



Inspect a Character: **The Wizard of Oz**

The Wizard in *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* is supposed to be a powerful leader who uses magic and sorcery to keep The Emerald City the perfect place to live, and its citizens free from harm. In this scene, Dorothy and her friends find out that the Wizard isn't all he's been made out to be. Read the passage and answer the questions.

The Lion thought it might be as well to frighten the Wizard, so he gave a large, loud roar, which was so fierce and dreadful that Toto jumped away from him in alarm and tipped over the screen that stood in a corner. As it fell with a crash they looked that way, and the next they saw a little old man, with a bald head and a wrinkled face, who seemed to be as much surprised as they were.

The Tin Woodman rushed toward the little man and cried out, "Who are you?"

"I am Oz, the Great and Terrible," said the little man, in a trembling voice.

Our friends looked at him in surprise and dismay. "I thought Oz was a great Head," said Dorothy.



"I thought Oz was a lovely Lady," said the Scarecrow.

"I thought Oz was a terrible Beast," said the Tin Woodman.

"I thought Oz was a Ball of Fire," exclaimed the Lion.

"No; you are all wrong," said the little man, meekly.

"I have been making believe."

"Making believe!" cried Dorothy. "Are you not a great Wizard?"

"Not a bit of it, my dear; I'm just a common man."

"You're more than that," said the Scarecrow. "You're a humbug."

"Exactly so!" declared the little man, rubbing his hands together;

"I am a humbug."

Inspect a Character:

The Wizard of Oz *Continued*

“Doesn’t anyone else know you’re a humbug?” asked Dorothy.

“No one knows it but you four—and myself,” replied Oz. “I have fooled everyone so long that I thought I should never be found out. It was a great mistake my ever letting you into the Throne Room. Usually I will not see even my subjects, and so they believe I am something terrible.”

“Really,” said the Scarecrow, “you ought to be ashamed of yourself for being such a humbug.”

“I am — I certainly am,” answered the little man, sorrowfully; “but it was the only thing I could do. Sit down, please, there are plenty of chairs; and I will tell you my story.” So they sat down and listened while he told the following tale:

“I was born in Omaha —”

“Why, that isn’t very far from Kansas!” cried Dorothy.

“No; but it’s farther from here,” he said, shaking his head at her, sadly. “When I grew up I became a ventriloquist. After a time, I tired of that, and became a balloonist. One day I went up in a balloon and the ropes got twisted that I couldn’t come down again. It went way up above the clouds, so far that a current of air carried it many, many miles away. For a day and a night I traveled through the air. I awoke and found the balloon floating over a strange and beautiful country. I found myself in the midst of a strange people, who, seeing me come from the clouds, thought I was a great Wizard. Of course I let them think so, because they were afraid of me, and promised to do anything I wished them to. Just to amuse myself, and keep the good people busy, I ordered them to build this City, and my palace; and they did it all willingly and well. I thought I would call it the Emerald City, and to make the name fit better I put green spectacles on all the people, so that everything they saw was green.

“The Emerald City was built a great many years ago, for I was a young man when the balloon brought me here, and I am a very old man now. But my people have worn green glasses on their eyes so long that most of them think it really is an Emerald City, and it certainly is a beautiful place, abounding in jewels and precious metals, and every good thing that is needed to make one happy. I have been good to the people, and they like me; but ever since this Palace was built I have shut myself up and would not see any of them.”

“I think you are a very bad man,” said Dorothy.

“Oh, no, my dear; I’m really a very good man; but I’m a very bad Wizard, I must admit.”

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Answer the questions about the passage you have just read.

1. Why did the Wizard decide to stay in Oz?

2. Why is he so worried others will find out he does not have magical powers?

3. How do Dorothy and her friends react after finding out who the Wizard really is?
Why do they feel this way?

4. *“Oh, no, my dear; I’m really a very good man; but I’m a very bad Wizard, I must admit.”*
What does he mean by this? What do you think? Is he a good or a bad man?
