# Is Wicked queer or 'queerbaiting'?



The much-anticipated film adaptation of the beloved Broadway musical Wicked has officially launched in cinemas across the UK but critics are asking, are the female relationships basically 'queerbaiting' gay audiences? 'Queerbaiting' is a term used to describe a marketing technique that hints at same-sex relationships without fully representing them in the narrative. Critics voiced their concerns on social media platforms, questioning why the characters could not be portrayed as platonic friends. Conversely, supportive fans have celebrated star Ariana Grande's acknowledgment of Glinda's potential queerness, viewing her comments as affirmations of LGBTQ+ identities.

In Wicked: Part One, directed by Jon M. Chu, Ariana Grande as Glinda is joined by an impressive cast that includes Cynthia Erivo as Elphaba, Michelle Yeoh as Madame Morrible, and gay actor Jonathan Bailey as well as Jeff Goldblum. Wicked: Part Two is scheduled to premiere on November 21, 2025.

The film, based on the Broadway and West End musical, reimagines the classic tale of The Wizard of Oz, delving into the complex friendship between Elphaba, the future Wicked Witch of the West, and Glinda, the Good Witch, long before the arrival of Dorothy and Toto. The story explores themes of rivalry, acceptance, and personal growth as the two characters navigate their contrasting personalities and societal expectations.

In promotional interviews, both Erivo and Grande have reflected on the intimate bond their characters share, hinting at the potential for queer interpretations of their relationship. Ariana Grande, a fierce LGBTQ+ advocate (her brother is gay and she even left the Catholic church because of its attitudes to homosexuality) remarked that Glinda "might be a little in the closet," suggesting that the depth of their connection transcends traditional definitions of love and could be perceived through a queer lens. Grande noted that many fans might "ship" the characters due to the strong emotional ties they develop throughout the story.

She went on, "Oz is a celebration of uniqueness," and referred to elements of the narrative as inherently queer, echoing sentiments from L. Frank Baum's original books where the term "queer" frequently appeared. Grande's comments regarding Doctor Dillamond's character, labelled as a "gay icon," reflect a broader intention to embrace and affirm LGBTQ+ identities within the fantastical narrative, affirming Oz as a "Pride parade" in spirit.

Cynthia Erivo added another layer to the discussion, expressing that Elphaba's love for Glinda is genuine and rooted in an "unbreakable bond." She praised the connection the characters share, remarking that “what they build with each other is an unbreakable bond and love,” reinforcing the importance of their relationship within the storyline.

In addition to the engagement with queer themes, the film dazzles audiences with high production values and amazing performances. Michelle Yeoh’s portrayal of Madame Morrible has been particularly highlighted, as she embodies the authoritative figure at Shiz University where Elphaba and Glinda first cross paths.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wicked\_(2024\_film)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wicked_%282024_film%29) - Corroborates the director, cast, and release dates of the film 'Wicked: Part One' and 'Wicked: Part Two'.
* [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wicked\_(2024\_film)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wicked_%282024_film%29) - Provides details on the film's production, including the decision to split the story into two parts and the involvement of key cast members like Cynthia Erivo and Ariana Grande.
* <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1262426/> - Confirms the cast, including Cynthia Erivo as Elphaba and Ariana Grande as Glinda, and the storyline of the film.
* <https://columbus.broadway.com/buzz/wicked-part-one-will-release-early-movie-fans-excited-for-wickediator/> - Supports the release date of 'Wicked: Part One' on November 22, 2024.
* <https://ew.com/movies/everything-we-know-about-the-wicked-movie/?srsltid=AfmBOoqO9gp3Zl1RaXrVykQS2eRapUuxkw97Qk4zNBxfcKl2A9F7AyMQ> - Confirms the release dates for both 'Wicked: Part One' and 'Wicked: Part Two'.
* <https://www.nbc.com/nbc-insider/where-to-watch-wicked-tickets-imax-more> - Provides information on the release date and how to watch 'Wicked: Part One', including IMAX showings.
* [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wicked\_(2024\_film)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wicked_%282024_film%29) - Details the narrative and themes of the film, including the complex friendship between Elphaba and Glinda.
* <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1262426/> - Supports the characters and their roles in the film, such as Michelle Yeoh as Madame Morrible.
* [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wicked\_(2024\_film)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wicked_%282024_film%29) - Discusses the production values, including set designs and the emotional journey of the cast during the film's creation.
* <https://ew.com/movies/everything-we-know-about-the-wicked-movie/?srsltid=AfmBOoqO9gp3Zl1RaXrVykQS2eRapUuxkw97Qk4zNBxfcKl2A9F7AyMQ> - Provides context on the cast's emotional responses and their gratitude for being part of the project.
* [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wicked\_(2024\_film)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wicked_%282024_film%29) - Supports the overall reception and anticipation surrounding 'Wicked: Part One' and its themes of acceptance and love.
* <https://wsvn.com/entertainment/deco-drive/wicked-stars-cynthia-erivo-ariana-grande-and-michelle-yeoh-talk-bringing-beloved-musical-to-the-big-screen/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data