



**Fort Wayne Youtheatre**

# Elements of a Production

**SET**— the scenery pieces that form the area in which the performers act out the play. Sometimes scenery is very realistic and complete, making the audience think they are inside a real house, for example. Other times the scenery is quite fanciful or limited. What different sets can you name in *Treasure Island*? What did the actors do to change settings? What time and place does it look like?

**LIGHTS**— the lighting instruments that help to create the right atmosphere on the stage. Lights direct the attention of the audience to specific areas of the stage or to a specific performer. The lights may be different colors to add special effects such as nighttime or a storm. How do the lights in *Treasure Island* show the difference between being on the ship or in a jungle?

**PROPS (PROPERTIES)**- the objects performers carry to help them act out the story. Look for important props like magic wands, books and gold coins. What kind of props does Long John Silver use?

**MAKE-UP**— the cosmetic bases, blushes, lipsticks, mascara and eye liners which help the performer physically become the character he/she is playing. Make-up is also used so that the performer's facial features can be seen clearly under the bright stage lights and from a distance.

**COSTUMES**— the clothing the performers wear. Depending on the story being acted out, this clothing may be what a character of the time would have actually worn. It may also be very exaggerated or old fashioned in the case of a fairy tale like *Treasure Island*. Costumes help the audience know what a character is like or where and when he/she lived. Are the costumes in *Treasure Island* drab or colorful? How do the costumes tell you about the characters and their story?



Above are pictures from Youtheatre productions of *Willy Wonka* and *Lord of the Flies*.

# Setting the Stage: Synopsis

## Mole meets Rat

With the arrival of spring and fine weather outside, the good-natured Mole loses patience with spring cleaning. He flees his underground home, emerging to take in the air and ends up at the river, which he has never seen before. Here he meets The Wolf and Weasels who try to intimidate him. Rat who at this time of year spends all his days in, on and close by the river. Rat takes Mole for a ride in his rowing boat. They get along well and spend many more days boating, with “Ratty” teaching Mole the ways of the river, with the two friends living together in Ratty's riverside home.

## Toad

One summer day, Rat and Mole disembark near the grand Toad Hall and pay a visit to Toad. Toad is rich, jovial, friendly and kind-hearted, but aimless and conceited; he regularly becomes obsessed with current fads, only to abandon them abruptly. Having recently given up boating, Toad's current craze is his horse-drawn caravan. He persuades the reluctant Rat and willing Mole to join him on a trip. Toad soon tires of the realities of camp life, and sleeps in the following day to avoid chores. Later that day, a passing motor car scares the horse, causing the caravan to overturn into a ditch. Rat threatens to have the law on the car driver, while Mole calms the horse, but Toad's craze for caravan travel is immediately replaced by an obsession with motorcars.

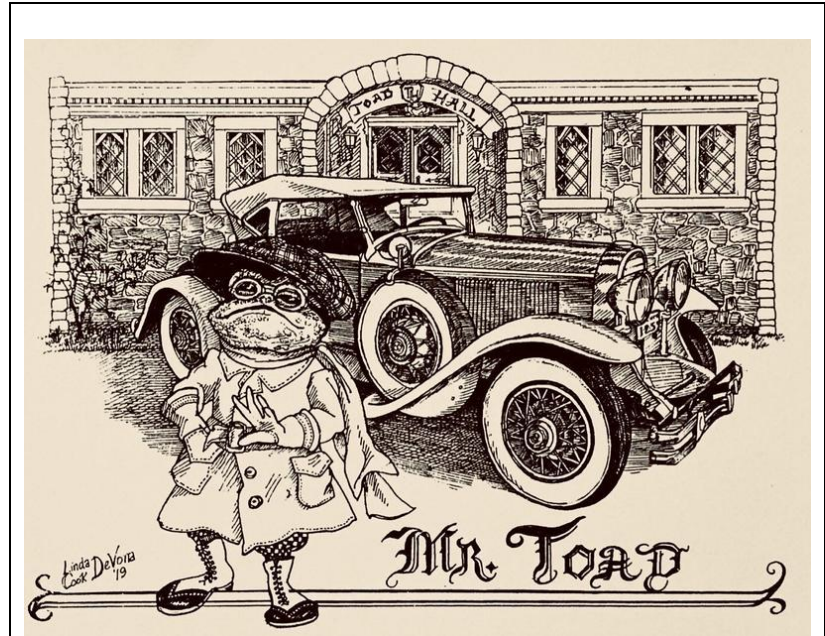
## The Wild Wood and Badger

Mole wants to meet the respected but elusive Badger, who lives deep in the Wild Wood, but Rat – knowing that Badger does not appreciate visits – tells Mole to be patient and wait for Badger to pay them a visit himself. Nevertheless, on a snowy winter's day, while the seasonally somnolent Rat dozes, Mole impulsively goes to the Wild Wood to explore, hoping to meet Badger. He gets lost in the woods, sees many "evil faces" among the wood's less-welcoming denizens like the Fox and Weasels.

Rat wakes to find Mole gone. Rat goes in search of Mole and once again saves him from the Fox and Weasels. Attempting to find their way home it begins to snow and, Rat and Mole quite literally stumble across Badger's home – Mole barks his shin on the boot scraper on Badger's doorstep. Badger – en route to bed in his dressing-gown and slippers – nonetheless warmly welcomes Rat and Mole to his large and cozy underground home, providing them with hot food, dry clothes.

## Toad and motorcars

Badger learns from his visitors that Toad has crashed seven cars, has been in hospital three times, and has spent a fortune on fines. Though nothing can be done at the moment (it being winter), they resolve that when the time is right they will make a plan to protect Toad from himself; they are, after all, his friends, and are worried about his well-being.





With the arrival of spring, Badger visits Mole and Rat to take action over Toad's self-destructive obsession. The three of them go to Toad Hall, and Badger tries talking Toad out of his behavior, to no avail. They put Toad under house arrest with themselves as the guards, until Toad changes his mind. Feigning illness, Toad bamboozles the Water Rat (who is on guard duty at the time) and escapes.

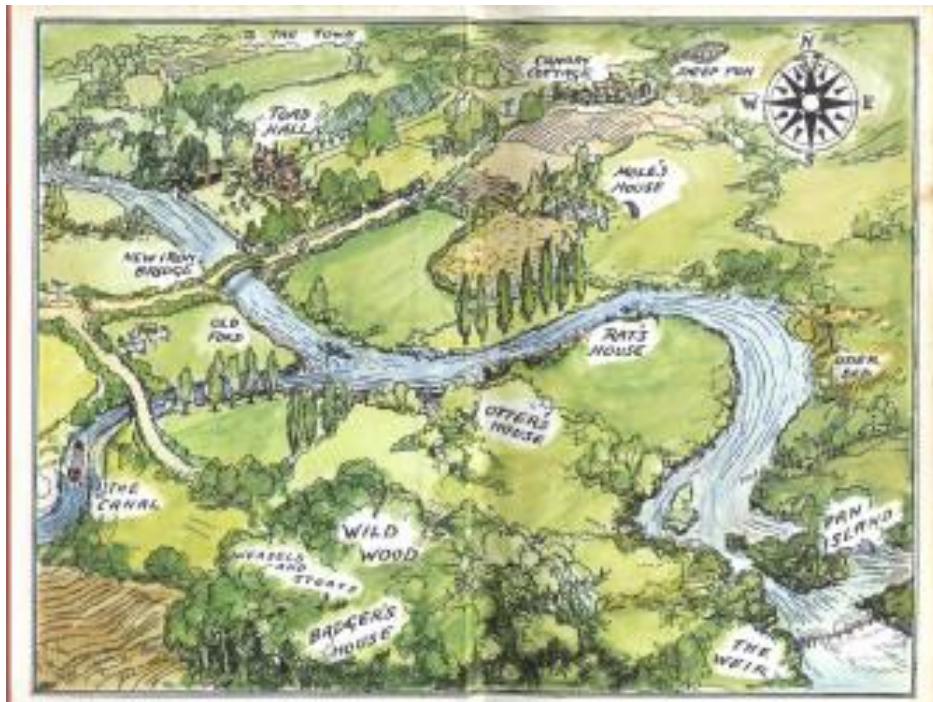
Badger and Mole are cross with Rat for his gullibility, but draw comfort because they need no longer waste their summer guarding Toad. However, Badger and Mole continue to live in Toad Hall in the hope that Toad may return. Meanwhile, Toad meets the weasels and Fox and they convince him to steal a car. Toad crashes the car and is captured by the police. He is then taken to court and sentenced to 20 years in jail.

### **Toad escapes from prison**

In prison, Toad gains the sympathy of the gaoler's daughter, who helps him to escape disguised as a washerwoman. Though free again, Toad is without money or possessions other than the clothes upon his back. He manages to board a railway engine manned by a sympathetic driver, which is then pursued by a special train loaded with policemen, detectives and prison warders. Toad jumps from the train and, still disguised as a washerwoman, comes across a barge. The barge's owner offers him a lift in exchange for Toad's services as a washerwoman. After botching the wash, Toad gets into a fight with the barge-woman, who tosses him into the canal. Toad accidentally falls into a river, which carries him by sheer chance to the house of Rat.

### **Recapture of Toad Hall**

Toad now hears from Rat that Toad Hall has been taken over by the Fox and weasels from the Wild Wood, who have driven out Mole and Badger. Although upset at the loss of his house, Toad realizes what good friends he has and how badly he has behaved. The four friends sneak back into Toad Hall and confront the Fox and weasels. They are outnumbered but willing to fight. Having heard about the plan of the four friends, Otter, Horse and the Hedgehog children go to Toad Hall, with other friends of Toad, to help Toad get back his home. The Fox and Weasels, seeing that they are outnumbered agree to leave. Having driven away the intruders, Toad holds a banquet to mark his return, during which (for a change) he behaves both quietly and humbly. He makes up for his earlier excesses by seeking out and compensating those he has wronged, and the four friends live out their lives happily ever after.



## About the Author



**Kenneth Grahame**, (born March 8, 1859, Edinburgh, Scotland—died July 6, 1932, Pangbourne, Berkshire, England), British author of *The Wind in the Willows* (1908), one of the classics of children’s literature. Its animal characters—principally Mole, Rat, Badger, and Toad—combine captivating human traits with authentic animal habits. It is a story that adults have enjoyed as much as children.

Orphaned at an early age, Grahame went to live with his grandmother in England and attended St. Edward’s School, Oxford. Money was lacking for him to go to the university. Hence, his family guided him into a career at the Bank of England, with which he stayed until ill health compelled him to retire in 1908. Meanwhile, he contributed articles to such journals as the *St. James Gazette* and the *Yellow Book* and published collections of sketches, stories, and essays—*Pagan Papers* (1893), *The Golden Age* (1895), and *Dream Days* (1898)—all of which reveal his sensitive understanding of childhood.

*The Wind in the Willows* was dramatized by A.A. Milne as *Toad of Toad Hall* (1929) and became a frequently performed Christmas play.

## Recommended Reading

Here are some recommendations for further reading.

- Peter Pan, by J. M. Barrie
- Gulliver's Travels, by Jonathan Swift.
- Treasure Island, by Robert Louis Stevenson.
- Lord of the Rings, by J.R.R. Tolkien.
- Watership Down, by Richard Adams
- Alice In Wonderland, by Louis Carrol

# It's all about character

## Characters in Wind in the Willows

### Mole

Mole is a sensible animal, yet generous and extremely loyal to his friends. He is closest of all to Rat, the animal who teaches him the value of exploration after he leaves his home in the first chapter. Since Mole is an underground animal by nature, his journey into the upper world near the river poses the novel's first main conflict. A 'younger' character than Rat or Badger, Mole serves as our first lens into the story, as he slowly matures from a frightened animal into a self-reliant, brave and clever companion.

### Rat

The river animal Rat is kind, sociable, and accommodating. He has a strong sense of manners and responsibility, so he wants to make sure everyone around him feels comfortable and included. Rat prefers to stay near the water because it is his home, but he also enjoys traveling with his friends. Though loyal to all his friends, Rat cares most for Mole, whom he invites to live with him and to whom he acts as mentor. In this way, he is an 'older' animal than Mole is.

### Toad

Toad is the flightiest and pettiest character in *The Wind in the Willows*, due to a combination of immaturity and unrestrained wealth. He represents the British upper class, as he is an aristocrat living in his large inherited estate, Toad Hall, and has a snooty attitude towards those of lower class. The 'youngest' of the animals, he is quick to pick up and then dismiss expensive hobbies, most notably with motorcars. And yet Toad is often described by critics as the novel's most complex character, partly because he also cares deeply for his friends. They in turn worry about his habits, and eventually help him embody a more mature and grounded attitude towards life.

### Badger

The 'oldest' of the animals, Badger is a stoic and solitary character who lives in the Wild Wood. While he is friendly and hospitable, caring deeply for his friends, he also eschews proper etiquette as a result of his removed, underground life. Because of both his seriousness and his gruffness, he is the one who works hardest to reform Toad's habits.

### Otter

Though Otter appears in only a few chapters of *The Wind in the Willows*, he is a part of the central friends group. He is quick and bright, and gains the respect of other animals by always being on hand to help when needed.



Who is your favorite character in Wind in the Willows? Why? Chances are they are your favorite because of their character traits.

Character traits are made up of **physical traits** and **personality traits**. Think about the character of Mole from the play Wind in the Willows. Use this graphic organizer to record both physical (outside) and personality (inside) traits for the character. List at least five physical traits outside Mole or Toad, and at least five personality traits inside Mole or Toad.

## CHARACTER TRAITS

Agonized, alluring, amicable, anxious, apologetic, arrogant, avid, awestruck, bashful, benevolent, blissful, bored, brave, candid, calm, carefree, cautious, confident, concerned, considerate, courageous, cruel, cunning, curious, curt, defeated, demure, depressed, determined, devious, disappointed, disapproving, disbelieving, disdainful, disgusted, distracted, eager, ecstatic, enraged, envious, exhausted, flustered, focused, frank

Frightened, frustrated, gallant, gentle, gleeful, glum, grieving, guilty, happy, harmless, haughty, hilarious, honest, honorable, humble, hurt, hysterical, idiotic, impish, indifferent, innocent, inquisitive, interested, jaded, jealous, joyful, jubilant, kind, livid, lonely, meditative, melancholy, mischievous, miserable, miserly, modest, negative, nervous, nosey, obnoxious, obstinate, odd, opinionated, optimistic

Pained, paranoid, perplexed, pessimistic, petty, playful, prudish, puzzled, radical, regretful, relieved, sad, satisfied, selfish, selfless, serious, sheepish, shocked, shy, skeptical, sly, smug, spiteful, surly, surprised, suspicious, sympathetic, terrified, thoughtful, timid, trustworthy, undecided, unpleasant, unwilling, wary, willing, withdrawn, wretched, zealous

**Think About It:** A person's behavior and interests might say a lot about them – what ways did Toad behave that tell about Toad's character?

**Essay Question:** What does your behavior and interests say about you? If someone asked you about the things you collect or love to do, what would you say? What would they think about you based on your behavior or hobbies?

## Sequence a story

1. Sequence the events from the story by numbering them.
2. Fold a piece of white paper like an accordion, so that it has six sections.
3. Number each section as a “page” in your book (1 - 6).
4. Illustrate the events that you put in sequence in your book.
5. Create a cover for your book.

### COMPARING THE BOOK AND THE PLAY.

Read *Wind in the Willows*. Compare the book and the play. In what way are the characters, setting and plot alike? In what way are they different?

\_\_\_ *Fox and the Weasels leave Toad Hall.*

\_\_\_ *Toad goes to Jail.*

\_\_\_ *Mole gets lost in the woods.*

\_\_\_ *Badger yells at Mole for letting Toad escape.*

\_\_\_ *The Jailer's Daughter brings Toad some food.*

\_\_\_ *Otter saves the basket of food.*





## Quotes

These quotes are from *Wind in the Willows*. Read each one. Beside each, write what you think the quote means. Discuss as a group.

WHETHER YOU GET AWAY, OR  
WHETHER YOU DON'T; WHETHER  
YOU ARRIVE AT YOUR  
DESTINATION OR WHETHER YOU  
REACH SOMEWHERE ELSE, OR  
WHETHER YOU NEVER GET  
ANYWHERE AT ALL. IT'S ABOUT  
ENJOYING THE TIME.

IT'S GOING TO BE TEDIOUS. I'VE  
NEVER SEEN YOU SO  
DETERMINED TOAD.

TOAD IS OUR FRIEND. AND  
YOU STAND BY YOUR  
FRIENDS AND HELP THEM BE  
THE BEST THEY CAN BE.

YOU DISRESPECTFUL  
AND CHEEKY TOAD!

### Think About It

*Wind in the Willows* was written in 1908. Different words and sayings were popular at that time. What is something we say today that would have not made sense in the time *Wind in the Willows* was written?

### Thinking about Theme

In the play, *Wind in the Willows*, Toad's friends treat him with kindness and stand by him to help him become a better person. When did you treat someone kindly to help them? Explain.

