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*James Marshall , Maurice Sendak (Illustrations)*

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**Swine Lake** James Marshall , Maurice Sendak (Illustrations)

When a lean and mangy wolf stumbles into the Boarshoi Ballet, he finds tasty pigs a-plenty, twirling and whirling in a performance of *Swine Lake*. Faced with all those luscious porkers, whats a hungry wolf to do? Well, something totally surprising, as it turns out.

Pure fun from Marshall and Sendak--an incomparable duo!

## Swine Lake Details

Date : Published April 21st 1999 by HarperCollins (first published 1999)

ISBN : 9780062051714

Author : James Marshall , Maurice Sendak (Illustrations)

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# From Reader Review Swine Lake for online ebook

## Kathryn says

Swine Lake was just okay for me. Perhaps Marshall wasn't able to really polish the story since it was published posthumously. Too bad. The premise was okay it just seemed rather meandering and not very inventive in the telling. The illustrations, while not my favorite style (or favorite Sendak), did lend a lot to the story and I appreciated all the little details and humor. I did like that it showed what it is like to attend a fancy professional ballet performance; and that the wolf was unwittingly carried away by the performance and moved to dance himself. (Sensitive children might be a little nervous or upset by the first half of the book, though, when the wolf plans to eat the pigs, FYI.)

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## Heidi Hart says

We got this from the library this week because James Marshall (of George and Martha fame) and Maurice Sendak (Where the Wild Things Are, duh) are both old favorites, and we were not at all disappointed. Swine Lake is about a down-on-his luck wolf who stumbles into an unfamiliar part of town, lucks into tickets to the Boarshoi Ballet performance of Swine Lake, and--even as he plans to massacre the dancers to satisfy his own nefarious appetites--winds up falling in love with the ballet instead.

Readers familiar with Marshall's and Sendak's other works will find among the fabulous illustrations several clever references to other favorites: a child in the theatre audience clutches a George-the-hippo stuffed lovey, and another pig is reading a newspaper story about The Stupids.

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## Mili Fay says

Wonderful! A lone, hungry, mangy wolf finds his way in an unfamiliar part of town, only to discover "Swine Lake" playing in the New Ham Ster Dam Theater. His plan is to gobble up the dancers, but he soon discovers that there is more to the ballet than dancing pigs.

The writing is full of humour and filled with anticipation, the ending is enjoyably surprising.

Maurice Sendak's illustrations are wonderfully executed with humour not written in the text. They begin telling the wolf's story long before we read the first line.

Whether you are a fan of ballet or not, I think you would enjoy this story. I like it so much that this book may find it's way to my shelf one of these days.

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## Laura says

Cute take on the pigs & wolf story, with a twist. The ending was rather abrupt, which was disappointing

since this could have been a 5-star story with a better ending. Still, I love Sendak, and the illustrations are fantastic.

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### **Kelly says**

What I didn't like about the book (not thrilled with the illustrations) was how the story unfolded. It's almost a typical big, bad wolf wanting to devour pigs. I just found it to be a little dark for little readers.

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### **Copeland says**

I grew up reading books by James Marshall, from George and Martha to the Fox series. His books have always made me giggle, and Swine Lake is no exception. The story follows a "lean and mangy wolf," as he falls in love with the theater. Drawn in by "the aroma of swine, thinly disguised by french perfume,"(n.p.) and the promise of a meal of juicy pig, he surprisingly sits through a whole performance. The twist at the end had me laughing and smiling without it feeling forced. It reminds me of my own experiences in the audiences of grand productions and the desire I and many others feel to join in the action.

This book is a great one to introduce conversations about appropriate audience reactions to children in a non direct and funny way. The characters have exaggerated movements and expressions which pair well with the description full text of the narrative. The pictures also have a myriad of visual and written jokes to entertain adults who may be reading the book, such as the fact that the ballet in the title is occurring at the "New HAMsterdam Theater"

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### **Courtney says**

Story gets 1 star, Illustrations get 4 stars . . . .

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### **Amy Layton says**

This book is so funny but also makes me cry. So let's start with the crying part, because that has to do with the production of the book rather than the book itself. James Marshall and Maurice Sendak were gay bffs. They went to the theatre together, and they both supported each other in their changing industry. In 1992, Marshall died and left behind the Swine Lake manuscript. Years later, Sendak decides to illustrate it. And you can even see how Sendak attempts to draw in a similar style to Marshall's (see: how tiny and close together the characters' eyes are). The story of how this story came to be is just so sweet and heart-touching that I can't help but to share it.

Okay, so onto the book. It's. So. Funny. And well drawn. And so detailed. (My favorite illustration is at the bottom of a page, showing four or five pigs sitting in a row, about to watch the show. One of the pigs is reading a newspaper whose headline is THE STUPIDS DIE, which is the title of one of Marshall's books--a title that Sendak jokingly can never forgive Marshall for, for being too funny). There's this beautiful mixture of Sendak/Marshall wit and style, and it's just absolutely wonderful. As a last book in a career, it's a wonderful one.

Review cross-listed here!

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## **Beverly says**

What a fun book! I loved all the pig-related puns: New Hamsterdam Theater, Boarshoi Ballet, the dancing pigs called Pieds de Cochon, etc. And Sendak's illustrations helped maintain the focus of the story of the hunger-obsessed wolf becoming a dance-obsessed wolf. As wordy as this story is, I don't think it is aimed at very young children; it is more for early elementary age children.

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## **Dolly says**

This book was featured as one of the selections for the February 2015 Dance-themed reads for the Picture-Book Club in the Children's Books Group here at Goodreads.

The story is fun to read aloud the illustrations really complement the story nicely. I love how the plot also includes some explanation about ballet and numerous puns about pigs and the famous Russian ballet the story is based on.

The narrative is a bit long, and younger children might lose interest, but our girls loved the humorous details and silly illustrations. Overall, it's an entertaining tale and we enjoyed reading it together.

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## **Manybooks says**

While I was and remain in absolute love with Maurice Sendak's brilliant illustrations (they are lively, fun, imaginative, and the delicious puns and word plays using porcine terms/descriptions from a number of different languages leave me smiling gleefully and with much appreciation), James Marshall's narrative feels mundane and actually rather unfinished in and by comparison. I still find the text of Swine Lake basically adequate, however, it just seems to stimulate one's appetite, and one remains with a hunger, a desire for more in-depth verbal descriptions of the wolf and his escapades, a hunger that is simply not ever adequately satisfied (and no pun is intended here, either). And truly, compared to and with the illustrations, there just is not sufficient offered on a textual, on a printed word level (especially when Sendak's illustrations seem to promise all kinds of humour, parody and satire). An interesting and promising premise, that at least on a narrative level, never fully materialises (still to be recommended, but with the caveat that there most definitely is somewhat of a major dichotomy between text and image presented in Swine Lake). Regarding Maurice Sendak's illustrations, I especially love the Hotel Schwein (don't know if I would want to frequent such a place in real life, though), and that is equally true of the store called "Schweinerei" (in German, "Schweinerei" means a mess, something akin to a room that looks like a pigsty); and it really and truly is too bad that the humour of the illustrations, and the often clever, language based puns of the same, never really manage to appear within the narrative itself.

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## **Malika J. says**

As I read a lot of reviews on here before I read this book, I was expecting to be disappointed. A lot of the reviews said it was unmemorable and poor work from both Marshall and Sendak which surprised me. However, after Sam and I finished reading it, we loved it! There was great discussion on some new, big vocabulary words introduced in the story. We talked about what the wolf and the pigs "normally" do in stories. It was a great book to compare the Three Little Pigs. We were able to talk about the relationship between pigs and wolves, and why it was silly that the wolf fell in love with ballet. I would pair this book with other versions of the Three Little Pigs (James Marshall and Jon Scieszka- The True Story of the Three Little Pigs).

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## **Jenny says**

Cute story with some fun details in the illustrations...but ran a bit long to really capture my children's attention. They thought it was just okay. I did like the ending quite a bit...good but not great.

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## **Kest Schwartzman says**

The drawings- A+

The Puns- A+

The Story- A+

but seriously, I want to open a "New Hamsterdam Theatre" and just have it be a live-cam of a hamster cage.

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## **Linda Lipko says**

Printed in 1999, after Sendak's beloved friend James Marshall had died, grieving, Sendak worked diligently to give justice to the story line.

A wolf who loves pigs roams around in an unfamiliar part of town. Hungry and smelling pigs, he follows his nose to the Swine Lake Boarshoi Ballet theatre.

Aiming to eat the cast of characters, instead, the wolf becomes mesmerized by the play.

Caught up in the pagentry of emotion, during his attendance at the play, the following night, he jumps on stage and dances.

Reading rave reviews the next night, "he executed a couple of flashy dance steps!"

This was a lovely book, highly creative in the message of how art can tame the most savage beast!

