



We Are All in the Dumps with Jack and Guy: Two Nursery Rhymes with Pictures

By Maurice Sendak

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We Are All in the Dumps with Jack and Guy: Two Nursery Rhymes with Pictures By Maurice Sendak

We are all in the dumps
For diamonds are thumps
The kittens are gone to St. Paul's!
The baby is bit
The moon's in a fit
And the houses are built
Without walls

Jack and Guy
Went out in the Rye
And they found a little boy
With one black eye
Come says Jack let's knock
Him on the head
No says Guy
Let's buy him some bread
You buy one loaf
And I'll buy two
And we'll bring him up
As other folk do

Two traditional rhymes from Mother Goose, ingeniously joined and interpreted by Maurice Sendak.

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Grade 2 Up-Sendak is back, bolder than ever, as he looks out to the problems of today's world. He combines two little-known and unrelated nursery rhymes, taking advantage of their absence of story to interpret them with a wealth of detail and social commentary. In so doing, his visual images invite readers to become co-conspirators in the creation of the tale. From the dust jacket's ragged and newspaper-wrapped children, depicted within a monstrous mouth that readers will discover is the moon, to the very last page, one must search for clues to bring meaning to the enigmatic text. (Most are in the form of newspaper headlines). The homeless children and kittens are watched over by the moon, which seems to insist that the youngsters take care of one another. The moon itself is transformed into a giant cat to save the kittens and a baby from the rats who steal them. Unlike Max from *Where the Wild Things Are* (HarperCollins, 1988), however, their return is not to safety and a warm supper, but to the uncertainties of the street. Overall, the images refer to poverty, war, crime, pollution, famine, inflation, AIDS, unemployment, and other current evils. The illustrations themselves are not frightening, but they remind readers of horrific things in the real world. The somewhat muted and subdued palette is brightened with bursts of red sky and a stark white cat, which give an explosive energy to the story. The clarity of the art and of the composition of the pages are deceptively simple. The rhythms of the street, of rap music, are recognizable in the interplay between the rhymes and characters' ballooned comments. This is a potent, evocative book, but Sendak respects children's ability to deal with powerful and potentially controversial issues and ideas. *We Are All in the Dumps* will lead to discussion, speculation, and a variety of interpretations, all of which are appropriate for this type of allegory. This headline says it all: "Leaner Times, Meaner Times...Children Triumph."-Kay E. Vandergrift, School of Communication, Information and Library Studies, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ
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From Kirkus Reviews

Harking back to *Hector Protector* (1965), Sendak again pairs two nursery rhymes; but this time, he penetrates deeply into society's ills in his elaborate visual extension of the words. "We are all in the dumps/For diamonds are trumps/The kittens are gone to St. Paul's/The baby is bit/The moon's in a fit/And the houses are built without walls." Sendak sets this first rhyme in New York, where homeless children are watched over by an increasingly agitated moon and where two wicked rats build a house of cards, play for the "poor little kid" (an appealing waif), and haul him, as well as the kittens, off to "St. Paul's Bakery and Orphanage"--which resembles Auschwitz (glimpsed more subtly in *Dear Mili*). In the second part, Jack and Guy, who have earlier ignored the waif's pleas for help, follow after: "Come says Jack/Let's knock him on the head/No says Guy/Let's buy him some bread..." There's much more going on in the extraordinary art, including allusions visual (Trump Tower, a Cheshire cat moon that maternally enfolds the kittens) and verbal (in dialogue balloons and newsprint that also serves as shelter). *Dear Mili's* exquisitely detailed paintings give way here to the freely drawn, more immediate style of *I Saw Esau* (1992); but the subtle orchestration of Sendak's ideas has never been more intricate, telling, or playful. Adults may question presenting serious topics to children in this imaginative form. Lucky children have seen homelessness, and worse, only on TV; the unlucky have lived it. In this beautiful, passionately concerned book, Sendak creates visual poetry, rich in symbolism, that goes to the heart of such matters better than any earnest description. Once again, he explores new ground and offers a masterpiece. (Picture book. 4+) -- Copyright ©1993, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.

About the Author

In addition to *Where the Wild Things Are*, Maurice Sendak's books include *Kenny's Window*, *Very Far Away*,

The Sign on Rosie's Door, Nutshell Library (consisting of Chicken Soup with Rice, Alligators All Around, One Was Johnny, and Pierre), Higglety Pigglety Pop! or There Must Be More to Life, In the Night Kitchen, Outside Over There, We Are All in the Dumps with Jack and Guy, and Bumble-Ardy.

He received the 1964 Caldecott Medal for *Where the Wild Things Are*; the 1970 Hans Christian Andersen Award for Illustration; the 1983 Laura Ingalls Wilder Award, given by the American Library Association in recognition of his entire body of work; and a 1996 National Medal of Arts in recognition of his contribution to the arts in America. In 2003, he received the first Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award, an international prize for children's literature established by the Swedish government.

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