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Family Plays

KENNETH GRAHAME'S

**THE WIND IN
THE WILLOWS**

Adapted by
R. Eugene Jackson

THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS

Comedy. Adapted by R. Eugene Jackson. From Kenneth Grahame's story.

Cast: 1m., 1w., 11 extras. The story begins with the rich and lazy but laughably lovable Toad and his latest obsession of sports cars—the faster the better. He buys car after car, but unfortunately he is as reckless as he is wealthy, and his carelessness eventually lands his cars in the scrap heap and Toad in a small-time jail with a comically caricatured small-town sheriff and his dim-witted deputy. The plot thickens when Toad breaks out of jail to save his family home which was taken over by a band of weasel-thugs from the wild wood while Toad was sitting in jail. With the help of Badger, Water Rat and Mole, Toad dresses in drag and regains Toad Hall, delivers the band of weasels to the sheriff, and earns his freedom. *This delightful two-act tale has a cast of 13 or more players, depending on the size of the weasel band and the sheriff's posse. Set: in and around the wild wood. Time: the present. Approximate running time: 70 to 80 minutes. Code: WF4.*

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The Wind in the Willows

Kenneth Grahame's

The Wind in the Willows

dramatized by

R. EUGENE JACKSON

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311 Washington St., Woodstock, IL 60098

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(THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS)

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

TOAD
 BADGER
 MOLE
 WATER RAT
 WEASELS
 CHIEF WEASEL
 SERGEANT WEASEL
 SNEEZEL WEASEL
 GREASEL WEASEL
 CECIL WEASEL
 OTHER WEASELS, as desired
 SPORTS CAR DRIVER
 SHERIFF
 JIMMY RAY [Deputy]
 SARIE, the Sheriff's daughter
 POSSE

Time. The present

Place. In and around the Wild Wood

NOTE: Even though the original book was written in 1908, this play takes place in the present. Interestingly, Grahame mixed animals and people together in his story as if they were all human. Thus, the Sports Car Driver, the Sheriff, Jimmy Ray, Sarie, and the posse members are all humans, while the other characters are animals.

About the Play

R. Eugene's Jackson's dramatization of Kenneth Grahame's classic tale, *The Wind in the Willows*, will enchant your audiences and delight your actors. This skillful retelling of the beloved favorite retains all of the charm and delicacy of the Grahame novel, but now you can relive the adventure in visual, dramatic detail as Toad, Badger, the weasels, and all of the others spring to life on your stage.

The story begins with the rich and lazy but laughably lovable Toad and his latest obsession: sports cars, the faster the better. He buys car after car, but unfortunately he is as reckless as he is wealthy, and his carelessness eventually lands his cars in the scrap heap and Toad in a small-time jail with a comically caricatured small-town sheriff and his dim-witted deputy.

The plot thickens when Toad breaks out of jail to save his family home, which was taken over by a band of weasel-thugs from the Wild Wood while Toad was sitting in jail. With the help of Badger, Water Rat, and Mole, Toad dresses in drag and regains Toad Hall, delivers the band of weasels to the sheriff, and earns his freedom.

This delightful 2-act tale has a cast of 13 or more players, depending on the size of the weasel band and the sheriff's posse. Playing time is approximately 70 minutes.

PROPERTIES

Act I, Scene 1

ON STAGE—An A-frame ladder; an outdoor lounging chair; a small table next to it; on the small table is a strawberry soda, a bowl of popcorn, and a modern duster; a paint can and paint brush on the ground; a twig to hide behind down left for Cecil; a two-person boat in the river [*cutout, boat frame on casters, or other*], two oars in the boat; a sign near the river that says, “Private; No Landing Allowed”

JUST INSIDE THE HOUSE—Two bags or sacks or suitcases, several big, open maps, two blankets, an empty picnic basket, a fake canary in a cage

TOAD—A thick wad of [*fake*] dollar bills, a damaged steering wheel

WOMAN DRIVER—A red sports car [*of whatever design*]

WEASELS—Various weapons such as clubs

SNEEZEL—A big handkerchief

GREASEL—A big, greasy handkerchief

CHIEF—a riding crop [*optional*]

Act I, Scene 2

ON STAGE—The same chair and table; strawberry soda on the table; the ladder and paint can and duster are gone; same boat and oars as seen in Act I-1

MOLE—Children’s water wings

TOAD—A twisted steering wheel, a large house key, the same wad of [*fake*] dollar bills

BADGER—An identical large house key

WOMAN DRIVER—The same red sports car

SHERIFF—A police cruiser [*of whatever design*], handcuffs, a big badge, gun in holster [*not used*], police whistle

JIMMY RAY—Handcuffs, a big badge, billy club, police whistle

Act II, Scene 1

ON STAGE—Jail cell with a small cot; at Left, a small table with cell keys on it; a chair

JIMMY RAY—a police whistle, earphones connected to portable radio, a comic book

SHERIFF—A clipboard, police whistle

SARIE—A clothes basket containing, among other things, a dress and a scarf for Toad and items to tie her up with

Act II, Scene 2

TOAD—The clothes basket containing lots of miscellaneous clothing items

JIMMY RAY—Police whistle

SHERIFF—Police whistle

POSSE MEMBERS—Crude weapons, such as a butterfly net, a broom, a rake, a toilet bowl brush, a rolling pin, etc.

Act II, Scene 3

ON STAGE—The same lounging chair, table as Act One, Scene One

CHIEF—An empty strawberry soda can, an empty popcorn bag, his riding crop

TOAD—The same boat with two oars; the clothes basket with shirts and pants all tied together in this order: silk shirt [*a fancy shirt*], pants, skirt, tuxedo jacket; many other items attached to those so that TOAD can encircle the WEASELS twice with them

SHERIFF—Handcuffs, police whistle

JIMMY RAY—Handcuffs, police whistle

POSSE—Their weapons

Sound

A bicycle horn [found in bicycle shops] for the “toot toots”

Most large record stores have sound effects compact discs that contain car sounds and car crashes

Fast-moving music for the chase scene

Scene-change music to mask the noises of the changes of scenery

Original Cast

This play was originally produced at the University of South Alabama with the following cast and crew

Director	R. Eugene Jackson
Costume Design	Rebecca F. Britton
Scene and Light Design	Lyle B. Miller
Original Music	J. Mitchell Lee

Characters

Toad	Paul Thomas
Badger	Page Harder
Mole	Jamie Rohde
Water Rat	Cayce Duncan
Weasels:	
Chief Weasel	J. Mitchell Lee
Sergeant Weasel	Lisa Barnes
Sneezel Weasel	Billy Trufant
Greasel Weasel	Joan Ashley Peoples
Cecil Weasel	Jennifer Inez Pace
Sports Car Driver	Lydia Courtney Hughes
Sheriff	Tanis Harcey
Jimmy Ray (Deputy)	Mason Merrill
Sarie, the Sheriff's daughter	Katie Walker
Posse	Raili Ruul, Tina L. Thompkins, Kelly Comeaux, Lydia Courtney Hughs

Technicians

Stage Manager	Molly Holmes
Assistant Stage Manager	Katie Barron
Costume Construction	Lisa Barnes, Margaret Broach, Sondra Hancock, Tanis Harcey, Lydia Hughes, Phoebe Minardi, Laura Nealy, Paul Thomas, & Costume Class
Wardrobe	Laura Nealy, Margaret Broach
Scenery Construction	Scott Baker, Rhonda Bright, Cayce Duncan, Bem Hemphill, Molly Holmes, Mason Merrill, Evan Tanner, Billy Trufant, Jonathon Heflin, Katie Barron
Light Operator	Katie Barron
Sound	Scott Baker

The Wind in the Willows

ACT I

[SCENE: The present; the exterior of TOAD's extravagant home, Toad Hall, at right. It is "a handsome, dignified old house of mellowed red brick, with well-kept lawns reaching down to the water's edge." In front of it are a lounging chair and a small table with a tray holding a bowl of popcorn and a can of strawberry soda. There is also an A-frame ladder and a can of paint and brush on the ground. At Stage Left is the river. There is a sign on the river bank that says, "Private. No Landing Allowed." It is a warm, early spring day.]

[AT RISE. TOAD enters from the house dressed in a modern dapper manner. He wears an apron over his clothes and carries a modern duster. His disposition is sunny and pleasant. In general, he is pleasantly pompous.]

TOAD. *[Smiling and singing in a screeching voice, "La la la la"]* Spring dusting. *[He takes one swipe with the duster at his chair. Then he tosses the duster down and picks up the paint brush.]* Spring painting. *[He climbs up the ladder and takes one swipe on his house with the paint brush. Then he climbs back down the ladder and tosses the brush aside.]* Spring resting. *[He picks up his drink and popcorn and plops into the chair. He sighs.]* Ahhh. The life of Toad. My favorite chair, a strawberry soda, and tons of popcorn. Mmmm. *[He tosses a handful of popcorn into the air and attempts to catch some of it in his mouth.]*

BADGER. *[He enters from Up Right behind the house. He is dressed in a suit, including a vest and a bow tie. He is older and wiser and carries a cane.]* Well, Toady, my old friend.

TOAD. Badger. What a pleasant surprise. *[He does not rise.]*

BADGER. What are you doing?

TOAD. My spring cleaning.

BADGER. From your chair?

TOAD. Actually, I've done all the spring cleaning I can stand for one spring.

BADGER. I see. *[He indicates the duster.]* Oh, you dusted.

TOAD. Well, not exactly.

BADGER. I see. *[He indicates the paint brush.]* Oh, you painted.

TOAD. Well, not exactly.

BADGER. What exactly have you done so far?

TOAD. So far? Well, let's see. I put on my apron.

BADGER. Yes?

TOAD. I got out all my supplies.

BADGER. Yes?

TOAD. And, after that, I was so exhausted, I had to take a break.

BADGER. And what do you intend to do after you've taken your break?

TOAD. Oh, I don't know. Maybe take another break.

BADGER. Toad!

TOAD. What?

BADGER. Toad Hall is a magnificent home, but it really does need some repairs.

TOAD. And I will do them—as soon as I finish resting. *[He tosses some more popcorn into the air and attempts to catch some of it in his mouth.]*

BADGER. Most animals would love to own a place like this.

TOAD. Well, they can't have it. My father built it and left it to me.

BADGER. I know. But almost anyone would take better care of it than you do.

TOAD. You're right, Badger. *[He stands determinedly.]* I'm going inside right now. *[He goes to the door.]*

BADGER. To finish your spring cleaning?

TOAD. *[He stops and turns back.]* No. To get some more strawberry soda.

BADGER. But what about your cleaning?

TOAD. Later. First, I want to tell you about my latest adventure.

BADGER. You tell too many stories, Toad. No more—please.

TOAD. *[He crosses behind Badger.]* But you haven't heard this one. You see, I was sailing down the river when... *[BADGER plugs his ears with his fingers as TOAD pushes him into the house.]*

[After a brief pause, RAT rows a boat on the river at left. MOLE is a passenger in the back of the boat. NOTE: The boat can be a simple profile cut-out painted to look like a boat, or it can be a three-dimensional piece on casters with no floor in it. As the actors push the boat with their feet, it appears to be floating along.]

MOLE. So, Ratty, what did you call this? *[S/he indicates the river.]*

RAT. It's a river. You've never seen one before?

MOLE. Moles live underground most of the time. We don't go out in boats like this.

RAT. What? Then what do you do?

MOLE. Dig holes.

RAT. And after that?

MOLE. Dig more holes.

RAT. You don't know what you're missing, Mole. Believe me, there is nothing quite like the life of a River Rat. Whether I'm *in* the river or *on* the river, it doesn't matter. I'm enjoying life. Whether I reach my destination or not, I'm always busy. Doing nothing in particular. And, when I finish doing that, there's always something else to do.

MOLE. It sounds very exciting.

RAT. It's my world. What it hasn't got isn't worth having, and what it doesn't know isn't worth knowing.

MOLE. *[S/he points up right.]* And what's up that way?

RAT. The Wild Wood. We don't usually go in there.

MOLE. Why not?

RAT. Because of the weasels. They're slimy things—and they'll attack you and take everything you have. But old Badger lives in there too.

MOLE. Do they bother him?

RAT. Nobody bothers Badger. He can take care of himself.

MOLE. *[S/he points to Toad Hall.]* And whose house is that?

RAT. That's Toad Hall, home of Toad. He's very rich and unpredictable. You never know what he's going to do next. Shall we drop by for a visit?

MOLE. We can't. There's a sign that says, "Private. No Landing Allowed."

RAT. That doesn't mean us.

MOLE. It doesn't?

RAT. Toady may be boastful and conceited, but he's also my friend.

MOLE. Oh, good. Then let's do stop. I'll row. *[S/he grasps one of the oars.]*

RAT. *[S/he pulls it back.]* No. You don't know how to row yet.

MOLE. *[Stands and pulls it toward him/herself]* I'll learn.

RAT. *[Pulls it back]* Sit down. You're rocking the boat.

MOLE. *[Pulls it back]* I want to row.

RAT. *[Pulls it back]* You'll turn us over.

MOLE. *[Pulls it back]* No, I won't.

RAT. *[Pulls it back]* Yes, you will!

[They play tug-of-war over it. Finally, they scream and try to keep their balance, but they fall out of the boat on its upstage side—away from the audience—and into the "water."]

MOLE. Yeeei!!!

RAT. *[As they peep over the edge of the boat]* I told you not to do that!

MOLE. Help! I can't swim, I can't swim! *[S/he gurgles and goes "underwater."]*

RAT. Moley! Moley, where are you?

MOLE. *[As his/her head comes above the boat, s/he chokes.]* Down here.

RAT. Oh!

MOLE. *[Frightened]* And I think I'm going down again! *[S/he gurgles and sinks again]*

RAT. *[Reaches for him/her]* Don't worry. I've got you. Here. Come on.

MOLE. *[Visible again, s/he spits water.]* I'm drowning, I'm drowning.

RAT. I'll save you. I'll save you. *[S/he drags MOLE up onto the dry land.]* Here. I'll give you artificial respiration.

[S/he pumps MOLE's stomach three times. Each time, MOLE's legs jump into the air. Then s/he gasps for breath.]

RAT. Moley? Are you all right? *[No answer]* Moley?

MOLE. What?

RAT. Are you still alive?

MOLE. No. I'm totally drowned.

RAT. You're not drowned.

MOLE. Well, I'm all wet.

RAT. Wet is good. We River Rats love to swim and cavort in the river.

MOLE. Well, we moles prefer to cavort on solid earth.

RAT. No need to worry. You're safe now.

MOLE. I'm safe?

RAT. Absolutely nothing can happen to you now.

[TOAD enters from his house with scraps of carpet or other junk and, without seeing them, tosses it over Mole and Rat.]

MOLE. Aeeiii! Something's attacked me!

RAT. What? What is this? Get...get this stuff off me!

MOLE. It's got me! It's got me! I'm gone. *[S/he falls silent.]*

RAT. *[Pushes the carpet away]* What on earth? Toad? What are you doing?

TOAD. Spring cleaning. How did you get under there?

RAT. I didn't. You threw it on top of me.

TOAD. Now why would I do that?

RAT. Help me find Mole. [*S/he pushes the carpet back and finds him/her.*] Mole? Moley? Moley, say something.

MOLE. Okay. Heeeeeelp!

RAT. You don't need help. You're fine.

MOLE. I am? I don't feel fine. [*S/he checks him/herself out.*]

RAT. You're fine.

MOLE. Oh. Then where am I?

RAT. This is Toad Hall. [*He indicates the house.*]

MOLE. [*To Toad*] Oh. Hi, Mr. Hall.

TOAD. No. I'm Toad. This is Toad Hall. [*He indicates the house.*] The finest estate on the whole river. Or anywhere else, for that matter.

BADGER. [*Enters from the house. To Toad*] As soon as you finish with that, you simply must do something about the curtains in your... [*He sees the others.*] Well, if it isn't Water Rat.

RAT. [*To Mole*] This is Badger.

BADGER. [*To Mole*] You're all wet.

RAT. We just went for a swim.

MOLE. An accidental swim. We fell out of the boat.

RAT. Moley flipped us over.

BADGER. I see. Well, if you need lessons on boating, Toady can help you.

TOAD. Not me. I've given up boating.

BADGER. You have? But what about all the boats in your boathouse?

TOAD. I've totally forgotten about them.

MOLE. How many boats does he have?

TOAD. Oh, I lost count at twenty-five.

MOLE. You have twenty-five boats?

TOAD. No. I lost count at twenty-five. I have a lot more than that. Let's see. I started out with a couple of dingys and a canoe. They were nice, but I had to exert too much energy to operate them.

MOLE. What do you mean?

BADGER. He means he had to row them by hand.

TOAD. Yes. So I turned to motorboats. With them, you turn the key, pull the throttle, and you're off—zooming up and down the river.

BADGER. And causing havoc with the animals who live along the banks.

RAT. How so?

BADGER. The loud roar of the engines, the wake of the water flipping over other boats, scaring the fish away.

TOAD. Motorboats were too small. So I bought a houseboat. It was too slow. So I bought a yacht.

MOLE. What's a yacht?

TOAD. A motorboat as big as a house—with living quarters in it.

MOLE. I've never seen a boat that big.

TOAD. But they were still too small for me. So I decided to buy an ocean liner.

RAT. An ocean liner? You mean one of those big ships that take people on cruises?

TOAD. Yes.

RAT. But they're huge.

TOAD. That was the problem. It wouldn't fit in my boathouse.

BADGER. It was also so big, he couldn't even get it up the river.

MOLE. Do you still have all those boats?

TOAD. Oh, yes. In my boathouse and along the river bank just north of here.

BADGER. Just sitting there—rotting, rusting, leaking.

TOAD. Well, I'm tired of boating.

RAT. And what will you do now?

TOAD. I don't know. Something will come up. I'm sure of it.

BADGER. Toad, you can't go on living your life this way. You have no focus, no objectives or aims. No goals in your life.

TOAD. I have a goal, Badger.

BADGER. What is it?

TOAD. I want to do *what* I like *when* I like and *as* I like.

BADGER. How utterly selfish.

TOAD. Selfish?

BADGER. Toady, if everyone did that, there would be utter chaos. Think about it. If people did anything they wanted, they could...well, they could take your boats.

TOAD. I don't need them any more.

BADGER. They could take your clothes.

TOAD. I'd buy some more.

BADGER. They could take Toad Hall.

TOAD. [*Outraged*] What?! No, they can't! [*He stands protectively in front of the house.*] I won't have it! I'll have them thrown out, tossed into the river. Toad Hall is mine!

BADGER. You see? You wouldn't like that at all, would you?

TOAD. No.

BADGER. So you don't want *them* to do *what* they like *when* they like and *as* they like.

TOAD. Well, *they* can't. [*He smiles.*] But I can.

BADGER. Toady, you're impossible!

TOAD. Enough of this idle chatter. Friends, I propose we have an adventure. I know. Let's go beyond the Wild Wood into the Wild World. *[The OTHERS gasp.]*

RAT. We can't do that.

TOAD. Don't you want to see the world? Sounds like fun to me.

BADGER. Toad?

TOAD. Yes, Badger?

BADGER. You need to finish your spring cleaning. And I need to go into town. Good day, Toady. *[S/he heads Down Left.]*

TOAD. Party pooper.

BADGER. Ratty, Mole. *[S/he exits Down Left.]*

RAT. Next time.

MOLE. By-by.

TOAD. *[To Rat and Mole]* Well, I guess it's just the three of us then.

RAT. You can count me out. I'm not leaving. I'm staying by my river, my home-in-the-ground, and my boat. And Mole is staying with me. Aren't you, Mole?

MOLE. *[Hesitantly]* Ummm, I guess so. *[Pause]* Although I would like to learn more about the world. *[Pause as RAT glares at him]* Just a little more. You showed me the river, which was new to me. What else is there to see?

TOAD. Lots and lots and lots.

MOLE. *[Shyly]* But of course I'll stay with you, Ratty. If you don't want to go. I mean, if you really, really don't want to go. I mean, if you absolutely, totally refuse to...

RAT. *[S/he gives in]* Oh, all right. I'll go!

MOLE. *[Delighted]* Oh, Ratty, Oh, Ratty, Oh, Ratty! Thank you, thank you, thank you! Just think of all the things we'll see. Why, we'll see...ummm...we'll see...

TOAD. Lots and lots and lots.

MOLE. Yes! Won't it be wonderful?

RAT. *[Reluctantly]* If you think so.

TOAD. Excellent. In preparation for just such an adventure... *[He rushes into the house and returns with several bags and shoves them into MOLE's arms.]* I have packed a few things I thought we might need.

RAT. A few?

TOAD. We must be prepared for any eventuality. Suppose we get lost? *[He dashes into the house and returns with an armload of maps.]* We'll need these maps. *[He tosses them into MOLE's arms.]* Suppose we decide to take a nap? *[He dashes into the house and returns with several*

blankets.] We'll need these blankets. [He tosses them over MOLE's head] Suppose we get hungry? [He dashes into the house and returns with a picnic basket.] We'll need this picnic basket. [He gives it to MOLE. RAT promptly looks inside.]

RAT. Toady, this basket is empty.

TOAD. Oh. *[He dashes into the house and returns with a canary in a cage]* Well, here's a chicken we can eat.

RAT. That's not a chicken. That's a canary. And you don't eat canaries.

MOLE. *[Under the load of things]* Help me!

TOAD. *[He takes it back.]* Never mind. *[He tosses it back inside the house.]* If we get hungry, we'll just stop by a fine restaurant.

[Off in the distance to their left, they hear two TOOTS from a car horn. They turn toward the sound.]

RAT. What was that? *[It TOOTS twice again.]*

MOLE. *[Weighted down and unable to see because of the blankets covering his/her head]* I don't know, but there it is again.

[The SOUND of a speeding car is heard in the distance. This can be a sound on audio tape or the Sports Car Driver making the sounds.]

RAT. *[Points off Down Left]* There it is—a cloud of dust.

TOAD. *[Delighted]* And a hearty roaring!

[Two TOOTS]

MOLE. And a toot-toot.

RAT. It's a car—a sports car. And it's headed this way.

TOAD. It's beautiful, absolutely beautiful!

RAT. Look out, Toady. It's speeding up! And it's headed right for us!

[As the speeding car SOUND grows louder and another "TOOT TOOT" is heard, the CAR appears from Left—spewing smoke if possible—and passes too close to the Animals. It is driven by the SPORTS CAR DRIVER (This can be simply a WOMAN pretending to drive; or a WOMAN rushing by behind a cutout of a red sports car). It drives downstage of them and exits Down Right.]

RAT. *[As the car goes by]* Aeiiii! Look out! *[To get out of its way, s/he dives into the "water" upstage of the boat.]*

MOLE. *[As the car passes by, MOLE goes into a spin.]* Whoaaa! *[S/he turns around and around, dropping everything and finally falling on his/her face.]*

TOAD. *[As the car passes him, he is so fascinated by it, he grins broadly.]* Glorious, stirring sight! Poetry in motion. *[The car is gone.]* Forget my boats and yachts and ocean liners. That is the real way to travel. The only way to travel.

RAT. *[Meanwhile, RAT has pulled him/herself from the water and tries to dry off. S/he turns toward the disappearing car.]* What a scoundrel! Did you see that crazy driver! What a road hog! I'll have the law on her! I'll take her to court and sue her for...for something. *[Pause. Deflated]* Well, I would if I had gotten the license plate number. Did you see that, Moley?

MOLE. *[Clumsily rising to his/her feet]* See what?

RAT. Did you see that, Toad?

TOAD. Did I see it? I reveled in it.

RAT. You enjoyed it?

TOAD. Did you see how quickly it flew by, Ratty? Did you hear the rushing of its huge engine?

MOLE. I heard a toot-toot.

TOAD. I want one of those. Maybe two or three of those. Yes, indeedy. That's what I want.

RAT. Toad, you don't know how to drive.

TOAD. I'll learn.

RAT. Toad, you don't have a driver's license.

TOAD. I don't need one.

RAT. Toad, you don't know anything about cars.

TOAD. I know I want one.

RAT. You can't just jump into a car and drive off. Remember what Badger said? You can't do *what* you like *when* you like *as* you like.

TOAD. Yes, I can.

RAT. What about law and order?

TOAD. Who needs those? I've got money. *[He flashes a wad of bills]*

MOLE. *[To Toad]* Don't you think we ought to go to the police station and file a complaint against that wild driver?

TOAD. Police station? File a complaint? No, Moley. Indeedy not. How could I complain about that heavenly vision that just zoomed by here? That blazing thunderbolt. Far from filing a complaint, I'm going to the car lot right now to buy one just like it. *[He starts off Down Left.]*

MOLE. But, Toad. What about our adventure?

TOAD. Adventure? Oh, you go along without me, Moley. I have to buy me a sports car. [*He makes car noises.*] Rrrruuum, rrrruuum! [*He exits Down Left*]

MOLE. [*To Rat*] What do we do now, Ratty?

RAT. I don't know, Moley. Poor Toad. He's possessed again. Just like he was with the boats. When he fell in love with them, he had to have one of every type. Now it's cars.

MOLE. [*As they pick up most of the items on the ground*] Is that bad?

RAT. Moley, when Toad gets into one of his passions, there's no stopping him. And he'll be the worst driver in the county.

MOLE. How do you know?

RAT. Because he's too careless. When he was looking at boats, he wrecked three of them before he got out of the showroom. And his boat-house is not filled with boats, but with the parts, pieces, and splinters of them—what's left after he crashed them into piers, bridges, and other boats. Believe me, Moley, when he starts to drive...get out of the way!

MOLE. Well, what about our adventure?

RAT. Well, since we're already packed...[*S/he indicates the items they are carrying.*]...let's have our own personal adventure. Shall we?

MOLE. [*Smiles broadly*] Yes, let's.

[Singing loudly, they happily and snappily march off Down Right. After a few seconds, a band of WEASELS appears at Up Right from behind the house. Carrying clubs and other weapons and looking like vicious thieves, they are led by the SERGEANT. NOTE: In addition to GREASEL WEASEL, SNEEZEL WEASEL, and CECIL WEASEL, other WEASELS may be added. Naturally, GREASEL is greasy and grimy while SNEEZEL sneezes a lot.]

SERGEANT. All right. Greasel Weasel?

GREASEL. [*Gruffly as s/he wipes his/her hands on a greasy rag*] Yeah, sergeant?

SERGEANT. Sneezel Weasel?

SNEEZEL. [*Sneezes and blows his nose*]

SERGEANT. Cecil Weasel?

CECIL. [*A very shy weakling*] Uhhhh...?

SERGEANT. [*If there are others: "And all the rest of you"*] Search the area. See if there is anything here worth stealing.

WEASELS. [*Ad-lib*] Yes. Right. Sure. We're searching, we're searching.

[The noisy WEASELS rush to various places on stage and look.]

SERGEANT. *[Calls off Up Right]* It's all clear, Chief.

CHIEF. *[The head weasel, s/he is small and struts in carrying a riding crop.]* Good, good. This looks like a good place to rob. What do you think we should steal first?

SERGEANT. The river, Chief.

CHIEF. The river? You can't steal a river.

SERGEANT. The chair, Chief.

CHIEF. The chair? That thing's not worth stealing. No. I propose we steal...the house!

SERGEANT. The house, Chief?

CHIEF. Yes—the house. *[S/he smiles.]* Toad Hall—the biggest, finest, and most famous house on the river. And it's ours for the taking.

SERGEANT. But, chief, a big place like this must be well-protected.

CHIEF. *[To Cecil]* How many guards do you see?

CECIL. *[S/he looks.]* I don't see any guards.

CHIEF. None. Exactly. *[To Sneezel]* How many burglar alarms do you hear?

SNEEZEL. *[S/he listens.]* None.

CHIEF. How many doors are locked?

GREASEL. *[S/he checks the front door.]* None.

CHIEF. *[Happily]* None. There. You see, Sergeant? The place is ours.

SERGEANT. But what about Toad? It's his place.

CHIEF. Sergeant, I'm the Chief Weasel. I do *what* I like *when* I like and *as* I like. Right now, I like this house.

SERGEANT. Right, Chief. But what if Toad wants it back?

CHIEF. He'll have to fight for it.

SERGEANT. He has lots of friends, you know.

CHIEF. Friends? What's that?

SERGEANT. Animals who like him.

CHIEF. Oh, really?

CECIL. And people who like each other take care of each other.

CHIEF. They do?

SNEEZEL. And protect each other.

CHIEF. Really?

GREASEL. And look after each other's property.

CHIEF. You mean, like Toad Hall?

SERGEANT. That's right, Chief.