

THE WIND *In The* WILLOWS

SAMPLE SCRIPT

SCENE ONE

The main stage is empty. At the front of the stage is the river, perhaps made from fabric or coloured card.

Gradually, incrementally, the rabbits hop on cautiously and begin grazing. After a while, one of them pipes up:

Rabbit 1 This grass is AMAZING.

Rabbit 2 Isn't it just! And how spacious is the warren!

Rabbit 3 Paws down the best warren ever.

Rabbit 4 I've even got my own bedroom.

Rabbit 5 Have you?

Rabbit 4 Yes.

Rabbit 5 *(a touch disappointed)* Oh. Lucky.

Rabbit 6 Yes, we've landed on our paws with this one, that's for sure. And no sign of any foxes neither!

Rabbit 7 You mean 'either'.

Rabbit 6 Do I?

Rabbit 7 Yes.

Rabbit 6 Right: I'm never quite sure about those double negatives.

Rabbit 8 The only other animals I've seen so far are some field mice, and they wouldn't say boo to a goose.

Rabbit 1 I saw a rat earlier: a water rat. I think we must be near a river.

Rabbit 2 We'd better check where it is: we don't want to stumble upon it if we get chased.

Rabbit 3 I love a good chase, get the heart racing.

Rabbit 4 You're crazy. No seeking out allotments this time!

Rabbit 3 There's no need when the grass is as good as this. Honestly, I'm in rabbit-heaven here.

Suddenly a creature crawls up through the ground – or, more likely, appears upstage. Without a word, the rabbits disappear from the stage in all directions, making use of every exit to vanish immediately.

The creature is Mole, who comes forward, pushes his glasses further up his nose and peers around.

Mole Hello? Is someone there? Please don't go on my account. I won't hurt you. Not unless you're an earthworm, of course. In which case I'll eat you. But I know you're not earthworms.

The rabbits slowly, warily, make their way back onto the stage.

Rabbit 5 He's not very big, is he! *(to Mole)* I wonder if he's a mole.

Rabbit 6 What's a mole?

Rabbit 7 **He's** a mole.

Rabbit 8 Where did he come from?

Rabbit 7 I think he came from underground. Moles are tunnellers.

Rabbit 1 Like us. *(to Mole)* Do you live in a warren?

Mole No, I live in my home.

Rabbit 2 By yourself?

Mole Of course. Everyone lives by themselves. Don't they?

The rabbits look around at each other. Mole spots this.

Rabbit 3 We don't. We all live together. One big, happy family.

Mole *(surprised)* Oh. How many of you?

Rabbit 3 Hmmmm, now there's a question. It does tend to vary actually, depending on ... well, the time of year mostly.

Rabbit 4 *(to Mole)* At least you've got your own bedroom. I've got my own bedroom too.

Rabbit 5 Yes, we know, thank you.

Rabbit 6 Is this your first time above ground?

Mole Pretty much. I don't come up very often, but I thought I'd have a look. Not that I see very well. You're just shapes, really.

Rabbit 8 How awful for you!

Rabbit 3 If it helps, I'm the good-looking one.

Rabbit 4 Ha! And the comedian too!

Rabbit 7 (*to Mole*) Where are you heading?

Mole I'm not sure really. I guess I'll just follow my nose: I've definitely got a good sense of smell.

Rabbit 1 Then it's a good job you don't live in our warren.

Rabbit 2 Though you're always welcome to visit!

Mole Thank you. Perhaps I will. I'm a very solitary creature, but I do like a bit of company now and then. Goodbye.

Rabbit Goodbye!

Mole moves onwards. The rabbits exit in different directions, still nibbling at the grass. After a little while, Mole stops. He has heard something, though he's not sure what it is.

SFX – The River.

Uncertain, Mole takes a couple of steps forwards onto the river bank.

Mole I say, I wonder what this is?

He takes another step, loses his footing, then his balance. He stumbles and falls into the river. He shrieks out in terror.

Mole Aaagggghhh. Help! Help me!

After a few moments of panic, Ratty, Otter and Beaver enter from different directions on the river. They swim quickly over to Mole, take hold of him, and pull/push him out of the river onto the bank. Mole lies there, exhausted and breathing heavily.

Otter Is it alright?

Ratty Yes, I think so. He's breathing at least. Come on, we'll take him to my house.

Beaver Strange-looking creature. What is it?

Otter A mole. Lives underground and rarely comes up.

Beaver And you're sure you want it staying in your house?

Ratty Well I don't want it left here for the owls and kestrels, that for sure. Lend a hand, let's get him inside.

They carry or manoeuvre Mole off as the lights go down and the scene changes to the inside of Ratty's house.

Incidental Music: 'The Riverbank' (#11)