“Are You A Good Witch, Or A Bad Witch?”

The movie “The Wizard of OZ” has mesmerized and delighted audiences for years. For almost everyone, there is something to like, a whimsical tale of witches, elves, talking lions and scarecrows that draw you into a world of magic and make believe. Most people see this story as lighthearted, delivering the message that the grass isn’t necessarily greener on the other side of the fence, and that gratitude is a basic foundation of living life happily. At most it is a little scary for children when the “Wicked Witch of the West” appears and challenges the hero, or supposed hero, Dorothy. In reality this is a story of murder, deceit, treachery, collusion, and greed.

Dorothy is a twelve year-old Kansas girl who is in her house when it gets caught in a tornado that lifts it into the air and drops it into the magical kingdom of Oz. There she meets good witches, bad witches, munchkins, and a myriad of other assorted magical creatures. It is easy for the viewer to watch the film and miss the subtle signs that all is not well in Oz. From the beginning of the film, it is easy to think that Dorothy and her dog Toto are the heroes. We meet her family, and the people that work on her family’s farm. Once in Oz, we meet several main characters who resemble the people we have been introduced to on the farm. Many people have deduced that Dorothy was dreaming her adventure in Oz and that the characters she meets in her “dream” are only extensions of the real people that inhabit her every day life. I intend to debunk the entire premise that Dorothy is a hero. In my opinion, Dorothy is a dupe. She did not dream her adventure in Oz, and Glenda the “Good Witch” is actually the main character of the film
and probably one of the most ruthless, power-hungry characters ever presented to audiences in sheep’s clothing.

When Dorothy’s house lands in Oz, it just happens to land on a witch who dies from her injuries on the spot. Dorothy, unaware of this, wanders out of the house to find a world of color and magic. The very first person she meets is Glenda, the Good Witch. Glenda appears and introduces Dorothy to the Munchkins and explains to her that her house has killed the bad witch and now all of the Munchkins have reason to celebrate their newfound freedom. In the middle of the reverie, the dead witch’s sister, the Wicked Witch of the West appears, angry that her sister has been killed and wanting to retrieve her sister’s Ruby Slippers. As she attempts to remove them from her sister’s feet, they disappear and suddenly reappear on Dorothy’s feet. The Wicked Witch threatens Dorothy and leaves the scene vowing to get the slippers at any cost. This is one of those places where most people miss the real direction this story takes. Why did Glenda give Dorothy the Red Slippers? If Glenda is seen in the correct light, it becomes an easy question to answer. When Dorothy arrives in Oz, there are four seats of power. Glenda has power, but apparently only over a small area. The two sisters who have been termed “The Wicked Witches” have control of the east and the west regions of Oz, and the Wizard has control of the populated city called Oz. As soon as Dorothy’s house lands on and kills the Wicked Witch of the East, Glenda realizes that her opportunity for a coup has come. When the Wicked Witch of the West arrives to get what she is rightfully entitled to, her sister’s red slippers, Glenda magically gives them to Dorothy setting up a conflict between Dorothy and the Witch of the West. Glenda’s first question of Dorothy
was “Are you a good witch, or a bad witch?” To which Dorothy responds, “Why, I’m not a witch at all!” Glenda now has all of the information she needs. She pits Dorothy against the Witch of the West and begins making her plans for the downfall of the Wizard and the complete takeover of the seats of power in the realm of Oz.

Dorothy is advised that in order to get back to Kansas, she must go to see the Wizard. To get to the Wizard, she must travel right through the Wicked Witch of the West’s back yard. Glenda is well aware of this and has purposely set this up. As is seen at the very end of the movie, Glenda is forced to send Dorothy home by magic after she misses leaving in the hot air balloon that takes the Wizard back to Kansas. This shows that Glenda could have sent Dorothy back home at any time. Many will argue that only after Dorothy learned her “lesson” would the magic spell work to send her home. I, however, believe otherwise. At the end of the movie both Wicked Witches are dead, the Wizard has left for the land he came from, and Dorothy has been returned to Kansas via magic. The Scarecrow, Lion, and Tin Woodsman are the rulers of Oz and Glenda is their “Advisor”. Glenda is now the most powerful person in the entire realm of Oz and by sending Dorothy back to Kansas in front of the population of Oz she appears to be gracious, giving, and considerate. All lies!

When Dorothy finally reaches the Wizard, she is instructed to bring the broomstick of the Wicked Witch of the West to him or he won’t help her. Even though there is no evidence to support this view, I am forced to deduce that Glenda has somehow played a part in the Wizard’s decision. The reasoning would run like this: Dorothy has met and gained the
help of several outcasts, unlooked for on her way to Oz, each of them discarded due to their inability to accomplish the tasks they were designed to do. A lion that is cowardly, a scarecrow, that doesn’t scare away the crows, and a robot that has rusted and been left by the owner to decompose. Because of their help, Dorothy was able to survive the attacks of the witch and actually make it to Oz. This was not Glenda’s plan. Her plan was that somehow Dorothy would find a way to kill the witch and open that seat of power for Glenda. Glenda is obviously a coward herself since she won’t face the witch herself. When Dorothy reaches Oz alive and the witch is also still alive, Glenda sees that more needs to be done to force the showdown between Dorothy and the witch to a conclusion. Therefore Glenda, behind the scenes and unknown to the movie watcher, has approached and in some way or another, either by pressure or spell, convinced the Wizard to make Dorothy attempt to kill the witch. If Dorothy fails, it isn’t good for Glenda because the wicked witch is still alive; however, Glenda hasn’t overtly attacked the witch and can deny all association with Dorothy thereby avoiding public awareness of her scheme. If Dorothy succeeds and kills the witch, then all Glenda needs to do is rid herself of the Wizard, and she becomes the most powerful being in Oz.

It is evident that the Wizard, despite his education, is a numbskull. Glenda would have no trouble convincing him in one way or another to do her bidding. Hence, when at the end of the movie Dorothy needs to evacuate Oz, Glenda has already arranged for the Wizard to “take” her home. In reality, Glenda is forcing him out of his position. She has somehow threatened him or pressured him into leaving Oz. Why else would he choose at that time to depart and leave a cushy situation in which he is considered all-powerful?
To summarize, until Dorothy’s house lands on one of the sisters, Glenda is basically helpless. She doesn’t have enough “juice” to take on both of them and unseat the Wizard without revealing her true nature. When Dorothy’s house lands on one of the sisters and kills her, Glenda sees her chance to finally accomplish her goal. She pits Dorothy against the witch. When Dorothy avoids the fatal life and death confrontation with the witch, Glenda intercedes with the Wizard and in some unknown way forces him to send Dorothy to kill the Witch of the West. Once this is accomplished, the Wizard knows that Glenda is now the one that holds the power in Oz and is forced to let everyone think he is doing a good deed by taking Dorothy home in his balloon. When his buffoonish ways cause him to leave without her, Glenda is forced to openly use magic to send Dorothy back to Kansas. Glenda does this in a very clever way, however, and no one suspects that she could have done this all along, and she appears to the masses to be a wonderful, caring benefactor that will advise the new rulers of Oz, the Scarecrow, the Lion, and the Tin Woodsman, all of whom are still the dysfunctional ne’re-do-wells they were before Dorothy met them. Only now, they have bogus certificates awarded to them by a bogus wizard proclaiming their accomplishments. Glenda in the end is the puppet master pulling the strings of the government in Oz with no opposition to her power anywhere else in the entire realm. At last she is the all-powerful being in Oz. Her plans have succeeded and her reign has begun.