

THE CREATION OF OZ

Written by

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When a deadly tornado threatens his aunt's farm, an imaginative boy entertains his family with a fantastical story while they ride out the storm in the cramped quarters of an underground shelter.

FADE IN:

SUPER: KANSAS, 1865

EXT. FARM - DAY

Ominous dark clouds cast a grey tone over the weathered farmhouse and barn. Dirt and dust billow as winds pick up speed.

With a sense of urgency, FRANK BAUM (10) an imaginative kid with inquisitive eyes, and his timid brother HARRY (6) help their AUNT EMOGENE (35) corral nervous chickens into their coop.

ANN BAUM (40) rushes out of the house. A basket hangs from the crook of her arm, three year old DOROTHY propped on her hip.

ANN

It's coming! Frank! Harry! Into the shelter!

Frank looks up. His eyes widen. In the distance, a tornado rips through a cornfield. A scarecrow is plowed down. Debris flies everywhere as it cuts a path of destruction. He's mesmerized.

Frank snaps out of his trance as Ann grabs the back of his jacket, practically scooping him off the ground.

Dazed, Frank runs alongside his mother. Harry on the other hand, needs no coaxing. Terrified, he waits by the shelter door.

Chunks of hail hit them as Ann pulls the door open. Dorothy begins to cry.

FRANK

Are those rocks?

ANN

It's hail.  
(yells to Emogene)  
There's no more time!

Harry enters the shelter. Once inside, Ann passes him Dorothy, then the basket. She nudges Frank to go in, but he hesitates.

FRANK

What about Uncle Luke?

Ann looks at the small, dilapidated house next door. As Emogene approaches, they share a worried glance.

Just then, UNCLE LUKE (35), exits the house, his arm around MRS. KROUSE (85). She protests as he helps her walk.

INT. UNDERGROUND SHELTER - DAY

Stone and cement walls, crumbled in some areas. A ladder propped against one wall, three dusty wooden benches on the others.

On one bench, Emogene consoles Dorothy. On another bench, Frank sits with Harry, who attempts to fight back tears.

On the last bench, Mrs. Krouse sits alone. Frank stares at her mean, rotten apple face as she mumbles incoherently.

Uncle Luke stands on the ladder. Debris whips around as he shuts the door and secures it.

Ann lights an oil lamp, illuminating their cramped quarters.

The wind is so loud outside, it sounds like a freight train rolling over them. Terrified, Harry covers his ears.

Ann opens the basket, rifles through the contents. She pulls out a stuffed lion, hands it to Harry. He releases his ears and cuddles the toy.

Ann squeezes between Harry and Frank, puts her arms around them.

Luke sits next to Emogene. Dorothy buries her face in his chest.

FRANK

What do we do now?

UNCLE LUKE

Ride it out. Nothing else we can do.

Something bangs against the door, startling everyone. Harry can no longer hold back the tears. Ann rocks him back and forth.

HARRY

I want to go home!

ANN

Don't worry, Harry. Your Aunt Em and I went through many of these when we were young girls. Isn't that right Emogene?

EMOGENE

Yes we did. In this very shelter.

FRANK

You never got hurt?

ANN

Not in the shelter. Never. You're safe in here, I promise.

HARRY

I don't like Kansas. There are no  
tornadoes in New York.

ANN

Frank, why don't you tell us a story?

Frank shakes his head "no". Ann pleads, gestures toward Harry.

ANN

Please, Frank. It'll help pass time.

Everyone looks at Frank. Even Dorothy looks at him with teary,  
bloodshot eyes. He shifts nervously.

EMOGENE

Your mother tells us you're a  
wizard at storytelling.

Dorothy wriggles out of her father's arms, shuffles to Frank,  
red shoes scraping the dirt floor. She bumps into Mrs. Krouse.

MRS. KROUSE

I don't like munchkins.

Alarmed, Ann looks at Emogene, who shakes her head assuring her  
there's nothing to worry about. Dorothy tugs Frank's pant leg.

DOROTHY

Story?

Frank stands, moves in front of the ladder, clears his throat.  
Dorothy runs back to Emogene, sits on her lap. Watches eagerly.

FRANK

(voice cracks nervously)  
This is a story about -- a girl  
named Dorothy, who wanted to --

MRS. KROUSE

I can't hear you!

Surprised she was listening, Frank glances at Mrs. Krouse, nods.

FRANK

(louder)  
Dorothy was lost and wanted to get  
home. She met someone along the way.  
(spots Harry's lion)  
It was a lion. He told her she had  
magic shoes.

Dorothy gasps, smiles wide, looks at her red shoes. Harry has  
calmed down to a snuffle.

FRANK

The lion was also lost, so they promised to help each other find their way home. They skipped along a path until they got to a fork in the road and didn't know which way to go. A scarecrow hung in a cornfield and the lion told Dorothy to click her heels three times and ask the Scarecrow to show them the way.

No one seems to notice how loud the storm has gotten. The latch on the door rattles but everyone's attention is on Frank.

Sensing his audience's interest, Frank gets more animated.

FRANK

So Dorothy clicked her heels three times. Suddenly, the scarecrow's eyes popped open. The lion asked,  
 (deepens his voice)  
 Mister Scarecrow -- can you tell us which way is home?  
 (normal voice)  
 The scarecrow's arm unhooked from the post and pointed to the right. They thanked him and skipped away.

INT. UNDERGROUND SHELTER - LATER

Everyone smiles as they watch Frank, except mean Mrs. Krouse.

Frank stands behind the ladder, looks at them through the rungs.

FRANK

They peeked through the window, shocked at what they saw. A witch stood at the fireplace, stirring something in a pot. Sensing someone at her window, she spun around and saw them. Her face green and ugly.

Scared, Dorothy clings to her father, Harry to his mother.

INT. UNDERGROUND SHELTER - LATER

Still captivated, they watch as Frank stands on the ladder. He holds up a stick.

FRANK

Dorothy stands before the king and says,  
 (makes his voice higher)

FRANK (CONT'D)

We've defeated the witch! Now tell us how to get home!

Just then, someone outside bangs on the door three times. Startled, everyone looks up at the door.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Emogene? Luke? You all in there?

Surprised, Ann, Luke and Emogene chuckle. The storm is over. Frank moves aside. Luke climbs the ladder, slides over the lock.

Sunlight bursts into the shelter as the doors open from outside. Harry squints as he looks up.

HARRY

The storm is over?

Ann squeezes him. She smiles proudly at Frank, winks.

ANN

Yes it is, Harry.

Uncle Luke disappears up the ladder. Aunt Em passes Dorothy to him then she climbs the ladder, followed by Harry then Ann. Just as Frank is about to follow, he hears a voice.

MRS. KROUSE (O.S.)

Well? Did they get home?

He turns, sees Mrs. Krouse, on a bench in a dark corner. She doesn't look mean anymore.

FRANK

Yes. They found out they could get home by using the magic shoes.

Mrs. Krouse nods, gives a little "Hmfm". Frank helps her stand, walks her to the ladder. She looks at him and smiles.

MRS. KROUSE

Good story.

Luke reaches down to help Mrs. Krouse.

EXT. UNDERGROUND SHELTER - DAY

Last one out, Frank emerges from the shelter.

The farmhouse and barn are a little beaten but still standing. In the sky is a beautiful rainbow.

THE END