

KANSAS ANYMORE

a radio play by

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kansasanymorefinal.doc
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THE CHARACTERS:

DOROTHY is an older woman with a bit of a little-girl voice.

MAGGIE is of indeterminate middle-age.

THE SETTING:

An old farmhouse somewhere in Kansas.

FADE IN:

(SFX: A STRONG WIND BLOWING. A GATE BANGING IN THE WIND AGAINST A WOODEN FENCE. DISTANT CAWING OF CROWS.)

MAGGIE

(Calling to someone in another room)
Oh, WOW. Is this amazing? I can't believe I'm really here! Dorothy? *Hello...*?

DOROTHY

(HER VOICE MUFFLED AS FROM ANOTHER ROOM)
Yes, I'll be out in a second! Just make yourself at home!

MAGGIE

Out this window? Your farm looks just like the movie! It's the beginning of *The Wizard of Oz*! I mean, there's the pig pen. The storm cellar. A fence gate banging in the wind... And nothing and nobody for miles and miles, just grey clouds over dead Kansas prairie...
(More to herself:)

A perfect setting for a murder...

(Calls:)
Dorothy! Are you all right? What are you up to in there?

(SFX: DOOR OPENING.)

DOROTHY

Here I am.

MAGGIE

Oh, you *did it*! You sweetheart, you put it on! *The blue gingham dress*! Thank you!

DOROTHY

Well, you asked me about it so nicely in your letter. And I thought – for the interview and everything...

MAGGIE

Dorothy, you are a feast in that, you are *scrumptious*! And that's what you wore in the actual Land of Oz?

DOROTHY

It doesn't really fit me anymore. That was all decades ago, I was just a girl.

MAGGIE

It's perfect. Oh, and will you look at that? The *basket*! The immortal basket you carried your little dog in!

DOROTHY

Yes, I carried Toto everywhere in this. The Yellow Brick Road, the Emerald City, the castle of the Wicked Witch of the West...

MAGGIE

May I hold it, may I hold that precious basket for just one second?

DOROTHY

If you're very careful with it.

MAGGIE

Well! Your basket is much heavier than I expected! What have you got in here...?

(SFX: SUDDEN YAPPING OF LITTLE DOG.)
What the hell?!

DOROTHY

Stop it, Toto, stop it, stop it!

(SFX: LITTLE DOG GROWLING and RUNNING AROUND THE ROOM.)

Get back in the basket now! Go on!

(SFX: BASKET LID DROPPED INTO PLACE. MUFFLED GROWLS.)
He doesn't usually do that with strangers.

MAGGIE

So Toto is still *alive*? What is he, 75 years old?

DOROTHY

Oh, no, this is Toto Number 22. I couldn't live without a Toto at my side.

MAGGIE

So you have the gingham dress and the basket and your little dog, too. What you *don't* have are the silver shoes.

DOROTHY

No, the shoes got lost on the way back, unfortunately.

MAGGIE

Silver shoes. *Not* ruby slippers, as the movie had it.

DOROTHY

Oh, the movie got so many things wrong. Hollywood just made them *ruby slippers* because of the Technicolor. I thought they were vulgar, when I finally saw it.

MAGGIE

Darn those Hollywood people! They *were* vulgar!

DOROTHY

But don't you want to take off your sunglasses?

MAGGIE

I'm sorry...?

DOROTHY

Your sunglasses, since we're here inside?

MAGGIE

No, it's just – I have this thing with my eyes. The light here in Kansas only seems to make it worse somehow.

DOROTHY

Of course you people wear sunglasses all the time in Los Angeles.

MAGGIE

It's the local dress code in LaLa Land. Though it's never as warm there as this. Phew!

DOROTHY

Do you want to help yourself to some ice water? The pitcher's right there on the table.

MAGGIE

I think I'll abstain.

DOROTHY

Do you mind if I pour myself a little?

MAGGIE

No, no. Please.

(SFX: SOUND OF ICE WATER BEING POURED.)

So! Dorothy of the Land of Oz. My listeners on Radio Hollywood are going to love, love, love hearing you.

DOROTHY

But how in the world did you find me, Miss Hamilton?

MAGGIE

Oh, sweetheart, please, call me Maggie.

DOROTHY

How did you ever find this *farm*? Out in the middle of nowhere?

MAGGIE

I'm a reporter, honey. Digging people up is my *job*. Shall we get started?

DOROTHY

Where are you from originally?

MAGGIE

Dorothy, you're the interviewee, I'm the one who asks the questions.

DOROTHY

We Kansas folks like to know things like that, where people come from. Are you a church person, and so on.

MAGGIE

Church person. Not exactly. Listen, while we have the light, would you mind if I get a picture of you? As a souvenir?

DOROTHY

No, no, not at all.

MAGGIE

Let me just get out my camera...

(SFX: ZIPPER, THEN METAL TOOLS RATTLING AROUND.)

DOROTHY

Oh, my, what an enormous black bag you have. What all is in there?

MAGGIE

Just the tools of my trade, some odds and ends...

DOROTHY

Are those – are those knives in there?!

MAGGIE

What in the world would I want with knives? And there's my camera. Now just stand right there.

DOROTHY

Can Toto 22 be in the picture, too?

MAGGIE

And Toto 22, too!

(SFX: LITTLE DOG YAPPING.)

DOROTHY

Stop it, Toto, stop it!

(SFX: LITTLE DOG GROWLING.)

I really don't understand why he's behaving like this.

MAGGIE

Well, we'll just have to punish him, won't we? Now, smile! And...

(SFX: CAMERA SHUTTER.)

...perfect!

(SFX: LITTLE DOG BARKING.)

Could you do something about your little *dog*, please?

DOROTHY

Toto 22, get back in the basket! Go on!

(SFX: BASKET LID CLOSING. DISTANT ANIMAL WHIMPER.)

Good boy. So where are you from, Miss Hamilton?

MAGGIE

Originally, you might say I'm from – Wichita.

DOROTHY

Wichita...

MAGGIE

Listen, why don't we settle in and get started?

DOROTHY

You don't *sound* much like Wichita...

MAGGIE

Do you mind if we push on? I hear there's some bad weather moving in, I sure don't want to get caught in that.

DOROTHY

No, no, please.

MAGGIE

You take a seat while get out my trusty Dictaphone here...

(SFX: MORE RATTLING OF METAL OBJECTS.)

DOROTHY

You were so specific about when you wanted to meet...

MAGGIE

I was letting the weather guide me. That Kansas weather building up out there right now.

DOROTHY

But you're from *Wichita*...? Really?

MAGGIE

Can I just say I am so honored you're doing this? You are a very difficult get.

DOROTHY

It's true, I've turned down every interview since it all happened. Radios, newspapers, then television, when that came in.

MAGGIE

So why did you say yes to *me*?

DOROTHY

I don't know, Maggie. You just sounded a little different. But you're from *Wichita*, you say...

MAGGIE

Just one second.

(SFX: MACHINE BEEP.)

Testing, testing.

(SFX: MACHINE BEEP.)

MAGGIE'S VOICE ON TAPE

Testing, testing.

MAGGIE

Good, we're all set to record. Just speak up for the microphone. And...

(SFX: MACHINE BEEP.)

Welcome to Radio Hollywood! My name is Maggie Hamilton, today is the 4th of July, 1976 – America's 200th birthday, by the way – and I am on a farm in the middle of Kansas with an American icon, a true national *heroine*. Say hello to our listeners, Dorothy.

DOROTHY

(clearing her throat)

Hello.

MAGGIE

Are you nervous?

DOROTHY

Just a little bit.

MAGGIE

And that is so odd, because you personify *courage* the whole world over. Could you just re-cap for our listeners what made you into a symbol of bravery for people everywhere?

DOROTHY

Well – once upon a time – when I was a girl, I was living on this very farm with my Aunt Em and Uncle Henry.

MAGGIE

And Toto, too.

DOROTHY

And my dog Toto, too.

MAGGIE

And then what happened...?

DOROTHY

And then one day a cyclone came up and lifted this whole house and carried me away to a strange and wonderful place.

MAGGIE

To the so-called merry old land of Oz.

DOROTHY

Yes. Onto a part of it called Munchkinland.

MAGGIE

Munchkinland. Is that delicious? But didn't that cyclone drop your house *onto* something?

DOROTHY

Yes, it dropped us on top of the Wicked Witch of the East. Knocking her right over!

MAGGIE

Knocking her over? Knocking her *off*, you mean!

DOROTHY

I didn't *mean* to kill her. The house did it.

MAGGIE

Oh, these lethal Kansas farmhouses. And then what happened?

DOROTHY

Well, then, the Witch of the *North* came and thanked me for killing the Wicked Witch of the *East*.

MAGGIE

So *this* was a nice witch, the “good” quote-unquote “Witch of the North”?

DOROTHY

A very nice witch. You should have seen how she just glowed.

MAGGIE

I can picture it.

DOROTHY

Anyway, I had to find my way back to Kansas somehow.

MAGGIE

You actually wanted to come back?

DOROTHY

Of course I did. And *she* said I should ask the great and powerful Wizard of Oz. So I set out on the Yellow Brick Road for the Emerald City, where he lives.

MAGGIE

Probably sounds unbelievable to some of our listeners. But you made some unusual friends on that yellow road, didn't you, Dorothy?

DOROTHY

Oh, yes. The Scarecrow, who wanted a brain, the Tin Woodman, who wanted a heart, and the Cowardly Lion, who wanted courage.

MAGGIE

Men without brains or a heart or courage? Sounds like L.A. to me!

DOROTHY

I'm sorry?

MAGGIE

Nothing. A Hollywood joke. But you were meeting the Wizard.

DOROTHY

Yes, and he told me the only way I could get back home was to kill the Wicked Witch of the West.

MAGGIE

The villain of your story, quote-unquote.

DOROTHY

Not quote-unquote. She *was* wicked. That's why they called her...

MAGGIE & DOROTHY

(together)
The Wicked Witch of the West.

MAGGIE
But fess up, now, was she *really* all that wicked?

DOROTHY
Well, she sicced her nasty Flying Monkeys on us! And she very nearly killed us!

MAGGIE
Getting rid of her couldn't have been *that* hard. You'd already bumped off her sister.

DOROTHY
That was an accident. My house fell on her.

MAGGIE
But in the end, you *did kill* her, the so-called Wicked Witch of the West. How did you do that again?

DOROTHY
By throwing a bucketful of water at her and melting her. A bucket no bigger than the pitcher of water on this table right here.

MAGGIE
And you've never felt bad about taking a life, taking *her* life?

DOROTHY
I didn't mean to melt her. The water did it.

MAGGIE
What about murdering her sister?

DOROTHY
It was an *accident*. *My house fell on her*.

MAGGIE
You are a dangerous lady, Dorothy from Kansas! And I have to say, the merry old land of Oz doesn't sound very merry to *me*. I mean, falling houses. Munchkins and murders and meltings. Gangs of psychotic monkeys headed by wicked old witches.

DOROTHY
It was wonderful. The adventures, and everything.

MAGGIE

And yet you still came back, didn't you.

DOROTHY

Well, I was still homesick for Kansas.

MAGGIE

Since there's "noplacelikehome."

DOROTHY

Since there's noplacelikehome.

MAGGIE

You realize it's a pernicious cultural stereotype.

DOROTHY

I'm sorry...?

MAGGIE

Witches? Haggard crones flying around on broomsticks doing quote-unquote "evil"? That's all part of the cultural baggage of patriarchy, a way of demonizing women who have certain special knowledge and unusual powers...

DOROTHY

She was a witch. A witch, Miss Hamilton. All right?

MAGGIE

Fine. Fine. It's your experience. But after you got back Hollywood made a movie called "The Wizard of Oz" and they got a few things wrong, didn't they?

DOROTHY

Oh, that darn movie invented all kinds of things! The books by Mr. L. Frank Baum were much truer to what really happened.

MAGGIE

Let's stop there. You say "what really happened." Now did all of that *really* happen? In so-called "Oz"?

DOROTHY

Every bit of it.

MAGGIE

You know there are a few doubters out there.

DOROTHY

Oh, yes, I know some people think it's all just a fairy tale or something.

MAGGIE

So you actually *talked* to a *Scarecrow* and a man made out of scrap metal...

DOROTHY

It wasn't scrap metal. It was *tin*.

MAGGIE

A lion with self-esteem issues...

DOROTHY

Lion was *afraid*. And he had every right to be! With all those dangers.

MAGGIE

Some people claim the Merry Old Land of Oz is just a metaphor. A satire on capitalism. Emerald City was green because of money and the road was yellow to symbolize gold.

DOROTHY

No, no, no. It all happened! It was *real*. And the *dangers* were real, which I overcame by banding together with my fellow creatures – even if they were made of straw, or tin.

MAGGIE

Socialism, in other words.

DOROTHY

Not socialism. *Friendship*.

MAGGIE

Can we talk about those friends of yours for a second? Scarecrow, for example. If I may get a little more personal, more intimate...? Because I suspect you're hiding something behind all that Midwestern goodness and virtue.

DOROTHY

What about Scarecrow?

MAGGIE

Fess up, Dotty. Was Scarecrow maybe just a little *more* than a "friend," quote-unquote...?

DOROTHY

What a terrible thing to say.

MAGGIE

How about the steadfast Tin *Wood-Man*, was there a little flirty-thing going on? Maybe a *menage à trois*? With the lion your not-so-cowardly voyeur?

DOROTHY

Shame on you!

MAGGIE

Sweetheart. I'm in the media. I'm in the *Hollywood* media.

DOROTHY

Well, you must change the channel of your *mind*. Good Lord! I loved them as my *friends*.

MAGGIE

Fine, we'll leave it at that. So speaking of the movie, did you go out for the premiere?

DOROTHY

To Los Angeles? Oh, no. I stayed right here in Kansas.

MAGGIE

I should mention for our listeners that Dorothy is sitting here with me in the famous blue-check dress and holding the basket with her celebrated little dog. Do you keep the dress under glass, or...?

DOROTHY

Oh, no, just wrapped in tissue paper in a box in a drawer. A very nice box with flowers that Aunt Em left me.

MAGGIE

Aunt Em...

DOROTHY

People always think it's *Auntie* Em.

MAGGIE

That darn movie again!

DOROTHY

She's gone long ago, God rest her soul. She and Uncle Henry.

MAGGIE

And Toto, too.

DOROTHY

And Toto, too.

MAGGIE

You've done a brilliant job of staying out of the limelight all these years. Hidden out here all alone. A recluse. A hermit, really.

DOROTHY

Well, it was very hard, after I came back. Adjusting, I mean.

MAGGIE

Of course it was. You'd been traumatized. You were a refugee.

DOROTHY

You might say that.

MAGGIE

A refugee from heaven. From Eden.

DOROTHY

It is hard to have gone somewhere special and done something wonderful, and then suddenly be...just...

MAGGIE

Nothing.

DOROTHY

...and then be nothing. And have nothing.

MAGGIE

This broken-down old farm is all that's left you now, isn't it.

DOROTHY

Barely. It's been mortgaged five times over. All the rest of the farms around here have been sold off to big corporations. I don't even know anybody around me for miles anymore. No. That whole world is gone now. That beautiful world I grew up in... Where families lived together. People knew each other. Helped each other. Oh, my. Will you look at that. You made me cry.

MAGGIE

Now you go right ahead.

DOROTHY

I'm sorry. I'm so sorry.

MAGGIE

I should think you often find yourself crying into your apron, don't you, Dorothy? Late at night, all alone here in the dark...?

DOROTHY

Yes, I do find myself crying a good deal these days...

MAGGIE

After losing so much. Not just Aunt Em and Uncle Henry and 21 Totos in a row. Losing Oz.

DOROTHY

Yes... Which is still out there, somewhere. Over the rainbow, as she says in the movie.

MAGGIE

Must be pretty lonely here in gray old Kansas, at your advanced age. Mortgaged up to the wazoo in non-merry old America. Cradling your old basket in your arms. Maybe you do that from time to time? Put on the old blue dress here all by yourself and take out the basket...

DOROTHY

Yes, I do do that sometimes...

MAGGIE

Maybe read one of Mr. Baum's dog-eared books...

DOROTHY

I do like to read them.

MAGGIE

Maybe even watching that darn movie.

DOROTHY

I hate that movie. But – oh, we do love to be lied to, don't we. Why, I watch that movie every time it's on the television!

MAGGIE

It never ages, does it.

DOROTHY

Even though Oz, the real Oz, wasn't anything like that! Oz was so much more – what...more...

MAGGIE

Magical?

DOROTHY

Yes, but the magic wasn't the place, the magic wasn't outside of you. It went all through you. It flooded you. It *became* you. The good things *and* the bad. You turned into a piece of Oz. Forever.

MAGGIE

Nobody ever ages a day there, do they.

DOROTHY

No, they just are whatever they are and stay that way, forever and ever and ever...

MAGGIE

What about all the wonderful things the movie never mentioned? The people made out of china, and the fighting trees, and the Quadlings...?

DOROTHY

Oh, my, the Quadlings, yes...

MAGGIE

Would you go back, Dorothy? If you could? Back to the land of Oz?

DOROTHY

I would do it in a second.

MAGGIE

In a second. Exactly.

DOROTHY

In spite of all the terrible things.

MAGGIE

The terrible things wouldn't matter, would they. Nothing would matter if you were in Oz.

DOROTHY

Wouldn't *you* go back?

MAGGIE

Yes...

DOROTHY

Don't *you* want to go back?

MAGGIE

I do want to go back.

DOROTHY

Back to your castle?

MAGGIE

Back to my wonderful castle. Back to my guards. My faithful monkeys...

DOROTHY

Now will you turn that machine off? Turn it off, please!

(SFX: MACHINE BEEP.)

You *liar*.

MAGGIE

I beg your pardon?

DOROTHY

Do you think I don't know who you are? Well, take *this*!

MAGGIE

No, not the water, don't throw the water!

DOROTHY

Are you ready to melt again? *For good* this time, I hope?

MAGGIE

Stop, Dorothy! Please!

DOROTHY

I thought it might be you from your letter. "*Maggie Hamilton*." Quote-unquote! You coward, why don't you say who you are?

MAGGIE

(*a la Margaret Hamilton as the Witch in the movie*)

You little brat! Yes, it's me!

DOROTHY

When you said you were from "*Witch-ita*" I knew for sure. You just couldn't resist, could you?

MAGGIE

Well, we all need our little fun.

DOROTHY

So you came here to kill me. With your bagful of knives.

(SFX: LITTLE DOG YAPPING AND BARKING.)

Get her, Toto!

MAGGIE

Oh, will you be QUIET?!?!?

(SFX: LITTLE DOG WHIMPERS AND GOES QUIET.)

Damn dog...! So throw the water at me! Go on!

DOROTHY

Get ready!

MAGGIE

But *if you do*...your life will be even more empty than it is now, my pretty! *You need me, Dorothy! I give you meaning!*

DOROTHY

Give me meaning...?

MAGGIE

The same way you give it to me. Yes, I came out here to take my revenge. But first to make you talk about the old days, just to torture you. Dellllllllicately!

(Reverting to "Maggie")

After looking for you, for decades. Hating you for decades.

DOROTHY

So it didn't work the first time? I didn't melt you?

MAGGIE

Oh, you melted me, all right – and you transported me to this. To America. Where *I'm* nobody, too. Where I'm powerless Maggie Hamilton of Hollywood, California, interviewing faded celebrities by day, sitting alone at night watching and re-watching an old movie about me. About the two of us.

DOROTHY

I'm going to throw this!

MAGGIE

You're my friend, Dorothy! You're my *only* friend! Don't desert me now!

DOROTHY

Why didn't you do it, why didn't you just kill me?

MAGGIE

You and your friends went to the Wizard looking for a brain and a heart and some courage. Today you gave me something *I* needed.

DOROTHY

What could I possibly give *you*...?

MAGGIE

A touch of goodness. A reminder of how strange and wonderful it is. And of how much I missed you and our time together – before I take my leave, with a little help from Kansas...

(SFX: A SWIRLING WIND, growing louder and louder through the following.)

DOROTHY

What is that, what's that noise?

MAGGIE

Look out that window and you'll see. *That's* why I planned all this for today.

DOROTHY

It's a cyclone! It's coming right this way...!

MAGGIE

Yes, Dorothy, the cyclone that can take me back! That can take *us* back – together!

DOROTHY

Oh, *my*...! No!

MAGGIE

Yes, that cyclone is a yellow brick road back to Oz. Out of this grey hell to our own true home. And what do we always say? About home?

DOROTHY

There's no place like home...

MAGGIE

And all we have to do is ride that tornado to reach it. It'll take me and you and your blue dress and your immortal basket and Toto, too.

DOROTHY

No. No, not that... I couldn't do that again, not now, not at my age...

MAGGIE

Yes, you can!

(*The Wicked Witch again:*)

Surrender, Dorothy! Don't fear it! Ride the cyclone – with me! The Scarecrow is waiting for you. The Tin Woodman, the Lion. Oz wants you back. It's not complete without you. A place where you'll never age again.

DOROTHY

I'll never age...?

MAGGIE

Not one more day. You'd be just as you are right now, forever.

DOROTHY

I'd never age...

MAGGIE

And I'd have all my powers again!

(SFX: SWIRLING WINDS GET LOUDER.)

You hear that? The cyclone is calling us! Come with me, Dorothy! Back over the rainbow! Back to friendship, back to wonder, back to danger, to a world of beauty beyond Technicolor! To the wonderful land of Oz!

DOROTHY

Yes...

MAGGIE

Oh, the adventures we could have over there, you and I!

DOROTHY

Yes...!

MAGGIE

Will you come with me, Dorothy?

DOROTHY

How do I know this isn't just another trick?

MAGGIE

The only way you'll find out is by going.

DOROTHY

I should trust *you*?

MAGGIE

You were brave enough back then. Are you brave enough for this? You are, I know it.

DOROTHY

Yes. Yes! I'm brave enough! Hop in the basket, Toto!

(SFX: LITTLE DOG BARKING HAPPILY.)

MAGGIE

Yes, hop in the basket, Toto. And say it for me, Dorothy! Say it!

DOROTHY

There's no place like home! There's no place like home! There's no place like home!

MAGGIE

(does the high-pitched witch's cackle of triumph)

My pretty!

(THE SWIRLING WIND IS VERY LOUD.)

*(THEN, SUDDEN SILENCE EXCEPT FOR A DISTANT CAWING OF CROWS
AND A GATE BANGING IN THE WIND.)*

(END OF PLAY.)