



THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS  
ADAPTED BY  
RICHARD HILLS

Extract

A SMITH SCRIPT

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**THE WIND IN THE  
WILLOWS**

**A Play**

**By**

**RICHARD HILLS**

**Based on the novel by Kenneth Grahame**

## **CHARACTERS**

**RATTY**

**MOLE**

**OTTER**

**TOAD**

**BADGER**

**MOLLY HEDGEHOG**

**BILLY HEDGEHOG**

**MRS FIELD MOUSE**

**PROSECUTOR**

**MAGISTRATE**

**CLERK OF THE COURT**

**PC WREN**

**JAILER'S DAUGHTER**

**WASHERWOMAN**

**WATER RAT**

**BARGE WOMAN**

**WEASEL CHAIRMAN**

**MRS WEASEL**

**1<sup>st</sup> WEASEL**

**2<sup>nd</sup> WEASEL**

**Plus four Young Field Mice**

## **LIST OF SCENES**

### **ACT ONE**

- Scene 1      The river bank
- Scene 2      On the way to Toad Hall next morning
- Scene 3      The living room in Toad Hall
- Scene 4      A country road, one day later
- Scene 5      The kitchen in Badger's house, that evening
- Scene 6      On the way through the wood, the next day
- Scene 7      The kitchen in Mole's house, that evening
- Scene 8      On the way to Toad Hall, the next morning
- Scene 9      The Magistrate's Court, six week's later

### **ACT TWO**

- Scene 1      The Prison cell, four months later
- Scene 2      By the canal, next morning
- Scene 3      On the way to the river bank, that afternoon
- Scene 4      The kitchen in Ratty's house, that evening
- Scene 5      On the way to Toad Hall
- Scene 6      The dining room at Toad Hall, that night

# THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS

## ACT ONE

### SCENE 1

*(The scene takes place on THE RIVER BANK. Across the back there are willow trees drooping over the river. DR there is a bush from behind which MOLE appears from a hole. Centre stage there is a small rowing boat on the river moored at the bank. In the boat there is a small picnic hamper. DL there is a bit of a bank.)*

*As the scene opens RATTY enters DL with a couple of oars, which he places in the boat. MOLE pokes his head out from behind the bush DR.).*

**MOLE:** Oh, dear! The light is so bright!

**RATTY:** *(Turning and seeing MOLE.)* It always is in daylight, except when it rains.

**MOLE:** I'll have to put my sunglasses on. *(He takes sunglasses from his pocket and puts them on.)*

**RATTY:** I don't know why you spend so much time in those dark underground tunnels.

**MOLE:** Because I'm a mole.

**RATTY:** Can't you find anything better to do?

**MOLE:** I like making tunnels. That is what Moles are for.

**RATTY:** One home for me is enough. "Rat Hole" I call it.

**MOLE:** What are you doing?

**RATTY:** Going for a cruise down the river. *(Getting in the boat.)*

**MOLE:** In that thing?

**RATTY:** It is called a boat. Want to come?

**MOLE:** I've never been on the river.

**RATTY:** Climb in. Lean on the side. Now step in. *(Mole scrambles in.)*

**MOLE:** I have never been in a boat in all my life.

**RATTY:** You haven't lived.

**MOLE:** Is it nice?

**RATTY:** Nice? The only thing! Believe me, there is nothing better than messing about in boats.

**MOLE:** Can I bore holes in it?

**RATTY:** No you can't. We don't want to sink the thing.

**MOLE:** Why not?

**RATTY:** We would get wet, and we wouldn't get to where we are going.

**MOLE:** Where are we going?

**RATTY:** Wherever it takes us. That is the fun of it.

**MOLE:** *(Wagging his nose.)* I'm having a lovely day.

**RATTY:** We haven't started yet. Hold on to the hamper.

**MOLE:** What is inside it?

**RATTY:** Food! Chicken, cold tongue, cold ham, cold beef, pickled gherkins, French rolls, potted meat and ginger beer.

**MOLE:** Stop! That is too much!

**RATTY:** Do you think so? It's what I always take on my little excursions.

**MOLE:** I say old chap. I like your clothes.

**RATTY:** I'm going to get a black velvet-smoking suit some day.

**MOLE:** You must think me rude, this is all new to me. (*He looks about him.*) So this is a river?

**RATTY:** The river! I live by it and on it. It is brother and sister to me. My world and I don't want any other.

**MOLE:** Isn't it a bit dull at times, just you and the river?

**RATTY:** You're new to it. The bank is so crowded these days that people are moving away. It isn't what it used to be. Otters, kingfishers, Dabchicks, and Moorhens, all wanting you to do something

**MOLE:** (*Pointing off R.*) What is that over there?

**RATTY:** (*Looking.*) Just the wild wood, we don't go there much.

**MOLE:** Aren't they nice people there?

**RATTY:** The squirrels and rabbits are all right. Then there's Badger. Dear old badger, nobody interferes with him, they better not.

**MOLE:** Who should interfere with him?

**RATTY:** Weasels, Stoats and foxes. You can't trust them, that is a fact.

**MOLE:** What is beyond the wild wood?

**RATTY:** People.

**MOLE:** What are they like?

**RATTY:** Nasty lot. You want to keep away from them.

**MOLE:** Why?

**RATTY:** I've never been there. I'm never going, you neither. Don't ever refer to them again.

**MOLE:** I am enjoying the trip.

**RATTY:** Are you. (*Looking round.*) That's strange! We are still tied to the bank. Your fault, I forgot to untie the painter.

**MOLE:** Let us stop here for lunch.

**RATTY:** We haven't been anywhere yet.

**MOLE:** I'm hungry.

**RATTY:** One place is as good as another on the river I suppose. Get out, Mole.

**MOLE:** (*Getting out.*) Give me the hamper, Ratty.

**RATTY:** Careful now! (*He hands the hamper to MOLE.*)

**MOLE:** (*Staggering with it.*) It's very heavy. (*He puts it on the bank.*) I'll unpack. (*He starts unpacking the hamper.*)

**RATTY:** I must say you can't beat the river bank for a meal. (*He gets out of the boat and looks around.*)

**MOLE:** (*looking at all the food.*) Oh my! Oh, my! What a lot of food!

**RATTY:** Pitch in, old fellow. (*He sits down by MOLE on the bank.*)

**MOLE:** I don't mind if I do. (*He helps himself to a sandwich and starts to eat.*)

**RATTY:** Have a leg of chicken. (*He hands one to MOLE, who doesn't know which to eat first.*)

**MOLE:** Which do I eat first?

**RATTY:** Your choice old chap. (*He helps himself to a leg of chicken.*) There is nothing like a good meal, and a lay in the sun.

**MOLE:** Much too hot for me to lie in the sun.

**RATTY:** Have something to drink. (*He hands him a bottle of ginger beer.*)

**MOLE:** I can't eat and drink at the same time.

**RATTY:** Better make the most of it while you can.

**MOLE:** Why?

**RATTY:** Otter! It's always the same. No sooner I open my picnic basket than he turns up.

**MOLE:** How does he do that?

**RATTY:** He's got a nose for food.

**MOLE:** (*Taking a swig at the ginger beer.*) I must say this is the best part of the trip.

**RATTY:** You haven't been anywhere yet.

**MOLE:** I never knew a trip on the river could be so good. (*He looks at the river by the bank.*)

**RATTY:** What are you looking at?

**MOLE:** (*Eating his sandwich.*) Look, a streak of bubbles travelling along the surface. It looks so funny.

**RATTY:** Bubbles? Oh, no! He must have smelled the food.

(*OTTER appears L from behind the bank and hauls himself onto the bank.*)

**OTTER:** Greedy beggars! Why didn't you invite me, Ratty?

**RATTY:** It was an impromptu affair. Meet my friend, Mole.

**OTTER:** (*Sitting on the bank.*) Proud, I'm sure. (*He shakes hands with MOLE.*)

**RATTY:** Otter is always around when there is food about.

**OTTER:** (*Grabbing a sandwich.*) I must say you bring good food, Ratty.

**RATTY:** Where have you been?

**OTTER:** Swimming around, such a rumpus everywhere, with the entire world on the river today. I came up the back water and stumble on you fellows. Here, give me another sandwich.

**RATTY:** Help yourself.

**OTTER:** I always do. (*He takes two.*)

**RATTY:** Sure you have got enough?

**OTTER:** It will do for a start.

**RATTY:** Tell us, who's out on the river?

**OTTER:** Toad for one, in his brand-new-boat. He's got new togs, new everything.

**RATTY:** Once it was nothing but sailing. Then he took up punting.

**OTTER:** A nice mess he made of it.

**RATTY:** Whatever he takes up he gets tired of. Then he starts something new.

**OTTER:** Such a good fellow but no stability.

**MOLE:** I'd like to meet Mr Toad.

**RATTY:** Oh, you will one day. You can't miss him.

**OTTER:** Always out to be the soul of the party.

**RATTY:** I suppose we ought to be moving on.

**OTTER:** Not so fast old chap. I haven't had my fill.

**RATTY:** Trouble is you eat so much.

**OTTER:** I haven't eaten since breakfast. (*He grabs another sandwich.*)

**RATTY:** (*Looking at his watch.*) It's only eleven o'clock.

**OTTER:** Good, it will soon be time for dinner.

**RATTY:** Time to be on our way.

**OTTER:** You are not going already? I've hardly started.

**RATTY:** You would eat anyone out of house and home. Which of us had better pack the hamper?

**MOLE:** Please let me?

**RATTY:** Go ahead old chap.

**MOLE:** Thanks so much, Ratty. (*MOLE repacks the hamper.*)

**OTTER:** Thanks for the food, Ratty. (*He helps himself to two legs of chicken.*) These will do for my lunch. See you again sometime. (*He disappears off L.*)

**MOLE:** Where is he going?

**RATTY:** To see whom else he can scrounge off. Come on, Mole. Help me home with the hamper.

*(They both pick up the hamper and exit DL as the curtains close.)*

## SCENE 2

*(This is a front of tabs scene the next morning, on the way to TOAD HALL. RATTY and MOLE enter DL.)*

**RATTY:** Nice of you to stay the night, Mole.

**MOLE:** Nice of you to make me so comfortable.

**RATTY:** Not often I have company. What are we going to do today?

**MOLE:** Won't you take me to call on Mr Toad?

**RATTY:** What do you want to see him for?

**MOLE:** I've heard so much about him. I do want to make his acquaintance.

**RATTY:** Certainly! We'll get the boat out and paddle up there at once.

**MOLE:** I'd much rather walk.

**RATTY:** It's quicker by boat.

**MOLE:** All the same, I'd rather walk.

**RATTY:** Don't say you are afraid of the water.

**MOLE:** No, I quite enjoyed our trip on the river yesterday.

**RATTY:** We didn't go very far.

**MOLE:** Far enough for me.

**RATTY:** You'll never see the world like that.

**MOLE:** Most of my world is underground.

**RATTY:** Then we'll walk. It's never the wrong time to call on Toad. Early or late he's always the same fellow. Good tempered, glad to see you, sorry when you go.

**MOLE:** He must be a very nice animal.

**RATTY:** The best of animals. He's so simple, so good-natured and affectionate. But he's not very clever.

**MOLE:** We can't all be geniuses.

**RATTY:** He is both boastful and conceited, but he has got some good qualities.

**MOLE:** I can't wait to meet him.

**RATTY:** It won't be long. It's quite a big place he has got.

**MOLE:** Must be worth a lot of money.

**RATTY:** It is, he is loaded.

**MOLE:** I wouldn't know what to do if I had a lot of money.

**RATTY:** That is the trouble with old Toady, more money than sense.

**MOLE:** I am just a poor old mole.

**RATTY:** We can't all be rolling in it like old Toad.

**MOLE:** I would rather have more sense.

**RATTY:** So would I, old chap.

**MOLE:** Still, I suppose money sometimes comes in useful.

**RATTY:** *(Pointing off R.)* There is Toad Hall over there.

**MOLE:** A notice says "Private, no landing allowed". It's a good job we walked after all.

**RATTY:** The place is very old, one of the nicest houses in these parts. That is what comes of being rich.

**MOLE:** I wonder what new fad he has taken up now.

**RATTY:** Let's look him up. We shall hear about it soon enough.

**MOLE:** I'm really looking forward to this.

**RATTY:** Follow me.

*(They exit DR on end of scene).*

### SCENE 3

*(The scene is TOAD'S living room, with table and chairs C and two armchairs by a blazing fire DL. Voices are heard in the hall.)*

**TOAD:** *(Off.)* Hooray! This is splendid! How good of you to come. Come into TOAD HALL. *(He enters R with RATTY and MOLE.)*

**RATTY:** My friend Mole wanted to see you.

**MOLE:** I heard so much about you.

**TOAD:** Splendid! Splendid! How kind of you to come. Sit yourselves down. *(He sits in one armchair by the fire and RATTY grabs the other. MOLE stands cap in hand.)* Grab yourself a chair old chap. Pull it up to the fire. *(MOLE does so.)*

**MOLE:** What a lovely place you have.

**TOAD:** Oh, so-so you know. Have great plans for it in the future. I was just going to send a boat for you, Ratty, with strict orders to be fetched at once. I want you badly... both of you.

**RATTY:** What for?

**TOAD:** You don't know how lucky it is, your turning up now.

**RATTY:** Let's sit quiet a bit Toady!

**TOAD:** *(To MOLE.)* It's the finest house on the river, or anywhere else for that matter.

*(RATTY nudges MOLE.)* All right, Ratty! Only my way you know. It's not such a bad house is it? You rather like it yourself.

**RATTY:** Couldn't afford the place. It must cost a lot.

**TOAD:** Have to be rich for a place like this. Now look here, let's be sensible. You are the very animals I want.

**MOLE:** What for?

**TOAD:** You've got to help me. It's most important.

**RATTY:** If it's about your rowing, you are getting on fairly well, though you still splash about quite a lot. With patience and a quantity of coaching you may....

**TOAD:** Pooh, boating! Silly boyish amusement that is, I've given that up long ago, sheer waste of time.

**RATTY:** Then what are you on about?

**TOAD:** You ought to know better than spending your energies in that aimless manner. I've discovered the real thing, the only genuine occupation of a lifetime.

**RATTY:** He's off again, Mole.

**MOLE:** Let's hear him out.

**TOAD:** I regret the wasted years that lie behind me, squandered on trivialities.

**RATTY:** What is it this time?

**TOAD:** What did you see outside my front door when you arrived?

**MOLE:** A gipsy caravan?

**TOAD:** There you are! Shining with newness! It's painted in canary yellow picked out with green and red wheels. What a sight!

**RATTY:** What is it for?

**TOAD:** For? There is real life for you, embodied in that little cart, the open road, dusty highways. Camp, villages, towns, cities, the world, here today, up and off somewhere tomorrow!

**MOLE:** You going away?

**TOAD:** Me? All of us! The whole world before us! Horizons always changing! The finest cart ever built, without any exception. Planned it all myself.

**RATTY:** Beg your pardon. Did I overhear you say we start?

**TOAD:** You did, all of us this afternoon!

**RATTY:** Just a minute.

**TOAD:** Dear good old Ratty, don't start talking in that stiff shifty sort of way. You know you have got to come. I can't possibly manage without you.

**RATTY:** (*Getting up.*) I don't care! I'm not coming.

**TOAD:** You surely don't mean to stick to your dull old river all your life and live in a hole in the bank?

**RATTY:** I'm not coming and that's flat. I'll live in a hole and boat as I've always done. And Mole is going to stick with me, aren't you Mole?

**MOLE:** I'll always stick with you, Rat. All the same, it sounds as if it might have been fun.

**TOAD:** Come in the dining room and have some lunch, and we'll talk it over. (*He gets up.*) I only want to give pleasure to you fellows. Live for others! That's my motto. Come this way, friends. (*He leads them off to the dining room R, as the curtains close.*)

#### SCENE 4

*(Front of tabs scene. The sound of a crash, and a car roaring by hooting. RATTY hurries in DR, waving his arms and jumping about.)*

**RATTY:** You villains! You scoundrels! You Highwaymen, road dogs! I'll have the law onto you! I'll report you, and take you through the courts!

**MOLE:** (*Entering DR.*) The horse has run away.

**RATTY:** That car smashed the caravan. I said we shouldn't have come.

**MOLE:** Where is Toad?

**RATTY:** I don't care. I wish I was at home.

**MOLE:** So do I.

**RATTY:** So much for Toad's travel and see the world.

**MOLE:** (*Looking off R.*) All I can see is a broken down caravan.

**RATTY:** What is Toad doing now?

**MOLE:** He's coming this way.

*(TOAD enters DR and proceeds to cross DL as if he was driving a car.)*

**TOAD:** Poop-poop! Poop-poop!

**RATTY:** (*Going to him.*) Hi, Toad! Come and look at your caravan.

**TOAD:** (*Driving back DR.*) Poop-poop!! Poop-poop!

**RATTY:** Are you coming to help us, Toad?

**TOAD:** Glorious stirring sight!

**MOLE:** What is?

**TOAD:** Poetry in motion. The real way to travel! The only way to travel!

**RATTY:** What is?

**TOAD:** Here today, next week villages, towns, cities. Always someone else's horizon! O bliss! O poop-poop! (*He sits CS and pretends driving a car.*)

**MOLE:** Stop being an ass, Toad!

**TOAD:** To think I never knew. All those wasted years. What flowery track lies before me? What dust-clouds shall spring up behind me as I speed recklessly away?

**MOLE:** What are we to do with him?

**RATTY:** Nothing, because there is nothing to be done, he is now possessed.

**MOLE:** To think this time yesterday we agreed to come away with him.

**RATTY:** Our fault. We should have known better.

**MOLE:** Well it did sound interesting.

**RATTY:** A new craze, he is like an animal walking in a happy dream, useless to all practical purposes.

**MOLE:** Let's go and see what we can do with the caravan.

**RATTY:** No use whatever.

**MOLE:** Why not?

**RATTY:** Beyond repair. Come on, it's five or six miles at least home.

**MOLE:** How are we going to get there?

**RATTY:** We shall have to walk.

**MOLE:** All the way?

**RATTY:** There is no other.

**MOLE:** What about Toad? We can't leave him here sitting in the middle of the road. In this distracted state.

**TOAD:** Poop-poop!

**RATTY:** (*Looking at TOAD.*) Oh, bother Toad!

**MOLE:** Supposing another thing was to come along?

**RATTY:** I've done with him. He can find his own way home.

**MOLE:** We must get him up.

**RATTY:** (*Pulling TOAD to his feet.*) Look here, Toad. As soon as we get to a town you must report to the Police Station. See if they know anything about that motorcar. Lodge a complaint about it. Then you must see to your horse, go to a Blacksmith's and arrange for your caravan to be fetched and repaired.

**TOAD:** Police Station! Complaint! Me complain about that beautiful heavenly vision that has been vouchsafed me? Mend the caravan? I've done with caravans forever.

**RATTY:** Here he goes again.

**TOAD:** I never want to see another caravan. (*Turning to RATTY.*) Oh, Ratty! You can't think how obliged I am to you for coming on this trip. I wouldn't have gone without you. Then I would never have seen that sunbeam, that thunderbolt, that trouncing sound, or smelt that bewitching smell. I owe it all to you my friends.

**RATTY:** You see what it is? He's quite hopeless. I give up. I'm going home. (*He crosses to DL.*)

**TOAD:** Poop-poop! (*He makes out driving a car off DR.*) Poop-poop! (*He drives off DR.*)

**RATTY:** Now then, Mole! We must pull ourselves together and make a start for home while there is still some daylight left. It will never do to spend the night here, much too cold.

**MOLE:** Dear, Ratty. I'm dreadfully sorry, I'm simply deadbeat.

**RATTY:** You can't be deadbeat now.

**MOLE:** You must let me rest and get my strength back, if I'm to get home at all.

**RATTY:** Just for a minute. It will soon be dark and we have a long way to go.

**MOLE:** I'm sorry, Ratty. (*He sits down CS.*)

**RATTY:** There ought to be a moon later. I'll see what it is like just down the road. *(He exits DL.)*

**MOLE:** Don't go off and leave me. I shall never find my way home.

**RATTY:** *(He returns after a moment.)* Come on, Mole!

**MOLE:** What is up, Ratty?

**RATTY:** Snow is up, or rather down. It's starting to snow hard. *(He turns to exit.)*

**MOLE:** *(Getting up.)* Oh, no! Not snow.

**RATTY:** *(Coming back for MOLE.)* Can't be helped, pull your coat collar up old chap. *(They both pull their coat collars up.)* We must make a start and take our chance. The worst is, I don't know exactly where we are.

**MOLE:** Nor do I.

*(They both start walking on the spot facing DL.)*

**RATTY:** This snow makes everything look so different.

**MOLE:** *(After a few moments of walking.)* I'm beginning to ache all over.

**RATTY:** We have a long way to go, come on old chap, and make an effort.

**MOLE:** It's all right for you. Your legs are longer.

**RATTY:** We shall have to make another move or do something.

**MOLE:** *(Wrapping his arms around himself.)* The cold is awful.

*(They continue walking on the spot facing DL.)*

**RATTY:** The snow will soon be too deep to wade through.

**MOLE:** You are telling me! It's all Toads' fault.

**RATTY:** I know we shouldn't have got talked into his foolhardy caravan trip,

**MOLE:** I should have listened to you yesterday.

**RATTY:** Instead we spend a cold night on the hard floor in Toad's caravan

**MOLE:** Listening to him snoring all night. I'll never listen to Mr Toad's ideas again.

**RATTY:** We all learn by our mistakes. *(He turns to MOLE.)* This is what occurs to me. *(He points to off DL.)* There is a sort of dell down there in front of us. The ground seems hilly and humpy. We'll try and find a shelter or cave to rest up out of the wind. We are both pretty deadbeat.

**MOLE:** I'm more than that.

**RATTY:** The snow may leave off or something may turn up. Come on! I'll give you a push.

*(He gets behind MOLE and they start walking on the spot again.)*

**MOLE:** Oh! My poor leg! My poor shin! *(He sits in the snow and looks at his leg.)*

**RATTY:** Poor old Mole! You don't seem to be having much luck today. Let's have a look at the leg. *(He takes a look at the leg.)* You've cut your shin. It's not done by a branch, looks as if it was done by a bit of sharp metal. I'll get my handkerchief and tie it up for you. *(He takes out his handkerchief and ties it around MOLE'S leg.)* It's a very clean cut.

**MOLE:** Never mind what done it. It hurts just the same whatever done it.

*(Ratty starts feeling around the ground on all fours.)*

**MOLE:** Come on Ratty, stop fooling around on the ground.

**RATTY:** Hooray! I've found it!

**MOLE:** What have you found, Ratty?

**RATTY:** (DL.) Over here where you were, come and see!

**MOLE:** (*Getting up.*) I see it right enough. Seen the same sort of thing many times before, a doorscraper, what of it?

**RATTY:** Don't you see what it means, you dull witted animal?

**MOLE:** It means that some careless person has left his door=scraper lying about where it's sure to trip everybody up. Very thoughtless I call it. When I get home I shall complain about it.

**RATTY:** Oh, dear! Oh, dear! Stop arguing and come and scrape. (*He starts scraping DL again.*) There what did I tell you? A doormat!

**MOLE:** You seem to have found another piece of domestic litter. Go ahead and dance a jig if you have to. Perhaps we can go on and not waste any more time.

**RATTY:** Do you mean to say this doormat doesn't tell you anything?

**MOLE:** Really, Rat, I think we have enough of this silly folly. Whoever heard of a doormat telling us anything? They simply don't do it.

**RATTY:** You thick headed beast! If you want to sleep dry and warm tonight it's our last chance. (*He searches DL.*) Here it is a bell-pull!

**MOLE:** And a brass plate! Ratty, you're a wonder! I see it all now. You worked it out step by step, in that wise head of yours. I believe you could find anything you liked. If only I had your head.

**RATTY:** You haven't. Hang on that bell-pull and pull hard. I'll bang on the door.

*(MOLE pulls on the bell-pull while RATTY bangs on the door just off stage. After a few moments we hear the door being unbolted and a gruff voice speaks out.)*

**BADGER:** The very next time that happens I shall be exceedingly angry, disturbing me on such a night. Speak up!

**RATTY:** Oh, Badger! Let us in please! It's me Rat, and my friend Mole. We have lost our way in the snow.

*(BADGER appears DL in night cap and dressing gown holding a lamp.)*

**BADGER:** Ratty, my dear little man! Come along in at once, both of you.

**RATTY:** Thank you, dear fellow.

**BADGER:** Lost in the snow? You must both be perished. At this time of night, come in do!

*(And they both exit into BADGER'S house as the scene ends).*