

AN AUBURN NIGHT IN OZ

One movie. One campus. A hundred memories.

Based on the Broadway musical that became one of the highest grossing stage productions of all time.

Inside the pink-and-green world that took over campus.



A NIGHT FULL OF MAGIC...

There are certain moments in college that do not exist in planners, syllabi, or schedules. Some moments rise above the everyday routine of classes, group projects, and exams. In Auburn, these moments usually begin the same way: someone sends a text, a plan forms, and suddenly that group creates memories. The newest premiere of *Wicked: For Good* was one of these moments. A night when Auburn no longer felt like a small southern college town but a place filled with excitement, fantasy, and anticipation.

For weeks leading up to the release, the conversations I heard were all the same: Who's going? What are you wearing? Should we dress up? How early do we need to get there? The excitement was familiar, and the anticipation became an experience of its own. This time, however, felt especially personal. Many people I know, including myself, grew up listening to the original soundtrack of *Wicked*, or heard stories from older siblings who had obsessed over Idina Menzel and Kristin Chenoweth. Now, the movie version was finally showing in a theater just minutes from our campus. This did not feel like pure entertainment; instead, it felt like an invitation to relive a piece of our childhood.

In my sorority, the release of *Wicked: For Good* became an event of its own. Our executive board even surprised us with a private screening

On the afternoon of the screening, my house felt like a miniature backstage dressing room. Friends ran in and out of hallways, trading glittered tops, curling each other's hair, and debating whether emerald green or bubble-gum pink felt more "on theme."

Someone blasted the *Wicked* soundtrack from a Bluetooth speaker while others took group photos. It was chaotic, loud, and completely perfect; the kind of chaos that reminds you why girlhood, especially in college, feels like a team sport.

By the time we drove over to the theater, the energy was contagious. At the AMC in Tiger Town, girls gathered outside the ticket line, dressed in every shade of green imaginable. You could spot groups from other sororities, friends from class, and couples who had turned the premiere into a date night. The crowd felt like a preview of the movie itself—colorful, exciting, and full of anticipation.

Inside, the lobby smelled like popcorn and perfume. Students carried glittery cups, pink Stanley tumblers, and bags of candy big enough to share with entire rows. Every seat in our theater filled quickly, and there was that warm, low sound of voices blending: the sound of a shared moment before it becomes a memory.



THIS OR THAT



Stand up even when it is bold



Values truth over popularity



Bold, intense, & loyal



Most likely to question the system



Realist



Believes in the magic of presentation



Loves tradition and community



Warm, bubbly, & intense



Most likely to win "most popular"



Optimist

Then, the lights dimmed.

The shift in the room was immediate. The chatter fell away, the screen turned on, and for the next two hours, Auburn was not Auburn. We were no longer stressed students. We were not thinking about deadlines or Canvas notifications. We were in Oz. We became swept up in the world of emerald cities and shared an experience in a room full of people who had been waiting for this very moment.

There was something special in watching the crowd react together. Laughter filled the rows every once in a while, gasps echoed during plot twists, and a few of us whispered the lyrics under our breath during big musical numbers, resisting the urge to sing out loud. However, when the movie ended, and the credits rolled, there was that collective pause, the kind that happens when no one wants the moment to be over yet.

Some people stood and stretched. Others lingered in their seats. But almost everyone turned to someone next to them and started talking at the same time: "That was so good." "I'm obsessed." "When are we seeing it again?" The conversations moved into the lobby, then into the parking lot, then into group chats as everyone tried to decide where to go next.

But more than anything, that night felt like proof of how community forms on a college campus. It is not always in big, formal events, but in the small moments: getting ready together, sitting side-by-side in a dark theater, laughing at the same scenes, walking out of the theater to talk about our favorite characters.





In a place like Auburn, where tradition and belonging are part of the very heart of the town, these shared experiences matter.

They interrupt the business of college life and remind students that they are part of something bigger than themselves. They create a collective memory between students who choose to show up for something together.

For many of us, the Wicked premiere became a new tradition, one we did not know we were creating. It was about the movie, yes—but it was also about friendship, girlhood, and the joy of experiencing something magical with the people who shape your college years. It was about finding moments of peace in the middle of a stressful semester and remembering that community is not something you stumble into; it is something you participate in.

When I think back on the Wicked premiere, I do not just remember the film. I remember the people next to me. The laughter, the glitter, the sweater someone borrowed. I remember the feeling of being surrounded by hundreds of students who, for a brief moment, were all part of the same story. In a college town like Auburn, that feeling is its own kind of magic. One we create together, a shared moment at a time.

