

The Wind in the Willows

An excerpt adapted from the original by Kenneth Grahame

Mole's new friend, Rat, has a boat. Mole is keen to explore new places along the river.

"I wanted to ask you to take me to meet Mr Toad. I've heard so much about him," said Mole

"Why of course," said kind Rat, jumping to his feet. "Get the boat out and we'll paddle up there at once. It's never the wrong time to call on Toad. Early or late he's always the same fellow – friendly, glad to see you, sorry when you go!"

"He must be a very nice animal," said Mole, getting into the boat and taking the oars. Rat sat comfortably in the stern.


"He is the best of animals," replied Rat. "So simple, cheerful and affectionate. He might not be very clever – we can't all be geniuses, and maybe he is boastful and conceited. But he has got some great qualities, has Toady."

They rounded a bend in the river and saw a handsome old house, with well-kept lawns reaching down to the water's edge.


"There's Toad Hall," said Rat. "Toad is rather rich, you know. This is one of the nicest houses in these parts. But we never tell that to Toad."

They got out of the boat and went in search of Toad. They found him in a wicker garden chair with a thoughtful look on his face and a large map spread out on his knees.

"Hooray!" he cried, jumping up when he saw them. "I was just going to send a boat down the river for you, Ratty, with strict orders that you came up here at once. Come inside!"



The *stern* is the back of a boat.



To be *conceited* is to be self-centred.

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Mole sat down and made a polite remark about Toad's "delightful home".

"Finest house on the whole river," cried Toad loudly. "Or anywhere else, for that matter," he added.

Rat nudged Mole. Unfortunately, Toad saw him do it and turned red. Then he laughed. "All right, Ratty," he said. "It's just how I am, you know. And it's not such a very bad house, is it? Now, look here, you've got to help me. It's very important!"

