



How Great Ideas Happen

When we read a wonderful book, it's easy to imagine that the story sprang, fully developed, from the author's imagination, but that is not always the case—sometimes great ideas are accidents; and sometimes they are the result of adapting to things that didn't work out the way that we had hoped. Have you ever read the book *Where the Wild Things Are* by Maurice Sendak? The story of how that book came to be what we know and love is a perfect example of "accidents" and "adaptation".

The original title for *Where the Wild Things Are* was going to be *Where the Wild Horses Are*. As you can probably guess, the story featured fillies, foals and mares. Maurice Sendak had a very good editor named Ursula Nordstrom who had edited many classic books you have probably read or heard of, like *The Giving Tree*, *Goodnight Moon*, *Harold and the Purple Crayon* and *Charlotte's Web*. Nordstrom really loved the proposed title for Sendak's book. She thought that it was very poetic. But when Sendak began to illustrate the book, he discovered that there was a problem: Sendak couldn't draw horses. He had to tell Nordstrom that he wasn't going to be able to finish the Wild Horses book after all. Nordstrom was not pleased.

"But I can't draw horses," he tried to explain.

"Maurice, what *can* you draw?" she asked.

"Things," he said, and "things"—wild things—is what he drew.

It's important to always try when you have an idea. Sometimes you might fail; but in that failing, it just may turn out that what you end up with is better than what you had first hoped that it would be.

Main Idea

1. Great ideas sometimes happen by:

- A. accident
- B. adaptation
- C. accident and adaptation

2. *Where the Wild Things Are* is the book that it is today because of:

- A. accident
- B. adaptation
- C. accident and adaptation

Significant Details

3. *Where the Wild Things Are* was originally going to be about:

- A. horses
- B. dogs
- C. wild things

4. Sendak drew the wild things because:

- A. his editor asked him to
- B. it was what he imagined
- C. he couldn't draw horses