The Magic of Oz (Books of Wonder)
by L. Frank Baum

There's trouble once again in the land of Oz!

The mischievous boy Kiki Aru has discovered a magical word--Pyrzqxgl--can transform him and anyone else into whatever Kiki demands. Worse yet, Kiki has been recruited by the villainous Nome King in his latest attempt to get revenge on Princess Ozma and all her friends.

While Ozma's court plans a spectacular celebration for her birthday, Dorothy and the Wizard set out with the Cowardly Lion and the Hungry Tiger to find a gift for their beloved princess. But in the Forest of Gugu they become entangled in the wicked plans and magical transformations of Kiki and the Nome King.

Can Dorothy and the Wizard stop the evil-doers before they conquer Oz? Or will Kiki's incredible powers finally give the Nome King the revenge he has craved for so long?

This deluxe reproduction of the rare first edition features all twelve of Oz artist John R. Neill's beautiful color plates, along with his nearly one hundred black-and-white drawings, making this the perfect present for Oz fans old and new.

My Personal Review:
The enchantment of this book begins with the cover; even as a child I was intrigued by this artwork, which seemed to suggest mystery, magic, and mischief. Well, the story behind the cover really delivers; truly, this book demonstrates just how L. Frank Baum was mastering his craft at this stage of his life. Sadly, this was the second-to-last book he was to pen before passing away. In Magic Baum falls back on a wide and familiar cast of characters including Dorothy, the Cowardly Lion, and the Wizard--as well
as perennial villain of The Nome King (who, delightfully, just seems impervious to reform). Baum seems to have taken this approach in many of his later books, bringing in as many characters as he could; this approach works with marvelous success. For a kid, its like getting to go to a birthday party with all of your favorite people; and Magic is one heck of a party. In this book, Baum really explores magic and how it is enacted in the Land of Oz; a departure, in a way, because generally the Oz books are about queer creatures and magical objects, and not about the use of magic itself. The parallel adventures of the separate groups of characters in this book help make it one of the most suspenseful in the series and it all ties together quite neatly. John R. Neils illustrations are wonderful, as is this particular edition of the book. I say Magic is a book that all fantasy lovers should read--dont let this tale slip into the oblivion of time. If your children are Harry Potter fans (especially the younger set), then introduce them to the Oz series--and this book in particular.

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