

The End

I grew up reading the Oz books by L. Frank Baum; so, did my cousins, who lived hundreds of miles away. That was the one thing we kids could count on: a new Oz book for Christmas. Then, when the family got together (usually once a year) we children would exchange our books and double our reading pleasure!

The books always involved people of this world (like Dorothy Gayle of Kansas, for instance) traveling by some circuitous route to a hidden magical kingdom, Oz, where unusual things would happen. There was danger to be overcome, obstacles to be met, and people (or animals that talked) who accompanied and helped you on whatever needed to be accomplished. You always knew, however, that all would be well, in the end: party or feast to celebrate victory, the good-guys winning and a return home to wherever “you” (or the hero or heroine) had come from.

To me, then—as a child—the “journey” was always interesting and always had a happy ending.

Now, there are three things that you might need to know about me: First, we moved around a lot. (I averaged about 2 schools per school year until the age of 12.) Secondly, I have always loved horses and, thirdly, my own personal hero was Roy Rodgers (who always rode a palomino horse). So, you can imagine how excited I was when, in the third grade (at about 8-years old), I heard about a contest that involved winning a palomino pony. All I had to do was “name the horse” and the best entry would win.

My mom, of course, tried to discourage the idea. “Even if you win, we’d have to sell it,” she said. “We don’t have the money to feed it, no place to keep it”, etc.

But, I was a child. I entered the contest, anyway; and, of course, against my fondest expectations, my “perfect” entry name of “Amber” didn’t win.

But I was child. I knew that this couldn’t be the end. Ends always involved something good...a party...a returning home...friends, etc.

Then, in eighth grade (when I was about 12-years old), our family got to talking about “names”. If we owned our own home, what would we name it. (People often tried to give their houses names, in those days...even people like us, who rode around in an old jalopy, looking at houses and joking about “Let’s go buy it” when what our parents really meant, as we drove past, “Well, we just went by it!”

I knew exactly what kind of house I’d have. It would be a ranch, and I’d end up having lots and lots of horses, consequently, I blurted out, with a great deal of confidence, the perfect name for such a place “I’d call it ‘Horses’ End’!”, I said.

There was a split second of silence; then my parents broke up into gales of hysterical laughter and, to me, a total put down of my perfectly reasonable name and lovingly thought of name: the end...place where horses would end up...a happy ending.

Two different ages, adults and children, seeing things so very, very differently...and one hurting the other without really meaning to.

Isn't that what often happens when two different ages interpret the same set of words? Like Creation and Evolution? Only, the word involves "beginnings" instead of "endings". Therefore, the end of this essay (involving "understanding") should probably be called...

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