

Talking about *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*

by L. Frank Baum · the free ebook lives at youngreaderguide.org/books/wizard-of-oz/

Warming *up*

Easy openers. Anyone at the table can answer these, including the youngest.

1. Which companion would you pick for a long journey: the Scarecrow, the Tin Woodman, or the Lion? What would the trip be like with them along?
2. The movie stops at the Emerald City, but the book keeps going. Which of the strange countries after it would you actually want to visit?

The real *conversation*

Pick two or three, not all of them. Parents answer too, honestly.

1. The Scarecrow thinks he has no brains, but he does most of the clever thinking. The Lion thinks he's a coward, but he does the bravest things. What's going on there, and do you know anyone like that?
2. The Wizard admits he's a humbug, but people leave his palace feeling braver and smarter than when they walked in. Is he a liar or a helper? Can somebody be both?
3. Everyone in the Emerald City wears green glasses, locked on, so the whole city looks like emerald. Why would people go along with that? Would you take yours off?
4. The silver shoes could have carried Dorothy home from the very first day; she just didn't know it. Does that make the whole journey a waste? Would Dorothy say so?
5. Dorothy never fights anyone and never tricks anyone, and she still wins. What does she actually do that gets her home?

The big *one*

Save it for last.

The Scarecrow, the Tin Woodman, and the Lion each crossed a dangerous country to ask for something they already had. Is there something you're sure you're missing, that the people at this table can see you already have?

Do it *together*

Invent the next country of Oz. Baum builds his story one strange country at a time: the china country, the fighting trees, the Quadlings. Each of you invents one more country past the china wall: who lives there, the one strange rule everyone follows, and what a traveler must do to be allowed through. Draw the map or just tell it out loud; youngest goes first.