**Kenneth Grahame Biography Outline**

* Note about Grahame
  + Grahame objected to biographers and critics because he thought they told people what opinions they should have. His works *Dream Days* and *The Golden Age* inform how he felt about his early life, as well as documents from friends and family.
* Early Life
  + Born in Edinburgh to Cunningham and Bessie Grahame on March 8th, 1859. He had two older siblings, Helen and Willie, and later a younger brother Roland.
  + Moved to towns around Loch Fyne in 1960 to accommodate Cunningham’s Sheriff appointment
    - His parents were detached from their children, who were raised mostly by their tutors and governesses
    - It was here that Kenneth began to love sailing and rivers
  + Moved again to Inveraray until Bessie died of scarlet fever shortly after Roland’s birth (1864)
    - Kenneth also contracted scarlet fever and would suffer from bronchial health issues for the rest of his life
  + Cunningham devastated by her loss and falls deeply into alcoholism
    - Cunningham had been so prior to Bessie’s passing, though not to the degree recorded after her death
  + Children sent away to their grandmother (Mrs. Ingles) in Cookham Dean England
    - Grandmother was harsh with the children, though not abusive
    - Became entranced with his imagination and Quarry Wood surrounding Cookham Dean (the Wild Wood)
  + Moved again to Cranbourne, England and then to Oxford to ease the financial burden on their benefactor, Kenneth’s Uncle John.
  + Left childhood with a disdain for adults, as shown in his descriptions of the Olympians, and an attachment to his fantasy worlds
* Oxford and London
  + Sent to a very harsh military school (St. Edwards) and was surprisingly athletic and did well academically, although he suffered considerable abuse from faculty
    - Participated in sports, literary publications around Oxford, and debate teams
  + Enchanted by Oxford, adored the city and especially the Thames
    - Would go boating around the Thames in his spare time
  + Though he was set on continuing his studies at Oxford, his Uncle refused to pay for that education and his relatives set him up for a clerkship with the Bank of England.
    - This traumatizes Kenneth and permanently embitters him against his relatives
* Writing vs. Bank of England
  + Worked in his father’s accounting office until securing the clerkship with the Bank of England, living with his Uncle Robert
  + Stage of Grahame’s life where he showed a very strong duality
    - Hated his banking job, although he was very gifted.
      * Bank of England environment very social, crass, and rowdy, as Grahame was opposed to
      * Appointed secretary in 1898
    - Wrote and engaged in literary pursuits outside of profession
      * Thought by his Uncle Reginald to have been writing and maybe publishing by 1882
      * Visited Italy in 1866, becomes an important facet of *The Golden Age* and *Dream Days*
  + First published in 1980 by *Scot’s Observer*, Golden Age in ’85 and Dream Days in ‘86
    - Tried to keep his creative and professional work secret from each other
* Marriage and Family
  + Met Elspeth Thomson in 1897, she’d been infatuated with him and they were engaged by 1898 then married by 1899
    - Elspeth prone to delusion about her husband and her son; believing them greater than they were and causing distress because of it
  + Alastair Grahame born in 1900
    - Born prematurely and blind in one eye,
    - Elspeth projected heavily on “Mouse”, much to his distress
  + Kenneth prone to travelling abroad and going off to “mess about in boats”, as his secretarial duties allowed
* *Wind in the Willows* 
  + Grahame retires early from the Bank of England, supposedly from bureaucratic pressure due to frequent illness, four months before *Wind in the Willows* is published
    - Also attributed to bullying from the recent bank governor William Campbell over Grahame’s sexuality
  + Compiled from stories told to Mouse, first in 1904 and finally published, with considerable difficulty, in 1908
  + Reviews were very critical, but it was a successful sale
* Death of Mouse and End of Grahame’s Career
  + Mouse passed in 1920 along a set of train tracks. Official cause of death listed as an accident, though now it’s generally agreed that Alistair committed suicide
  + Kenneth Grahame hadn’t written anything of note since *The Wind in the Willows* 
    - In 1930, E.H. Shepherd spoke to him about illustrating an edition
    - “I love these little people, take care of them”
  + He would spend the remainder of his life traveling with Elspeth, brought together after Mouse’s death
  + He passed away from a cerebral hemorrhage at 73, on Tuesday July 5th, 1932

Sources

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