



In the Night Kitchen

Maurice Sendak

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From the acclaimed author-artist Maurice Sendak comes a Caldecott Honor-winning tale of a fantastical dream world. This comic fantasy will delight readers of all ages with playful illustrations and an imaginative world only Sendak could create.

In the Night Kitchen is the classic story of Mickey's adventures in the bakers' kitchen as they prepare our morning cake. "*Milk in the batter! Milk in the batter! We bake cake and nothing's the matter!*" the bakers sing.

The bakers in the night kitchen need more milk for their batter, but then Mickey falls into the cake! They decide to put him in the oven anyway, but Mickey has different plans. He escapes in a plane made of bread dough and helps the bakers find the milk at last.

"A celebration of the primal, sensory world of childhood and an affirmation of its imaginative potency," proclaimed *Children's Books and Their Creators*.

In the Night Kitchen Details

Date : Published January 18th 1996 by HarperCollins (first published 1970)

ISBN : 9780064434362

Author : Maurice Sendak

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From Reader Review In the Night Kitchen for online ebook

Sally says

Any time a book has polarizing reviews, I'm interested as to why. This being a kids' book made me more interested. Seems one issue was the little boy's nekkedness.

That was not an issue for me at all. Kids like being naked. We all have strange dreams. (This book is the little boy's dream.)

What really weirded me out was the three fat bakers. They were creepy. I guess this confirms that I'm not a huge Maurice Sendak fan.... ;)

Ronyell says

Revised Review:

“In the Night Kitchen” is a follow-up of Maurice Sendak’s famous children’s book, “Where the Wild Things Are” and has also received the distinguished Caldecott Honor Book Award. “In the Night Kitchen” is also one of the most controversial books in history due to many images of Mickey being naked during his dream trip to the Night Kitchen. This book details the adventures of a small boy named Mickey who journeys to the Night Kitchen and meets three unusual cooks and eventually saves the day for everyone who eats cake in the mornings. Maurice Sendak’s surreal storyline and creative illustrations makes this book an instant treat to read.

Maurice Sendak’s surreal story and even more creative and beautiful illustrations, combine effectively in this book as they both delightfully detail Mickey’s adventures in the Night Kitchen. First of all, the story is beautifully surreal as it takes place in a strange dream world where milk cartons and food jars take place as buildings and the three bakers, who are always smiling and speaking in lyrical prose, occupy the population of this strange world. Also, Mickey’s descent into the Night Kitchen is extremely bizarre as he seems like he is a ghost when he falls through the ceilings and the floor, which clearly indicates that this was all a dream. Maurice Sendak’s illustrations are as creative as they are beautiful. He illustrates the Night Kitchen as a colorful world where the sky is full of white stars and food labels on various jars and cartons provide a colorful background. I love the way that Maurice Sendak contrasts the Night Kitchen from Mickey’s world as Mickey’s house is mostly a brown and red color making it seem like a boring place to be, while the Night Kitchen is a colorful world and seems like a lively place to be at. Also, the three bakers in white are truly mind-blowing as they are portrayed as happy, moustache looking men in chubby bodies and tall hats.

Parents should know that this book is controversial for a good reason. There is a brief scene of nudity in this book involving the title character, Mickey. For a fictional character, Mickey’s “private area” being exposed will definitely cause concern for many parents who want to read basic children’s stories to their kids. Also, many pages in this book have Mickey mostly nude and because of this reason, this book has been extremely controversial for many years. Parents who do not want their children to know about nudity at such a young age might want to steer away from this book since it has many nudity scenes.

“In the Night Kitchen” is an extremely unique and beautiful book about the wonders of the dream world and

will surely captivate many children's hearts just as "Where the Wild Things Are" has for many years. I would strongly recommend this book to children ages five years and older because the surreal plot may confuse many small children and the nudity scenes might not be appropriate for children ages four and under.

Review is also on: Rabbit Ears Book Blog

Michael says

I have a confession to make, *goodreads*. You might want to sit down.

I've been seeing other literary social cataloguing websites.

No, wait, put that plate down. It wasn't because I really *wanted* to see anyone else. . . it was for my grade.
dodges plate Wait, wait, let me explain! The thing is, I'm doing a big project on book reviews.

I'm analyzing the rhetorical differences between online book reviews and those published in print.

From meta-reviews to highly negative reviews, to reviews that are discussing the process of reading the book instead of the actual book itself, I'm searching for every kind of trend that's developing. Including the brilliant one-sentence reviews.

How many have I been seeing? Uh, like four. Probably six by the end of the week. *dodges a lamp* But I'm not reviewing with them, *goodreads*! I'm just there for the . . . well, you know . . . if I want my project to say anything, I need to know the lay of the land, don't I?

But, more than just literary social cataloguing websites, I'm also looking at other parts of the internet: online-only reviewers, amazon.com book reviews, and on and on. The project itself will be specifically about reviews on *goodreads*, but I'm going to do some comparisons to see *why* our reviews are better than theirs. Because they are, and I love you the best.

I'm saying all this because it would just be the cat's pajamas if anyone knows a website I should check out, article I should read, or even a specific review that you think of as a "must read."

And I raise the question: is it even a book review if the book is never mentioned, nor any issue about the book's subject matter raised?

3Dyneisha says

There are at least 100 and more books that are banned in the United States. Books of all kinds are being prohibited from schools and some libraries. But what's the reason? Why are they being banned? Should books even be allowed to be banned? These are all questions that need answers.

I think books should not be banned. All subjects no matter how realistic they are should be allowed to be printed and exposed to the world. Reading books that covers certain topics can teach us how to look at the world differently, in someone else eyes. Banned books such as "Go ask Alice" and the "Chocolate War" was both interesting books. They exposed the down sides of life that many people only hear about or see on movies.

"Go ask Alice" was a diary type book telling the life of a young girl moving into a new town. Alice used to be a happy teenager but the town showed her a new life that she without notice, jumped in. She got her first taste of the drug LSD at a house party; leading her to a world feel with prostitution, drugs, and obstacles she must face on her own. Alice got so bad that she was sent to a mental institution. She later died from an overdose. This book caused much controversy amongst parents who were worried about their young daughters reading such a book. The book was supposed to be a ploy to stop the rapid drug rate in teens. Instead the book drew kids in so much it became a "must read book" in the 70's. Parents were outraged. Complaints began to come and the book was banned. Parents felt the book encouraged drug use, sex, and the topic was to mature for teens.

“Chocolate War” is a book about an orphan Jerry Renault who attends an all boy school Trinity High School. There he is bullied and abused by the school gang “The Vigils”. “The Vigils” assigned people in the schools, mostly the “losers”, assignments that they must complete no matter how physical they were. Jerry assignment was to sale chocolates, but he refused to obey “The Vigils” and their leader Archie Costello. The gang asked Jerry everyday and everyday he said no. This made them angry. Archie and The Vigils made Jerry life miserable after that. They would whip on him, trash his locker, and prank calls him all times of the night driving Jerry insane. This book was banned as well. Parents felt the violence that took place in the “Chocolate War” was not for young teens. The book also contained explicit language and masturbation went on in the book.

When people banned books in the United States its usually motivated by these factors; Religion, Political views, violence, sexual content, and homosexuality. Sometimes book critics and parents look to deep into books searching for these factors. When I read a book I read it for entertainment. It seems these days book critics read books just to search for a reason to ban it. It has gotten so bad that even children literature books are being banned.

Early this school year my English teacher assigned the class projects. We were asked to look up the banned books assigned to us. My book was ‘In the Night kitchen” by Maurice Sendak. Maurice Sendak was famous for his illustrations in child books. He was also famous for writing his own children books, receiving awards for many. He was mostly known for his book “Where the wild the wild things are”. He received the Caldecott Medal. When he released “In The Night Kitchen” he received nothing but controversy. Parents felt the book was to mature for young children. The character in the book “Mickey” who was no older than 3, roamed naked in the book. “In the night kitchen” was set in Mickey’s dream, which was in the kitchen of 3 jolly bakers. Parents wanted this book banned for 3 main reasons; Mickey was NAKED, he roamed the streets ALONE, and the book had MASTURBATION in it. Masturbation in a children book? Yes! The drawing in the book did not sit well with some critics. NUDITY + FREE FLOWING MILKY FLUIDS + “BIG PHALLIC” MILK BOTTLES = MASTURBATION. While Sendak had supposing admitted that the book is about a small boy glorifying in his sensuality. Critics have taken it to the extreme saying these things are convenient symbols within rebellious tale about masturbation.

When I hear books are banned I feel like people are trying to withhold information. No information is to mature. I think no book no matter the topic or subject should be banned. If you think it is to violent, or have to much sex in it than you should put it down and pick another book more on your level don’t ruin it for those that like to extend their learning.

Calista says

The Nephew asked to read this tonight. They found the pictures of the naked boy to giggle and laugh. Still they settled and enjoyed the story.

This reminds me of Alice in Wonderland. There is no plot, only nonsense. It is the perfect story that is like a dream. It's like we get to watch this whacked out dream this little boy is having. There is so little out there like this.

I still love this little story.

j says

Somehow I never read this growing up. I have now read it to my daughter about five times. I have absolutely no idea what the hell this book is on about. "Thanks to Mickey, we always have cake in the morning!"

We do? WHO HAS BEEN TAKING MY MORNING CAKE

Jack Kirby and the X-man says

It's just way too weird for me... Maybe X-man will be able to explain it too me when he can talk!

Children have fantastic imaginations, and they'll need them to understand this book.

Why are the three bakers clones - and why do they look like Hardy (from Laurel and Hardy)?

How can you confuse milk with a small child?

Why is the oven called a "Mickey Oven" if they didn't mean to bake him?

Who eats cake for breakfast? Well, I suppose children in their dreams!

Do I dare read the final of the "Wild Things Trilogy" - Outside Over There?

Lisa Vegan says

To tell the truth, I thought I was going to intensely dislike this book. I'm not a huge Sendak fan. But, I've seen this book discussed recently and I was curious, so I borrowed it and just read it.

What a trip! This is a wonderful book. I now get why there is all the fuss (think naked little boys; I guess that's the objection some have) but I don't get why there is all the fuss.

This book is so imaginative, funny, a joy to read, and yes, I even enjoyed the pictures. They were a lot of fun. Once again, the actual style doesn't wow me, but the content does.

One of the best ever dream books for kids! In my fantasy, I wonder if I'd have enjoyed this book even more if other illustrators had created these exact same pictures, but in their art styles.

Autumn says

This is one of the creepiest books for children out there. I was traumatized by this book as a small child. I wanted to reread it from an adult perspective. It's still creepy. I will never show this book to any children.

Megan says

To the person (librarian, patron, library employee or hippopotamus) who censored this book: you are a jerk, and I hope you realize that scribbling ever so carefully over Mickey's private parts meant you focused more on them than anybody else who's going to read the book. Doesn't that make you the pervert?

Anyway: This book is wonderful. It made me wish I had read it aloud to somebody because there was so much rhythm in the text. Mickey's expressions are great. I can't wait to read this to my kids, but I'll buy a copy for myself. At least the bookstores want to make money, so they won't censor.

Diane S ? says

I very seldom rate the children's books I read but I made an exception for this one because of how I came to read this story. I am reading Voracious: A Hungry Reader Cooks Her Way through Great Books, and in this book she discusses books and their recipes and her story that plays into them. Anyway one of the books is this one and since I absolutely adore Where the Wild Things Are, and since she said that this is a highly contested book that yearly many want to ban. So that was enough made me want to pick it up and read it. I thought it was cute, the pictures were great. I guess those who want to ban it protest against the young boys nudity and his little parts being exposed. Loved the jolly bakers as well.

Amy says

Maurice Sendak's illustrations are beautiful as always, but I didn't really "get" the story. Judging by other Goodreads reviewers, I was lucky to get an uncensored copy from my local library.

Tatiana says

This is such a weird book, but my 3-year old can't get enough of it, constantly singing "Milk in the batter! Milk in the batter!" Why in the world was Mikey in the cake at all?

Heidi-Marie says

Uh, well, I tried to be grown-up and open-minded, but I (like some others) was a little surprised that Sendak would illustrate full frontal nudity. More than once. And of a child. So naked children are a bit more common in public than adults (whether intended or not). That still doesn't mean it's right. At least in this society. And in my opinion. So, I found it slightly unsettling, even in trying to put it in the context of a child's dream.

That aside, I didn't like the story either. The child being baked in a cake was even more disturbing than the illustrations. Perhaps this just isn't my kind of imagining, but I didn't like the boy's dreaming. And considering how much I've enjoyed some of Sendak's work, I was shocked to dislike this one as much as I do. Let me find one thing positive. Um...I guess kneading the bread into an airplane.

I haven't a clue who I would ever recommend this book to. Unless it's a child that had a nightmare they were

going to be baked in a cake and have them read this book to help them get over that trauma.

Manybooks says

Now truth be told, I certainly have never ever even remotely enjoyed Maurice Sendak's In the Night Kitchen nearly as much as his eternally and forever brilliant Where the Wild Things Are (which ranks as one of my favourite picture books of all time, period), and this is mostly because there is just not enough of a plot, of an actual storyline contained within In the Night Kitchen to fully satisfy me narrationally, but be that as it may, I will still and very much gladly and with pleasure give In the Night Kitchen five glowing and well deserved stars. For one, Maurice Sendak's illustrations are simply wildly amusing and oh so much fun (and I do indeed very much appreciate that Mickey is depicted as being naked during his dream, as I also very very often used to dream of being naked as a young child, but really, I have also NEVER considered Mickey's nakedness as in any way all that special or even eye-catching, just basically and entirely natural and no huge and all encompassing deal). And for two, Mickey landing in a cake (and how he is depicted as being encased in batter) kind of nostalgically somewhat reminds me of Wilhelm Busch's 19th century classic Max und Moritz, where the two nasty little protagonists (or rather the antagonists) are also in one of the episodes baked in an oven whilst they are encased in batter and then eat themselves through the same in order to escape (and while I certainly do not in any way think that the Mickey being baked in a cake episode is in any way related to the Holocaust, I do notice and have observed that with In the Night Kitchen there does seem to be some rather obvious allusions by Maurice Sendak to German children's literature examples of kids being baked, of being encased in cake or bread batter, such as the above mentioned Wilhelm Busch story, and this sure does very much tickle my literary and cultural fancy).

However, I guess I have to admit that the real and most pressing reason why I have given Maurice Sendak's In the Night Kitchen five stars (for if I were to consider the book with regard to how much I actually have enjoyed the author's printed words, I would and should probably be giving a high three star ranking, for a fun dream, an often hilarious romp through Mickey's nighttime adventures, but not quite enough for me on a textual, on a plot level), the real and sadly annoying factoid and truth of the matter is that I am so frustratingly and angrily sick and tired of the fact that puritanical dictator types in especially the USA have repeatedly tried to (and sometimes even succeeded) having In the Night Kitchen censored and removed from library shelves etc. (and mostly simply because little Mickey just happens to be naked during his dream) that five stars is indeed the only reasonable ranking for me, the only way to go. Now if you indeed and personally find In the Night Kitchen totally unacceptable due to Mickey's nudity, while I do very much consider this more than a trifle laughable and really quite sad, I would still albeit a bit grudgingly and with a growl in every way respect you not wanting to read the book (or not wanting to have your children read In the Night Kitchen). If on the other hand, you then also want to ban or censor In the Night Kitchen in ANY manner (if you want to prevent others from being able to read, from being allowed to choose to read In the Night Kitchen, if you want the book removed from classrooms, from libraries and the like), now that is where my tolerance absolutely and utterly ends, as book banners are (and I cannot and will not state this in a less painful and condemning way) nothing but a bunch of goose stepping undemocratic jerks; they are akin to the Nazis, to the Stalinists and so totally undemocratic that one can only call them dangerous and an absolute affront to personal freedom and choice (and if anyone feels offended by this attitude, I quite frankly do not care).
