

Rat

don't like moles. They belong in holes. We don't like moles. We don't...

The Wild Wooders have Mole on the floor now and are kicking and beating him and the Chief Weasel having taken off Mole's spectacles, is about to do his worst and gestures for silence to accentuate the horror when in the silence is heard a distant but familiar voice

Rat (*off, calling*) Moley.
Chief Weasel It's Rat!

The Wild Wooders scatter, only the Chief Weasel, who is as two-faced as they come, runs back with Mole's spectacles. Rat enters

Put your glasses on, mate. Only a bit of fun.

Rat Moley, Where are you? It's me. It's old Rat. Moley.

Mole Ratty? Ratty? Is that really you?

Rat Moley?

The Wild Wooders have withdrawn to a respectful distance but are watching the proceedings, still wondering if they could be in there with a chance. Rat, catching sight of them, puts paid to that idea

Don't even think about it. (*To Mole*) Oh, thank goodness I've found you, old chap.

Mole Oh, Rat, I've been so frightened, you can't think. Frightened to death. Oh, oh.

Rat Hold up, hold up. It's all right. Safe now. Rat's here. You shouldn't have done it, Moley. We River Bankers hardly ever come here by ourselves.

Mole But why do they do it, Rat?

Rat It's just their nature. We can't stop here. The weasels are still somewhere about and it's snowing. Trouble is, I don't quite know where we are. Up you get, Moley. We must get on.

Mole I'm tired out, Ratty.

Rat Me too, but our only hope is to find some shelter or we're done for. Come on.

Mole trips and falls headlong

Mole Oh, my leg, my leg.

Rat What's up.

Mole I must have tripped over a tree stump. Oh my, oh my.

Rat (*getting out his handkerchief*) No, you didn't.

Mole Yes, I did.

Rat You didn't, Mole. This is a very clean cut. It's not from a tree stump, it's from something sharp.

Mole Well, never mind what done it. It hurts just the same whatever done it.

Rat "Whatever did it". Just because we've hurt our leg doesn't mean we can forget our grammar. (*He starts scripping away the snow*)

Mole Hey, Ratty, what about my leg?

Rat Never mind your leg. Look.

Mole So? A doorscraper. What of it?

Rat What of it? Don't you see what it means, you dull creature?

Mole Of course I see what it means. It means that some very careless person has left his doorscraper in the middle of the Wild Wood. And you seem to have forgotten I've hurt my leg.

Rat Where there's a doorscraper, what else is there?

Mole How should I know? Sometimes, Rat, I don't understand you.

Rat Yes — that's because you're a thick-headed beast. Now dig.

Mole I'm not thick-headed. I'm not thick-headed, at all. Ratty! A front door!

Rat Exactly. Now do you understand?

Mole It's Mr Badger's.

Rat Exactly. Pull the bell.

Mole You saved us! You saved us!

Mole pulls the bell. Rat seizes it from him and yanks it even harder

Oh, Rat, you're a wonder. You're wasted here — among us simple creatures. You should be at Oxford. Or in the Government.

Rat I'd rather be beside a warm fire. (*He batters on the door*) Wake up,

Badger, wake up. Pull, Mole, pull. We must wake him. Badger, Badger. Wake up!

There is a sound of many locks being unlocked and bolts drawn and of a gruff voice inside

Badger (*off*) Now the very next time this happens, I shall be very cross. Very cross indeed. Disturbing someone on a night like this. Who is it? Come on, speak up.

Rat Badger, let us in, please. It's me, Rat, and my friend Mole. We're lost.

Badger (*off*) Lost? How can you be lost? You're outside my front door.

He opens it. Badger is all dressing-gown. His hair, once black, now has a broad streak of grey down it and though there is a tail somewhere, since he is never out of his dressing-gown we don't see it. His bark, needless to say, is much worse than his bite and his heart melts at the sight of the two friends