



The Wild Things

By Dave Eggers

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The Wild Things — based very loosely on the storybook by Maurice Sendak and the screenplay cowritten with Spike Jonze — is about the confusions of a boy, Max, making his way in a world he can't control. His father is gone, his mother is spending time with a younger boyfriend, his sister is becoming a teenager and no longer has interest in him. At the same time, Max finds himself capable of startling acts of wildness: he wears a wolf suit, bites his mom, and can't always control his outbursts. During a fight at home, Max flees and runs away into the woods. He finds a boat there, jumps in, and ends up on the open sea, destination unknown. He lands on the island of the Wild Things, and soon he becomes their king. But things get complicated when Max realizes that the Wild Things want as much from him as he wants from them. Funny, dark, and alive, *The Wild Things* is a timeless and time-tested tale for all ages.

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The Wild Things By Dave Eggers Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #363008 in Books
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Editorial Review

From [Bookmarks Magazine](#)

Maurice Sendak's spare picture book has captured the hearts of readers for more than four decades. Critics were split, however, on whether Eggers's novel will enjoy the same long-lasting popularity. Its greatest appeal may stem from Eggers's ability to convey both the sense of wonder and the dark uncertainty that make up a typical childhood, though a few reviewers disagreed. The *Times*, for example, called Max's outbursts an appalling symbol of "contemporary brattish America." The *Washington Post* simply wished that authors would develop their own material (critics mentioned *Pride and Prejudice* and *Zombies* as a horrific literary crime, not for the first time). Overall, younger readers may find much to enjoy here, but children and adults alike should start with the original.

From [Booklist](#)

In Eggers' novel, adapted from Spike Jonze's film of Maurice Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are*, Max is a robust, self-reliant boy who acts out in response to his parents' divorce. After some particularly epic mischief, he runs away, finds a boat, and sails it to a land where large, destructive beasts are willing to recognize him as their king—but Max, as it turns out, is not a particularly good king. There are many pleasant surprises here, from the personalities of the wild things to the dreamlike particulars of their world. But it doesn't feel like an organically grown story. Whether because of this book's unique origins, or Eggers' execution, or even the familiarity of the picture book, the drama here, unfortunately, comes less from Max's adventures than from our interest in seeing how Eggers has managed the adaptation. Where Sendak's book contains multitudes in a dozen sentences, Eggers uses nearly 300 pages to tease out a number of ideas, and his book still feels too long. Billed as an "all-ages novel," *The Wild Things* feels too grown-up for most children and too childlike for most grown-ups. Its association with the movie may boost sales, but the book seems unlikely to last long in the popular imagination. --Keir Graff

Review

"Once Max reaches the island of the beasts, Eggers goes for broke. We get a writhing Technicolor landscape of carnivorous vines, lava beds, mini-tornadoes, mutant snakes, and, of course, the beasts themselves, a motley bundle of brawn and neuroses.... The real question, when it comes to literature, is whether a particular author is interested in hustling us through a breakneck plot (a la Dan Brown) or investigating the internal lives of his or her creations. The best books—and I happily include *The Wild Things* on this list—manage to do both.... Eggers has written a book for readers of all ages, without dumbing down his prose. But his highest achievement is in having found a fresh way to tell us a story we already know so well, about the monstrous forces of love and hate that mark every childhood—and pursue us howling into adulthood."

— Steve Almond, *Boston Globe*

"Eggers, in this funny and touching novelization of Maurice Sendak's picture book, is brilliant at portraying the exuberance and chaos of a young boy's mind and heart."

— *San Francisco Chronicle*

"Not content to reinforce the foundation of Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are*, Eggers instead architects entirely new additions. Young Max's psyche is fully formed, and the Wild Things themselves are given

wonderfully eclectic personalities, ensuring each new chapter is greeted with a sweet sense of anticipation."
— *Powells.com* Staff Pick

"Dave Eggers has created a novel like childhood itself: sometimes weird, sometimes dark, and full of wonder.... Like the original, this is far from the cosy world kids are often fed, but it has real heart—Eggers uses simple but superbly effective prose to suggest that childhood has to be lived without cossetting for us to grow up with any semblance of a normal personality."

— Doug Johnstone, the *Independent*

"Eggers makes us privy to Max's thoughts, fears and desires. He lets us feel the boy's confusion and horror as anger results in shocking behaviour....[*Wild Things*] is not only a wonderful read, but a lovely product. McSweeney's is known for the care it takes in producing its books. From the cover illustrations by Rachel Sumpter to the quality paper and printing, to the informative postscript by the author/publisher, this does Sendak's original picture book proud. (It's for all ages, by the way, not just for kids.)"

— Bernie Goedhart, *Montreal Gazette*

"Everything is in the spirit of Sendak's book. There are knowing nods—Max carves his name on the boat during the boring trip to the island—and the monsters retain their utter, incomprehensible difference. There is far more emotion: the monsters are petulant, panicky, selfish, vulnerable and violent. 'We want what we want. We want all the things we want,' says one, 'oh, and we want no more want.' Without being too grandiose, Max learns that 'uneasy lies the head that wears a crown.' His attempts to govern the monsters slip from rumpus to warfare to disillusionment. More than in the original, Max learns what it feels like to let others down, although this moral is not forced nor mawkish. The parting is affecting. It won't just be Max and the monsters that end in 'a mess of tears.'"

— Stuart Kelly, *The Scotsman*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Lorenzo Davis:

Your reading 6th sense will not betray anyone, why because this *The Wild Things* book written by well-known writer who knows well how to make book that may be understand by anyone who all read the book. Written inside good manner for you, leaking every ideas and producing skill only for eliminate your own personal hunger then you still question *The Wild Things* as good book not just by the cover but also from the content. This is one reserve that can break don't determine book by its handle, so do you still needing one more sixth sense to pick this specific!? Oh come on your examining sixth sense already told you so why you have to listening to another sixth sense.

Geneva Ricks:

This *The Wild Things* is great reserve for you because the content which is full of information for you who

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Christopher Hill:

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Sue Randall:

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