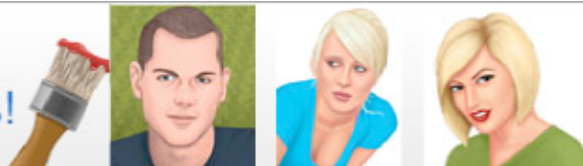


Cartoon Yourself
with WebTattoos!



You can use these cool cartoon drawings of yourself on your profile!

Click Here & Do Yours!

www.mytattoos.com



rogerebert.com

movie reviews

reviews | answer man | great movies | movie glossary | people | scanners | store
commentary | festivals | oscars | roger ebert's journal | one-minute reviews | letters

CHICAGO SUN-TIMES | news | sports | business | entertainment | classifieds | columnists

WHERE THE WILD THINGS ARE (PG)

Ebert: ★★★ Users: ★★★ You: [Rate this movie right now](#)

search

Site

Web Search

powered by **YAHOO!**

GO

[advanced](#) » [tips](#) »

register

You are not logged in.

[Log in](#) »

[Subscribe to weekly newsletter](#) »

times & tickets

Fandango

[Search movie](#)

[showtimes and buy tickets.](#)

about us

[About the site](#) »

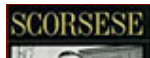
[Site FAQs](#) »

[Contact us](#) »

[Email the Movie](#)

[Answer Man](#) »

on sale now



Max and a Wild Thing.

Where the Wild Things Are

/// October 14, 2009

by Roger Ebert

"Where the Wild Things Are" reflects so much of a plucky little kid: the flirting up of anger at a parent, the defiant escape into fantasy, the tough talk in a tight situation, the exuberance and then the fundamental need to return home and be loved and reassured. All of these stages are explored in Maurice Sendak's famous 1963 children's book, which contains only nine sentences. Ah, but what sentences they are when given resonance by his drawings.

[Spike Jonze](#) and Dave Eggers have met the challenge of this little masterpiece head on, by including both a real little boy and the imaginary Wild Things in the same film. It would simply not have done to alter or shrink the monstrous Things, and with an \$80 million budget, Jonze has been able to make a movie where any reader of the book should be able to recognize all of the Things in sight.

cast & credits

Max Max Records
Claire Pepita Emmerichs
Mom [Catherine Keener](#)
Teacher Steve Mouzakis
Boyfriend [Mark Ruffalo](#)

With the voices of:
Carol [James Gandolfini](#)
Alexander [Paul Dano](#)
Judith [Catherine O'Hara](#)
Ira [Forest Whitaker](#)
The Bull Michael Berry Jr.
Douglas [Chris Cooper](#)
KW [Lauren Ambrose](#)

Warner Bros. presents a film directed by [Spike Jonze](#). Written by Jonze and Dave Eggers, inspired by the book and illustrations by Maurice Sendak

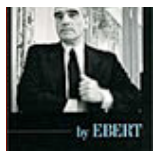
Cartoon Yourself!



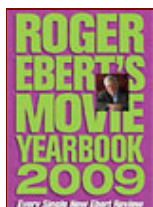
You can use these cool cartoon drawings of yourself on your profile!

Click Here & Do Yours!

www.mytattoos.com



[Buy now](#) »



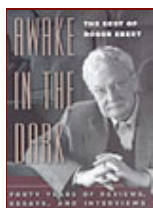
[Buy now](#) »



[Buy now](#) »



[Buy now](#) »



[Buy now](#) »



The creatures in the film are voiced by actors, and given a *great* deal more to say, of course, than in the book. The Things are a considerable technical achievement, combining as they do muppetry and CGI. I don't find them particularly lovely, nor should I; they're not fuzzy toys but characters in a dream that slides in and out of nightmares.

illustrations by Maurice Sendak.
Running time: 101 minutes. Rated PG (for mild thematic elements, some adventure action and brief language).

[Printer-friendly](#) »

[E-mail this to a friend](#) »



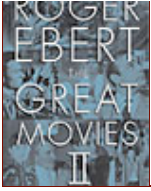
Max Records, of "[The Brothers Bloom](#)," plays the difficult role of Max, the boy who gets into a stubborn argument with his mom ([Catherine Keener](#)) and flees to his room and then to his imagination. In the book his room transforms itself into a jungle, but the film has him sailing a stormy sea in a little boat that looks like a bathtub toy. It arrives at an island which the Wild Things inhabit in grouchy discontent, and Max finds himself moved to bring the discord under control. Why these creatures, who tower over him, should even consider accepting his leadership is a no-brainer: This is Max's dream.

The plot is simple stuff, spread fairly thin in terms of events but portentous in terms of meaning. It comes down to: What is right? -- a question that children often seek answers to. One of the film's strengths is the way it doesn't soft-pedal sticky situations. For example, Max's mom has a boyfriend ([Mark Ruffalo](#)), who isn't painted as an interloper, and affection between the two of them is calmly regarded by Max (whether deeper issues with his absent father are part of his anger is a good question).

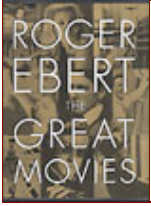
The voice actors and the f/x artists give their fantastical characters personality. When I mention special effects, I don't want to give the impression that the Wild Things are all smoke and mirrors. In close-up, they seem tangibly there, and at times I believe human actors are inside costumes. I used to be able to spot this stuff, but f/x has gotten so good that sometimes you just don't know.

The voices belong to [Catherine O'Hara](#), as the know-it-all Judith; [James Gandolfini](#) as the authoritative boss Thing; [Lauren Ambrose](#) as KW; [Chris Cooper](#) as Douglas; [Forest Whitaker](#) as the pleasant and meek Ira, and [Paul Dano](#) as Alexander, who is only a few feet taller than Max. Each of these creatures is one of a kind, leaving open the question of how, and with whom, they reproduce their species.

The movie felt long to me, and there were some stretches during which I was less than riveted. Is it possible that there wasn't enough Sendak story to justify a feature-length film? In a way I suppose the book tells a feature-length story just in Sendak's drawings, and Jonze and Eggers have taken those for their inspiration. All the same, the film will play better for older audiences remembering a much-loved book from childhood, and not as well with kids who have been trained on slam-bam action animation.



Buy now»



Buy now»



Log onto
EarthShare.org
and see what
you can do.

One environment.
One simple way
to care for it.®



Refinance Now at 4.25% Fixed
No hidden fees-4.4% APR! No obligation.
MortgageRefinance.LendGo.com

Obama Backs Insurance Regulation
Drivers Pay \$44/mo on Avg for Car
Auto-Insurance-Experts.com

Obama Urges Homeowners to Refinance
(\$200,000 Refinance under \$1,059/mo) See
SeeRefinanceRates.com

Online College Degrees
Enjoy Online College Convenience!
Education.NexTag.com/Online-Degrees

Ads by Yahoo!



copyright 2009, rogerebert.com

[privacy policy](#) • [terms of use](#) • [submission guidelines](#)

