



## **The River Bank: A Sequel to Kenneth Grahame's The Wind in the Willows**

*Kij Johnson , Kathleen Jennings (Illustrations)*

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In this delightful dive into the bygone world of Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows* staunch Mole, sociable Water Rat, severe Badger, and troublesome and ebullient Toad of Toad Hall are joined by a young mole lady, Beryl, and her dear friend, Rabbit. There are adventures, kidnappings, lost letters, and family secrets—lavishly illustrated throughout by award-winning artist Kathleen Jennings.

Praise for Kij Johnson:

“*The Fox Woman* immediately sets the author in the front rank of today’s novelists.” —Lloyd Alexander

“Johnson has a singular vision and I’m going to be borrowing (stealing) from her.” —Sherman Alexie

“Johnson’s language is beautiful, her descriptions of setting visceral, and her characters compellingly drawn.” —*Publishers Weekly* (starred re-view)

“Johnson would fit quite comfortably on a shelf with Karen Russell, Erin Morgenstern and others who hover in the simultaneous state of being both “literary” and “fantasy” writers.” —*Shelf Awareness*

**Kij Johnson**’s stories have won the Sturgeon, World Fantasy, and Nebula awards. She has taught writing and has worked at Dark Horse, Microsoft, and Real Networks. She has run bookstores, worked as a radio announcer and engineer, edited cryptic crosswords, and waitressed in a strip bar.

**Kathleen Jennings** was raised on fairytales in western Queensland. She trained as a lawyer and filled the margins of her notes with pen-and-ink illustrations. She has been nominated for the World Fantasy award and has received several Ditmar Awards. She lives in Brisbane, Australia.

## **The River Bank: A Sequel to Kenneth Grahame's The Wind in the Willows Details**

Date : Published September 12th 2017 by Small Beer Press

ISBN : 9781618731302

Author : Kij Johnson , Kathleen Jennings (Illustrations)

Format : Hardcover 195 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Childrens, Middle Grade, Fiction, Animals

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## **From Reader Review The River Bank: A Sequel to Kenneth Grahame's The Wind in the Willows for online ebook**

### **Marianne says**

So I was so anxious for this to be good that it cut into my enjoyment of the book somewhat. Suspect it will be a 5-star read next time, since I know it won't fail me.

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### **Alison C says**

The subtitle to Kij Johnson's "The River Bank" is "A sequel to The Wind in the Willows," and that's just what it is. Taking place the summer after the events in that classic, we again encounter Mole, Water Rat, Badger, Otter and, of course, Toad of Toad Hall, who is up to his usual shenanigans. Newcomers to the neighbourhood are Beryl (a female Mole and an Authoress) and her companion, a young Rabbit; initially the objects of suspicion from the old inhabitants, they slowly are integrated into the world of the River Bank.... Whether one would like this book depends largely on his or her relationship to the original; me, I loved it. I think Ms. Johnson did a great job of continuing Kenneth Grahame's story in a voice similar to his, while at the same time updating the attitudes described in the earlier book. Recommended!

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### **Kiwi Carlisle says**

This is an utterly charming book. Kij Johnson has done an admirable job of capturing the tone and feel of a book I've loved all my life, and expanding it with intensely believable female characters. The new adventures of my old friends were true to their characters and the settings were perfect. My only disappointment was the chapter in which Miss Beryl Mole and the Water Rat pay a totally unnecessary trip to Pan Island. I don't know that I would have been able to resist writing in a visit to the Friend and Teacher either, but without the truly transcendent writing of the original chapter, this seemed like an unnecessary distraction from the story. Otherwise, it's a lovely novel that I will want to read again.

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### **Julia Rutledge says**

I waited impatiently for this book to come in from the library, and when it did I finished it in an ecstatic two days. This was everything I wanted and more - amazing female characters, a perfect turn-of-the-century author voice, and even some hints at queer relationships (or as much as can be hinted in a book like this). My one gripe is that the plot spent too much on Toad (that hasn't strayed much from the original), but I guess you have to give the people what they want. Not this people. I'd be happy if Toad weren't in it at all, but oh well. Beryl was an amazing edition to the cast. She and Rabbit have that "plucky heroine" quality that I kind of miss from modern-day female characters. I read this in the cold of midwinter, and never before since Redwall have I read better descriptions of summertime. Kij Johnson, you've knocked it out of the park.

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### **Dan says**

A delight from start to finish. I first read Kij Johnson last year and she is a master of writing in different modes and tones. When I found out she was writing a sequel to a childhood favorite, *The Wind in the Willows*, it immediately became my most anticipated book of the year. It lived up to expectations. It captures the humor and wonder of the other book perfectly while subtly probing the class implications of the original and adding female characters to the mix. If that last sentence made you expect a lecture or something preachy, subtly was the operative word. It's a worthy sequel. Highly recommended, especially if you love the older book as much as I do.

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### **Daniel Coren says**

I didn't think I'd like a sequel to *The Wind in the Willows*, one written by a different author. But it has some of the charm of Grahame's characters and prose. Also, the Toad bits are hilarious. The main drawback, for me, is that the author seems to try rather hard to insert herself (and her views) into the story, albeit in clever ways.

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### **Kathleen Jennings says**

Even if I weren't the illustrator I'd be telling you this is a charming, charming book.

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### **Amanda says**

I loved Johnson's intention to correct some of the failings of *TWITW* while still celebrating it. However I found the writing style neither Johnson's or Graham's and the story didn't have the same coziness as the original (I think this mainly due to Mole's bad attitude). I will continue to love Johnson's other works and *TWITW*, but I unfortunately didn't love *The River Bank*.

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### **Miz Lizzie says**

Kij Johnson's sequel to *The Wind in the Willows* pays tribute to the original with the same lush language and bucolic setting while mixing it up a bit with a feminine, if not somewhat feminist, point of view. Two ladies, a Mole authoress and her good friend Rabbit, move to the River Bank and make inroads into the old boys club. They come in rather handy when Toad, of course, gets into trouble again. It is the sort of book, like the original, that requires a certain leisurely approach to reading as well as a willingness to suspend disbelief like a child and enter a British countryside in which talking animals and humans co-reside, rather like Narnia though with less exciting adventures. A good book to read in depths of winter to remind oneself of summer.

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### **Jude-marie says**

This is too adorable. I've begun reading it to my grandson, in lieu of *The Wind in The Willows*. Johnson does a masterful job working in the manners of that British century, with her female characters not exactly conforming to expectations and the aghast but accepting reactions of the males that populate the original. Fun adventures are had by all, including a visit with the river god. Descriptions of possessions, furnishings, and food excel. And now I'm craving biscuits with jam.

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### **Martha Meyer says**

Are you a *The Wind in the Willows* fan? Here at long last is a worthy sequel seemingly written by Kenneth Graham himself after being gently enlightened about women and privilege. The River Bank is incredibly funny yet full of detailed delight in nature as well as an exciting kidnapping for ransom. It does not require any real familiarity with *The Wind in the Willows*, either -- it can stand alone beautifully.

The irrepressible Toad has another madcap adventure; he is again rescued by his good friends Water Rat, Badger and Mole. However, now they are joined by two bachelor women, Beryl Mole and her intrepid friend Rabbit! Beryl is an "Authoress" come to the River Bank for time and space to write, but what happens in life more than competes with her supernatural crime novels.

This book is even more effective when read aloud. I read it to my husband, (and yes, we laughed till we cried together) but reading this aloud to your kids one chapter a night before bed will make for a magical 12 days. Enjoy!

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### **Ruth says**

This was so delightful! No worries about another fan-fiction sequel to the original story—at least no worries if the author is Kij Johnson. Haha, what fun. The Toad manages to get in plenty of trouble again (and of course, his friends have to get him out of hot water). I loved the new characters too. Fabulous.

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### **Madalene says**

A delightful "sequel" to *The Wind in the Willows* - this seems like a concept that just shouldn't work, a sequel written by someone else, more than 100 years after the original. However, the characters fit in smoothly and there are some pleasant twists throughout. I would imagine this would be a nicer treat for those who really loved the original, but even if you don't, a step into a tweed filled river bank neighborhood for a couple afternoons is a nice way to pass the time.

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### **Jani says**

The River Bank is a wonderful sequel to *The Wind in the Willows* capturing the original's spirit wonderfully,

but updating it and remaining its own work instead of imitation.

The life on the River Bank is disturbed or rather the bachelors' life is disturbed by the arrival of two female animals, Beryl and the Rabbit to the area. However, much like in the Grahame's novel this results in wild adventures: after all, the Toad is still on the loose.

The River Bank catches much of the magic of the earlier novel with its wit, fun and loving hand Johnson uses. However, it brings welcome more modern elements to the world as well as a small dose of politics, which is quite nice, at least to me who mostly agrees with the sentiments.

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### **Richard Levine says**

I greatly enjoyed Kij Johnson's "sequel" to *The Wind in the Willows*. It's obviously a tricky thing to write a follow up of a beloved hundred year old children's classic -- especially one like *TWITW* that is so old-fashioned as to seem almost archaic -- but Johnson does a nice job of it. At the outset, she matches pretty closely the tone and atmosphere of Kenneth Grahame's original; then as the book progresses, she begins to introduce a few new and different things of her own -- new characters, a slightly more wry and knowing (at times almost post-modern) authorial voice, a somewhat more contemporary social perspective. But nothing TOO disorienting, at least to my mind, and I can hardly blame her for not just wanting to slavishly imitate Grahame. She does maintain the character of Mr. Toad, in all his vain, boastful, comical glory, pretty much just as Grahame created him. And even more important is that throughout the book she continues the gentle and sweet spirit of the original.

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