

Where The Wild Things Are, (U) Distributed by: Warner Bros, Release date: October 16th 2009, 104 minutes, United States.

Screenplay by: Spike Jonze and David Eggers, adapted from the picture book by Maurice Sendak

The Author

American author and illustrator Maurice Sendak, was born June 10th 1928 in Brooklyn to immigrant parents. Disney's *Fantasia* inspired him to become an illustrator at 12 years, and a time confined to his bed due to sickness led to a love of reading. At 81 his work has been adapted into a cartoon, opera and now feature film. His book 'Where the Wild Things Are' was originally criticised for the scary and nightmarish appearances of his characters. It was Sendak's target audience that flipped things on it's head though as children were drawn to the book beyond the comprehension of their parents.



- Also Written by Sendak:
- *Kenny's Window* (1956)
- *Very Far Away* (1957)
- *The Sign On Rosie's Door* (1960)
- *The Nutshell Library* (1962)
 - *Chicken Soup with Rice (A Book of Months)*
 - *Alligators All Around (An Alphabet)*
 - *One Was Johnny (A Counting Book)*

The picture book

Where the Wild Things Are has been adapted from Maurice Sendak's picture book, written in 1963. The treasured children's story, tells the tale of Max an

imaginative young boy who is sent to bed after running riot in his house, whilst dressed in a wolf costume. As he sinks into his imagination the reader is taken to where the Wild Things live, Max becomes king of the fearsome creatures and we join him as he dances with the monsters before returning home to his bed.



The Adaptation

This film has been described as part of the fantasy-drama genre. Directed by Spike Jonze and co-written with David Eggers the film puts a modern twist on Sendak's original tale depicting nine year old Max as a deeply sensitive child left craving attention as a result of a broken home. Whereas in the book Max dreams his way to the Wild Things the film sees him fleeing to find a boat which he sails away in.

Jonze, director and screenwriter of 'Where the Wild Things are' is known best for the filmmaking skills behind 'Being John Malkovich' for which he was nominated to receive an Academy Award for best director. He also worked along side the likes of Meryl Streep whilst filming 'Adaption'.

The Film

Although based on a picture book, a seemingly unsubstantial form of prose, the tale has been successfully developed into a feature film. Targeted largely at an adult audience by Warner Bros, 'Where the Wild Things Are' combines a childish spirit of adventure with a yearning for community. It differs from the novel, as the characters are much more developed. This 2009 adaptation takes you inside Max's home and draws you into his world as it introduces you to the aspects of his life that he's trying to escape from. It makes a much clearer link between Max's thoughts and the Wild things personalities. A variety of themes are explored and for an older audience it is at times a quite thought-provoking piece.

Reviews

'It certainly doesn't offer much Christmas jollity. Jonze's fans, on the other hand, will find that this director's talents remain untamed.' *Guardian*

'The movie barrels out at you like a nine-year-old boy filled to bursting with joys, fears and furies he can't articulate.' *Rolling Stone*

Film notes Lexy McCaughan