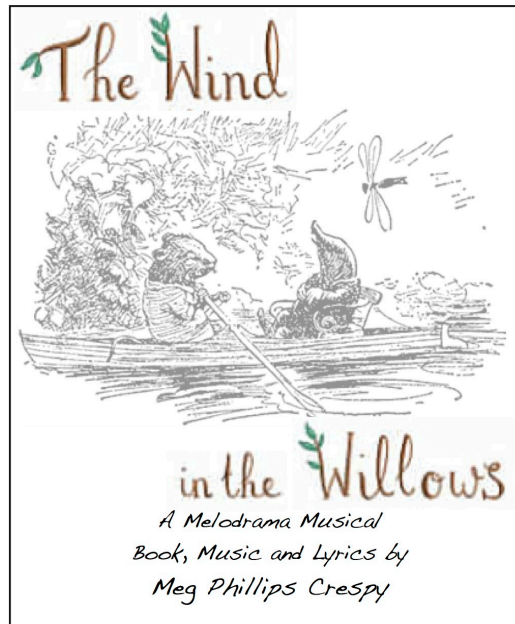


PRODUCTION SCRIPT



The Wind in the Willows

A melodrama-style musical comedy

by

Meg Phillips Crespy

Adapted from the novel
“The Wind in the Willows”

by Kenneth Grahame



Newport, Maine

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THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS

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CAST 5 characters -- 1M 4either

RAT -- A poet and avid boater, Rat is good-natured and sensible.

MOLE -- Mole is innocent, eager to learn, and possesses inner courage.

TOAD -- Toad is enthusiastic and irrepressible. There is no one he admires more than himself, but somehow he manages to stay lovable.

BADGER -- A no-nonsense creature, Badger is gruff but has a good heart.

WEASEL -- Weasel loves to cause mischief and can't be trusted.

A NOTE ON GENDER:

The script uses male pronouns; however, any part can be played by a male or a female, and casting directors are encouraged to consider both genders for all roles. Pronouns should be adjusted accordingly.

Wind in the Willows is a play within a play; the above characters are portrayed by their great- great-grandchildren. Not much has changed in four generations – the characterizations should be similar. The most noticeable change is RAT, but his ancestor was a poet, and he is a storyteller, so they are more alike than different. The change should be conveyed physically, but it need not be extreme.

The Wind in the Willows was first produced by Talking Horse Productions in September 2014. It was directed by Bill Baer, with music direction by Ed Hanson. Background set design was by Karin Mirick. The cast was as follows:

RAT: Dana Bocke

MOLE: Dianna Long

TOAD: Ed Hanson

BADGER: Melle Richardson

WEASEL: Bill Baer

MUSICAL NUMBERS

#1 -- WONDERFUL TOAD -- Toad

#2 -- MOTORCAR -- Weasel

#3 -- HERE COME THE WEASEL -- Weasel

#4 -- WHENEVER TOAD COMES HOME -- Toad

#5 -- WONDERFUL TOAD (reprise) Part 1 -- Weasel

#6 -- WONDERFUL TOAD (reprise) Part 2 -- Toad

#7 -- WONDERFUL TOAD (reprise) Part 3 -- All

SCENERY AND PROPS should be minimal, with the audience's imagination filling in many of the details. The action of the play is continuous.

SETTING: A stage, which becomes the English countryside of the early 20th century.

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT:

Award-winning playwright Meg Phillips Crespy has been commissioned by academic and regional theaters to write incidental music, plays and musicals for production. Her play "Mostly Sweet" was highlighted in NYC's 2013 Cherry Lane Theatre Tongues series, and "The Zenith Escape" (composer) won the 2017 National Jackie White Children's Playwriting Contest.

WIND IN THE WILLOWS by Meg Phillips Crespy 40 minutes 5 actors (1M 4either) *(Suitable for Professional. Educational or Amateur performances for Youth Theatre, Children's Theatre or TYA)* Written in melodrama style -- in keeping with many of the theatricals of the period in which the original novel was written and the story set -- the script encourages audience participation. It chronicles the adventures of Toad and his friends with a fast-moving storyline, lots of humor, and a nod to Kenneth Grahame's beautiful prose. Although the primary audience is children, the script also contains references for adults, in the vein of the old Rocky and Bullwinkle cartoons. **ORDER #3195**

The Wind In The Willows

(As the play begins, RATTY McRATTERSON JR, THE FOURTH enters. He is just past his prime – not elderly, but he carries a walking stick in one hand, which he uses to cross to Center stage.)

RATTY JR, THE FOURTH: Good morning. I said, “Good morning!”

(Works audience until he gets a good response)

That’s better. Allow me to introduce myself. I am Ratty McRatterson Jr, the Fourth. I’m named after my father, Ratty McRatterson Jr, the Third, who was named after his father, Ratty McRatterson Jr, the Second, who was named after his father, Ratty McRatterson, Jr,

(Deep breath)

who was named after his father, Ratty McRatterson. He was my great great grandfather, and his friends called him Rat. Now, I’m going to tell you a story about my great great grandfather. Great great Grandfather always said –

(MOLE JR, JR, JR, JR, JR sticks his head in from L.)

MOLE JR, JR, JR, JR, JR: What about my great great grandfather? He’s in the story, too.

RATTY JR, THE FOURTH: ...A story about my great great grandfather and his friend. Now, Great Great Grandfather always said –

(TOAD JR, JR, JR, JR, JR sticks his head in, above MOLE’S.)

TOAD JR, JR, JR, JR, JR: My great, fantastically great, great grandfather was there, too!

(BADGER JR, JR, JR, JR, JR sticks his head in, below MOLE’S.)

BADGER JR, JR, JR, JR, JR: And mine.

RATTY JR, THE FOURTH: ...A story about my great great grandfather and his friends. Now, Great Great Grandfather always said –

(WEASEL JR, JR, JR, JR, JR sticks his head in from R.)

WEASEL JR, JR, JR, JR, JR: *(slyly)* Don’t forget *my* great great grandfather.

RATTY JR, THE FOURTH: *(sighs)* All right, a story about my great great grandfather and his *acquaintances*.

(WEASEL JR, JR, JR, JR, JR chuckles mischievously and disappears. RATTY JR, THE FOURTH shoos the other three off.)

My Great Great Grandfather always said –

(He becomes RAT – his walking stick turns into a pole for his boat, and he uses it to pantomime guiding his boat down the river, still standing – a slow, steady motion first on one side of his raft, then the other.)

RAT: There’s nothing like the river! The sights, the smells, the sounds... and the wind playing in the willows like music.

(BADGER enters. [Note: as the animals enter and exit, their movement should suggest that RAT is floating past them on the river.]

RAT: Good morning, Badger!

BADGER: *(nods)* Rat.

RAT: What a beautiful day this is!

BADGER: (*Shrugs*) If you say so.

(*BADGER exits. TOAD enters.*)

RAT: Good morning, Toad! Have you ever seen such a beautiful day?

TOAD: Indeed I have! It was a morning very much like this when I embarked on one of my grand, courageous adventures. I –

RAT: (*quickly*) Oops, would you look at the time? I have to go!

TOAD: (*as he exits*) Remind me to tell you later, Rat, it really was a most extraordinary display of –

RAT (*over TOAD*) Bye bye!

TOAD: (without pausing) – heroism on my part, especially the bit where I –

(*TOAD exits. WEASEL enters.*)

WEASEL: (*a la Seinfeld and Newman*) Hello...Rat.

RAT: Hello...Weasel.

(*WEASEL exits. RAT transforms back into RATTY JR, THE FOURTH.*)

RATTY JR, THE FOURTH: Now let me tell you something about Weasel. He plays an important part of the story: the Villain. Do you know what a villain is?

(*Brief audience exchange*)

Our story takes place a long time ago – and do you know what people did a long time ago, when they watched a story about a villain? They BOO'd. Try it.

(*Audience BOOs*)

And they hissed.

(*Audience boos and hisses*)

It's fun, isn't it? It's so much fun that those people from a long time ago, created an entire kind of theatre around it, called Melodrama. Melodrama uses signs like this one –

(*WEASEL enters, displaying "BOO" sign.*)

RATTY JR, THE FOURTH: – to tell you what to do. Go ahead, boo and hiss. That's what we do to the villain.

(*The audience boos and hisses; WEASEL drops the sign to his side and points menacingly at the audience.*)

WEASEL: Watch it, you lot.

(*Exits*)

RATTY JR, THE FOURTH: We also have this sign.

(*TOAD enters, displaying "APPLAUSE" sign.*)

When you see the "Applause" sign, you –

TOAD: You applaud! Clap and cheer for the hero! Yes, just like that! Thank you, thank you, thank you.

(*Bowing and blowing kisses, he exits*)

RATTY JR, THE FOURTH: Toad thinks he's the hero, but the truth is, his friends are always rescuing him from one thing or another. Just wait until I tell you about the part where he – but I'm getting ahead of myself. You haven't even met Mole.

(*He transforms once more into RAT, skimming down the river. MOLE enters.*)

MOLE: (*to RAT, timidly*) Hello.

RAT: Do I know you?

MOLE: I'm Mole.

RAT: *(steers his boat to the shore)* I'm Rat.

(Shakes hands)

Nice to meet you. But say, don't you folks usually live underground?

MOLE: Yes, but I poked my nose out just for a moment, and I smelled the most wonderful things! I followed my nose and here I am in the open! It's very exciting. What's that?

(Proudly)

RAT: This is my boat.

MOLE: I've never been on a boat before. Is it nice?

RAT: Nice? It's the ONLY thing. Here, come aboard and see for yourself.

MOLE: Is it safe?

RAT: *(thoughtfully)* I suppose finding your balance might be tricky. Give it a try.

(MOLE, with great effort, manages to join RAT on the boat. This should be done with exaggerated physicality, perhaps some vocal ad libs. When he gets his balance, MOLE beams with pride while BADGER crosses L to R with the APPLAUSE sign.)

MOLE: Say, this *is* nice!

RAT: Believe me, my young friend, there's nothing half so much worth doing as messing about in a boat.

MOLE: So this is a river!

(RAT starts steering again and they float down the river. MOLE looks around contentedly.)

RAT: THE River. It's my world, and I don't want any other. What it hasn't got is not worth having, and what it doesn't know is not worth knowing.

MOLE: You have a lovely way of putting things.

RAT: I'm a poet.

MOLE: A poet! Will you recite some of your poetry?

RAT: *(with a great show of modesty)* I *do* have a new piece I've just started about ducks. I call it Duck Tail.

(Clears his throat and formally recites:)

"Duck tail, duck tail..."

(Pause)

MOLE: What comes next?

RAT: I don't know, that's all I have.

MOLE: *(pointing off)* Oh, look at that beautiful house!

RAT: That's Toad Hall – it's grand, all right, on the inside and the outside. Old Toad, Senior built it.

MOLE: Does he still live there?

RAT: No, he's gone to the great lily pad in the sky. Now it's just his son, Toad.

MOLE: You don't sound very fond of Toad.

RAT: I am quite fond of him, really – I just don't like to let HIM know that. You see, his head is a little puffed up.

MOLE: He has a disease?

RAT: No, no. I mean he's always talking about how wonderful he is. He's fond of boats, though, and anyone who's fond of boats is all right in my book. Here, you can meet him for yourself.

(RAT waves at TOAD as TOAD enters. TOAD carries a large basket which he sets down

upon entering.)

TOAD: Ahoy there!

(RAT steers the boat to land and he and MOLE step off and join TOAD.)

RAT: Toad, let me introduce you to a new friend. This is Mole.

TOAD: Mole! A pleasure, a pleasure!

RAT: And Mole, this is Toa –

TOAD: Come, no introductions are needed. Surely Mole has heard of me before.

MOLE: Er – no.

TOAD: How unexpected. Why don't I tell you a bit about myself?

SONG #1: WONDERFUL TOAD

TOAD:

OH, I AM THE WONDERFUL TOAD.

THE POETS SHOULD WRITE ME AN ODE.

RAT:

WELL, I THINK YOU'RE DRAB.

TOAD:

YOU MUST MEAN I'M FANTABULOUS!

BEST OF THE BEST! I AM TOAD.

OH, I'M AS SUPERB AS CAN BE

MOST CLEVER YOU EVER DID SEE.

I'M GREAT, I AM HANDSOME,

I'M WORTH A KING'S RANSOM

NO ONE'S AS STUPENDOUS AS ME!

(MOLE gets swept up in the excitement.)

TOAD AND MOLE:

HOORAY FOR THE WONDERFUL TOAD.

THE POETS SHOULD WRITE ME/HIM AN ODE

I'M/HE'S GREAT, I AM/HE IS HANDSOME,

I'M/HE'S WORTH A KING'S RANSOM

THE BEST OF THE BEST!

I AM/HE IS TOAD!

(BADGER enters with APPLAUSE sign and then exits.)

TOAD: Shall we go? I've got a basket all packed.

MOLE: Go where?

TOAD: Picnicking, of course! What else is there?

RAT: There's boating.

TOAD: Yesterday's news, Rat, yesterday's news! The picnic's the thing! Hiking over hilly terrain, finding the perfect little grove, arranging the delicious spread, and tasting the delectable treats! Biscuits, potted lobster, jam, sardines...

MOLE: I've never been on a picnic.

TOAD: It's the only genuine occupation. I propose to devote the remainder of my life to it.

RAT: What about boats?

TOAD: (*shakes his head*) My boating days are over; I can only regret the wasted years that lie behind me.

Picnics are the future, my friends! Come, let's away!

MOLE: (*to RAT*) Should we join him?

RAT: Why not? At least we'll get to eat.

TOAD: This way!

(TOAD leads the way and they exit R. Beat. They enter R and march briskly across stage, TOAD whistling. They exit L. Beat. They enter L, TOAD still leading the way; RAT and MOLE are dragging a bit.)

RAT: Are we there yet?

TOAD: A tad further!

(He leads them off R. Beat. They enter R; TOAD is still perky but the other two are exhausted.)

MOLE: Can't we eat, Toad?

TOAD: Don't stop now! Another eight or ten miles and we'll find just the spot!

RAT: Eight or ten – Toad, we've been friends for a long time, but...

WEASEL: (*from offstage*) Poop-poop-poop-poop-poop!

MOLE: What's that sound?

RAT: It's coming from over there. Can you see it?

TOAD: Never fear! I shall fetch my trusty Toad telescope!

(He crosses away from MOLE and RAT, sets down the basket and digs through it, looking for the telescope.)

MOLE: It's getting closer.

RAT: Oh! I know what it is!

WEASEL: (*Louder, from offstage*) Poop-poop-poop-poop-poop!

MOLE: A monster?

RAT: No, it's a motorcar!

(Turns to audience)

RATTY JR, THE FOURTH: (*to audience*) Now, let me tell you about motorcars. You know what a car is like today, of course. They –

(TOAD JR, JR, JR, JR, JR abandons the picnic basket and runs over, breathlessly.)

TOAD JR, JR, JR, JR, JR: They sound like this – vroom – and when you honk the horn, it goes ANH ANH, and the brakes are like RRRRRRT!

RATTY JR, THE FOURTH: Thank you, Toad, but I was just getting ready to explain that –

TOAD: JR, JR, JR, JR, JR: I'll act it out!

(To audience)

Help me with the sound effects!

RATTY JR, THE FOURTH: (*to TOAD*) They don't need you to act it out, they know what a car sou –

(Quickly)

One-two-three-GO!

TOAD JR, JR, JR, JR, JR:

(TOAD JR, JR, JR, JR, JR exaggeratedly pantomimes driving, honking, then braking. MOLE JR, JR, JR, JR, JR helps with sound effects, encouraging the audience to do the same. RATTY JR, THE FOURTH sighs and ducks offstage to get the APPLAUSE sign which he re-enters holding. TOAD JR, JR, JR, JR, JR takes a bow, then another, then another, until BADGER JR, JR, JR, JR, JR grumpily enters, takes the sign from RATTY JR, THE FOURTH and hushes the audience.)

BADGER JR, JR, JR, JR, JR: Don't encourage him.

(Exits, pulling TOAD off with him)

RATTY JR, THE FOURTH: Now, in my great great grandfather's day, motorcars sounded quite different.

Instead of Vroom, they sounded like this: Poop-poop-poop-poop-poop!

(MOLE JR, JR, JR, JR, JR: giggles. RATTY JR, THE FOURTH looks at him questioningly.)

MOLE JR, JR, JR, JR, JR: You said poop.

RATTY JR, THE FOURTH: Let's show some respect for historical accuracy, shall we? So, they went poop-poop-poop-poop

(MOLE JR, JR, JR, JR, JR stifles a giggle; RATTY JR, THE FOURTH glares at him)

– and sometimes the engine would go like this – POP! – and when you honked the horn, it sounded like this: A-OOO-gah! A-OOO-gah!

(To audience)

Try that. A-OOO-gah! A-OOO-gah!

(WEASEL JR, JR, JR, JR, JR: sneaks onstage, toward a position behind RATTY JR, THE FOURTH.)

RATTY JR, THE FOURTH: Louder! A-OOO-gah! A-OOO-gah!

WEASEL: *(sudden and loud from behind RATTY JR, THE FOURTH)* A-OOO-GAH!!!

(RATTY JR, THE FOURTH: jumps, startled; BADGER JR, JR, JR, JR, JR sticks his head in and displays the BOO sign while WEASEL JR, JR, JR, JR, JR laughs evilly and scampers offstage.)

RATTY JR, THE FOURTH: Look, we've gotten off-track. Can we just go back to the scene? All right, we're picnicking, or at any rate, hiking –

(As he speaks, he and MOLE take their places; TOAD enters and takes his place)

– we hear a sound, Toad goes for his telescope, and Mole says –

MOLE: It's getting closer.

RAT: Oh! I know what it is!

WEASEL: *(Louder, from offstage)* Poop-poop-poop-poop-poop!

MOLE: A monster?

RAT: No, it's a motorcar! Badger has one.

TOAD: *(not listening)* Aha!

(He pulls a giant telescope from the basket, holds it to his eye, and crosses toward the other animals.)

I can't see it –

PERUSAL SCRIPT -- The Wind In The Willows a musical by Meg Phillips Crespy

RAT: Toad, it's a mo –

WEASEL: *(over TOAD)* Poop-poop-poop-poop-poop!

TOAD: I can't make it out –

(WEASEL enters, driving straight toward TOAD)

– it's too far away – I...

RAT: *(over WEASEL)* Look out!

TOAD: *(over RAT)* – can't see it – it's –

(WEASEL bowls the three animals over and exits the other side without looking back. TOAD, RAT and MOLE somersault/roll around briefly, then right themselves. MOLE and RAT stand; TOAD remains seated, staring straight ahead as if transfixed.)

MOLE: Was that Badger?

RAT: No, that was Weasel. Curse that creature – he just loves to cause mischief. Are you all right, Mole?

MOLE: I'm fine, but I'm not sure about Toad.

TOAD: *(quietly, to himself)* Poop-poop-poop...

RAT: Toad? Are you hurt? Speak to us!

TOAD: *(louder, to RAT)* Poop-poop-poop-poop!

MOLE: What's wrong, Toad?

RAT: Not again!

(To MOLE)

It's the beginning of a new craze. First boats, then picnics, now motorcars! Toad, before you get too excited, just remember that –

(BADGER enters, driving a motorcar at a slow pace.)

BADGER: Poop-poop-poop-poop-poop – POP!

(He jumps as if the car has backfired)

– poop-poop-poop

(He sees his friends and honks the horn)

A-OO-gah!

(Stops the car)

BADGER: *(climbing out of the car)* Hello, all.

(To MOLE)

You're new.

MOLE: I'm Mole. I'm very excited to meet you sir.

BADGER: Why is that?

MOLE: Because I've heard of you, from my time underground.

BADGER: Ah, a fellow dweller from beneath!

(Takes MOLE aside)

These creatures of open sky are all well and good, but there's nothing like a good burrow.

(During the following lines, TOAD circles BADGER's car, drooling, with RAT trying to dissuade him.)

MOLE: Exactly! Underground, you know just where you are. Nothing can happen to you, and nothing can get at you. You're entirely your own master!

BADGER: (*nods*) Precisely what I say! Up and out of doors is good enough to roam about in; but underground to come back to at last—that's my idea of...

(By this time, TOAD has disappeared offstage. RAT has been trying to get the other animals' attention. BADGER is annoyed.)

What is it, Rat? Say, where is Toad?

RAT: That's what I've been trying to tell you. He –

(TOAD enters in a car and crosses stage.)

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

(He exits and there is a loud crash. A wheel rolls onto stage. TOAD comes back on.)

I say! This is the best thing ever!

(He exits; the other animals exit different directions, shaking their heads. WEASEL enters.)

SONG #2: MOTORCAR

WEASEL:

WHO'S THAT MANIAC A-COMIN' DOWN THE ROAD?

WITH ALL THAT NOISE, WELL IT CAN'T BE ANYONE BUT TOAD.

HIS MOTORCAR, IT WON'T GO FAR! I'LL FIX THAT TOAD.

(TOAD drives across stage from L to R.)

TOAD: Poop-poop-poop-poop-poop-poop-poop-poop-poop-poop

(TOAD exits; a crash is heard off R.)

WEASEL:

IT'S CLEAR THE OTHER CREATURES ALL RUN IN FEAR

EVERY TIME THAT STUPID NINCOMPOOP COMES NEAR

BIG AND SMALL, HE SCARES THEM ALL – THAT MAKES ME CHEER!

(TOAD drives across stage from R to L.)

TOAD! TOAD! TOAD! TOAD!

TOAD: Poop! Poop! Poop! Poop!

(TOAD exits; a crash is heard off L.)

WEASEL:

THERE HE GOES – WHOOPS! I GUESS HE DIDN'T SEE THAT TREE...

A SIGHT SO FRIGHTFUL I THOUGHT THAT I WOULD NEVER SEE.

HE'S LOOKING BAD – THAT MAKES ME GLAD AS I CAN BE!

(End of song. If the audience starts to applaud, BADGER enters and lectures them for applauding the villain, then pushes WEASEL offstage. If not, WEASEL exits and BADGER enters.)

7 more pages to the end