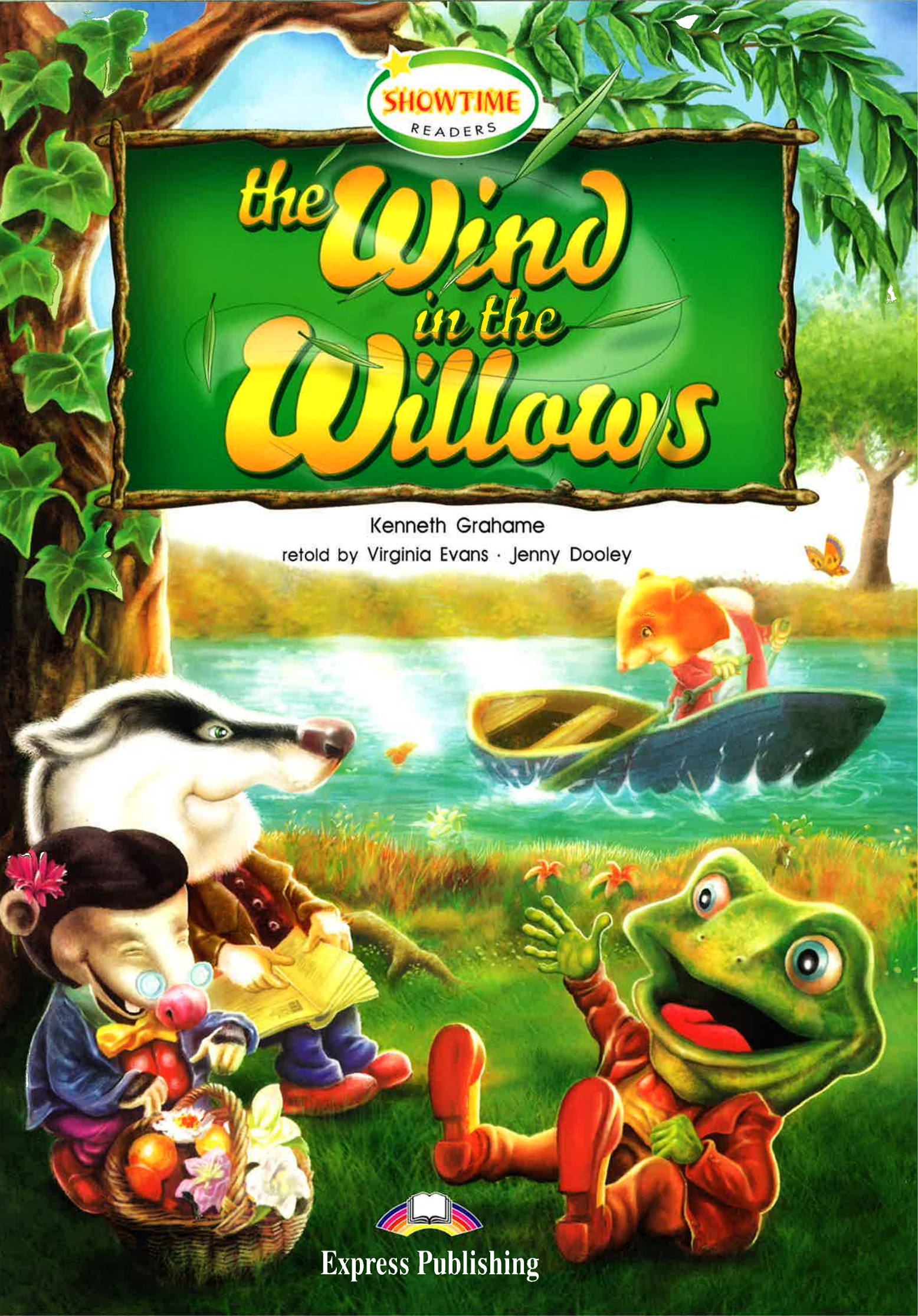




the Wind in the Willows

Kenneth Grahame

retold by Virginia Evans · Jenny Dooley



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THE BACKGROUND

The Wind in the Willows is a very famous children's book. Kenneth Grahame wrote the book for his young son, Alistair. He used to read the animal stories to Alistair at bedtime to make him happy and teach him good English. Alistair loved to hear about Rat, Mole, Badger and Toad.

The book is set in the beautiful English countryside. In some ways, the story is taken from Kenneth Grahame's life. When he was five, he lived with his grandmother, and there was a river next to her garden. Grahame found country life very pleasant. The characters in the book live in the countryside too. The animals live near the woods and a riverbank. When some of his books became well-known, Kenneth Grahame became rich. He gave up his job in the bank and he moved to the countryside, which he loved so much.

Children and adults still enjoy this book. It was made into a film many times but the most successful version was made in 1996. Many famous comedians starred in it. No doubt, it will continue to be popular for many years to come.

THE PLOT

The Wind in the Willows is the story of four friends and their adventures. This is like any other adventure story except that the characters are all animals. However, they also behave like humans. They speak, wear clothes and even drive cars! Toad is a bit foolish and a bit wild. He gets into trouble when he drives too fast. His friends give him advice but he doesn't listen to them. Eventually, he is put into prison because he steals a car. When he escapes from prison, his friends help him to get his home back from the weasels. Toad's life is very exciting but dangerous. How is he going to learn to behave properly?





ALICE

... is a kind girl who loves animals. She helps Toad when he is sad and lonely in prison. She decides to help him because he is in trouble.

THE ENGINE DRIVER

... is a good man who always tries to help others. He feels sorry for Toad, so he tries to help him.



THE WEASELS

... are very greedy animals. They often steal things and treat people very badly. They don't care about others and enjoy scaring them. They often make a lot of noise and mess too.



"The river is my world," said Rat. "I never want to live anywhere else."

"But don't you get bored, with nobody to talk to?" asked Mole.

"Nobody to talk to?" cried Rat. "There are otters and ducks and all kinds of water birds!"

"And what's that over there?" asked Mole, pointing to some trees on one side of the river.

"That's the Wild Wood," said Rat. "I don't go there very much."

"Aren't they very nice people there?" asked Mole nervously.

"Well, some of the rabbits are kind," said Rat, "and there's also good old Badger. Nobody dares to bother him, though!"

"Who would bother him?" asked Mole.

"Well, there are other animals in the Wild Wood," said Rat, "like the weasels and stoats, and you can't really trust them."

"I see," said Mole. "And what's on the other side of the Wild Wood?"

"After the Wild Wood is the Wide World," said Rat, "but that is something that you and I don't need to worry about. Let's not talk about it again."

Just then, Mole saw a huge house near the river.

"What a wonderful house!" he said. "Who lives there?"

"That's Toad Hall," said Rat. "My friend Toad lives there. Let's go and say hello!"