



# scaring dreams

An Hommage to Maurice Sendak





## A different view on children's world

Most widely recognized for his book, *Where the Wild Things Are*, Maurice Sendak is one of the best-known and most respected children's book artists in the world.

However, his oeuvre includes much more than picture books. It was his different way to look at children and what is interesting to them, that stays in mind. The book you hold in your hands puts a focus on his really special view by showing a part of his work and quotes.

It will give you an impression about what was important to Maurice Sendak and what makes the difference between him and other illustrators. Enjoy his often scaring, but always beautiful work. Yours Marie Dahm

i don't believe  
in children.  
i don't believe  
in childhood.





## Surviving childhood is not easy

I think it is unnatural to think that there is such a thing as a blue-sky, white-clouded happy childhood for anybody. Childhood is a very, very tricky business of surviving it. Because if one thing goes wrong or anything, and usually something goes wrong, then you are compromised as a human being. You're going to trip over that for a good part of your life.

From their earliest years children live on familiar terms with disrupting emotions, fear and anxiety are an intrinsic part of their everyday lives, they continually cope with frustrations as best they can. And it is through fantasy that children achieve catharsis. It is the best means they have for taming Wild Things.





## Kids just go for what they like

Once a little boy sent me a charming card with a little drawing on it. I loved it. I answer all my children's letters but this one I lingered over. I sent him a card and I drew a picture of a wild thing on it. I wrote, „Dear Jim: I loved your card.“ Then I got a letter back from his mother and she said, „Jim loved your card so much he ate it.“ That to me was one of the highest compliments I've ever received. He didn't care that it was an original Maurice Sendak drawing or anything. He saw it, he loved it. He ate it.

Kids don't know about best sellers. They go for what they enjoy. They aren't star chasers and they don't suck up. It's why I like them.

you cannot  
write for children,  
they're much  
too complicated.



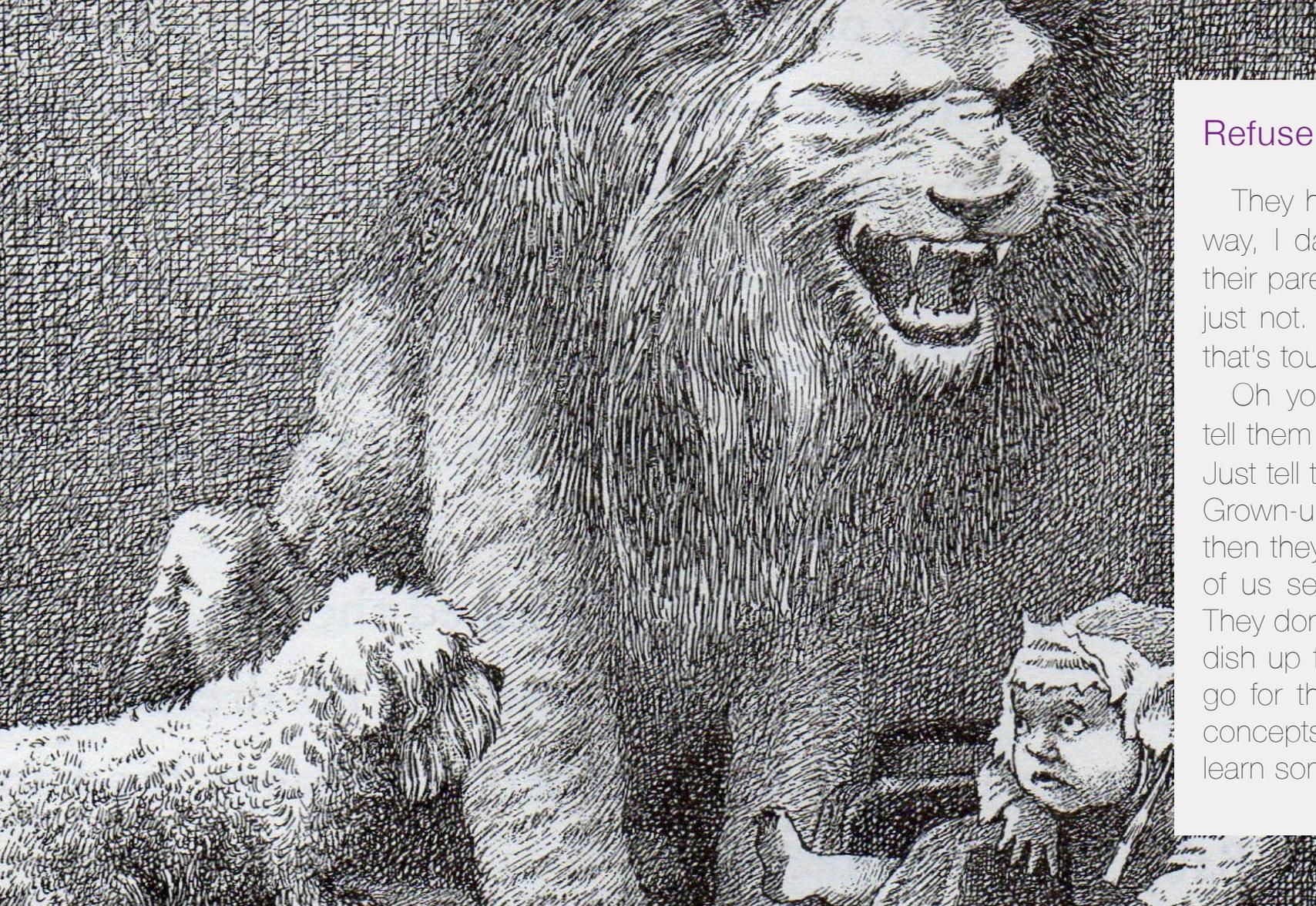


## Fantasy is always part of reality

Children are tough, though we tend to think of them as fragile. They have to be tough. Childhood is not easy. We sentimentalize children, but they know what's real and what's not. They understand metaphor and symbol. If children are different from us, they are more spontaneous. Grown-up lives have become overlaid with dross.

I believe there is no part of our lives, our adult as well as child life, when we're not fantasizing, but we prefer to relegate fantasy to children, as though it were some tomfoolery only fit for the immature minds of the young.





## Refuse to lie to children

They have written to me. They trust me in a way, I daresay, possibly more than they trust their parents. I'm not going to bullshit them. I'm just not. And if they don't like what they hear, that's tough bananas.

Oh you mustn't tell them that. You mustn't tell them that.' You tell them anything you want. Just tell them if it's true. If it's true you tell them. Grown-ups desperately need to feel safe, and then they project onto the kids. But what none of us seem to realize is how smart kids are. They don't like what we write for them, what we dish up for them, because it's vapid, so they'll go for the hard words, they'll go for the hard concepts, they'll go for the stuff where they can learn something.

live your life,  
live your life,  
live your life.





## You do it because you can't not do it

I'm writing a poem right now about a nose. I've always wanted to write a poem about a nose. But it's a ludicrous subject. That's why, when I was younger, I was afraid of writing something that didn't make a lot of sense. But now I'm not. I have nothing to worry about. It doesn't matter.

I have nothing now but praise for my life. I'm not unhappy. I cry a lot because I miss people. They die and I can't stop them. They leave me and I love them more...What I dread is the isolation. ... There are so many beautiful things in the world which I will have to leave when I die, but I'm ready, I'm ready, I'm ready.



Editor: Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe, Steintorplatz, 20099 Hamburg; Opening Times: Tuesdays to Sundays: 10 am - 6 pm, Thursdays: 10 am - 9 pm, Thursdays on or before public holiday: 10 am - 6 pm, Closed: Mondays, 1st May, Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve; Design: Marie Dahm, Support: Prof.in Silke Juchter & Prof. Wolfgang Sasse; Ceated and produced: SS 2014 at Muthesius Academy of Fine Arts and Design; Illustrations by Maurice Sendak; Font: Helvetica Neue; Paper: Bio Top 3 (160 & 250 g/m<sup>2</sup>), responsible for the contents of this book: Yoko.

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