

WICKED — BOOK REVIEW

April 1, 2012

HNotes Ezine

*I loved you too much to keep in touch* — Elphaba.

For sure, most of the community members of Hanson.net have read Fran Baum's classic tale, "The Wizard of Oz", and also have heard about the famous Broadway musical, "Wicked". The show is based on a book that shares the same name and a catchy subtitle: "The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West". The moving story written by Gregory Maguire is an alternative, imaginative, and clever re-creation of the land of Oz before Dorothy and her dog crash-land in it.

Maguire's "Wicked" narrates the life and experiences of Elphaba, the woman who later became the infamous Wicked Witch of the West, even though she had no formal training in witchcraft and neither was wicked, but smart, introverted and uncommonly green. With this 1995 fiction novel, Maguire gives a new perspective to the land of Oz, a land that is not a fairytale place filled with happiness and joy, but political oppression, treachery, injustice and killings. It is a land where Animals have voices, hearts, minds and souls. It is a land where people label you as crazy or wicked if you seek truth and justice and equity.

Elphaba never belonged to a place, she never had a place she could call home or feel like home. She was used to mockery and taunts since birth, yet she did not dream of harming others or the hostile world that refused to accept her. Elphie, the nickname given to her by the very few friends she made throughout her life, is a sassy Munchkinlander who fights for tolerance and has one sole mission in life: end the dictatorial rule of the Wizard of Oz. An intellectual revolutionary usually misunderstood and unloved, Elphaba is a flawed person like any of us. Maybe that is why almost 20 years after the publication of "Wicked" we still find ourselves under the spell of this story and the reason why Miss Elphie becomes a favorite for many readers.