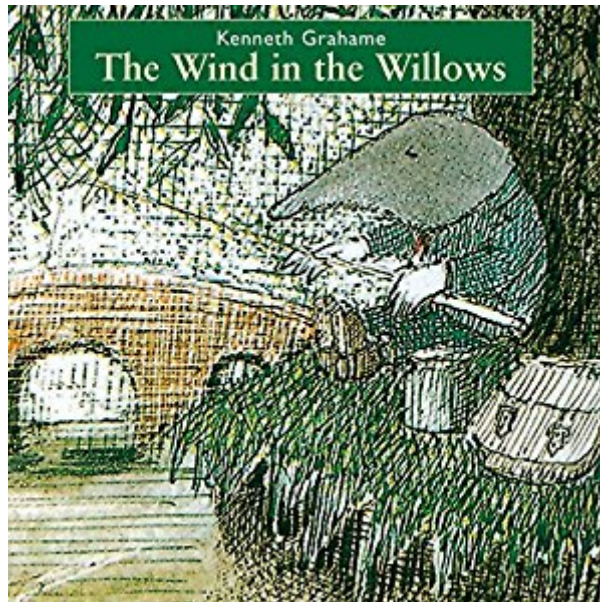


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The Wind In The Willows



Synopsis

The Wind in the Willows by Kenneth Grahame is a children's novel, published in 1908. Alternately slow moving and fast paced, it focuses on four anthropomorphised animals in a pastoral version of Edwardian England. The fiction is notable for its mixture of adventure, mysticism, camaraderie and morality, and celebrated for its evocation of the nature of the Thames Valley. In 1908, Grahame retired from his position as secretary of the Bank of England. He moved back to Berkshire, and invested his time by the River Thames doing much as the creature characters in his book do "as the book says, "simply messing about in boats" and expanding the bedtime stories he had earlier told his son into a content for the book. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 6 hours and 56 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Audible Studios

Audible.com Release Date: August 20, 2007

Whispersync for Voice: Ready

Language: English

ASIN: B000VB49UK

Best Sellers Rank: #9 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Children's Books > Animals #22

in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Children's Books > Classics #65 in Books > Audible

Audiobooks > Fiction & Literature > Classics

Customer Reviews

As a selection for our church book club, the book turned out to be humorous and definitely fit for audiences of all ages. It featured animals as characters who had many human traits, good and bad. None of them were evil monsters but some were no angels either. Several times during the reading I was provoked to laughing out loud because some of the characters or their actions were so whimsical or silly. A moral surfaced near the end which is probably why the book was written but it was not goeey or sappy, really fairly practical and reasonable. I think you will like it!

This is one of my favorite Children's Classics! Graham's language is beautiful--his descriptions of nature are lovely and his portrayal of the animals that inhabit the book are totally charming. And yes,

there are "life lessons" for his human readers. A hint: have a dictionary handy--his vocabulary is enormous.

Kenneth Grahame's classic children's novel, "The Wind in the Willows", makes the translation to graphic novel in this Campfire Classics edition. The novel, based on the bedtime stories that Grahame used to tell his young son, concern a group of animals near a river in southeast England. In the beginning, Mole will be introduced to the river, and to "messing about in boats" by his new friend Ratty the Water Rat. Through Ratty, Mole will meet the wise Badger and the wealthy, wild and irresponsible Toad of Toad Hall. This adaptation concerns itself primarily with Toad's adventures and misadventures with horse-drawn coaches, automobiles, boats, a prison break, and even a siege of his very own Toad Hall. The heart of the narrative is the effort by Badger, Ratty, and Mole to teach the carefree Toad to live responsibly, hopefully before he ruins himself or gets someone killed. The narrative pushes a moral point of view about responsibility in a gentle and sometimes humorous, sometimes exciting way. The artwork is nicely done, more than adequate to tell the story. This reviewer is very pleased to see the novel resurrected, even in an abbreviated fashion, for a new generation of young readers. Well recommended.

This is one of my absolute favorite books. My favorite chapter is when Mole is out with the Rat and he begins sniffing and he finds his home again -- sort of a "Christmas-y" chapter because later a group of carolers come and Mole and Rat put together a feast for them. There is a lot that could be drawn from this classic novel -- the adventurous Rat who shows Rat the whole world that is out there; the foolish and impulsive Toad; the stoic Badger. I recently listened to this via audio, and the legendary Ralph Cosham (of Louise Penny fame) was the narrator. He did an excellent job -- highly recommended!! I noticed another reviewer use the word "Zen" while describing this book, and he is absolutely right -- it's just a delightful, peaceful, and fun story to fall into... and to read time and time again. No matter how many times you need them and reread them, the animals in the woods will always be there for you.

A Beautiful Annotated Book, with a Caveat on the "Annotations." I initially discovered The Wind in the Willows as an adult, not in childhood. As a frequent audiobook listener, I picked this title up because I loved the narrator's work on other audio books. I couldn't have been more thrilled. What a treasure. Much in the tradition of Winnie the Pooh and Alice in Wonderland, this book has a timeless, ageless appeal. Having purchased the Annotated Alice and enjoying it immensely, I was

immediately intrigued about the *Wind in the Willows* version. I managed to work the book into my budget (a \$39.99 publisher's price tag, before discounts). I eagerly awaited my copy and when I opened the box I was stunned by the absolute beauty and size of the book. Like a kid in a candy store... Or, maybe Toad in a parking lot full of automobiles. I agree a great deal with what reviewer John Gough said about the book. The book's chapters on Grahame's life, his son and the evolution of the story are fascinating. People who like to know 'where did they come up with it all?' will have all their questions answered... and then some. One of my favorite features of this edition is the inclusion of drawings/art done by the major illustrators who have done work for the book over the years. It's interesting to see how different people can interpret the same story. Whether it is the size ratio to their surrounding world or the various ways an artist imagines how a 'rat' or 'mole' will look, the illustrations contribute to the cost-justification of the book. However, I do have one major caveat, and, sadly, it's in the title of the book itself. I am referring to the 'Annotations.' Unlike the scholarly feel of the *Annotated Alice in Wonderland*, Annie Auger's feel more like a thesis paper/personal treatise on the subject at hand. While explanations of historical terms and comments on the evolution of the book's revisions are very interesting, I was very disappointed by the fixations Auger had on some ideas, which I doubt are universal. A certain bias seemed to make her read things into the book that weren't always there. These areas are an over-obsession with class theories, a constant insinuation of homoeroticism, and the opinion that Grahame really disliked women. For example, she insists women are usually addressed negatively, but I don't see this at all. The woman at the jail is kind to Toad and does not come across negatively in the least. In addition, there is a chapter which describes nature as a 'she', but this is not noticed (though the benevolent Pan's gender as a male most certainly is). I actually can't think of one female that is described in a negative light. Unfortunately this sort of theory permeates so many interpretations of classics that it's almost rote. *Lord of the Rings*, *Wind in the Willows*, *Watership Down*: All attacked as misogynist when they are nothing of the sort. These are male writers and they are telling a 'story' about adventure and loyalty. Boys will adventure together - whether a sports team or playing at soldiers. Go to any elementary school playground. On a related note, just because there are not many women in the book, it does not mean that the characters are fighting homoerotic urges (Note: I am not prejudiced against homosexuality AT ALL). In one note, where the friends use the word 'comrade' she goes as far as to break the word down into the Spanish etymology into "chamber mate." Then she proceeds to describe how soldiers in Greece were often lovers with other males. She implies this several times (this is scattered throughout the book as a theme), but it just feels forced. Do not get me wrong. People are always going to see a book differently, but I really felt that

the annotations were not objective enough. It felt more like it was forced to fit the annotator's theory. All of that being said, I do not regret buying this book. The wealth of background information and the wonderful collection of illustrations have greatly added to the depth and joy of the book in my eyes. Visually, this book is a definite keeper. Fans of biography and who enjoy knowing the artist behind a masterpiece will be presented with lots of food for thought. If you do love the story, this book is worth it.

The audio quality was mediocre at best. The volume varied and there seemed to be static or something in the background. I didn't think we could bear it, but we adjusted and did make it through all of the CD's; however, we have probably listened to ~30 children's audio books in the last 2 years, and this was by far the worst audio quality. Good story, though. And, soon after this one we listened to Charlie and the Chocolate Factory and the Umpa Lumpas reference Wind in the Willows in one of their songs!

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