

# Kenneth graham's the wind in the willows essay

[Life](#), [Friendship](#)



British author Kenneth Grahame's novel, *The Wind in the Willows* (1908), is considered as "one of the best-loved children's books of all time" (Powells, n. d. , n.

pag. ). Based on the stories that Grahame told his young son, Alastair, the novel followed the adventures of four animals living in the River Bank - Mole, Rat, Toad and Badger ([http://www. powells.](http://www. powells. com)

com, n. d. , n. pag.

). a. Badger (also known as Mr. Badger) - Although he was wise and was both respected and feared by all the animals who knew him, Badger is always ready to lend a hand to those in need (<http://www. nswers. com>, n.

d. , n. pag. ). He willingly accommodated Rat and Mole when they got lost in the Wild Wood, giving them food and dry clothes and allowing them to spend the night at his house. Badger also patiently taught Toad to use his automobiles responsibly, despite the latter's stubbornness.

He oversaw Toad Hall during Toad's imprisonment and helped Toad reclaim it from the Weasels and the Stoats. b. Mole - Mole is genuinely interested in people, be it old friends or new acquaintances (<http://www. answers. com>, n. d.

, n. pag. . Mole happily greeted Toad upon the latter's return from his "adventures," in sharp contrast to Badger's more reserved welcome (<http://www.>

answers. com, n. d. , n. pag. ). Mole was also excited about things as he was about people - he swooned at the sight of Rat's new boat (<http://www.>

answers. com, n. d. , n. pag. ).

c. Rat (also known as River Rat or Water Rat) - Rat is a very generous friend. He welcomed Mole into the River Bank with a picnic and a ride on his new boat and even allowed him to stay in his house frequently. When Rat stayed in Mole's house for a night, he gave one of the field mice money to buy a good supper for everyone in Mole's house.

Rat also set out looking for Mole when the latter decided to venture into the Wild Wood alone to meet Badger, with the two of them ending up getting lost. After Toad escaped prison, Rat helped him evade rearrest by lending him his clothes. d. Toad - Having inherited a large fortune, Toad assumed a luxurious lifestyle.

He spends his time entertaining his friends and pursuing whatever hobby that catches his interest. Toad is also very arrogant and craves to be the center of attention - he often aspires to deliver speeches and sing songs pertaining to his feats in front of an impressed audience. There was an instance in the novel where Toad actually pretended to do so shortly before staging a party that celebrated the recover of Toad Hall (<http://www.> answers. com, n.

d. , n. pag. ). e. The Stoats and the Weasels - Even if they were only minor characters in the novel, political interpretations of The Wind in the Willows argued that they represented the proletariat (<http://www.>

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antiessays. com, n. .

, n. pag. ). They served as the antitheses of Toad, who symbolized the leisure-loving upper classes (<http://www. antiessays. com>, n. d. , n.

pag. ). The political explanations of the novel even went on to conclude that the Stoats and Weasel's takeover of Toad Hall was an allegory of the growing animosity between the rich and the poor (<http://www. antiessays. com>, n. d.

, n. pag. ). These observations were probably derived from the fact that The Wind in the Willows was written during a period of rapid industrialization across Europe (<http://www. answers. com>, n.

d. , n. pag. ). Some of the themes that Grahame explored in the novel are the following: a. Hospitality - Hospitality is second nature to most of the novel's characters, usually in the form of one animal providing food, clothing and or shelter to another ([com, n. d. , n.](http://www. answers.</a></p></div><div data-bbox=)

pag. ). b. Forgiveness - The characters in the novel were also very forgiving, regardless of the gravity of the transgression. Toad was always forgiven for his self-conceit and recklessness.

Toad, in turn, forgave the Weasels for seizing his home by employing one of them who returned to Toad Hall looking for work (<http://www. nswers. com>, n. d.

, n. pag. ). c.

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Humility - This theme focused on Toad ([http://www. answers. com](http://www.answers.com), n. d.

, n. pag. ). Toad used to be very haughty, until a succession of personal misfortunes humbled him by making him reliant on the kindness of strangers ([http://www. answers. com](http://www. answers.com), n. d.

, n. pag. ).

Grahame also promoted the following English values in *The Wind in the Willows*: a. Fortitude - In the face of problems, Rat, Toad, Mole and Badger never gave up on themselves and on each other. Rat bravely searched for Mole in the Wild Wood, despite the late hour and his unfamiliarity with the location. When the Stoats and the Weasels took over Toad Hall, the four of them immediately set out to recapture it. These were in sharp contrast to the cowardice displayed by Rat when he allowed himself to be persuaded by Mole to remain in the familiar environment of River Bank instead of joining Sea Rat on his journey.

b. Good Humor - Grahame promoted this value through Rat and Mole. They were carefree individuals who enjoyed boating and having riverside picnics. This was the opposite of Toad's arrogance and materialism and Badger's tendency to isolate himself from others. The nature of the novel's conflict is the fear of the unknown (<http://wpl. lib. in. us>, 1997, n. pag. ).

This holds true for the main characters. Mole, for instance, left his underground home because he was tired of spring cleaning, only to return after he encountered its smell while on a journey with Rat (<http://wpl. lib. in. us>, 1997, n. pag. ).

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in. us, 1997, n. pag.

). Meanwhile, Rat's frightening experience in the Wild Wood had a parallelism to the supposed cruelty of the industrialized world (<http://wpl.lib.in>.

us, 1997, n. pag. ). Badger was faced with the dilemma of whether he will choose friendship over isolation, while Toad, through his fascination for automobiles, was forced to choose between convention and modernity (<http://wpl.lib.in>. us, 1997, n. pag.

). The novel's setting was intended to induce the classical predicament of city versus country. The riverside was a quiet and bucolic place where everyone knew one another. This was a complete opposite of the city, stereotypically known as both an industrialized enclave and a hotbed of vice. This desire to promote the status quo was very evident in the chapter entitled Piper at the Gates of Dawn - the title of the chapter itself suggested inevitable transition or change. Rat and Mole's experiences were akin to the romanticized picture of English country life. Although its advocates are confident that it will not be swept away by modernization, they know deep inside themselves that their preference will soon be rendered obsolete.

Hence, Rat's words to Mole: " Afraid of Him? O Never, never! And Yet- And Yet- O, Mole I am afraid. "