

The Wind in the Willows (musical)

The Wind in the Willows is a novel by Kenneth Grahame. It is about a group of animals who live on the banks of a river. Recently, Stephen Kingsbury and Ben Sleep transformed this novel into a musical. In this extract from their script, Toad finds himself in trouble with the law...

Scene 6: A Courtroom

The JUDGE pops up from the WILD WOOD chorus

Judge: ...TOAD! You have been found guilty, on the clearest evidence, first, of stealing a valuable motor car; secondly, of driving to the public danger; and, thirdly, of gross impertinence to the rural police. The latter being by far the most serious of your numerous crimes.

Policeman: Hear, hear.

Judge: Be quiet you nincompoop!

Policeman: Er, begging your pardon M'Lud...

Judge: Quiet!

The CLERK also pops up next to the JUDGE

Clerk: But Your Honour...

Judge: I said quiet!

Policeman: Yes Your Honour.

Judge: Now, Mr...Toad, if that is your real name, these are grave, grave offences — you do understand that?

Toad: Oh yes Your Honour, nothing clearer... I am of course most dreadfully, dreadfully sorry...

Judge: Some of these crimes are unforgivable.

Toad: I didn't mean to steal; I mean it wasn't really stealing...

Judge: Not that! I understand that you verbally abused this officer here...

Toad: Oh I didn't mean it Your Honour...

Policeman: He called me a...

Judge: Quiet you nincompoop! I'm quite capable of getting the details from this wily frog!

Policeman: Toad...

Judge: How dare you! Never have I been spoken to in such a manner...

Clerk: I think he was referring to Mr. Toad, Your Honour.

Judge: What?... Oh, right.

Toad: It was only in jest!

Judge: That's no excuse. No one, whatever their rank, should take the name of the law in vain. Now...what did you call him?

Toad: I called him a...a...

Policeman: He said I was a...

Judge: Quiet you nincompoop! Now...Mr. Toad?

Toad: I called him a...nincompoop.

Silence

Judge: Disgracefull

1

Why is the word "TOAD" written in capital letters in line 3?

1 mark

2

Using your own words, explain the crimes that Toad has committed.

1 mark

3

How do the stage directions help you to understand the script?

1 mark

4

Describe the judge's attitude towards Toad.

2 marks

5

How does Toad react when he is found guilty?

2 marks

6

Why does the judge become offended by the policeman?

1 mark

7

How does this extract make the judge look foolish?

2 marks

Total
out of 10

Answers

1. E.g. To show that the judge is shouting.
2. E.g. He has stolen a car, driven dangerously and behaved rudely towards a police officer.
3. E.g. They give extra information about what is happening on stage so that the reader knows which actors are present and what they're doing.
4. E.g. He thinks Toad should be dealt with strictly for his many serious crimes. He thinks that Toad is cunning but that he can deal with him.
5. E.g. He apologises and says he understands that his crimes are serious. He also tries to defend himself — he denies that what he did was stealing and claims he was joking when he was rude to the policeman.
6. E.g. Because he thinks the policeman is insulting him by calling him a toad.
7. E.g. He calls the policeman a "nincompoop", but wants to punish Toad for doing the same thing. He says Toad's actions are "unforgivable" as no one, whatever their rank, should be rude to a police officer.

