KENNETH GRAHAME

The WIND in the WILLOWS

INCLUDES READING GROUP GUIDE

With a foreword by Newbery author Susan Cooper

KENNETH GRAHAME

The WIND in the WILLOWS

Illustrated by Ernest H. Shepard

If you purchased this book without a cover, you should be aware that this book is stolen property. It was reported as "unsold and destroyed" to the publisher, and neither the author nor the publisher has received any payment for this "stripped book."

This book is a work of fiction. Any references to historical events, real people, or real locales are used fictitiously. Other names, characters, places, and incidents are the product of the author's imagination and any resemblance to actual events or locales or persons, living or dead, is-entirely coincidental.

First Aladdin Paperbacks edition August 1999
Foreword-copyright © 1999 by Susan Cooper
Illustrations copyright © 1908, 1933, 1953 by Charles Scribner's sons; renewal copright 1961 Ernest H. Shepard, 1981 Mary Eleanor Jessie Knox

Aladdin Paperbacks would like to thank Project Gutenberg for making the full text of this classic book available on-line through their Web site at www.promo.net/pg.

ALADDIN PAPERBACKS
An imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing Division
1230 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10020

All rights reserved, including the right of reproduction in whole or in part in any form.
Designed by Steve Scott
The text for this book was set in Adobe Garamond
Printed and bound in the United States of America
10 9

The Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 99-63498
ISBN-13: 978-0-689-83140-9 (ISBN-10: 0-689-83140-4)

Foreword

The book has a light green cover, very faded now, and on the flyleaf is an inscription in careful handwriting: "Susan M. Cooper, Christmas 1943, with much love from Uncle Roy and Auntie Nora." It's my childhood copy of *The Wind in the Willows,* the seventy-first edition, illustrated by E.H. Shepard (who also immortalized the images of Christopher Robin and Pooh), and I've had it since I was eight years old.

Like most right-minded readers, I've been in love with Mole and Rat, Badger, and even Toad ever since then. I was already in love with the place where they lived, because I lived there too. My brother and I grew up in the Thames Valley, very near Cookham Dene, Berkshire, where Kenneth Grahame had lived, and all our lives we'd been wandering through the woods and fields and towpaths along that stretch of the River Thames where the *Wind in the Willows* is set.

Kenneth Grahame hadn't been born there. He was

born in Scotland, the third of four children, in 1859. When he was five, his mother died, and his unhappy alcoholic father sent the children to live with their grandmother—in Cookham Dene. Except for one other ten-month period in Scotland, they didn't see their father again for twenty years.

Grahame loved the river, and the green world beside it. All his life he was able to gaze for hours at running water, as if hypnotized. At nine years old, he was sent for seven years to a boarding school in Oxford, further up the River Thames; he was very happy there and longed to go on to Oxford University. But the aunts and uncles and grandmother who raised him, severe figures whom he later called "the Olympians," sent him instead to work in his uncle John's office in London.

It was the worst blow of his life; he felt he'd been driven out of Paradise. But he went, and worked in an office until he was sixty years old, eventually as Secretary to the Bank of England. Only inside his imagination, in secret, could he still live on the riverbank. "To know what you would like to do is one thing," he wrote ruefully, later. "To go out and do it is another."

So Grahame lived his London office life: he was

试读结束：需要全本请在线购买： www.ertongbook.com

tall, handsome, and quiet, and his uncle John said approvingly that he had "pluck and steadiness." He had few close friends. He collected toys. Always more attached to places than to people, he traveled often to Cornwall and Italy, and began to write, privately, essays and stories influenced (we are all influenced by someone, at first) by Robert Louis Stevenson. In 1893 he published a collection of these called *Pagan Papers;* in 1895 a book of stories called *The Golden Age,* which made him famous overnight. Like *Dream Days,* which followed in 1898, it focused on a family of four children and their conflicts with "the Olympians." Grahame knew a lot about that.

Kenneth Grahame lived in a peaceful green England which he felt was under threat; the quiet values of Victorian rural life were being invaded by factories, railways, material progress of all kinds. The popular press came to London in 1896, and so ("Poop-poop!") did the automobile, known in England as the motorcar. (Automobiles were banned in England till November 14th, 1896, and even then the speed limit was set at twelve miles per hour). *The Wind in the Willows* was his portrait of the older England; he knew it was doomed, but he at least could preserve it in his book.

Why did he write the book? It's a strange, sad story. As his biographer Peter Green put it, if Kenneth Grahame had never married, he might have died a gentle, fantastic-minded bachelor, like Lewis Carroll, Edward Lear, or Hans Christian Andersen. Instead, at forty he married a rather dominating thirty-seven-year-old lady named Elspeth Thomson, and a year later, they had a son, Alastair. They had no other children and poor Alastair was born not only half-blind, but with severe emotional problems that weren't helped by his mother's impossible, idealistic ambitions for him. When he was twenty—and studying at Oxford, as his father had longed to do—he committed suicide. But before that, he became the child-parent of *The Wind in the Willows.*

Kenneth Grahame used to call his son Mouse, and he told him bedtime stories. One day in 1904 he wrote to a friend, "Mouse had a bad crying fit on the night of his birthday, and I had to tell him stories about moles, giraffes and water-rats (he selected these as subjects) till after twelve." The giraffes didn't last; a year later, a guest overheard Grahame telling Alastair a bedtime story, and reported that "there was a Badger in it, a Mole, a Toad and a Water-Rat, and the places they lived."

Next summer, Alastair spent a holiday in Sussex with his governess while his parents were away in Cornwall, and Grahame wrote him a series of letters which told the adventures of Toad. Then in 1906, after thirty years in London, Kenneth Grahame moved his family to the landscape of his imagination, memory, and dreams: Cookham Dene, on the River Thames. Perhaps it was there that he added the first chapters of the book, the pre-Toad stories of the Riverbank.

Two years later he resigned from the Bank of England, and four months after that *The Wind in the Willows* was published. By then he had added two very personal chapters: "The Piper at the Gates of Dawn," with its benevolent version of the god Pan, and "Wayfarers All," in which Ratty is temporarily bewitched by the Sea Rat. I have to confess that when I was eight I used to skip both these chapters, feeling vaguely that they didn't belong. I still think they appeal more to grown-ups than to children, being passionate expressions of Grahame's belief in the healing powers of Nature, in one case, and in the other his longing for the unconventional life that he never had the courage to lead.

With or without those two chapters, it's a wonderful,

magical book, with perhaps the best first chapter ever written. On behalf of every one of us, Mole scrapes and scratches and scrabbles and scrooges his way out of boring everyday life until, *pop!* we are out with him on the sunlit riverbank, carefree and ready for adventure. And the people and emotions who then appear will go with every reader all through life. We all meet and recognize, sooner or later, Mole's homesickness for Mole End (" . . . this place which was all his own, these things which were so glad to see him again and could always be counted upon for the same simple welcome . . . "), Rat's passion for the river ("I *don't* talk about my river . . . But I *think* about it: I think about it—all the time!") and Toad's outrageous conceit ("You common, low, fat barge-woman! Don't you dare to talk to your betters like that!"). And everyone has, or would like to have, a friend, father, or uncle as solidly reassuring as Mr. Badger.

They are all animals, but they are people. Kenneth Grahame blithely disregarded logic, and so do we, from the very first page. Mole is an animal covered in black fur but is also standing on a ladder, with a brush and a bucket of whitewash. We don't think twice about it. He's not a mole, he's Mole. And when Toad is about to take his friends for a jaunt in his new

caravan, and sends them to capture the old grey horse who will pull it, we never stop for a moment to think of a mole and a rat chasing a horse big enough, in real life, to squash them both with one hoof. They are Mole and Rat. They are us.

This has always made life very difficult for Grahame's illustrators. When he was asked whether Toad, escaping his pursuers on a railway engine, was life-size or toad-size, he answered that he was both and neither: "the Toad was train-size, the train was toad-size, and therefore there could be no illustrations." But he did allow illustrations, over the years, and the best of them—which delighted Grahame—were those by Ernest Shepard.

Shepard went to the Thames Valley to visit Kenneth Grahame before starting work, Grahame pointed him the way to his beloved riverbank, though he was too old now to walk with him. He talked about Mole, and Rat, and Otter, but he didn't suggest how they should be drawn. He just said, "I love these little people—be kind to them!"

The Wind in the Willows has been in print since 1908, and in the United States since 1909, when President Theodore Roosevelt begged Charles Scribner not to turn it down. And the man who wrote

it is buried in Oxford, where at last he was allowed to stay. The inscription on his grave reads:

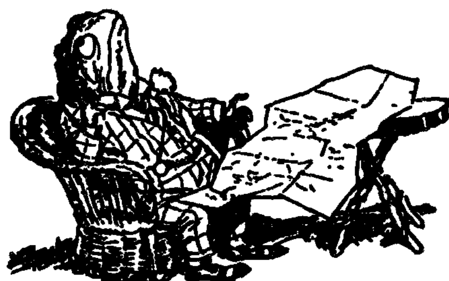
"To the beautiful memory of Kenneth Grahame,
husband of Elspeth and father of Alastair,
who passed the River on the 6th of July 1932,
leaving childhood and literature through him
the more blest for all time."

Susan Cooper

试读结束：需要全本请在线购买： www.ertongbook.

Contents

Foreword ix
Chapter 1 The River Bank 1
Chapter 2 The Open Road 25
Chapter 3 The Wild Wood 48
Chapter 4 Mr. Badger 70
Chapter 5 Dulce Domum 94
Chapter 6 Mr. Toad 121
Chapter 7 The Piper at the Gates of Dawn 146
Chapter 8 Toad's Adventures 165
Chapter 9 Wayfarers All 191
Chapter 10 The Further Adventures of Toad 221
Chapter 11 'Like Summer Tempests Came His Tears' 250
Chapter 12 The Return of Ulysses 281

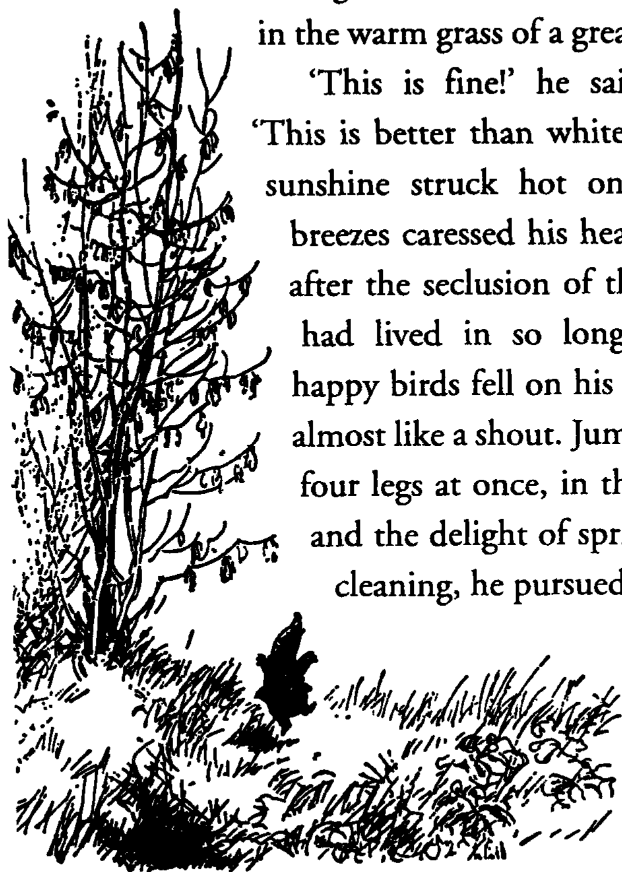


A MAP OF THE WILD WOOD
AND SURROUNDING COUNTRY

CHAPTER 1
The River Bank

The Mole had been working very hard all the morning, spring cleaning his little home. First with brooms, then with dusters; then on ladders and steps and chairs, with a brush and a pail of whitewash; till he had dust in his throat and eyes, and splashes of whitewash all over his black fur, and an aching back and weary arms. Spring was moving in the air above and in the earth below and around him, penetrating even his dark and lowly little house with its spirit of divine discontent and longing. It was small wonder, then, that he suddenly flung down his brush on the floor, said 'Bother!' and 'O blow!' and also 'Hang spring-cleaning!' and bolted out of the house without even waiting to put on his coat. Something up above was calling him imperiously, and he made for the steep little tunnel which

answered in his case to the gravelled carriage-drive owned by animals whose residences are nearer to the sun and air. So he scraped and scratched and scrabbled and scrooged, and then he scrooged again and scrabbled and scratched and scraped, working busily with his little paws and muttering to himself, 'Up we go! Up we go!' till at last, pop! his snout came out into the sunlight, and he found himself rolling in the warm grass of a great meadow.

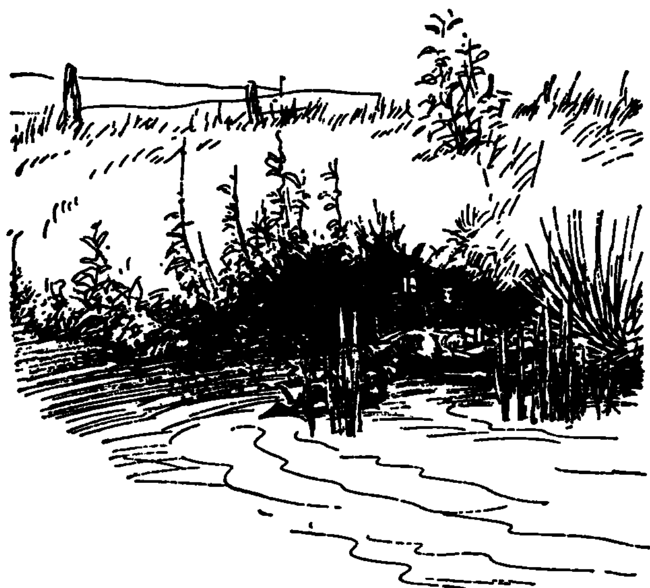


'This is fine!' he said to himself. 'This is better than whitewashing!' The sunshine struck hot on his fur, soft breezes caressed his heated brow, and after the seclusion of the cellarage he had lived in so long the carol of happy birds fell on his dulled hearing almost like a shout. Jumping off all his four legs at once, in the joy of living and the delight of spring without its cleaning, he pursued his way across the meadow till he reached the hedge on the further side.

'Hold up!' said an elderly rabbit at the gap. 'Sixpence for the privilege of passing by the private road!' He was bowled over in an instant by the impatient and contemptuous Mole, who trotted along the side of the hedge chaffing the other rabbits as they peeped hurriedly from their holes to see what the row was about. 'Onion-sauce! Onion-sauce!' he remarked jeeringly, and was gone before they could think of a thoroughly satisfactory reply. Then they all started grumbling at each other. 'How *stupid* you are! Why didn't you tell him——' 'Well, why didn't you say——' 'You might have reminded him——' and so on, in the usual way; but, of course, it was then much too late, as is always the case.

It all seemed too good to be true. Hither and thither through the meadows he rambled busily, along the hedgerows, across the copses, finding everywhere birds building, flowers budding, leaves thrusting—everything happy, and progressive, and occupied. And instead of having an uneasy conscience pricking him and whispering 'Whitewash!' he somehow could only feel how jolly it was to be the only idle dog among all these busy citizens. After all, the best part of a holiday is perhaps not so much to be resting yourself, as to see all the other fellows busy working.

He thought his happiness was complete when, as he meandered aimlessly along, suddenly he stood by the edge of a full-fed river. Never in his life had he seen a river before—this sleek, sinuous, full-bodied animal, chasing and chuckling, gripping things with a gurgle and leaving them with a laugh, to fling itself on fresh playmates that shook themselves free, and were caught and held again. All was a-shake and a-shiver—glints and gleams and sparkles, rustle and swirl, chatter and bubble. The Mole was bewitched, entranced, fascinated. By the side of the river he trotted as one trots, when very small, by the side of a man who holds one spellbound by exciting stories; and when tired at last, he sat on the bank, while the river still chattered on to him, a babbling procession of the best stories in the



world, sent from the heart of the earth to be told at last to the insatiable sea.

As he sat on the grass and looked across the river, a dark hole in the bank opposite, just above the water's edge, caught his eye, and dreamily he fell to considering what a nice snug dwelling-place it would make for an animal with few wants and fond of a bijo riverside residence, above flood level and remote from noise and dust. As he gazed, something bright and small seemed to twinkle down in the heart of it, vanished, then twinkled once more like a tiny star. But it could hardly be a star in such an unlikely situation; and it was too glittering and small for a glow-worm. Then, as he looked, it winked at

试读结束：需要全本请在线购买： www.ertongbook.com