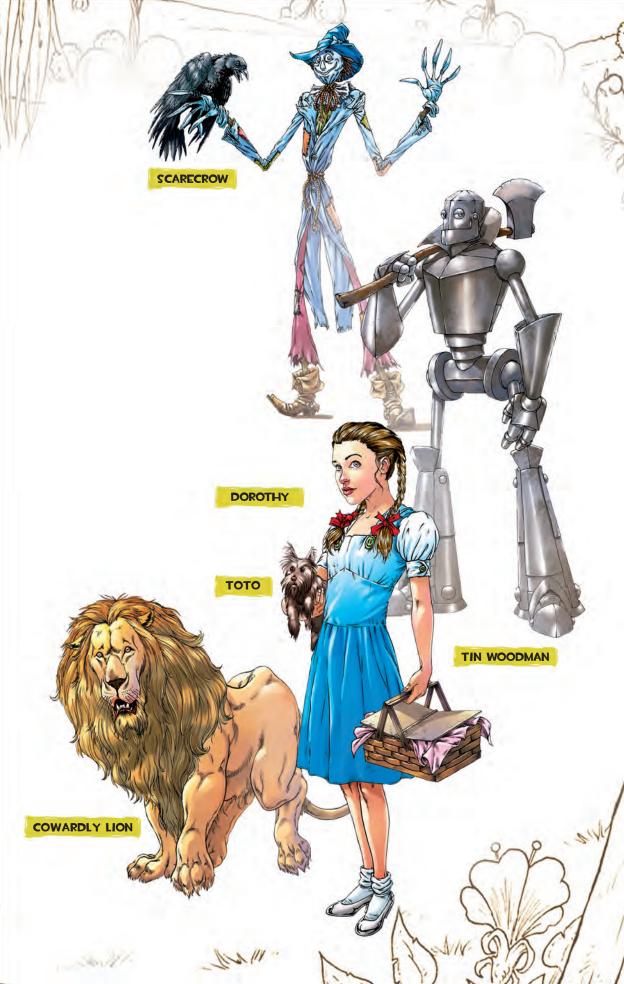
He then resumed his interest in literature by studying creative writing. With the aid of his father (who had made a great deal of money in the oil business), he purchased a printing press. He used the press to develop his own newspaper, *The Rose Lawn Home Journal*, and wrote articles, poetry, and editorials.

By the time he had turned twenty-five, Baum had developed an interest in the theatrical arts. In New York City, he managed an opera house, wrote plays, and also acted in his own play *The Maid of Arran*.

After leaving theater, Baum entered into a private business which failed. He then resumed editing a newspaper called *The Saturday Pioneer*. In 1882, he married Maud Gage. It was Maud's mother who guided Baum to success when she suggested he publish some of his nursery rhymes. Published in 1897 as *Mother Goose in Prose*, the collection was a huge success.

In 1900, Baum published his most famous work, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. The book was a phenomenal success and Baum then engaged himself in publishing a wide variety of works.

At the time of his death in 1919, Baum had written no less than thirteen sequels to his first Oz book, and several other children's books under various pseudonyms.

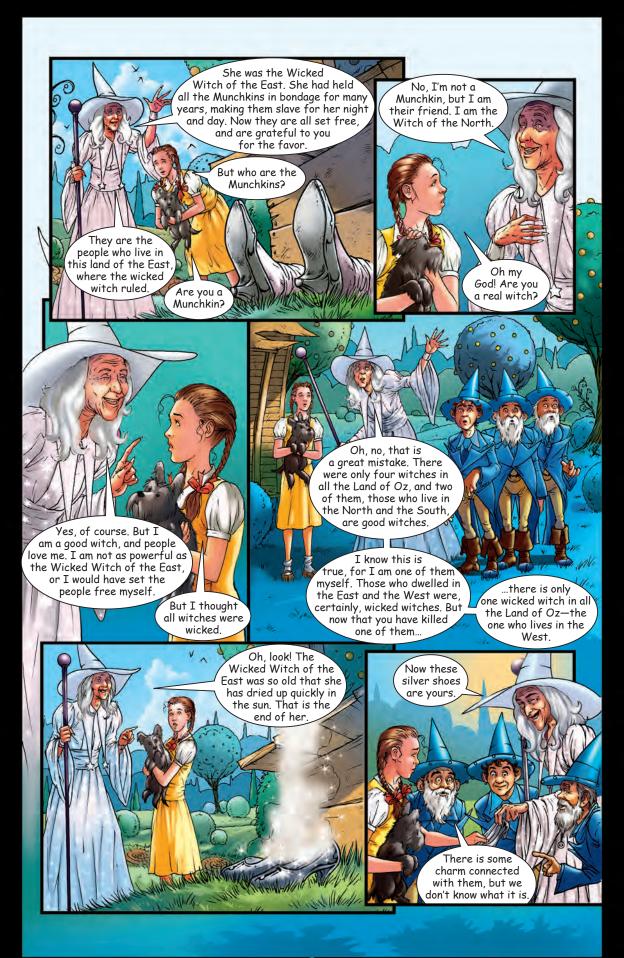


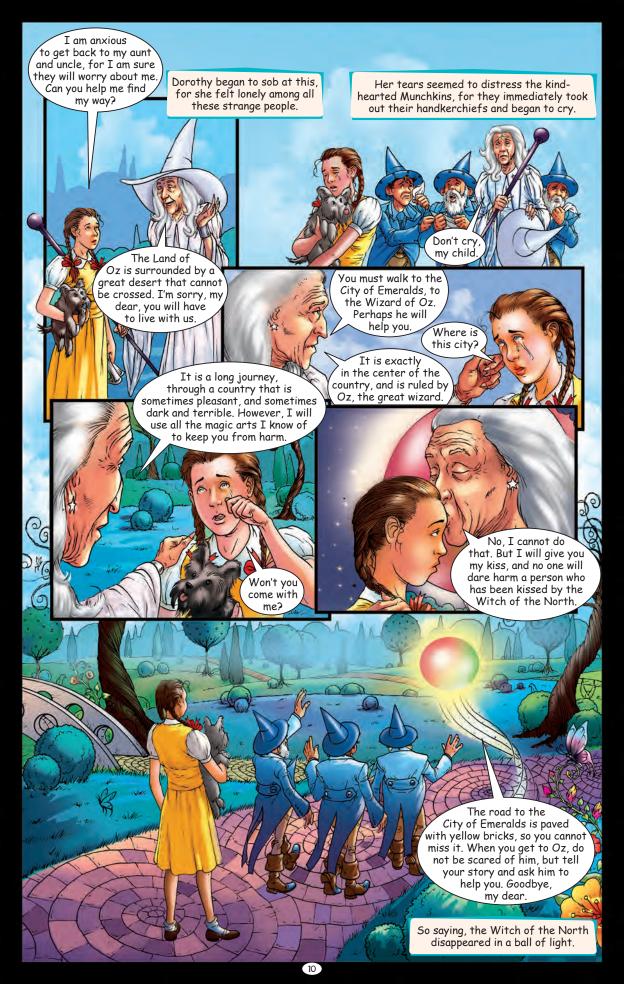






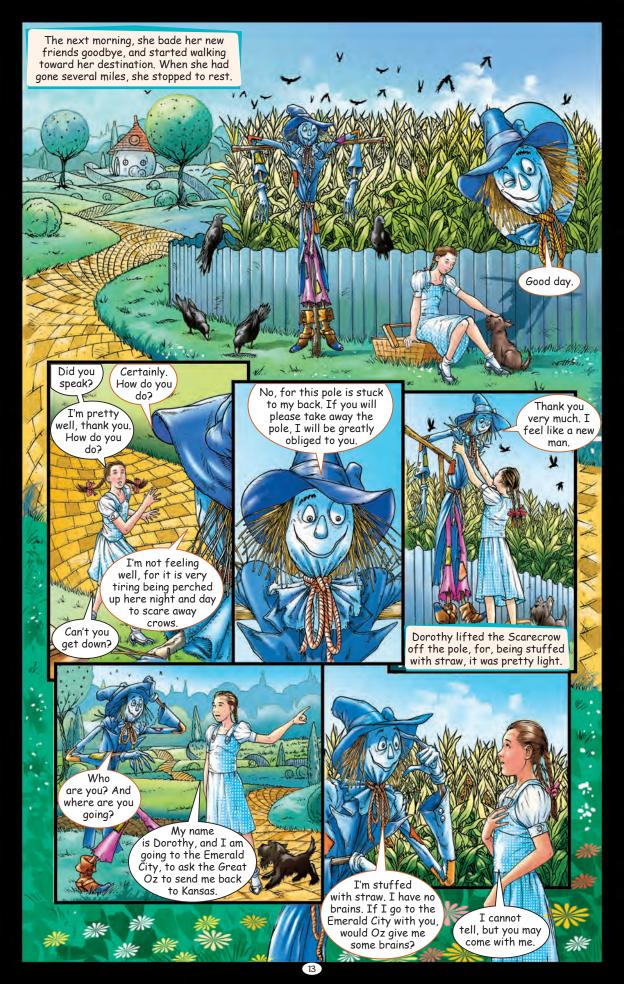


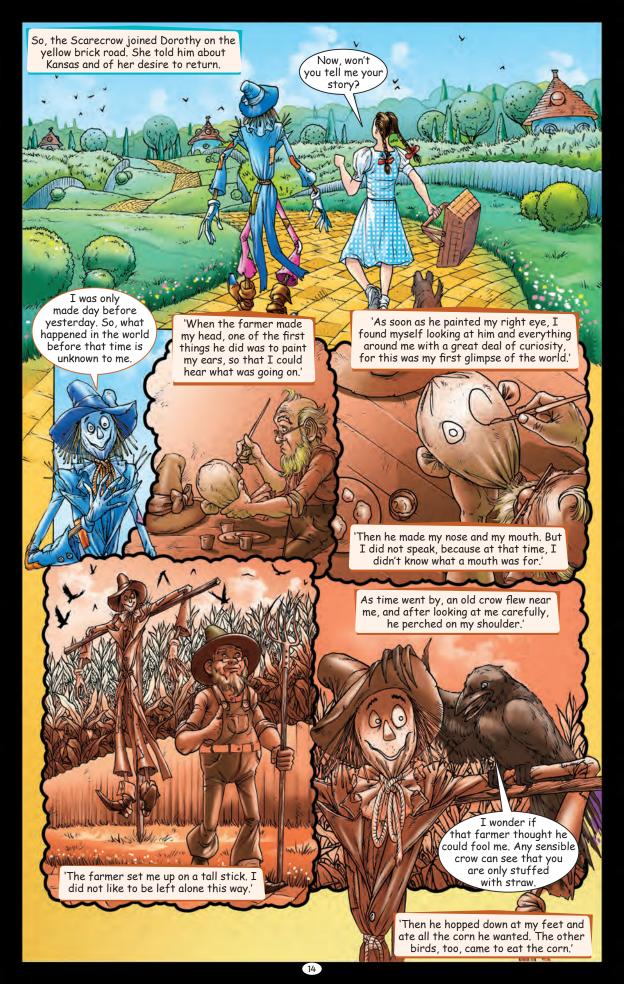






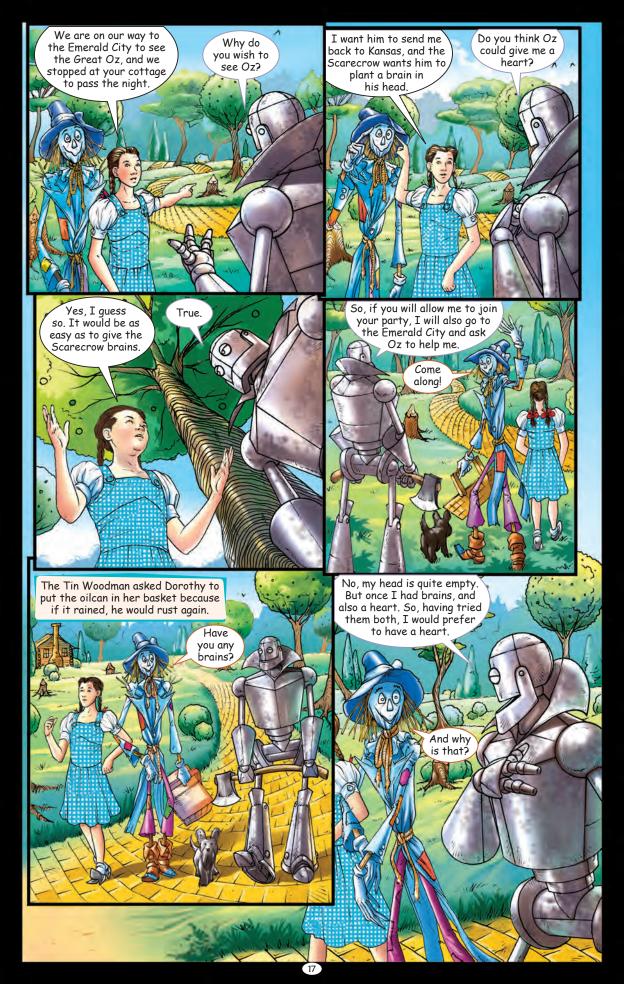


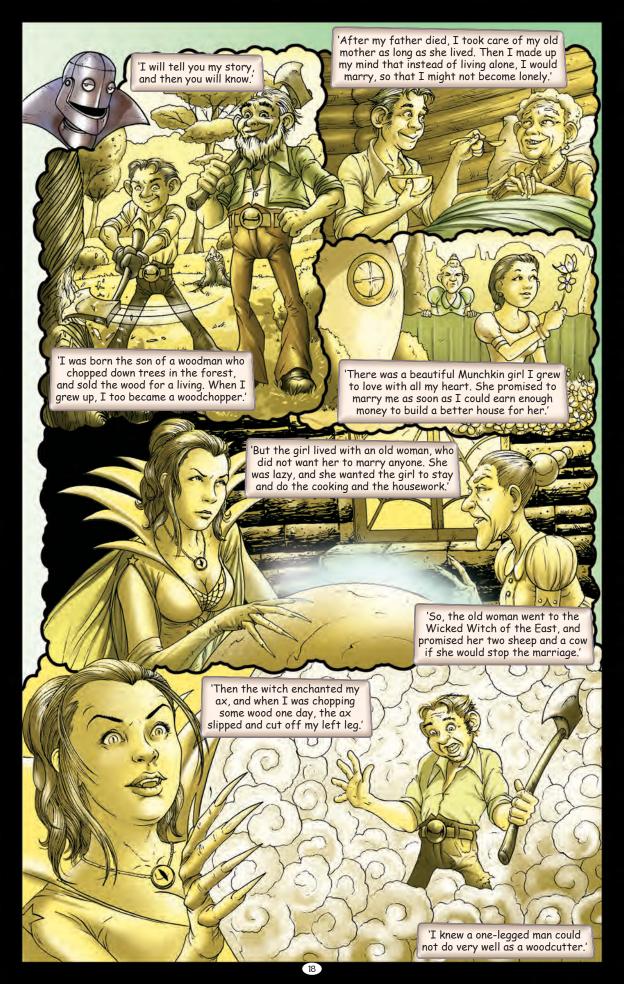


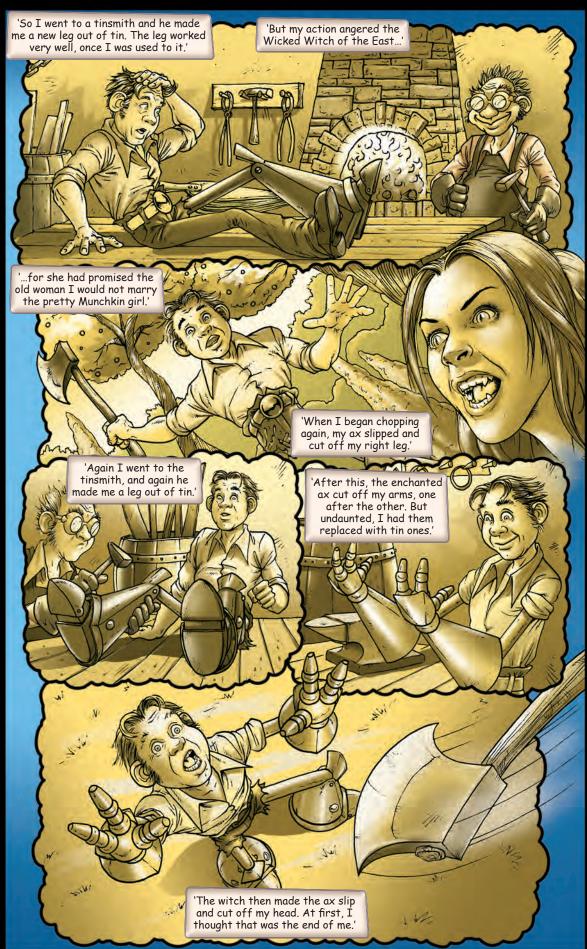


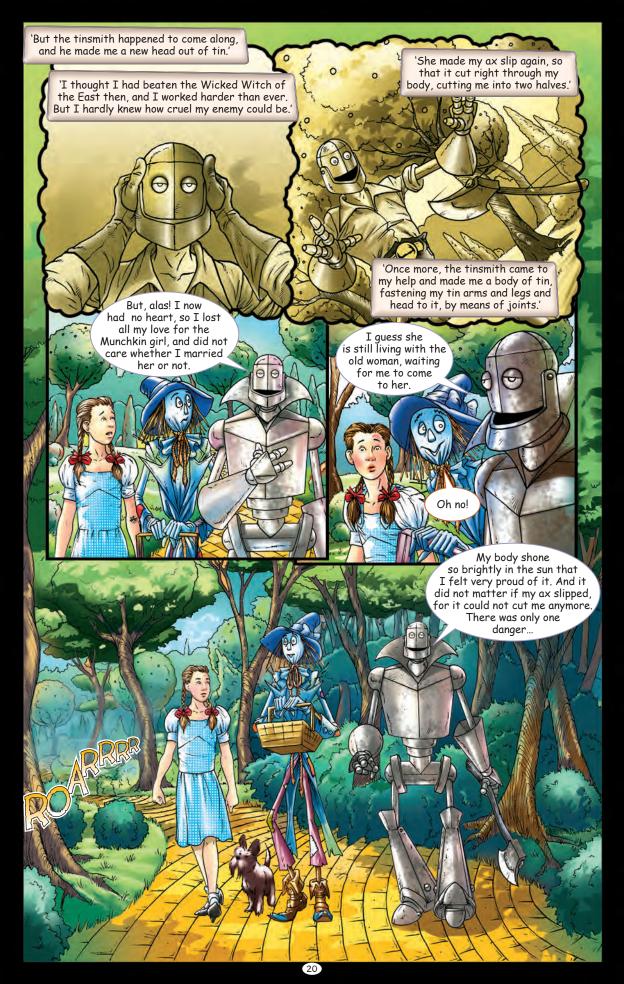








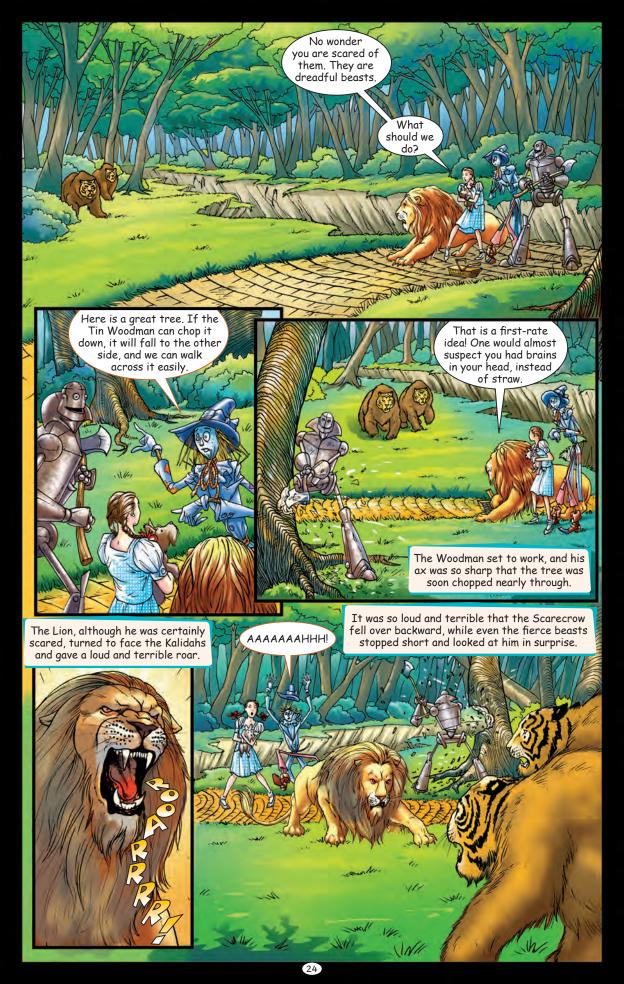


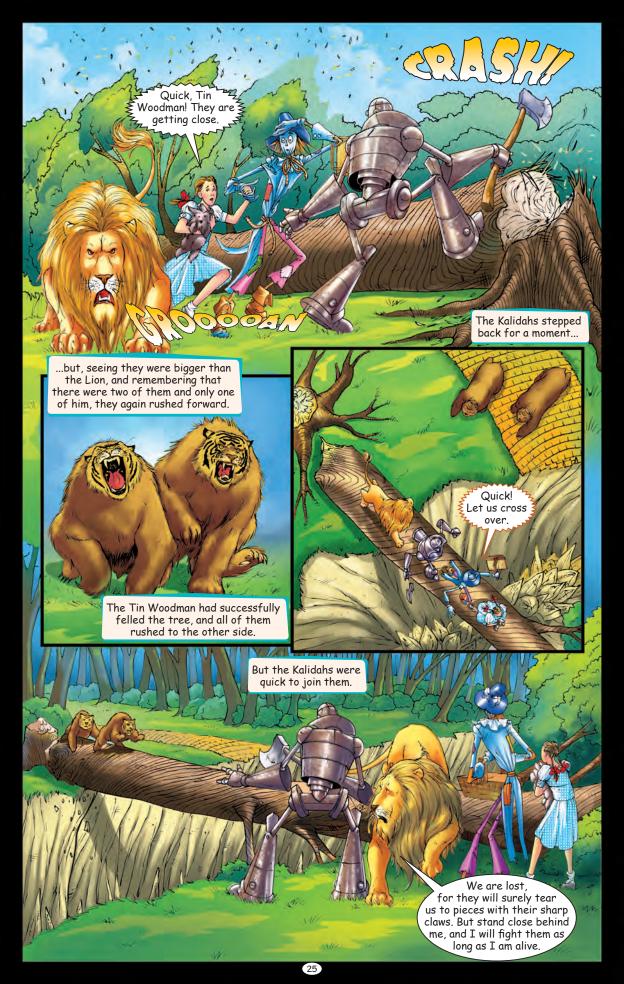


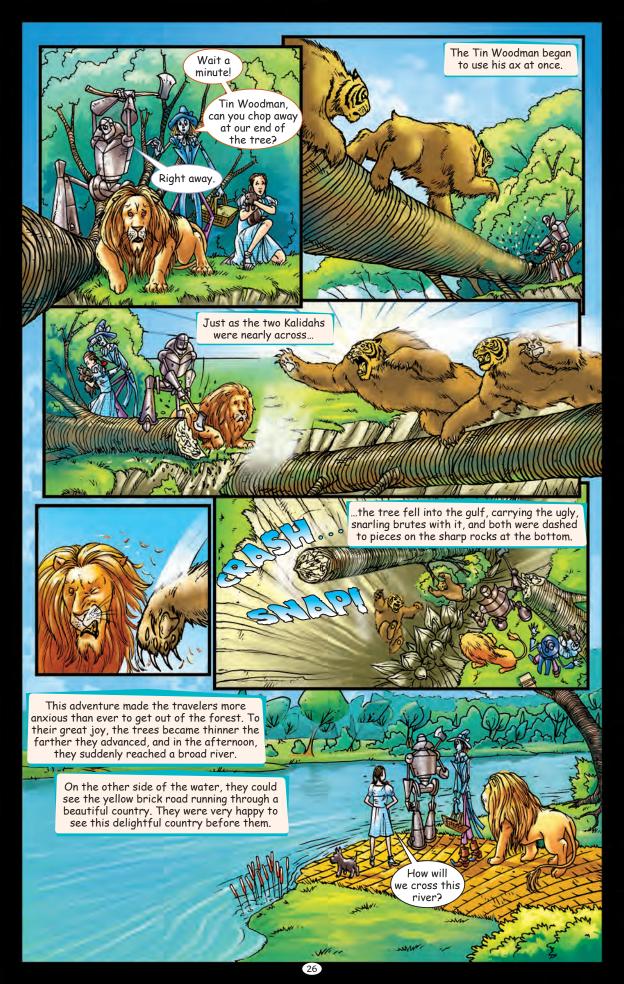


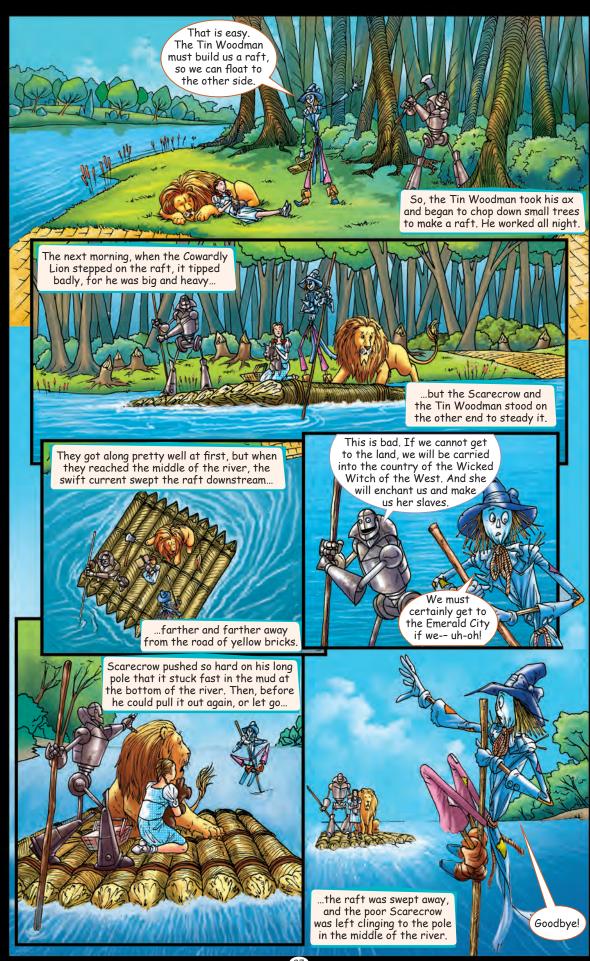


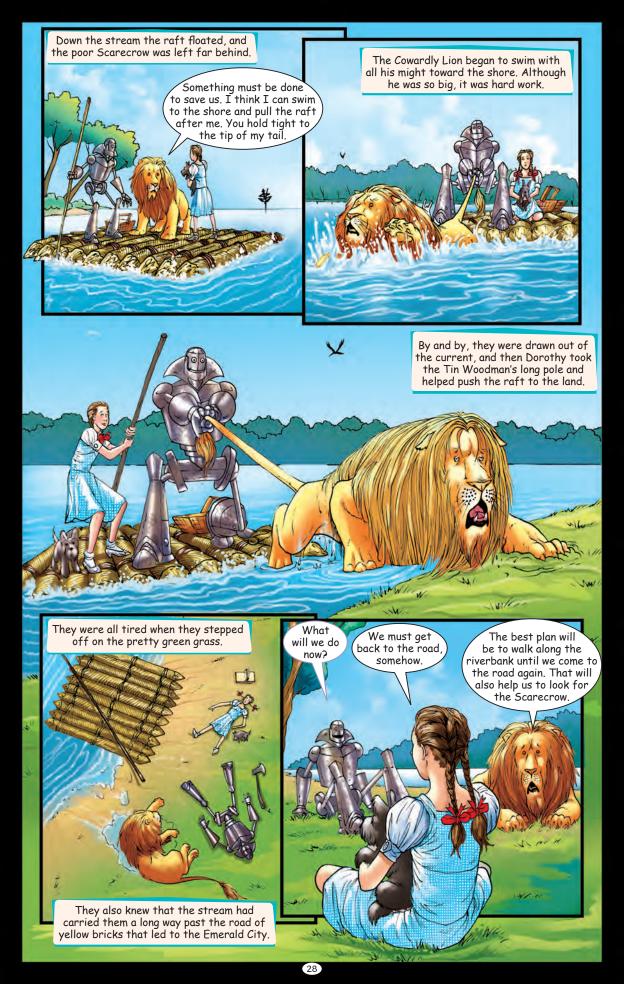




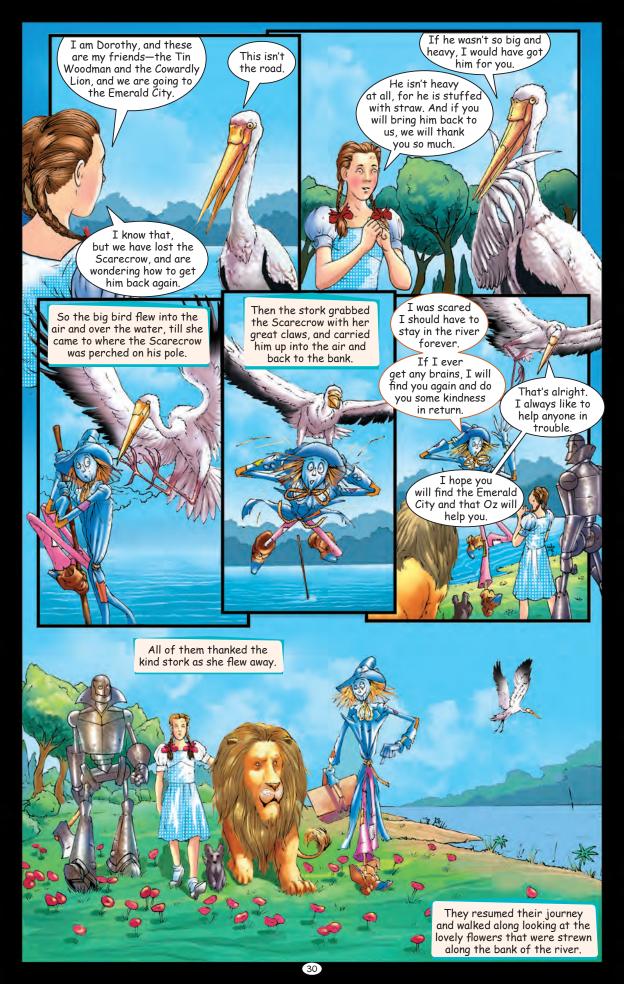


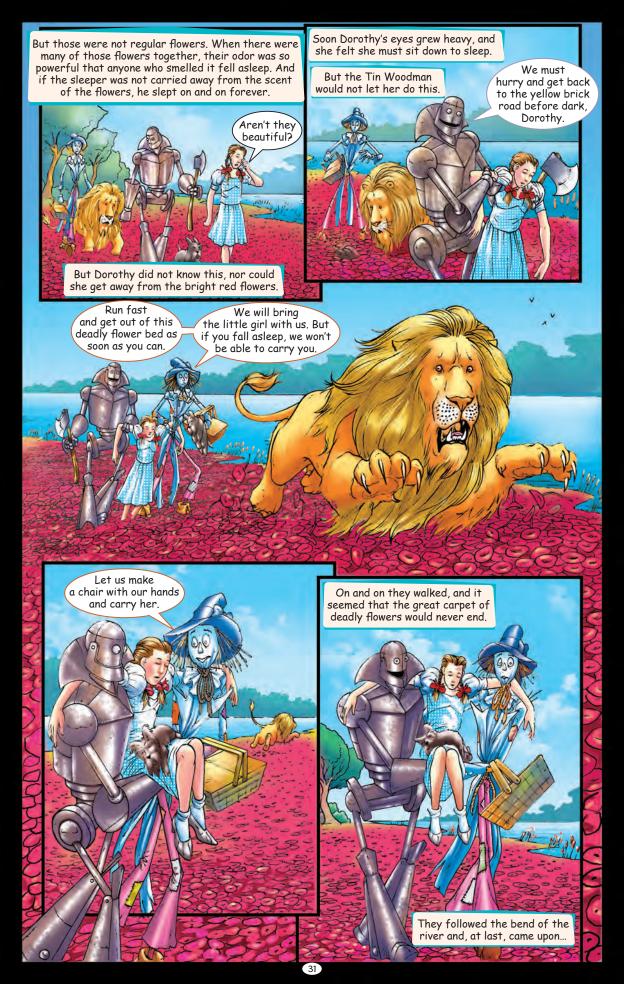










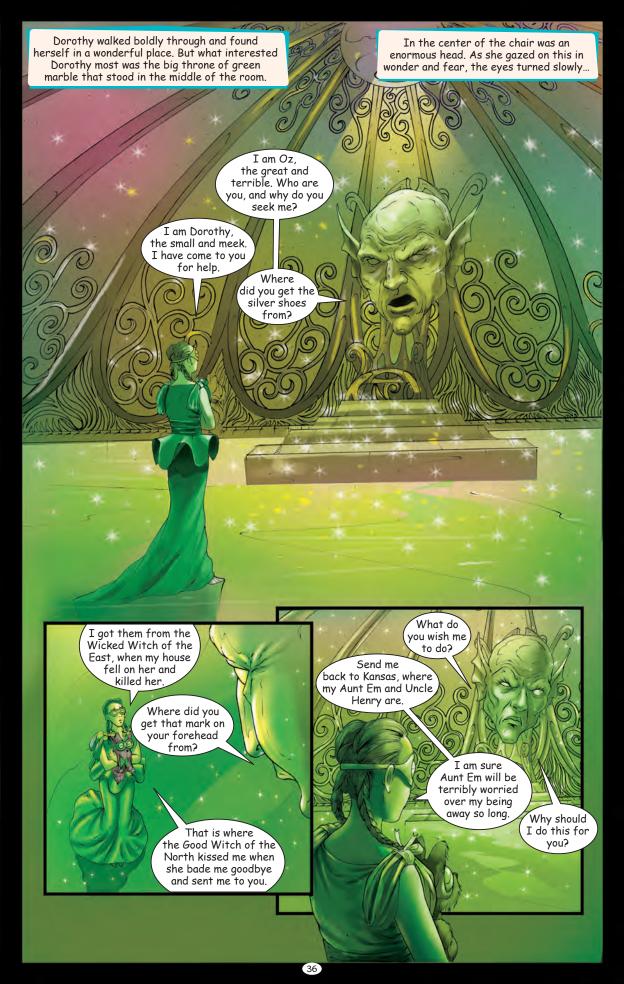




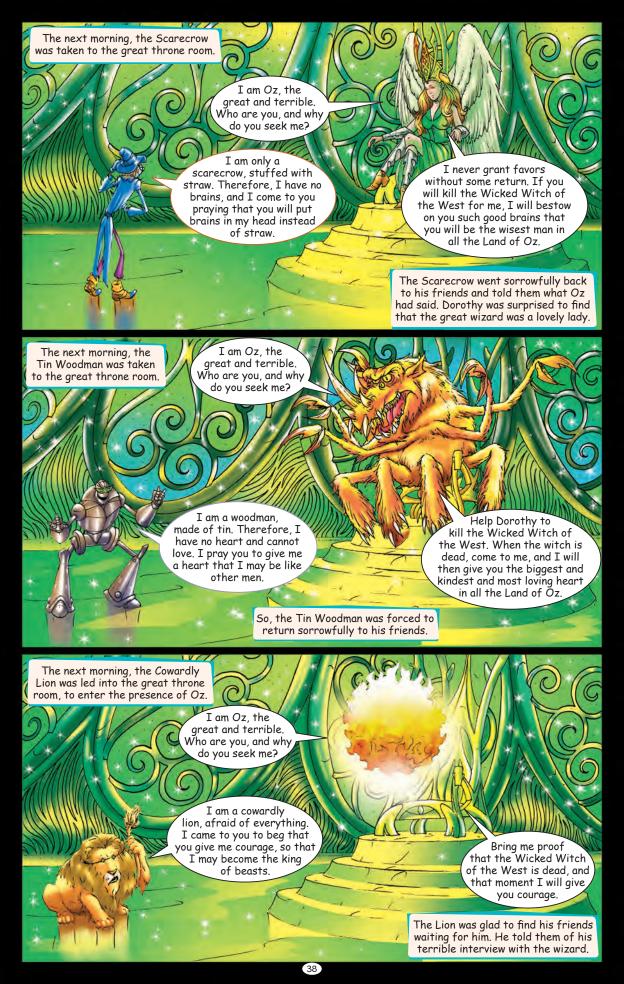












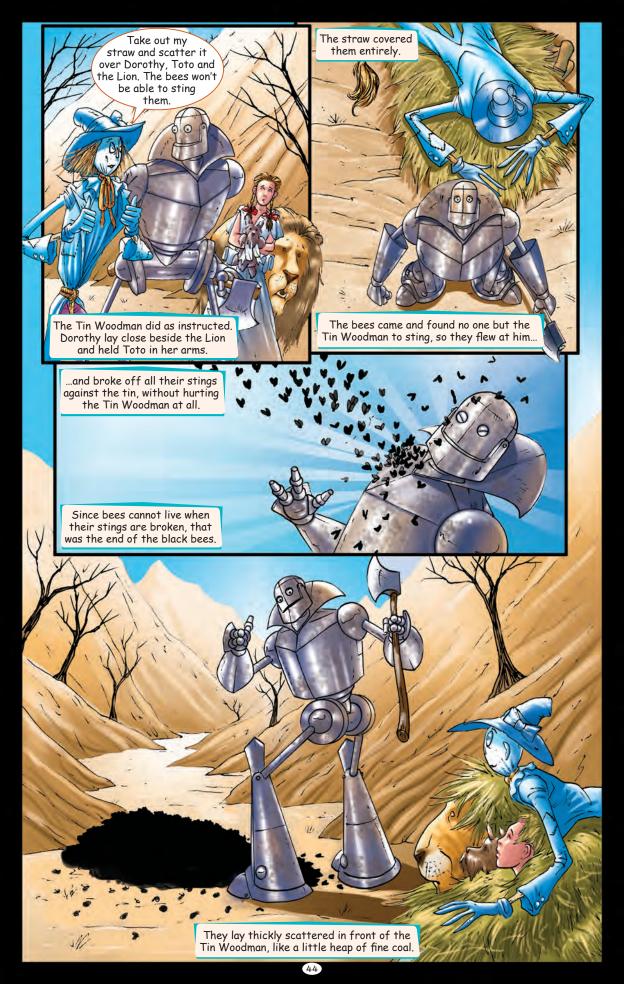










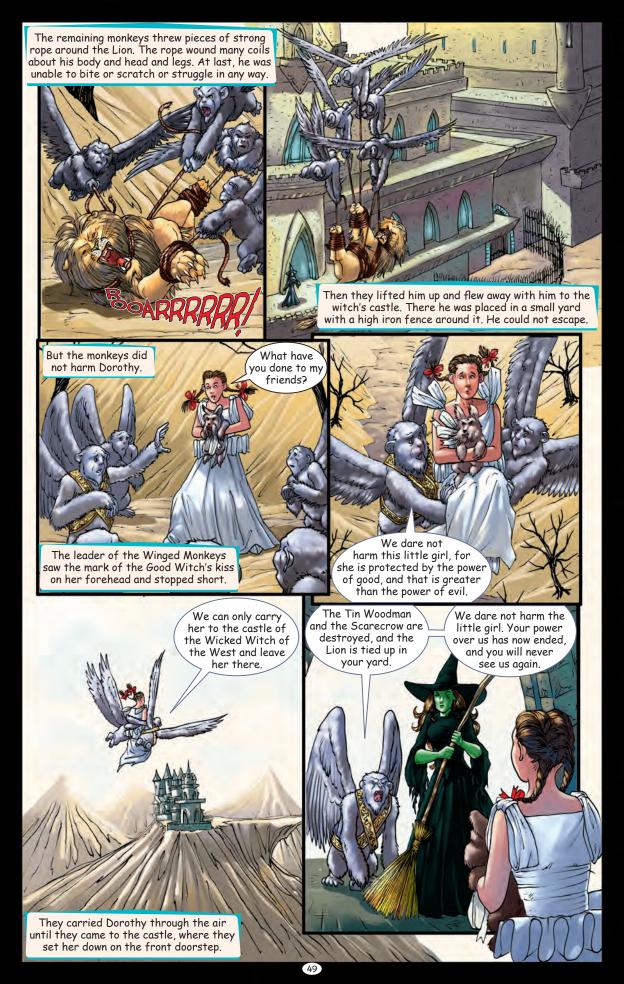




















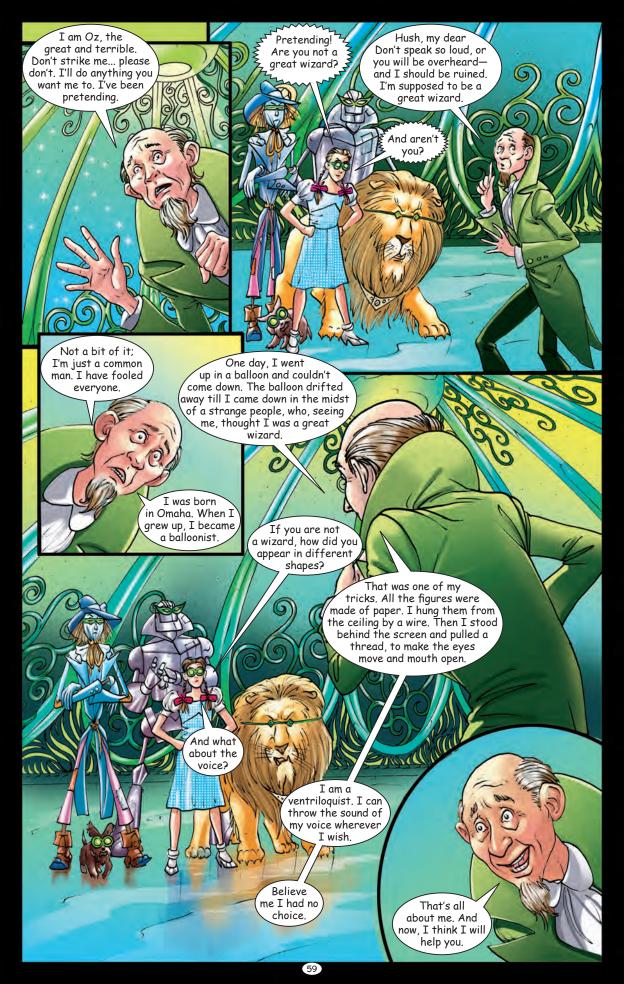


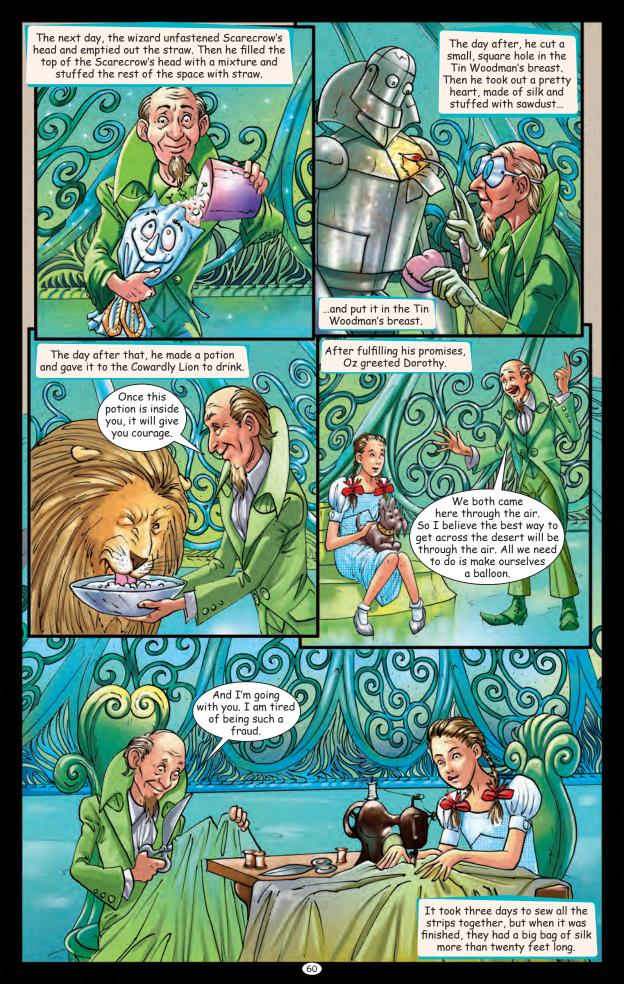


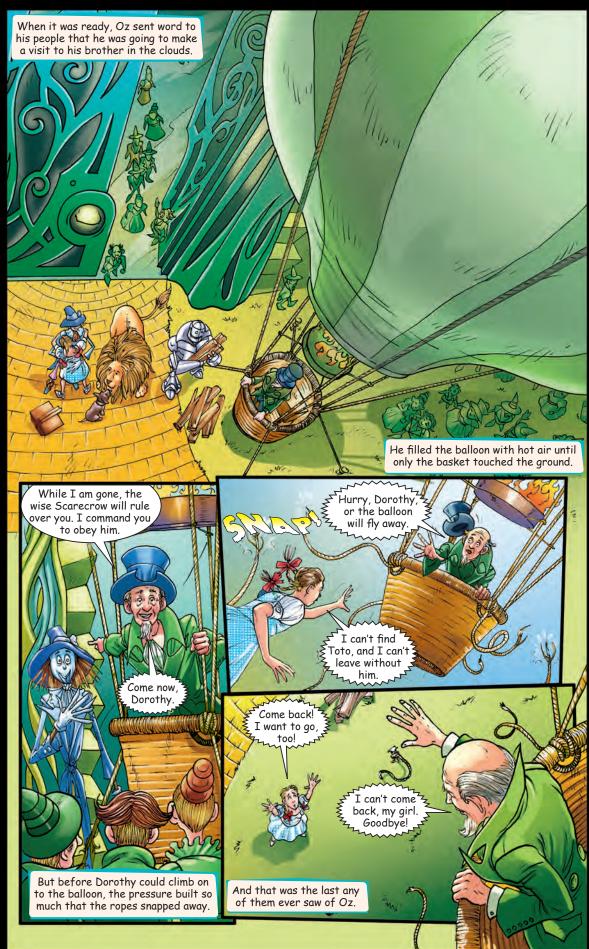


















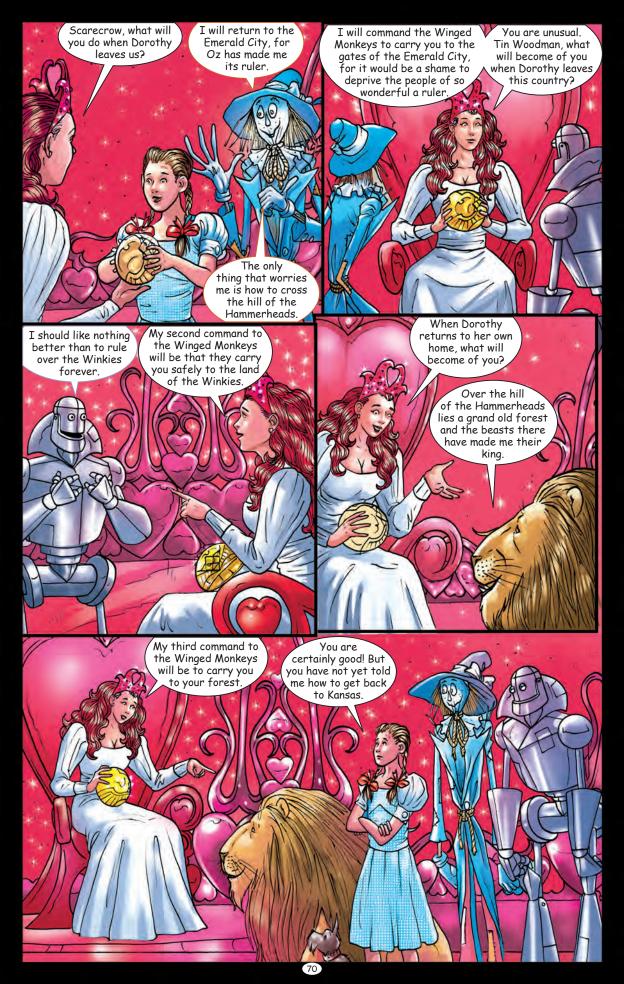


















KENNETH GRAHAME

ADAPTED BY: ARJUN GAIND

ILLUSTRATOR: SANKHA BANERJEE

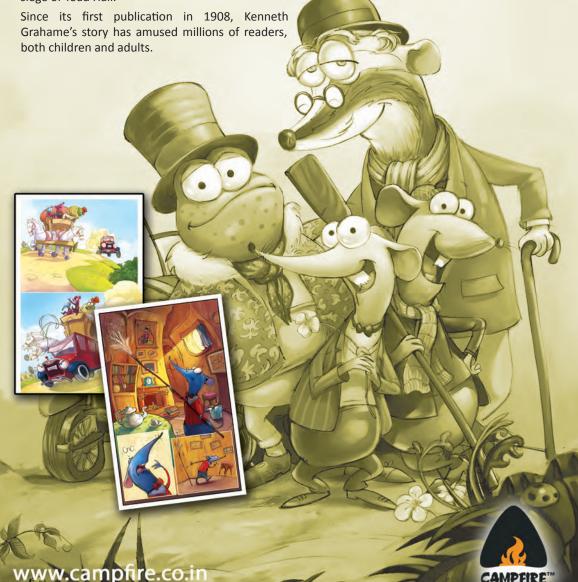
A delightful tale loaded with adventure, and moral values such as the beauty of friendship, courage, and the consequences of foolishness.

No sight makes a man tremble more than seeing Mr. Toad behind the wheel of a car...

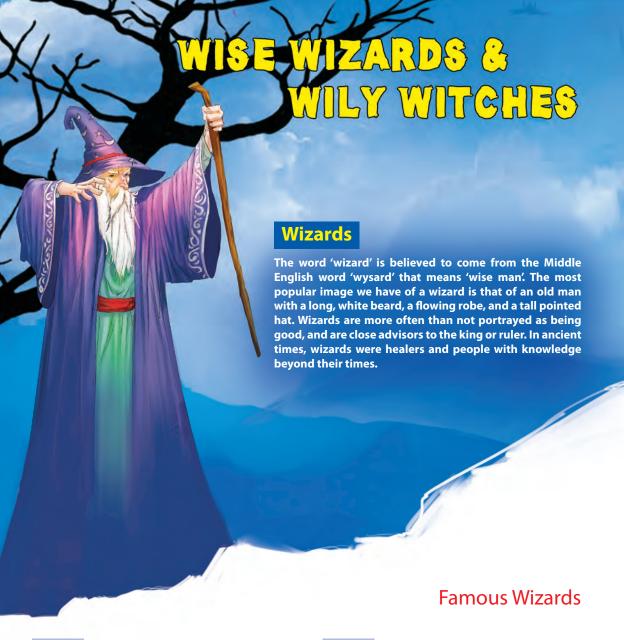
On a fine summer day, Mole is busy spring-cleaning his home. When he

decides he's had enough of cleaning, he ventures toward a place he has never seen before—the river. There he meets Ratty, and the two of them become close friends, spending lazy days by the river. But then they make the mistake of visiting Mr. Toad.

Toad is rich, exuberant, but also reckless. When he purchases his very first automobile, Toad, Ratty, and Mole are plunged into a dangerous adventure involving theft, a prison break, and the famous siege of Toad Hall.



CAMPFIRE'



Merlin

Long ago, in the days of knights and dragons, one man knew all the secrets of magic. He was the great Merlin and was said to be the greatest wizard that ever lived. Merlin saw the future and could cast powerful spells. Though he has appeared in many tales, Merlin is perhaps most popularly thought of in the Arthurian legends of Britain, in which he is seen as a wise old man who brought the legendary King Arthur to the throne and helped him rule England.

Faust

A very famous German legend tells of Faust, who became the protagonist of a very popular story that was written in many versions. In the most popular version, Johann Faust is a very learned man who summons the Devil and offers to sell him his soul in exchange for knowledge. But in the end, he realizes that excessive knowledge can be destructive and he manages to retain his soul. It is from this legend that the word 'Faustian', which pertains to someone striving for knowledge at the cost of anything, has originated.



Alchemists

It is believed that wizards often practised alchemy. Alchemists tried to find ways to help people live forever, and also turn lead and other substances into gold. They searched for the 'Philosopher's Stone' which alchemists believed was the vital tool that could change lead into gold and transform mortals into immortals. Interestingly, it is believed that the famous 17th-century scientist Isaac Newton was also an alchemist. It is said that he spent five years searching for ways to create the substance. No one knows till today if he succeeded or not!

Witches The most familiar picture of a witch is that of a wrinkled old woman wearing a black robe and a cone-shaped hat. Witches were portrayed as evil women making magic potions to cause harm. In fact, there was such great fear of witches from the 14th to the 18th centuries, that there were laws passed against witchcraft! At the same time, there are also good witches who help people and do no harm.

Baba Yaga

Famous Witches

There is a witch named Baba Yaga in the folklores of Eastern Europe and Russia. A thin old woman whose name means bony legs, Baba Yaga lives in a strange hut in the forest. The hut stands on the legs of a chicken and is encircled by a fence decorated with skulls. Whoever wishes to enter must recite some magic words. Although Baba Yaga helps the hero of a story, she is usually a scary figure.

Circe

In the *Odyssey*, the famous epic of ancient Greece, the hero Odysseus and his men met a witch named Circe. She was the daughter of a god and an ocean nymph. She had the power to turn people into animals and monsters. She lived on an island that was populated with lions, bears, and wolves. They were actually humans who had been transformed by her. She turned some of Odysseus's men into pigs too, but the hero used a special herb to protect himself.



Familiars

Did you ever notice that witches often have a black cat as a pet? Well, it is not exactly a pet but is a familiar. A familiar, more accurately called a 'familiar spirit', is said to be a spirit that has taken the form of an animal. In fact, different animals—right from owls to toads—can be familiars. Witches believe they are ideal partners in their magical workings.

The Lugbara people of Africa believe that toads, snakes, lizards, and jackals are familiars, while for certain Eskimos, the familiar is an artificial seal, and not a live animal!

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THE WONDERFUL Zard of

A powerful tornado rips through the Kansas prairie catching Dorothy inside her home. Caught inside the vortex, the home floats for hours. When the house finally lands on the ground again, it kills a wicked witch.

Dorothy finds herself in new surroundings and is welcomed by the local inhabitants, the Munchkins, who tell her she is in Oz, surrounded by a great desert that cannot be crossed.

Dorothy's only hope of escape is to see the great Wizard of Oz. On her journey to meet the Wizard, she is joined by some unusual friends who also want favors from the Wizard. But the Wizard will not help Dorothy and her friends unless they do something for him: they must kill the Wicked Witch of the West!

Read on to know more about Dorothy's adventures in this delightful tale that has fascinated children for ages.

