

“No one mourns the wicked.” If you’re a musical theater nerd, you just sang this line in your head. The famous song from the Broadway musical *Wicked* by Stephen Schwartz has been on a loop all month in preparation for the screen adaptation of the iconic musical, premiering on November 22. Musical fans have been singing (or, if you’re tone deaf like me, yelling) the soundtrack since the Broadway show was an immediate hit at its debut in 2003, starring Idina Menzel and Kristin Chenoweth. There was a time when no one could escape the song “Defying Gravity” (much like “Let it Go” from *Frozen*, ironically also performed by the iconic Idina Menzel!). That song is in your head now, isn’t it? Schwartz’s musical is to millennials what “West Side Story” or “Hair” was to previous generations of theater fans. Just imagine my excitement when I found out that one of my favorite shows was going to be adapted for the big screen! I exclaimed “Nothing’s gonna bring me down!” and waited eagerly for the premiere date. When you’re reading this article, I will have already seen the movie at least once, if not twice, because the day has finally arrived!

It took me longer than I’d care to admit to realize that the musical was based on a book of the same name. That’s right - I listened to the original cast album front to back at least 30 times before someone told me that I could also read the book. Gregory Maguire, the author of *Wicked* (book version), is a master of taking our favorite tales from childhood and turning them on their heads. You think the Wicked Witch of the West was born evil and nothing traumatic happened to her to make her obsessed with ruby red slippers? Guess again! She and Glinda the Good Witch were actually best friends and... well that would give too much of the plot away. Even though we know the witches’ fates after Dorothy woke up in Oz, what happens before is a bigger and darker story. Maguire’s “Wicked: the Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West” (1995) can be found on the Kirkland Town Library’s shelves along with Maguire’s other reimaginings.

*After Alice* (2015) follows Ada, a character briefly mentioned in Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* as she embarks on a journey to rescue her friend Alice. Ada goes on her own zany adventure while confronting her own apprehension of cause and effect. Maguire’s writing is Lewis Carroll meets Monty Python.

In *The Wild Winter Swan* (2020), Maguire turns Hans Christian Anderson’s *The Wild Swans* into a coming of age story for an Italian-American girl living in New York. To add to the story’s magic, it’s set during Christmas time in the 1960s. Buried by grief, with the threat of having to move to Montreal after the holiday season, Laura meets a one-winged handsome swan boy. As she tries to find help for her new friend, she also embarks on her journey to adulthood. Maguire’s hauntingly beautiful tale is not one that is easily forgotten.

*The Brides of Maracoor* (2021) the first book of a spin-off series from the Wicked series. It follows Elphaba’s granddaughter, Rain, after she washes up on the shores of Maracoor, where she is taken in by seven mysterious women. Rain must learn how to harness her powers to return home to her family in Oz. This book showcases Maguire’s ability to build a world full of complex and delightful characters.

Each of Maguire's books are a joy to read. His stories put our favorite fairy tale characters through the ringer, but they are really fun if you love reimaginings of famous stories. The Kirkland Town Library has six of his books on the shelf right now, so when you get tired of hearing about the movie *Wicked* or desperately need to drown out the people who will be singing the movie's soundtrack nonstop, fly by on your broomsticks and check out the author's less talked about books in our collection!

.