



Sell With a Story: Beyond the Yellow Brick Road

As a child watching *The Wizard of Oz* in years, I was too mesmerized by the wonder of Dorothy finding herself in a magical new world to take in all the details. Emerald City? That I understood. Ditto for her Ruby Slippers. But yellow bricks? Only years later, watching the movie for the who-knows-how-many-times, did I realize that the bricks were gold. Ah, looking back, it's clear the yellow brick road didn't just lead to the Emerald City. It was priceless in its own right – the ultimate symbol of luxury, the substance of dreams.



Goldrush

Dorothy was far from the only person to follow a golden road. Throughout history, gold discoveries have launched rushes across continents, up towering mountains, or distant streams and rivers. When we look at Renaissance portraits of current fashion magazines, we see gold everywhere – particularly yellow. Most people can tell you they love gold – whether yellow, white, or rose – and why, but few know much about its long, illustrious history.

Walk Back Along the Yellow Brick Road

We all know the vital role gold plays in the jewelry industry, but did you know our hominid ancestors – perhaps Neanderthals – discovered gold 40,000 years ago? This came to light when anthropologists and archaeologists studied ancient artifacts and paintings in Spanish caves, dating these treasures back 40 millennia. Among them, they discovered small gold nuggets. This rich yellow metal no doubt mesmerized those who first laid eyes on it as it has ever since.

In Days Long Past

In 5000 BCE, the Egyptians used electrum, a naturally occurring alloy of gold and silver ore, to make jewelry for both men and women. By 3000 BCE, gold jewelry appeared among the ancient Sumerians in Mesopotamia. In 2600 BCE, this same region produced the earliest example of lost wax casting, a funerary decoration for a long-ago queen. By 2500 BCE, gold chains emerged in the Sumerian city of Ur. And at this same time, the Egyptians discovered a wealth of techniques: filigree, granulation embossing, chasing, inlaying, molding, and engraving. South America's Chavin culture used these techniques by 1200 BCE.

A Death Mask

Gold "death masks" originated in Ancient Egypt, where they

believed the mask would help the deceased find their body in the afterlife. The most famous of these is King Tutankhamun. In the 18th century, a gold death mask was discovered in a mining shaft in southwestern Greece, known as Mycenae. Even though the mask pre-dated the Trojan War by 400 years, it was named the Mask of Agamemnon.

Did He Exist?

Agamemnon, the King of Ancient Mycenae, may or may not have lived outside Greek mythology, tragedies, and Homer's Illiad. In mythology, he led the Greek army to the Trojan Wars, accompanying his brother Menelaus, Helen of Troy's husband. But we have yet to make a specific match to a historical figure. The lesson learned? Mycenae was believed to be rich in gold. The mask and numerous decorative gold items discovered there indicate this was true.

Castaway

The Nazca civilization near the Peruvian coast perfected lost-wax casting around 500 BCE. This should come as no surprise because South America was rich in gold and silver, and a number of its ancient societies were highly sophisticated.

Does the Sun Cry?

South America's great Inca civilization believed it did. They

considered gold as the “tears of the sun.” Can you imagine a more beautiful description? If so, please share it below. For me, this gorgeous image does justice to the precious metals, almost unearthly beauty.

Dorothy Got It Right

Between the Emerald City and the Ruby slippers, Dorothy knew how to pick the perfect gems to pair with gold. Centuries ago, when miners in Burma’s Mogok Valley discovered Pigeon Blood Ruby, the king had it set in 24K gold starting a tradition. Pigeon Blood – the finest shade of Ruby – has blue/purple undertones and the brilliant yellow of 24K cancels them out. This creates a peerless, vivid red, one of the most challenging shades to achieve.

Similarly with Emerald, high karat yellow gold enlivens Emerald’s brilliant green displaying it in its full glory.



[Shown in style 123478](#)

Yellow gold also works magically with Alexandrite, Garnet, Pearl, Amethyst, and Sapphire.



[Shown in style 71607](#)

Forever and Ever

I'm skipping over a long period from the Middle Ages through to the present. I'll have to write another blog focusing on those lustrous years. Today we use gold for everyday jewelry, custom designs, sophisticated showstoppers, cocktail rings, and so much more.

Perhaps the biggest gold category is bridal – [engagements](#), [anniversary and eternity bands](#), and [wedding bands](#). It makes perfect sense. Because gold doesn't corrode, ancient cultures considered it "immortal" – like the love a couple vows to live. We say, "till death do us part," but love lives on in the hearts of all those whose lives the couple touches – forever and ever.

To learn more about Stuller's precious metal offerings, [visit our website!](#)

If you enjoyed this historical look at gold, view some more of our Sell With A Story blog posts.

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