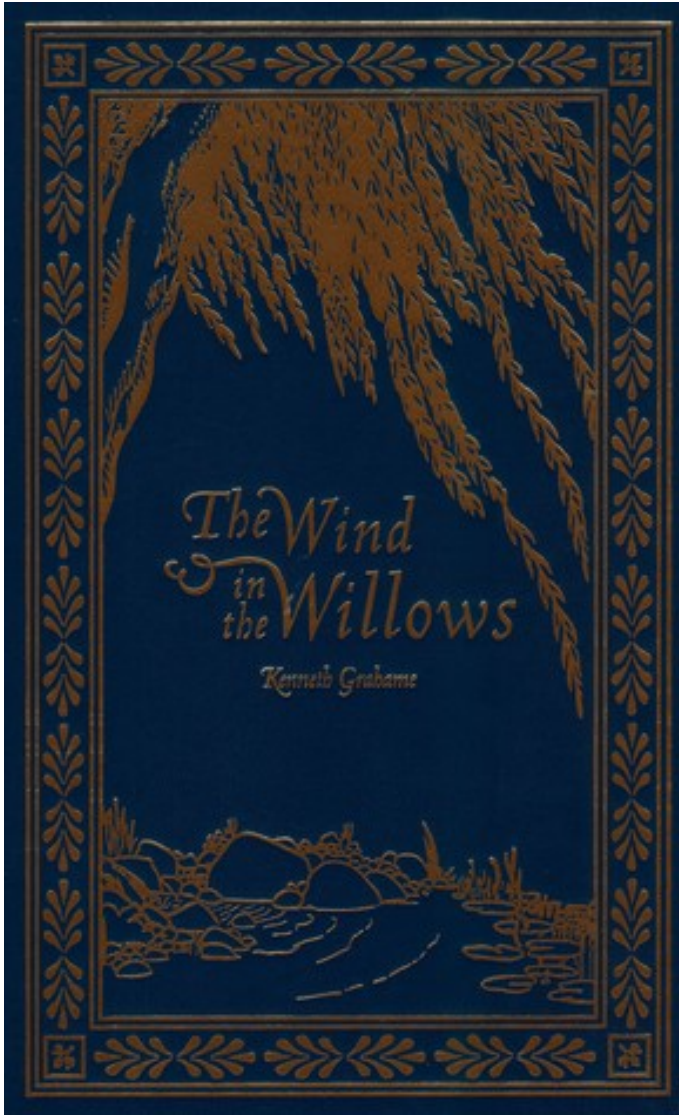

Kenneth Grahame

The Wind in the Willows



Title: The Wind in the Willows

Author: Kenneth Grahame

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Description

One of the most celebrated works of classic literature for children

Meet little Mole, willful Ratty, Badger the perennial bachelor, and petulant Toad. In the almost one hundred years since their first appearance in 1908, they've become emblematic archetypes of eccentricity, folly, and friendship. And their misadventures-in gypsy caravans, stolen sports cars, and their Wild Wood-continue to capture readers' imaginations and warm their hearts long after they grow up. Begun as a series of letters from Kenneth Grahame to his son, *The Wind in the Willows* is a timeless tale of animal cunning and human camaraderie. This Penguin Classics edition features an appendix of the letters in which Grahame first related the exploits of Toad.

Insightful reviews

Terry : Ok, second attempt at a review after the damn interwebs ate my last one. Luckily I'm composing this one offline first.

To me Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows* is a particularly fine novel. It's a children's story and normally that would get my back up. I'm generally not a big fan of children's lit or YA, and to add to this I didn't even read this book as a child and thus have the requisite rose-coloured glasses to lend credence to my love for the story. Somehow, however, this tale of the adventures of four animal friends in an idealized and idyllic Edwardian English countryside resonated deeply with me. I think part of this has to do with the deft hand Grahame shows in the creation of his characters: shy amiable Mole, courageous and resolute Ratty (that's Water Rat by the bye), gruff but stalwart Badger and, last but certainly not least, frivolous and vain Toad, all partake of elements of archetype and yet are never fully defined by it, they manage to emerge as characters in their own right. The setting too seems to straddle the line between generic and specific. The animal friends are constantly travelling against a background whose very names are emblematic: the River, the Wildwood, the Town and yet when we come to their homes we could not wish to find more congenial or personal places of the heart.

Our tale (or perhaps I should say tales) begins as the shy Mole first pokes his nose out from his underground home to be presented with a newly discovered wider world he approaches with awe and wonder. I wouldn't quite say that Mole is the main character of the stories that follow (though he is always a significant part of them), but I've always had a soft spot for him and enjoy seeing Grahame's idealized English meadows, woods and countryside through his amiable eyes. Toad would probably be the more likely candidate, certainly for a good portion of the stories which concentrate on his adventures: a life-loving jester of a character with more money than brains always looking out for the next fad that is of course the fulfillment of his true heart's desire...yet again. Indeed, keeping tabs on their friend and trying to hammer some good animal sense into his soft head is one of the major tasks the other characters must undertake in many of these tales. Grahame's pacing is excellent, at times meandering with a leisurely pace from a boating foray on the River to spring-cleaning a much-loved home, and at others moving at breakneck speed to escape from prison or reclaim an ancestral home from dangerous

enemies. Thus we follow our friends as they learn about their world and each other and I cannot say that there are many more enjoyable companions to be had for such a venture.

I've seen arguments online that these stories are somewhat parochial and insular: whenever the world outside of the hedgerows intrudes it is usually either a dangerous temptation or a destructive force. I can't really argue with this, but does all literature need to celebrate the novel and the strange? Isn't there a place for the well-loved hearth and a joyous homecoming? *The Wind in the Willows* is nothing if not a celebration of the comfortable and the familiar, a paen for a world and a type of beauty fading away. There may be good reasons for why it had to die out, but I would argue that there is still value in remembering it. When I try to put my finger on what it is about this book that so captures my imagination and elevates it from being merely a tale about talking animals within the context of a long-dead worldview I think that Christopher Milne, son of the author of *Winnie the Pooh*, may have said it best when he talked of "those chapters that explore human emotions – the emotions of fear, nostalgia, awe, wanderlust." It is these parts of the book that speak directly to my heart and examine the wider aspects of the human spirit.

Amy (shoutame): This was one of my all time favourite reads as a child! Reading it again as an adult brought back all those nostalgic feeling and this is definitely a read that I shall keep back for my (possible) future children!

- So this story follows the lives of woodland creatures who have the ability to talk - they live and act like humans. As you can see from the cover they dress in a very prim and proper way with their little tweed coats and walking canes! The primary characters consist of Mole, Ratty, Badger and Toad. Toad is a bit of a rascal and is constantly landing himself in trouble leaving it up to the others to come to his rescue.

- I love children's books that are based in the forest, the very natural backdrop really emphasizes how strange it is that these woodland creatures can all speak and they choose to dress and behave like humans.

- This novel is packed full of adventure and comedy but alongside that we also see the darker side to the forest - I always felt like I had learnt some sort of valuable lesson when being read this as a child. Whether it be to not walk around at night by yourself or simply to not steal other peoples belongings! This is a fun read for all ages and I would most definitely recommend it to those with children as I have such fond memories of this book from when I was little!

Pamela: I feel like I am the only person in the universe to not *get* this book. Perhaps I am not really human, but rather a troll or some other such hard-hearted creature.

I suppose my main issue with this book is that I couldn't quite understand the world that Mr. Grahame created. Pithy words of wisdom on *What It Means To Be A Child* tell us that children don't have preconceptions and thus accept things more readily, being shaped only by the prejudices of adults. I assume most people would use that argument against what I am about to say, to wit, that this book makes no sense.

The Wind in the Willows wobbles along the line between fantasy and realistic fable. On one hand, there are talking animals. On the other hand, there are humans, railroads, motor cars, and jails. Sometimes the animals just live their lives along the riverbank or in the woods, doing very animalish things like migrating and storing up food for the winter and so forth, and sometimes they steal motorcars and insult the police and get tossed in the clink for 20 years. That last one is Toad, by the way, whom I found to be absolutely insufferable. Also, somehow Toad has hair, which I don't understand at all. IS HE A TOAD OR A MAN??? Are humans and animals the same size in this universe? Toad somehow manages to sneak around disguised as a (human) washerwoman, but is manhandled as if he were toad-sized. My head hurts from all the contradictions.

This is where everyone who read and loved this rushes in and shouts: "But it's fantasy! Where is your imagination? What's wrong with you?"

Ahem. Are you done now? I mean, really, though. I read a lot of fantasy, and I'm quite prepared to suspend my disbelief (or belief) in order to go along with a story. I love the absurd. But I also like my stories to have continuity, and to make some sort of sense in the universe they inhabit. I honestly have no other words to express my befuddlement after finishing this.

Nicola: i do know it is a lot of people's favorite kid's booklet and that i actually need to like it too yet I simply don't. i have learn loads of kid's novels and for me there are others which are better. I locate the tale simply too jumpy. It does not circulate well, with random tales being dropped into it. the one who involves brain fastest is the story concerning the lacking child. that is simply weird, has no connection to the remainder of the e-book and is admittedly a bit disturbing. I really just like the characters of rat, mole and particularly badger and that i just like the imagery of the river and felt particularly drawn into surroundings however the tale simply hasn't ever totally engaged me.

Carrie: this can be my favorite e-book of all time. Perhaps it's the very Timelessness of the story that makes it so appealing. I love the ambience; corresponding to gentler times, unencumbered through the fabric frippery, with which we encompass ourselves during this swift and incessant twenty first Century. I by no means tire of studying the beautiful dialogue; try out the single in regards to the door mat! simply considering Ratty and his love affair with the peaceable riverbank, makes me calm and flow! Toad is infuriating together with his fads and scams yet how sufferer are his friends, how evenly Badger takes control; for Toad's personal good, in fact and kinds him out. this can be real love, real friendship: how I want lets all imitate their tolerance and realizing in their friends' imperfections. And Moley? he's lovely and keen and really teaches us the which means of, 'there's no position like home'. i believe someone will be challenging positioned to, to discover a flaw during this superbly written, superbly illustrated, uncomplicated yet wonderful story.

Anthony D Buckley: This e-book was once written in 1908, whilst the area used to be being shaken via the newly self-confident masses. girls have been propagandising for the vote; the Irish have been challenging domestic Rule; the alternate Unions have been exhibiting their strength. Socialism threatened. A spectre was once haunting Europe, and especially England.

Wind within the Willows is a sublime parable approximately category struggle, in regards to the hazards of decadent country-house-living within the face of strong progressive forces. There are might be 4 generations within the story. there's the younger guy Ratty, a steady kind of chap who spends his time messing approximately in boats. he's joined by means of the younger, much less skilled Mole. Mole can even be petty-bourgeois, yet he proves himself to be stout-hearted for all that. Mr Toad, however, has come into his inheritance, and lives in his state house. Toad is an irresponsible figure, taking on silly leisure pursuits of which, within the story, the main fateful is the motor car. The older guy is Badger, and it truly is he that casts chilly water in this irresponsibility. yet the place is all this irresponsibility going to lead? outdoor this comfortable cozy setting, lie the damaging forces within the Wild Wood. Mr Toad, besotted via his motor car, is arrested and despatched to gaol. His defences down, his home is quick occupied through the weasles and stoats who dwell within the Wild Wood. To the rescue comes Mr Badger, who's clever sufficient to determine that if Toad is to regain his precious property, he needs to forsake idleness and frivolity and withstand the folk of the Wild Wood. So the band of gentlemanly heroes take in fingers and re-establish the shaken social order."We shall creep out quietly into the butler's pantry -", cried the Toad,"- with our pistols and swords and sticks - ", shouted the Rat,"- and rush in upon them -", stated the Badger,"- and whack 'em and whack 'em and whack 'em - ", cried the Toad in ecstasy. This is, then, a cautionary tale, a caution to the propertied sessions to take up, if necessary, fingers opposed to the decrease periods and to prevent dwelling lives of decadent indolence.

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