

ALB

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The Wind in the Willows

**Toad** (*winking at Mole*) Never fails.

**Rat** Of course I'm still not keen myself, but since Moley clearly wants to go ...

**Mole** Only if you do, Ratty.

**Rat** And it may be I am a bit set in my ways.

**Toad** Excellent. Could you just have a word with the horse. He's being rather tiresome. Meanwhile I'll go and change into my caravanning clothes.

*Toad trots off to get into his togs*

**Mole** I didn't know there were caravanning clothes.

**Rat** Oh, there always have to be clothes for it, or Toad wouldn't want to do it. Now Albert, what's the matter?

*Albert is a Wolverhampton cousin of Eeyore*

**Albert** It's Toad. He wants me to pull the caravan and I'm not supposed to pull things. Doctor's orders. When I pull things I pull other things. Like muscles.

**Mole** (*moving to stroke Albert*) Oh Albert.

**Albert** Now don't start all that stroking. I don't like being stroked. And don't start smacking me on the side of the neck either, still less on the bottom. Smack anybody else on the bottom and it's a punishment, whereas if you're a horse you're supposed to love it.

**Rat** Would you like a carrot?

**Albert** Yes, provided it's in a cream sauce or diced in a little *bouillon*. What I don't want is one of those mucky raw articles. That's another misconception. One carrot and they think you're anybody's. Are you going on this expedition?

**Mole** Oh yes. It'll be fun.

**Albert** Fun for you. You're not pulling the cart.

*Toad emerges in his caravanning outfit and gets on to the box*

**Toad** Ready then?

*Toad smacks Albert*

Time to go.

**Albert** There you are, you see. Smacks me on the bum. Listen, will you talk to me?

**Mole** Of course I'll talk to you.

**Albert** Toad never does. His conversation is limited to "Gee up" and "Whoa!"

Part One

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**Toad** Gee up!

**Albert** Not my idea of a feast of reason and a flow of soul. Added to which I never get no supper.

**Rat** Any supper. I never get any supper.

**Mole** We'll talk to you and give you supper too.

**Albert** And when I say supper, I don't mean one of those nosebag things where you get your kippers all mixed up with the custard.

**Rat** Don't you worry.

*Mole smacks him on the bottom*

**Albert** There you go again! Desist.

*With Mole holding the horse's head the caravan proceeds on its way to the applause of the rabbits and other well-wishers*

**All** What a lovely caravan! Isn't she a spanker!

**Toad** Not bad is she — I can't believe she's all mine!

*And some not so well-wishers*

**Chief Weasel** Hello Toady. Got yourself a horse and cart now?

**Toad** Do you like it?

**Stoat Cyril** What happened to the houseboat?

**Weasel Norman** Yeah. And the bike?

**Weasel Wilfred** And the punt?

**Chief Weasel** Yeah, your punt, Toady. What happened to that?

**Toad** Such good people. How glad one is to be able to bring a little excitement into their dull lives. Happy, Ratty?

**Rat** I am, rather.

**Toad** Who wouldn't be — just riding along, taking the world as it comes, meadow giving way to moor and field to forest — the scene changing, as change it must, but gently, imperceptibly. That's England, Ratty. England's a caravan. Well! This looks like a good place to camp. Whoa. Why don't you fellows feed the horse, make a fire and so on. I'd prefer to do all that myself but I've got more serious work to do studying the map and planning the route for tomorrow. (*He gets into the caravan*)

**Rat** (*to Mole*) Same old Toad. I say, you rabbits.

**A Rabbit** I think he means us.

**Rat** You look at a loose end.

**Another Rabbit** Of course we are. We're rabbits.

**Rat** Why not lend us a hand?

**The Same Rabbit** I don't know, what do you think?