



Kenneth Grahame's children's novel *The Wind in the Willows* relates Mole's adventures as he meets new friends while exploring the river bank. The book is best known for the adventures of Toad, which are moral lessons to his badly behaved son.

The images are derived from the illustrations of E. H. Shepherd. Shepherd's initial sketches were approved by Graham, who died before the publication of that edition in 1931. E.

H. Shepherd is best known for his illustrations of *Winnie the Poo* by A. A. Milne. Milne wrote the play *Toad of Toad Hall* based on *The Wind in the Willows*.

The simple closed altarpiece provides a map similar to Bosch's *Garden of Earthly Delights*.

The narrative of the inside of the altarpiece reads from the predella, the goal well below ground, up to Badger's, Mole's and Rat's Homes, and finally to the pinnacle, the river itself.

The center panel is a triptych of Mole, Badger and Ratty, the main characters of the novel. It is fitting that mole occupies the central panel because story opens:

The Mole had been working very hard all the morning, spring- cleaning his little home.

The image of mole on a ladder is also used because it visually approximates the Crucifixion. By placing Mole on a ladder, he becomes the highest figure in the center panel, even though he is physically the smallest.

The side panels were to represent the riverbank at dawn and the wild wood in snow, but the backgrounds were too jarring.

The predella is a continuous narrative. Toad appears 3 times in the panel: once as boastful Toad, once as Toad the mad car driver, and finally in gaol as a result of his escapades. The narrative reads center to right to left.

The rear represents Toad's escape from goal.





Pinnacle Left:

'Is it so nice as all that?' asked the Mole ... as he leant back in his seat and surveyed the cushions,

Pinnacle Right:

the rower [Toad] ... splashing badly and rolling a good deal...

Center Panel:

a dark hole in the bank opposite ... caught his [Mole's] eye, ... what a nice snug dwelling-place it would make for an animal [Rat]

The Mole had been working very hard all the morning, spring-cleaning his little home.

The Badger, who wore a long dressing-gown, and whose slippers were indeed very down at heel, carried a flat candlestick

Left Side Panel:

[mole] thought his happiness was complete when ... he stood by the edge of a full-fed river.

Right Side Panel:

the snow was getting so deep that they could hardly drag their little legs through it....

Predella:

you [Toady] know well that your songs are all conceit and boasting and vanity

he sped he [Toad] knew not whither ... reckless of what might come to him.

Then the brutal minions of the law fell upon the hapless Toad; ... dragged him from the Court House, shrieking, praying, protesting;



you could escape from the castle as the official washerwoman.





