



# *the Wind in the Willows*

Kenneth Grahame

retold by  
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## THE AUTHOR



Kenneth Grahame was born on 8th March, 1859, in Edinburgh, Scotland. His mother died when he was five, and he went to live with his grandmother in a small town on the River Thames. He went to St Edward's School, Oxford, and he hoped to go to Oxford University. However, his uncle preferred him to take a job, and, in 1879, he started to work for the Bank of England. Kenneth Grahame married Elspeth Thomson in 1899, and they had one son, Alistair.

He began to write as a hobby and, in 1888, he had his first story published. His stories often have a message about what is right and wrong. Grahame also had a deep understanding of childhood, and his books are usually about children and animals. *The Golden Age*, a collection of short stories published in 1895, is about a group of children who are orphans. *The Reluctant Dragon* is one of his most famous short stories. It is about a happy dragon who just wants to be left alone and the people in his village, who don't like him because he is different.

Although Grahame became a successful banker, he continued to write. *The Wind in the Willows* was published in 1908 but it wasn't very popular at first. However, Kenneth Grahame made enough money from his other books to be able to retire from his job and live in the countryside. Grahame died in Berkshire, England, on 6th July, 1932. As time went by, *The Wind in the Willows* became increasingly popular, and Grahame is now thought of as one of the greatest children's writers of all time.



## THE BACKGROUND

*The Wind in the Willows* is a very famous children's book. Kenneth Grahame wrote the book for his young son, Alistair. He used to read the animal stories to Alistair at bedtime to make him happy and teach him good English. Alistair loved to hear about Rat, Mole, Badger and Toad.

The book is set in the beautiful English countryside. In some ways, the story is taken from Kenneth Grahame's life. When he was five, he lived with his grandmother, and there was a river next to her garden. Grahame found country life very pleasant. The characters in the book live in the countryside too. The animals live near the woods and a riverbank. When some of his books became well-known, Kenneth Grahame became rich. He gave up his job in the bank and he moved to the countryside, which he loved so much.

Children and adults still enjoy this book. It was made into a film many times but the most successful version was made in 1996. Many famous comedians starred in it. No doubt, it will continue to be popular for many years to come.



## THE PLOT

*The Wind in the Willows* is the story of four friends and their adventures. This is like any other adventure story except that the characters are all animals. However, they also behave like humans. They speak, wear clothes and even drive cars! Toad is a bit foolish and a bit wild. He gets into trouble when he drives too fast. His friends give him advice but he doesn't listen to them. Eventually, he is put into prison because he steals a car. When he escapes from prison, his friends help him to get his home back from the weasels. Toad's life is very exciting but dangerous. How is he going to learn to behave properly?

# THE CHARACTERS



**TOAD**

... is a rather crazy animal. He has a lot of money but spends it on silly things. He loves adventure but always seems to get into trouble. Toad never thinks about things carefully and can be quite selfish, but he loves his friends.



**BADGER**

... is a very serious character. He doesn't really like spending time with other animals. All the other animals respect him but they are also afraid of him. However, Badger is very kind and brave and he is a great friend to Toad, Ratty and Mole.



**MOLE**

... is a shy and friendly animal. He loves life and is eager to try new things. He is pleased with everything that the world has to offer him and is always excited when opportunities for adventure arise.



**RAT**

... is a thoughtful dreamer. He is clever and kind. He loves the river and wants to spend all his time in his boat, having picnics by the water. He is quite sensible and wants to stop Toad from getting into trouble.



### ALICE

... is a kind girl who loves animals. She helps Toad when he is sad and lonely in prison. She decides to help him because he is in trouble.

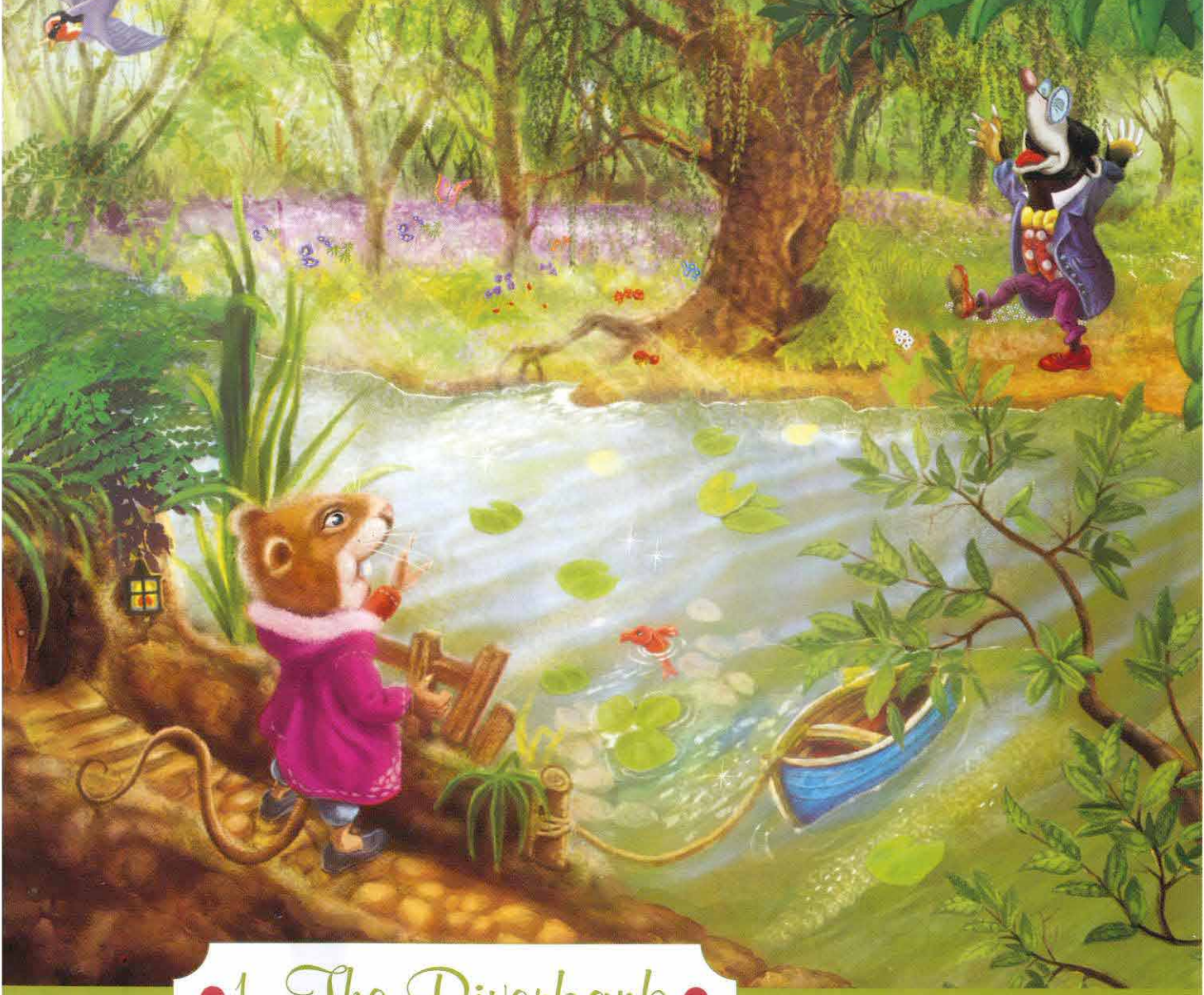
### THE ENGINE DRIVER

... is a good man who always tries to help others. He feels sorry for Toad, so he tries to help him.



### THE WEASELS

... are very greedy animals. They often steal things and treat people very badly. They don't care about others and enjoy scaring them. They often make a lot of noise and mess too.



## • 1. The Riverbank •

It was spring, and Mole couldn't wait to leave his little underground house and go outside. He pushed his way up through the dark earth until he suddenly felt the sun on his face and the soft warm grass on his paws. He hurried across the field and along the hedges. Then he saw the river. It was Mole's first experience of water, and he sat and watched it in amazement. It was beautiful and it glittered and shone in the morning sun.

On the other side of the river there was a dark hole in the earth. Mole suddenly saw a small brown head appear out of the hole. It was Rat! The two animals stood and looked at each other.

"Hello, Mole!" said Rat.

"Hello, Rat!" said Mole.

"Would you like to come over here?" asked Rat.

Mole could not see how to get across. Rat bent down, untied a rope and stepped into a small, blue, wooden boat and quickly rowed across to Mole. He held up his paw and helped Mole into the boat. Mole could not believe what was happening.

"I've never been in a boat before in all my life," he said.

"What?" cried Rat. "Never? But, my dear Mole, there is nothing as nice as being in a boat!"

Mole believed his new friend. Rat rowed, and Mole sat and watched the water happily.

"So, this is a river," he said, after some time.

"THE River," said Rat.

"And you really live by the river? What a wonderful life!" said Mole.



“The river is my world,” said Rat. “I never want to live anywhere else.”

“But don’t you get bored, with nobody to talk to?” asked Mole.

“Nobody to talk to?” cried Rat. “There are otters and ducks and all kinds of water birds!”

“And what’s that over there?” asked Mole, pointing to some trees on one side of the river.

“That’s the Wild Wood,” said Rat. “I don’t go there very much.”

“Aren’t they very nice people there?” asked Mole nervously.

“Well, some of the rabbits are kind,” said Rat, “and there’s also good old Badger. Nobody dares to bother him, though!”

“Who would bother him?” asked Mole.

“Well, there are other animals in the Wild Wood,” said Rat, “like the weasels and stoats, and you can’t really trust them.”

“I see,” said Mole. “And what’s on the other side of the Wild Wood?”

“After the Wild Wood is the Wide World,” said Rat, “but that is something that you and I don’t need to worry about. Let’s not talk about it again.”

Just then, Mole saw a huge house near the river.

“What a wonderful house!” he said. “Who lives there?”

“That’s Toad Hall,” said Rat. “My friend Toad lives there. Let’s go and say hello!”