

Classic Novel Opening Studies 8 – The Wind in The Willows

The Mole had been working very hard all the morning, spring-cleaning his little home. First with brooms, then with dusters; then on ladders and steps and chairs, with a brush and a pail of whitewash; till he had dust in his throat and eyes, and splashes of whitewash all over his black fur, and an aching back and weary arms. Spring was moving in the air above and in the earth below and around him, penetrating even his dark and lowly little house with its spirit of divine discontent and longing. It was small wonder, then, that he suddenly flung down his brush on the floor, said 'Bother!' and 'O blow!' and also 'Hang spring-cleaning!' and bolted out of the house without even waiting to put on his coat. Something up above was calling him imperiously, and he made for the steep little tunnel which answered in his case to the gravelled carriage-drive owned by animals whose residences are nearer to the sun and air.



- 1) How many different tools does mole use to clean his home? What are they?
- 2) What did mole forget to do as he left his home?
- 3) What does the word 'imperiously' mean?
- 4) Does the writer create a positive image of mole's home? Discuss.
- 5) In this animal fantasy, animals are reflective of real people in society. How does the writer create the impression that mole is inferior to those around him?