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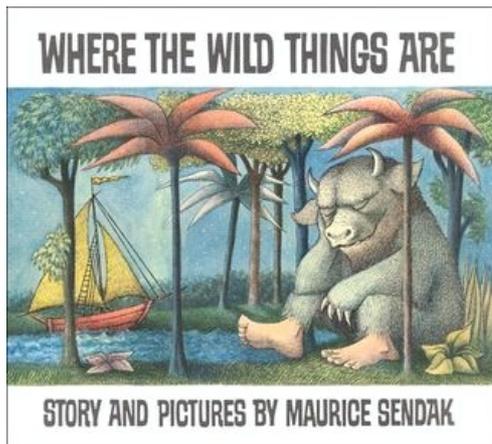
The Life and Death of Maurice Sendak: June 10, 1928 to May 8, 2012

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Hello Everyone,

I'm **Not Quite Miss Rumphius** and this is the blog for the Children's Department at North York Central Library. Welcome back.



Maurice Sendak, acclaimed author of *Where the Wild Things Are*, *Outside Over There*, and many other children's books died earlier today. He was 83 years old. It's difficult to sum up the impact Mr. Sendak had on the world of children's publishing and on several generations of children who read his books and pored over his pictures.

He was -- like each one of us is, in the end -- a bundle of contradictions. A private person and dutiful son, he took great pains to make sure his parents never learned he was a gay man; yet he didn't shy away from the

controversy that came with his portrayal of a naked child in the frequently-banned book, *In the Night Kitchen*. He detested the sugary sweet and twee world of "little people" that many writers and illustrators chose to depict; yet he was the perfect illustrator for the charming, cozy world of *Little Bear* in Else Holmelund Minarik's beloved books for beginning readers.



There were other contradictions, too. Maurice Sendak could be, in his public opinions, as bracing and bitter as a cup of strong, black coffee and

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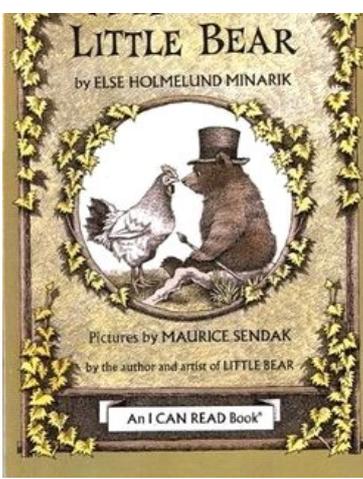
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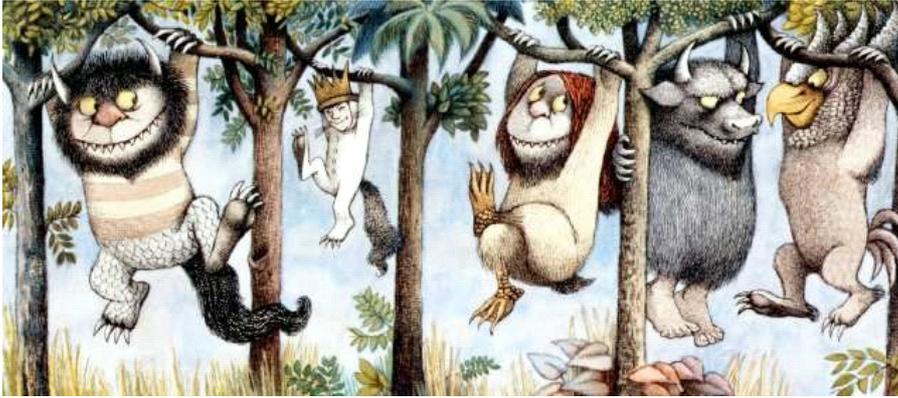


indeed, near the end of his life he came across as defiant and even unreasonable; yet he was also a generous mentor to up-and-coming illustrators and a gifted collaborator who worked with others in the world of theater to create a stage version of Brundibar, an opera first performed by children trapped in a concentration camp.

He shrugged off the label of "Children's Author" and loathed the "Kiddies' Writer" designation that was often unwittingly conferred upon him; at the same time, he saw himself as someone who had no choice but to champion and defend children. He believed it was their right to have books and stories and pictures that reflected the totality of their world; the sorrows, the fears, the small delights and oversize pleasures that make up that

great swirl of any child's emotional life.

The glorious, exuberant world that he depicted in *Where the Wild Things Are* is as good as any to imagine as the place where Maurice Sendak lives on. Let the wild rumpus begin!



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