

Tove Jansson is the most widely read Finnish author outside of Finland. She has had success as a writer, artist and cartoonist. She was a multi-talented artist who is mostly remembered as the creator of the Moomins. The Moomin books have been translated into over fifty languages.



Family

Tove's father was sculptor Viktor Jansson. Her mother was the illustrator and artist Signe Hammarsten-Jansson. She designed the notes for the Bank of Finland and also designed all the Finnish post stamps between 1929-1962.

Tove was born in 1914. She had two little brothers, Per Olov (born in 1920) and Lars (born in 1926) and like other members in the family both of them became artists. Per Olov was a photographer and Lars was first a writer and later became a Moomin cartoonist. The siblings had many shared projects, the best known being the Moomin comics which came before the books.



Islands

As a child, Tove spent summers with her family on islands near Stockholm in Sweden. This was part of the inspiration for Moomin valley and the Moomin house! In the beginning of 1960, Tove found an island called Klovharu in Finland. She built a small summer house where she spent over 30 summers (above picture).



Studying

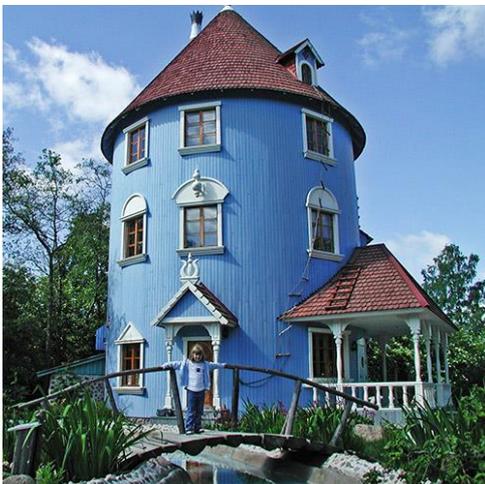
In 1930, Tove Jansson finished her studies in a Swedish speaking school in Finland. In the autumn of 1930, Tove started studying in Stockholm, Sweden where she learnt about ceramic art, painting and drawing. In 1933, Tove went back to Helsinki and continued her studies at the Finnish National Gallery. In 1938, she went on to study in Paris.

Travelling

Besides living in Finland and Sweden, Tove also lived abroad. During her trips around the world, she learnt about different artistic styles. In the 1970s, Tove and her partner travelled for 8 months around the world.

Studio

In 1944, Tove moved to Helsinki to a turret studio. At first, it was in an horrible shape but Tove made it her own. She lived there for many decades and finished many of her best known paintings there. The first Moomin story was also written in this studio home.



The Moomins

The first Moomin book was published in 1945 in Swedish and the third Moomin book was published in 1948, the first to be translated into English. The Moomins also appeared in a comic strip which was first published in England in 1954. Over the years, several TV series have been created, a Moomins theme park is open in Finland (including a Moomin house, see left!) and 9 chapter books about the Moomins have been published.



Besides Moomin books, Tove wrote 12 novels and short stories for adults. Although she is most famous for being an author, she considered writing a hobby! She saw herself as an artist first. Tove Jansson died in 2001 of cancer and is buried in Finland.