**The Real Wizard of Oz story**

**Author:**

 **Frank Baum, who ran a store and newspaper in South Dakota, experienced desolation and grayness that accompanied agrarian discontent during his lifetime. He became an ardent supporter of William Jennings Bryan. The Wonderful Wizard of Oz was published in 1900. “Oz” was a familiar abbreviation for those involved in the fight over the ratio of silver to gold-16 to 1. The film version was largely intact from the book, but musical numbers were added such as “over the rainbow” because of the depression that existed during its release.**

 **Settings:**

**Kansas= tough life, droughts, tornadoes, grey landscape. After 1887, a series of droughts hit Kansas hard and many “traced their steps back East”, while others pinned their hopes on the coinage of silver.**

**Oz=beautiful, colorful, water streams**

**Emerald City= (Washington D.C. or Chicago backed by greenbacks). Everyone must wear green glasses (corruption and blindness)**

**The Opening Characters:**

**Dorothy= carried by a cyclone from drought stricken Kansas to a marvelous land of witches and riches. (Symbolized as every person). To get back to Kansas, she needs to go to the Emerald City first. She is level headed, innocent, and good. Ideal Westerner.**

**Aunt Em (Dorothy’s Aunt) = came to Kansas as an attractive and vibrant young women, harsh life (wind, prairie life) changed her.**

**Uncle Henry (Dorothy’s uncle) = always sour**

**and he never smiles.**

**Munchkins= symbolizes the common people (small in stature). They are freed from servitude when Dorothy disposes of the Wicked Witch of the East.**

**Things to note:**

**Slippers: The original story had silver slippers (support of silver). At first, she doesn’t fully understand the power of the slippers, but a kiss from the good witch of the North (Northern voters) protects her on the road. Dorothy says, “Just the thing to take a long walk in, for they could not wear out”.**

**Yellow brick road: The gold standard. Baum supported bimetallism, thus assuring a proper relationship between the metals.**

**The Witches:**

**Wicked Witch of the West= mortgage companies, railroads, nature. She eventually dissolves in a bucket of water (How appropriate in the drought plagued west)**

**Wicked Witch of the East= Money, Favors Gold, Power, bankers, industrialists**

**Witch of the South=Silver supporter, good witch, helps Dorothy unmask the wizard ruling Emerald City**

**Witch of the North= northern voters, good witch**

**The Players of the Yellow Brick Road:**

**Scarecrow= symbolizes western farmers. Somewhat ignorant, but does have common sense**

**Tin Man= symbolizes the eastern industrial worker. He fears that he may be heartless because he doesn’t care about farmers. He develops a heart as he comes to understand the plight of farmers. Every time he swings his ax, he loses a body part (symbolizes the dehumanizing aspects of eastern industrialization)**

**Lion= symbolizes reformers, most importantly William Jennings Bryan and he fears he may be a coward, but turns out to not be cowardly at all as he is not afraid of anyone. Big roar, but no backbone. Similar to Bryan, big orator but not very effective.**

**Wizard of Oz = Glided Age Presidents. Really just a bumbling old man like the Gilded Age presidents, he is controlled by political parties.**

**The Group = Coxey’s army. They move towards the Emerald City to get answers, just like Coxey’s army did when they tried to get jobs in 1894.**

**The Flying monkeys = plains Indians, unable to find a home in the 1890s.**

**End of the Story…**

 **The four meet the “Great and terrible Wizard” who says they must destroy the Wicked Witch of the West. Once they accomplish this, they realize that the Wizard is not so great and powerful after all and that he is largely myth and illusion.**

**-Scarecrow rules the emerald city (political dominance of farmers)**

**-Tin man reigns in the West (symbolic of industry moving westward)**