

## Arthur Rackham

Rackham was born in London as one of 12 children. At the age of 18, he worked as a clerk at the Westminster Fire Office and began studying at the Lambeth School of Art. In 1892 he quit his job and started working for The Westminster Budget as a reporter and illustrator. His first book illustrations were published in 1893 in *The Dolly Dialogues*, the collected sketches of Anthony Hope, who later went on to write *The Prisoner of Zenda*. Book illustrating then became Rackham's career for the rest of his life.

In 1903, he married Edyth Starkie, with whom he had one daughter, Barbara, in 1908. Rackham won a gold medal at the Milan International Exhibition in 1906 and another one at the Barcelona International Exposition in 1912. His works were included in numerous exhibitions, including one at the Louvre in Paris in 1914.

Throughout his career Rackham was not content to remain with a proven style but sought new artistic challenges, illustrating *Cinderella* (1919) and *The Sleeping Beauty* (1920) in silhouette and experimenting with line and color in *Irish Fairy Tales* (1920) and *The Tempest* (1926). He also had the courage to tackle works that were considered sacrosanct, illustrating *Alice in Wonderland* (1907) and *The Wind in the Willows* (1940). Rackham considered the opportunity to illustrate *The Wind in the Willows* a great gift, for he had been offered the original commission but had had to turn it down because of other commitments. He consulted with Kenneth Grahame's widow about the illustrations for the new edition and finally finished the book just weeks before his death in 1939. Like his other work, the book is a fine example of his unique vision and his singular way with line and color.

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