

The Wind in the Willows

Class 2

Important points

Extra Information

Mythology: Piper at the Gates of Dawn

There are different interpretations of this: a popular interpretation you may hear is that Grahame is embracing pagan religion. But when you understand the background of Grahame, it's easy to see this isn't the case. Since Grahame studied the classics, he was familiar with Greek and Roman mythology. Writers of his time would frequently use characters from mythology to symbolize things. (C.S. Lewis in Narnia). Pan has many sinister attributes that come out in the stories about him in mythology, but in the Wind of the Willows there are none of these attributes. Grahame uses Pan to depict Nature, not in a pantheistic way: he is not saying that all of nature is god. Instead he is using it to invoke an image of nature very similar to the image that Tolkien makes with the Hobbits. The image he is painting is one of nature being safe and protecting, away from the dangers of the world, that we see Toad so involved in, in later chapters.

The Adventures of Odysseus vs. the Adventures of Toad

The Adventures of Toad are a comic representation of the adventures of an ancient Greek hero, called Odysseus (or Ulysses). Odysseus was known for being clever and brave and could get out of almost any difficult

position he was placed in. He fought with the Greeks in the Trojan War and was the one who came up with the idea of the Trojan Horse. After the Trojan War, he tried to return home, but encountered problems (and adventures) along the whole way. In his journey, he encounters among other things, one-eyed giants, monsters, and a massive whirlpool. (To read about [Type a quote from the document or the summary of an interesting point. You can position the text box anywhere in the document. Use the Text Box Tools tab to change the formatting of the pull quote text box.]

his adventures, visit <http://www.2020site.org/ulysses/index.html> or <http://www.heritage-history.com/www/heritage.php?Dir=books&Menuitem=display&author=harding&book=greek&story=odysseus>). Finally after twenty years, he arrives home, only to discover that his house has been overrun by men who want to marry his wife who has remained faithful to him this whole time. With the help of his son, he succeeds in killing all of the suitors and taking back his wife and his home.



The Return of Odysseus

Toad is a parody (comic representation) of the adventures of Odysseus: Toad likes to think he is smart and clever, and gets out of bad situations by his own wit, just like Odysseus did, but in reality, he is quite bumbling and foolish, and only accomplishes what he does because of his friends. And where Odysseus' adventures are quite serious and dangerous (man-eating giants, for example), Toad's adventures are not perilous, but comical. And where Odysseus is the mastermind behind his plan to recover his home, Toad relies on the wisdom and cleverness of his friends.

The Return of Toad and Victorian England

When Toad returns from his adventures, he becomes a truly changed Toad. Not only is his home saved from the folk of the Wild Wood, but his character is changed as well. All the good things about him are still there, but much of his former pride and arrogance was gone. This is Kenneth Grahame's final image of England as he wished it would be. He wished that England could be saved from the decline of Victorianism but he knew it never would be. Toad is saved, but England is not.