

Who Stole the Wizard of Oz?

Recommended for Grades 4-6

Book Summary: Who Stole the Wizard of Oz?

Becky is accused of stealing a copy of *The Wizard of Oz* from the library book sale. Insisting her innocence, Becky and her brother, Toby, follow the clues to find the answers for themselves and to clear Becky's name. They discover that four other books were stolen too and all were donated by the same person. While they piece together the clues, a series of strange robberies take place around town that correlate to things from the five stolen books. Reading the books, the two discover that each points towards a hidden treasure except for *Alice in Wonderland*.

[SPOILER]

Becky and Toby consider *Alice in Wonderland* the mistake until Becky realizes that their town, Checkertown, matches up with the chessboard squares in the book. The square where the game ended is right where the library is located. When they search the library for the treasure, they find a green-wrapped bundle behind a mirror in the library and use the information they learned to lure the thief to find the treasure.

When they confront the thief, they find that the treasure is an old copy of *Alice in Wonderland* that is later valued to be worth \$15,000. They leave the book in the library and it is left there to be enjoyed by all the patrons, following the wishes of the book's original owner.

Author Biography: Avi

Edward Irving Wortis, nicknamed "Avi" by his sister, was born December 23, 1937 in New York. He and his twin sister grew up being read to every day by their mother and going to the library every week. In high school, he worked with a tutor to improve his writing skills which in turn gave him the idea to begin writing books. After writing some failed plays, he turned to writing children's books and published his first book, *Things that Sometimes Happen*, in 1970. He has been a librarian at the New York Public Library and at Trenton State College in New Jersey. Avi has won several awards for his books, including a Newbery Award and Newbery Honors. Today, Avi continues to write and to visit schools. He lives with his wife Linda Cruise Wright in Denver Colorado. They have three sons.



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Discussion Questions: Who Stole the Wizard of Oz?

1. Becky is accused of stealing a book from the library, which she insists she didn't do. What would you do if you were accused a stealing a book? How would you prove that you didn't do it?
2. The book is narrated by Toby. Compare the different point of view types (first, second, third) and compare the advantages and disadvantages of each for telling this story. Do you have a favorite point of view? Which one and why?
3. Do the illustrations enhance the story at all? If so, how? Do the illustrator's ideas of the characters match your ideas? Why or why not?
4. Becky and Toby's first plan is to figure out where the missing may have come from by checking all the children's books at the sale for owner's names in the books. Do you think this plan would work? Why or why not? What else might they have done to find out where the books came from?
5. When Gramp tells them "curiosity killed the cat", Becky replies that "satisfaction brought him back". What does Becky mean by her response? Do you agree with her? Why or why not?
6. Miss Tobias left her niece, Miss McPhearson, with five children's books even though her niece always teased her for reading them. What else could Miss Tobias have done with her treasured books? Do you agree with Miss McPhearson that children's books are just for children? Why or why not?
7. Becky and Toby read all five books to figure out what would make them so valuable and they decide that the books lead to treasure. Did you find their path of reasoning believable? What would be your next step once you determined the books led to treasure?
8. Becky insists that all the books had maps after all since *Alice in Wonderland* had the chessboard, which matches up to their town of Checkertown. Why would the chessboard be a map? Could it be argued that all chessboards are maps? Why or why not?
9. Becky and Toby break into the library after it closes so they can see who steals the treasure. Was this the right thing for them to do? Why or why not? Do the ends always justify the means?
10. The twins leave the treasure, a copy of *Alice in Wonderland*, in the library so everyone can enjoy it. Who really owns the book? Did they do the right thing in leaving it for the librarian to find? Should the book have been sold so the library could get money for more books? Why or why not?



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