

Playstage

Junior

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THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS



Adapted from the book by Kenneth Grahame



Adapted by
Stewart Auty

CAST LIST (Characters in order of appearance)**MOLEY****MRS MOLE****RABBIT 1****RABBIT 2ih****HEDGEHOG 1****HEDGEHOG 2****RATTY****BADGER****OTTER****STOAT 1****STOAT 2****STOAT 3****STOAT 4****FOXY****FROGGY****CHIEF WEASEL****WEASEL JASPER****WEASEL JACK****WEASEL JILL****GAOLER****GAOLER'S DAUGHTER**

21 speaking parts. Non-speaking can be added.

PLEASE NOTE: There are no songs in this play. Running time is approximately 1 hour.

THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS**SCENE 1**

The River Bank. (SEE PRODUCTION NOTES) MOLEY and MRS MOLE are on stage.

MOLEY

Look, I'm not one to complain....

MRS MOLE

I should hope not! It's not your place to complain.

MOLEY

But every year, at this time, you make me do housework, and I'm sick of it.

MRS MOLE

You're sick of it? You're sick of it? What about me? I only ask for your help once a year. The rest of the year, I do it all by myself.

MOLEY

So what's special about this time of year? Tell me that.

MRS MOLE

If you hadn't noticed, it's spring. So today, it's not just housework, its spring cleaning.

MOLEY

So that makes it different? Spring? Had you forgotten? We live underground where it's always dark.

MRS MOLE

Just once a year, I need you to help. It's not just cleaning – there's whitewashing walls to do.

MOLEY

Look, I've got a lovely dark black fur coat. I don't want it covered in whitewash splashes.

MRS MOLE

Take it off then!

MOLEY

If only I could. Look, you go inside and put the kettle on. Make yourself a nice cup of tea.

MRS MOLE

And what about you? Where do you think you're going?

MOLEY

I'm going to the bank.

MRS MOLE

We've no money in the bank, so going to the cash machine is not a good idea.

MOLEY

Give me strength, woman! I'm going to the river bank! I'm going up to the surface for some fresh air. It's stuffy, dirty and dusty down here, so I'll be back later.

MRS MOLE

That's it leave everything to me! Just like last year, you disappeared then, if I remember rightly.

MOLEY

I'll try not to be long, but I need a bit of a break. Thinking about all that work has tired me out. Have you seen my sunglasses?

MRS MOLE

Now why would you want sunglasses?

MOLEY

You said it was spring, so there will be bright sunlight out there.

MRS MOLE

Please yourself. Do whatever takes your fancy. Don't think about me. Please yourself.

(Exit MRS MOLE, grumbling)

MOLEY *(Finding his sunglasses in his pocket and putting them on)*

At last! Daylight and freedom. Daylight means fresh air, and freedom means a rest from nagging.

(Enter RABBITS and HEDGEHOGS)

RABBIT 1

Ayup! Look what the wind has blown in.

RABBIT 2

It's Mr Cool!

RABBIT 1

Look at the shades! Do you think he's famous?

RABBIT 2

Never mind famous! What's he doing up here? He should stay underground.

RABBIT 1

Well don't tell me, tell 'im. He's the one to tell, not me.

RABBIT 2

Oy! Mole! What do you think you're doing up here?

MOLEY

I don't wish to be rude, but what has it to do with you?

RABBIT 1

You are trespassing, that's what. You're not allowed up here.

HEDGEHOG 1

You should know your place.

HEDGEHOG 2

And your place is underground. Deep in the dark depths, not up here, in the sunlight.

HEDGEHOG 1

And what's with the shades?

MOLEY

You mentioned the sunlight. It's very bright up here. Perhaps a bit brighter than you?

HEDGEHOG 2

You don't find us invading your subterranean passageways, so clear off! This is our part of the world!

RABBIT 2

You're intruding Mole. You're not wanted here.

MOLEY

Don't worry. I'm not staying, I'm just passing through.

RABBIT 1 (*mocking*)

Oh, just passing through, are we? And where are we going on this fine spring morning?

MOLEY

Not that it's any business of yours, but because it's a fine spring morning, I've come up here for some fresh air.

HEDGEHOG 1

Fresh air? We can't be having that!

RABBIT 2

You're not allowed fresh air, or sunlight either.

HEDGEHOG 2

Look, there's two sorts of people in society. Upstairs and downstairs.

HEDGEHOG 1

We're definitely upstairs people, because we're better than you.

HEDGEHOG 2

And you're definitely downstairs, so I'd be obliged if you would go back where you belong.

RABBIT 1

You don't want to cause any trouble, do you? So be a good mole, and go back down below, and we'll say no more about it.

MOLEY (*Tries to get past but his way is blocked.*)

If it's all the same to you, I'm going to the bank. I'll go back down below when I'm good and ready. Now let me pass!

RABBIT 2

I don't think he's listening properly, do you?

MOLEY

There's nothing wrong with my hearing. It's just that I've decided that you're not going to boss me about. I have been listening, but I've decided to take no notice.

(MOLE attempts to sidestep RABBIT 1, but HEDGEHOG 2 blocks his path)

HEDGEHOG 2

We might have to prevent you. Look at my spines! They stand up if I get riled!

HEDGEHOG 1

When he's riled, and his spines are up, he'll roll all over you!

HEDGEHOG 2

Think of the pain! These spines are really sharp!

MOLEY

You don't frighten me. I know my rights!

(Enter RATTY. He is quite posh and well dressed.)

RATTY

Now what's going on here? This looks like an altercation to me!

RABBIT 1

Nothing for you to worry about, Ratty.

RABBIT 2

It's between us and the mole.

RATTY

Everything alright, sir?

MOLEY

It would be if they would let me pass. They say I'm trespassing.

RABBIT 2

You are!

MOLEY

I'm not! My house is just over there. Well, just under there really.

RATTY

So he's not trespassing! He lives here! He lives underground, so he's local, he's a resident!

MOLEY

And they wanted me to pay a toll to walk to the riverbank.

RATTY

What absolute balderdash! Rabbits! Hedgehogs! You stop this now! You need to apologise to Mr Mole this minute.

RABBITS and HEDGEHOGS (*Together*)

Sorry, Mr Mole. We were only playing. We didn't mean any harm.

RATTY

Only playing? It looked like bullying and intimidation to me!

RABBITS and HEDGEHOGS (*Together*)

It wasn't like that. We were just having a bit of fun, that's all.

RATTY

Well it wasn't fun to Mr Mole. So be off with you, before I find a big stick!

(Exit RABBITS and HEDGEHOGS)

RATTY

Sorry about that. Allow me to introduce myself. I'm Colonel Rat,retired.

MOLEY

Pleased to meet you, sir. And thank you for your help.

RATTY

Didn't look as though you much needed it. You stood your ground, weren't intimidated by the local riff raff. Oh, and there's no need to call me sir. My friends call me Ratty.

MOLEY

Does that mean I can call you Ratty too? Does this mean we're friends?

RATTY

Friends we are. I might be Chairman of the Parish Council, Master of the Church Bell ringers, and Neighbourhood Watch coordinator, possibly the senior

and most respected resident around here, but I'm happy to number you among my friends.

MOLEY

Wonderful! Will you walk with me along the riverbank?

RATTY

I'll do better than that! Look! I've got a boat! It's over there! (*SEE PRODUCTION NOTES*)

MOLEY

A boat? I've never been in a boat, ever!

RATTY

What? Never? Never been in a boat? You don't know what you are missing!

MOLEY

I've never been on a river either.

RATTY

This is not just any old river; this is THE river, the best river ever, as it flows into the River Thames. Not a lot of people know that!

MOLEY

This is turning into a wonderful day! I'm glad I came up for some fresh air!

RATTY

Have you got time to spend? There's nothing, absolutely nothing, that's half as good as messing about in boats. But it does take time.

MOLEY

I'll be in trouble when I get back, whatever time it is. If I'm late, I'll just be in more trouble. It's all a question of degree.

RATTY

Come on then! Into the boat! Steady now! Don't rock the boat!

(RATTY climbs into boat and helps MOLEY)

MOLEY

Oooh! I didn't think it would be like this!

RATTY

Sit still, that's all you have to do. Boats always rock from side to side. You'll get used to it.

MOLEY

I might get seasick!

RATTY

Nonsense! We're on the river not the sea, and there's no such thing as river sick. Now, seeing as you have all day, I was going to have a picnic.

MOLEY

A picnic? That sounds good.

RATTY

I'm meeting my friends. I'll introduce you. You've spent too much time underground. It's time you got out more and met some people.

MOLEY

I don't want to intrude.

RATTY

They'll be pleased to meet you. Now, as you're a relative newcomer up above ground, I'd better tell you about who you're likely to meet.

MOLEY

Can I help with the paddling? I'd prefer helping to just being a passenger.

RATTY

By all means! Now take the oar, and the blade cuts into the water, and then you push that paddleful of water behind you.

MOLEY

Like this?

RATTY

Gently now! You paddle at that side, and I'll paddle at this side.

MOLEY

I get the idea! We're working as a team!

RATTY

That's it, well done! You're a natural! But slowly, slowly now, we're on the river. It's not a race.

MOLEY

It's all very leisurely, almost lazy.

RATTY

And that's how it should be. No rush, we've got all the time in the world.

MOLEY

Tell me about the river. It's all very still and peaceful. I think the right word must be tranquil.

RATTY

And that's how we like it. Now this side of the water, it's where we riverbankers live.

MOLEY

And what's over there, on the other side?

RATTY

We don't talk much about that lot over there. They're not really our sort of people.

MOLEY

What do you mean?

RATTY

That's the wild wood over there, with lots of unsavoury characters. Steer clear of them, that's my advice. I've never been there and I'm never going there either, nor you, if you've any sense.

MOLEY

I've met the rabbits and hedgehogs – they weren't very nice.

RATTY

They were pussycats compared to some. There's weasels and stoats, look out for them.

MOLEY

I always get them mixed up.

RATTY

No problem! Stoats are weasily recognised, but weasels are stoatally different!

(Enter BADGER)