



2009

The Wind in the Willows

Rebeca Wallin

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Eugene, Jackson R. *The Wind in the Willows*. I. E. Clark, 2000. ISBN W4671 \$5.25 script; \$60-50/performance fee. 51 p.

Reviewer: Rebeca Wallin

Reading Level: Preschool, Primary

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Plays; Adventure plays; Humorous plays;

Subject: Talking animals--Juvenile drama; Cars--Juvenile drama; Classics--Juvenile drama; Drama--Reviews;

Theme: You cannot live to only please yourself.

Production Requirements: Set, furniture, several props, recorded or produced sound.

Acts: 2

Run Time: 70 minutes

Characters: 13+

Cast: 1 male, 1 female, 11 either

Time Period: Present day

Based on Kenneth Graham's 1908 novel of the same name, this play follows the adventures of Toad with his friends Rat, Mole and Badger. Toad is rich and friendly and is constantly in the pursuit of pleasure. His current obsession is fast cars and despite his friends' warnings and attempts to stop him, he eventually ruins several cars, gets several injuries, and has to pay many fines. When he steals a shiny red sports car, he is sentenced to a twenty year sentence in jail. While Toad is in jail, evil weasels take over his house. When his friends tell him this, he finds a way to break out of jail, and with the help of his friends they rescue his house and turn the weasels over to the sheriff, which wins Toad his freedom.

This skillful adaptation with a fast paced, exciting script and memorable characters will delight audiences. Animal characters (who speak and act like humans) and human characters exist together in a fun fantasy world. The writing is inventive and flows well with several fun jokes and comic sequences. Toad often says that he just wants to do "what I like when I like and as I like." Without preaching too much, Jackson skillfully weaves the story so that children will understand that this is not a good attitude to have. Although the show does require a large number of props, the flexibility of the large scenery would make it possible to tour this show.

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