**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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