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**SKOPOS FOR CHILDREN'S LITERATURE: TRANSLATION AND  
COMMENTARY**

A THESIS IN TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETING  
(ENGLISH/ARABIC/ENGLISH)

by

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## **Abstract**

Literature represents a nation's culture and plays a vital role in the bringing up of children. As such and unlike adult literature, translating children's literature (CL) poses difficulties for translators simply because the intended target receivers are children. Many translation theories offer ways of handling the translation of CL, but *skopos* seems to provide more effective strategies. The aim of this thesis, therefore, is to explore how *skopos* can produce user-friendly translation of CL. To achieve this aim, a passage from the novel *The Wind in the Willows* was translated into Arabic and a *skopos*-based commentary was provided.

Search Terms: Children's Literature, Translation, Skopos Theory, and Target Text Reader.

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### ACKNOWLEDEMENTS

### ABSTRACT

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## 1. Introduction

Literature reflects the values and beliefs of the culture that produces it. Unlike adult literature, which is an established genre, the term Children's Literature (CL) was not as common until recently. Tales for children were delivered orally by mothers and grandmothers for entertainment purposes. There was no special interest in children as an important constituent of society, and thus the tendency of writing for children has been limited whereby CL as a phenomenon has been mostly used for pedagogical or educational purposes. CL was not considered an appropriate field of research, and suffered an inferior status compared to adult literature.

Early in twentieth century, CL started to be seriously considered as an acceptable literary phenomenon in the academic circles.

Related to CL is the issue of translating it across cultures. Through translating literature one can acquire values and traditions of other different civilizations and cultures. More specifically, translation is the process of turning an original or source text into a text in another language.

Notably, the relation between the source language (SL) and the target language (TL) in translation activity was and still is one of the central concerns in translation studies. Some scholars view the Source Text (ST) as a "sacred original", whether in terms of function, form, or both (Nida, 1964; Catford, 1965; Newmark, 1988; 1982). In an extreme position, Newmark (1982: 389) sees the translator's task as an activity "to render the original as objectively as he can, rigorously suppressing his own natural feelings; a text with which he passionately agrees must be treated similarly to a text with which he passionately disagrees". However, the real picture in translation practice is not as clear and straightforward as Newmark articulates it in this quotation. More recently, some translation theorists have regarded the translator's task as mainly reflecting the *skopos* (purpose) of the Target Text (TT) rather than that of the source text (ST) (Schäffner, 2003, 1998; Hönig 1998; and Vermeer 2000). On this latter view, the translation may be steered by the *skopos* of the TT prospectively rather than informed by the *skopos* of the ST retrospectively. In this spirit, Schäffner (1998: 238) views the translator as a TT author who is freed from the "limitations and restrictions imposed by a narrowly defined concept of loyalty to the source text alone".

Dealing with a special kind of literature like CL requires the same seriousness as does any other form of literature. Translating CL is somewhat similar to that of translating other literary texts, yet it has some of its own exclusive features.

Within this context of translating CL, the purpose of this thesis is to examine how *skopos*, as a theory of translation, can produce effective results translations of CL. This is a matter that researchers need to explore further particularly in the age of globalization. For this purpose, a passage from the novel *The Wind in the Willows* was translated into Arabic and a skopos-based commentary was provided.

In addition to this introductory chapter, this thesis is structured as follows. Chapter two reviews CL in terms of its constituents and how it differs from adults' literature. The chapter also discusses the translation of CL and reviews skopos theory as an approach of translation, which could be particularly effective for CL translation. Chapter three presents the source text (the passage taken from the novel *The Wind in The Willows*) and the target text (the translation into Arabic carried out for this thesis).

Chapter four provides an analytical discussion of examples taken from the translation to show the effectiveness of the skopos theory in translating CL. The commentary considers issues related to pragmatic and semantic aspects of language, and low register of discourse because the target text reader in this case is the child.

Chapter five concludes the thesis and provides suggestions to improve the translation of CL as an interesting genre.

## 2. Children's Literature and Skopos Theory

Literature has a great intellectual effect on peoples of all cultures. When it comes to children, literature enhances their imagination and their way to appreciate the world around them. This chapter introduces CL and shows how it is different from adult literature. The chapter then reviews translation, in general, and the skopos theory of translation, which can be effectively exploited in translating CL.

### 2.1 Definition of CL

As an important branch of literature, CL plays an important role in the growth of children's psychology and the formation of their perception of things around them. Dealing with such an issue requires experience and strong intuition. It is of great importance to note that a child's experience of literature in their early years is a huge dictator of their attitude and approach in their later life.

As a broad definition, children's literature is anything that children read, not just picture books. Whether a child is engaging in the most basic of texts or a relatively advanced novel, the fact that they are reading such products and they are children makes this children's literature (CL). Although most commonly in text form, now more than ever electronic and digital forms of CL exist. To provide a well-rounded, complete educational experience, exposure to different levels of literature in a range of different forms and contexts is key (Cullingford, 1998).

### 2.2 Difference between CL and Adults Literature

Before being distinguished as a genre, CL was confused with that intended for adults. Many stories were originally intended for adults before they were reshaped to harmonize with children's level of perception.

CL works on two levels. The first, most obvious level is that of an exciting/interesting/touching story that will appeal to the age of children at which it is aimed. The second level is actually aimed at the adult who will read it to the child and may make more of the 'touching' category or relate to some kind of universally recognized experiences. The best and most enduring CL fulfils both of these criteria and has apt characterization achieved through conversation and reactions of the characters

and a degree of humor and light-heartedness. CL may address and resolve issues that concern children.

Adult literature, on the other hand, is many layered, weaving stories within stories and having underlying meanings or references. Its characterization generally includes the thoughts and feelings of the character suggested by actions or spelled out. The story may or may not be easily memorable or even a necessary part of the work. The best literature leaves the reader questioning or rethinking his/her attitudes.

Also the use of simple, alliterative and rhythmic language and the simple level of register are factors that are not found in Adult literature, which tends to be more sophisticated and rhetorical.

### 2.3 Translation of CL

Through reading literature of other cultures, children become more open-minded and extrovert to traditions and values of other societies and nations, the thing which enhances their perception of life. One of the typical traits ascribed to CL is their asymmetry between the real author and the implicit author (a persona, or role played by the real person writing, usually one that has a peculiar point of view, which makes the story more interesting). In all this, translating CL assumes a vital role in the development of children. One translation theory that seems to be effective when it comes to CL is skopos, whereby the source text is re-written, re-created by the translator as the cultural mediator within a target-oriented perspective.

Freeman and Lehman (2001) stress that literature from other cultures supports children's language development in two ways. One aspect is that children, through reading translated literary texts, can increase their vocabularies in their native languages that relate to concepts from other cultures. The example is that when American children read a Korean story, they would learn words such as rice paddies, pagoda roofs and barley tea, which are words related to Korean culture (see Park and Park, 1998). Secondly, because these books often incorporate the vocabulary of another language, children are thus exposed to another written language through reading translated books.

Therefore, translated children's books "serve as a springboard for a comparative mini-unit on the written symbols that represent different languages" and support children's language development as to assist them to "construct knowledge about the

structures of other language, the distinctive sounds of languages, and the unique vocabulary” (Freeman and Lehman, 2001:13).

### 2.3.1 Principles and strategies of translating CL

The role of a CL translator as a mediator is to interpret and transmit the author’s story, intent, style, characterization, and tone with integrity to children of the intended age group. Translators have to be able to judge the story as a whole and must attend to the sensitivities of being both authors and readers. Just as Shavit (1981) states, the translator of children’s literature can permit him/herself great liberties regarding the text because of the peripheral position children’s literature occupies in the poly-system. In translating CL , translators usually adopt the following strategies:

#### *Use of Lively and Interesting Language*

It is an important aim to make children readers happy by producing and translating interesting stories. Translators resort to changes in wording and sentence patterns like turning the passive voice in English, for example, into active voice in Arabic, which is more acceptable.

#### *B. Use of Simple and Colloquial Words*

Wording is a key point in translating CL. Usually one foreign word in English, for example, can be rendered as many different Arabic words. Children normally do not have great vocabulary or experience. Translators should take the children's ability of understanding and cognition into account, and use as simple and clear words as possible.

#### *C. Use of Simple and Straightaway Sentence Patterns*

There are more long and complex sentences in English literature, for example, than in Arabic literature, especially in CL. Translators usually transform long and complex sentences into short and simple ones to help children maintain their interest in reading.

From the preceding discussion, it is clear that CL has its own traits and qualities which make it a specific genre that is different from the literature of older-age-readers. Translators should be versed in strategies of translation in order to justify their choices in translating CL. One of the interesting theories that seems to be effective in CL translation is skopos which is reviewed below.

Within translation studies, skopos theory is classified under the functional approach where the source text is no more sacred. The skopos theory dethrones the

source text and focuses on the target text and its recipient in a given situation. In their renderings, translators could modify the information presented in the source text to be appropriate with norms and values of the culture of the target text readers, children in our case.

#### 2.4 Definition of the Skopos Theory

Linguistically, *skopos* is a Greek word for 'purpose'. According to *skopos* theory, the basic principle which determines the process of translation is the purpose (*skopos*) of the translational action. The idea of intentionality is part of the very definition of any action (Nord, 1997). Also *skopos* theory is a theory of translation that was proposed by the German translator Vermeer in 1978. In this theory, the process of translation is determined by the function of the product. This function is specified by the addressee (target receiver).

This theory is one of the functionalist approaches whose aim is to dethrone the source text (ST). This is done by emphasizing the role of the translator as a creator of the target text (TT) and giving priority to the purpose (*skopos*) of producing TT. Functionalism is a major shift from linguistic equivalence to functional appropriateness. Thus, translation is considered primarily as a process of intercultural communication whose end product is a text which has the ability to function appropriately in specific situations and contexts of use (Schaffner, 1998). The translator must interpret the ST information "by selecting those features which most closely correspond to the requirements of the target situation" (Shuttleworth and Cowie, 1997:156). Thus, *skopos* theory has a strong connection with the functional approach.

The function of a translation is dependent on the knowledge, expectations, values and norms of the target readers, who are again influenced by the situation they are in and by the culture. These factors determine whether the function of the source text or passages in the source text can be preserved or have to be modified or even changed.

The *Skopos* theory posits that translation is produced for particular recipients with specific purpose(s) in a given situation (Vermeer, 1989). The maturing of the *Skopos* theory results in the dethroning of the source text and the de-mystification of "equivalence," foregrounding the significance and implication of "purpose" that contributes to the translation as a sort of social construction.

## 2.5 Theoretical background of Skopos

In the 1980s, translation was increasingly conceptualized as cultural transfer rather than a linguistic operation. Vermeer (1989) claims that translation is produced for particular recipients with specific purpose(s) in a given situation (Skopos). A translator accomplishes his/her translation assignment with such purpose(s) in mind. The translator assumes authority as an expert, who is consulted with and has right to decide what role the source text could play in his/her professional job. The target text is "functional" to fulfill the expectations and needs of target audience.

Vermeer (1989:20) explains Skopos rule as follows: "Translate/interpret/speak/write in a way that enables your text/translation to function in the situation in which it is used and with the people who want to use it and precisely in the way they want it to function." In this way, the source text is deprived by the translator of its primary and sacred status whenever s/he thinks this is appropriate for the achievement of the designated Skopos. The source text merely serves as one of various information sources utilized by the translator, not the first and foremost criterion in translator's decision-making (Aveling, 2002). As Hönig (1998: 9) notes, "the source text should no longer be seen as the 'sacred original,' and the purpose of the translation can no longer be deduced from the source text, but depends on the expectations and needs of the target readers."

The Skopos theory allows the translator freedom to act as an expert and take responsibility for his/ her approach. In the Skopos theory, the way a target text is intended to be received basically determines which translation strategy is the most suitable one.

There are three major kinds of purpose: (a) the general purpose as to why the translator performs this translation; (b) the communicative purpose (e.g. to inform); (c) the strategic purpose aimed at in employing a particular procedure (e.g. literal vs. free translation), (Hatim, 2001). Here "the end justifies the means" in translation (Nord 1997:29). In other words, translation strategy is determined by the intended function of the target text, which may not be same as that of the source text. As a "cross-cultural event," the target text (a "translatum") could assume a different sociolinguistic and pragmatic significance in a different socio-cultural context (Vermeer, 1998).

Vermeer (1986:33) claims that translation is a "complex form of action, whereby someone provides information on a text (source language material) in a new

situation and under changed functional, cultural and linguistic conditions." The relativity of function with varied and prescribed aims renders the objective of a sole, ultimate, and perfect target text invalid (Snell-Hornby, 1990).

Translation presupposes a purpose (Skopos) and is guided by it. Moreover, the meaning is not fixed and static in the linguistic manifestation. It depends on the negotiated and oppositional readings by the receivers (Hall, 1980). Different receivers (or even the same receiver at different times) would attribute and assign different meanings to the source text. Nord (1992:91) argues that "a 'text' can be as many texts as there are receivers."

Skopos theory challenges the notion of "equivalence" proposed by Nida (1964). Dynamic-equivalence translation is defined by Nida (1964:136) as a rendering of "the closest natural equivalent to the source-language message" in both meaning and style, which generates similar responses on the receivers in the target culture as compared with those on the receivers in the source culture. To solve the above problem, Nord introduces the loyalty principle into the functionalist model. In Nord's terms, function refers to the factors that make a target text work in the intended way in the target situation. Loyalty refers to the interpersonal relationship between the translator, the source-text sender, the target-text addressees and the initiator, (Nord, 2001). The combination of function and loyalty is the successful point of Nord's functionalist approach, and are respectively the two pillars of her approach which also answers many scholars criticism of Skopos theory.

The dethroning of the source text and the multiplicity of readings and purposes lead to a multiplicity of translation(s), which runs counter to said equivalent effect. In this way, equivalence may be one possible aim in translational action(s) (Aveling, 2002). Nord (1997:35) dismisses "equivalence" as "a static, result-oriented concept." As Reiss and Vermeer (1984:113) claim, "the message produced by the translator must be interpretable in a way that is coherent with the target recipient's situation."

In this chapter, CL and the skopos theory have been reviewed. The next chapter discusses the application of the skopos theory in translating CL by examining examples from the translation of a passage taken from the novel *The Wind in the Willows*.

### 3. A Chapter Taken From “The Wind in The Willows” and Translation Into Arabic

This chapter provides a summary of *The Wind in The Willows*, a story directed at children. A brief note on the author's life is also provided.

#### 3.1 Summary of "The Wind in the Willows"

The story begins with Mole taking a break from spring-cleaning, and wandering into the new world of the riverbank. He meets Ratty, the water rat, who spends all his time on or by the river. Rat takes Mole for a trip in his rowing boat. The two animals have a picnic and Rat tells Mole about his friend, Badger, who lives in the Wild Wood. He says that Badger is his good friend but he warns Mole not to go into the wood because weasels and other bad animals also live there. It is the first time Mole has ever been in a boat and he is very excited. But when he tries to row, the boat turns over and he and Rat end up in the water. Rat pushes him onto the bank and asks Mole to come and stay with him so he can learn about the river.

Sometime later, Rat takes Mole in his boat to meet Toad at Toad Hall. Toad is a rich and very boastful character, and he tends to develop obsessive fascination for things. He says boats are boring and together the three animals go off in Toad's latest passion – a gipsy caravan. But when they are travelling slowly along the open road, the caravan is suddenly driven off the road by a speeding car. Toad has never seen a car before and he loses all interest in his caravan. The very next day, he goes to London to buy a very big and expensive car.

Winter comes and Rat and Mole spend many days together, dozing in Rat's riverbank hole. But one afternoon, while Ratty was asleep, and despite his earlier warning, Mole decides to go and visit Badger in the Wild Wood. But everything looks different now it is the middle of winter and he becomes lost, tired and afraid. When Rat wakes up he realizes Mole has gone to the Wild Wood and so he sets off to look for him. Fortunately, more by luck than good judgment, Rat finds him and together they stumble over the snow-covered entrance to Badger's home. Badger is a rather gruff animal, and he doesn't like visitors. At first he is annoyed at being woken up, but when he realizes it is his dear friend, Rat, and Mole, he takes them into his cozy home and makes them a

nice hot meal. Badger wants to know all the news about what is happening on the river and Rat tells him about Toad's new obsession with cars. The next morning, Badger's friend, Otter, comes to visit, and after breakfast Badger shows the three animals another way to leave the Wild Wood, through underground tunnels.

Meanwhile, Toad has been terrorizing the neighborhood in a succession of sports cars. Badger visits Rat and Mole because he has decided it is time to take Toad in hand. Badger, Rat and Mole go to Toad Hall and Badger tells him to stop driving the cars. But Toad loves driving cars too much! Badger tells Rat and Mole to lock Toad in his bedroom. But Toad manages to get away from them by pretending to be ill. He runs away and steals a car, but the police catch him and he is sent to prison for 20 years. The daughter of one of the prison officers helps Toad escape from prison dressed as a washerwoman. He has many adventures and eventually makes it back to the river after riding on a train, a barge, a horse and then the very same car that got him sent to prison in the first place!

Toad is finally rescued from the river by Rat and learns the dreadful news that weasels have taken over Toad Hall and are guarding it, armed with guns. However, with the help of Badger, Rat and Mole, he regains possession of his ancestral home after a spectacular fight. Badger tells Toad that he must have a party to thank all his friends for their help. At first, Toad is too lazy to write the invitations, but when he sees how angry Badger is he goes straight to his desk to begin writing. He wants to use the party as an opportunity to be the centre of attention and to boast to everybody about his adventures. His friends persuade him to be more modest. Toad vows to be a different, less boastful toad from now on.

### 3.2 About the Author

“Kenneth Grahame was born in Edinburgh in 1859, the son of a lawyer. His father was a heavy drinker and when his mother died of scarlet fever, he was sent to live with his grandparents in Berkshire. Her house, set in a large garden by the River Thames, is thought to be the background for *The Wind in the Willows*.” (Cited from [http://www.bbc.co.uk/pressoffice/pressreleases/stories/2006/12\\_december/05/willows\\_grahame.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/pressoffice/pressreleases/stories/2006/12_december/05/willows_grahame.shtml)).

“Grahame wanted to attend Oxford University, but was not allowed to do so by his guardian on grounds of cost. Instead he was sent to work at the Bank of England in 1879.

He wrote many successful works like: *Pagan Paper* (1893), *The Golden Age* (1895), *Dream Days* (1898) and *The Wind in the Willows* (1908).

Grahame died in Pangbourne, Berkshire, in 1932. He is buried in Holywell Cemetery, Oxford.” (Cited from Wikipedia/kenneth grahame).

### 3.3 The English Source Text

#### THE RIVER BANK

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 his back aching and his 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. So he scraped and scratched and scabbled and scrooged and then he scrooged again and scabbled and scratched and scraped, working busily with his little paws and muttering to himself, ‘Up we go! Up we go!’ till at last, pop! his snout came out into the sunlight, and he found himself rolling in the warm grass of a great meadow.

‘This is fine!’ he said to himself. ‘This is better than whitewashing!’ The sunshine struck hot on his fur, soft breezes caressed his heated brow, and after the seclusion of the cellarage he had lived in so long the carol of happy birds fell on his dulled hearing almost like a shout. Jumping off all his four legs at once, in the joy of living and the delight of spring without its cleaning, he pursued his way across the meadow till he reached the hedge on the further side.

‘Hold up!’ said an elderly rabbit at the gap. ‘Sixpence for the privilege of passing by the private road!’ He was bowled over in an instant by the impatient and contemptuous Mole, who trotted along the side of the hedge chaffing the other rabbits as they peeped hurriedly from their holes to see what the row was about.

‘Onion-sauce! Onion-sauce!’ he remarked jeeringly, and was gone before they could think of a thoroughly satisfactory reply. Then they all started grumbling at each other.

‘How stupid you are! Why didn’t you tell him-’ ‘Well, why didn’t you say-’ ‘You might have reminded him-’ and so on, in the usual way; but, of course, it was then much too late, as is always the case.

It all seemed too good to be true. Hither and thither through the meadows he rambled busily, along the hedgerows, across the copses, finding everywhere birds building, flowers budding, leaves thrusting- everything happy, and progressive, and occupied. And instead of having an uneasy conscience pricking him and whispering ‘whitewash!’ he somehow could only feel how jolly it was to be the only idle dog among all these busy citizens. After all, the best part of a holiday is perhaps not so much to be resting yourself, as to see all the other fellows busy working.

He thought his happiness was complete when, as he meandered aimlessly along, suddenly he stood by the edge of a full-fed river. Never in his life had he seen a river before- this sleek, sinuous, full-bodied animal, chasing and chuckling, gripping things with a gurgle and leaving them with a laugh, to fling itself on fresh playmates that shook themselves free, and were caught and held again. All was a-shake and a-shiver- glints and gleams and sparkles, rustle and swirl, chatter and bubble. The Mole was bewitched, entranced, fascinated. By the side of the river he trotted as one trots, when very small, by the side of a man who holds one spell-bound by exciting stories; and when tired at last, he sat on the bank, while the river still chattered on to him, a babbling procession of the best stories in the world, sent from the heart of the earth to be told at last to the insatiable sea.

As he sat on the grass and looked across the river, a dark hole in the bank opposite, just above the water’s edge, caught his eye, and dreamily he fell to considering what a nice snug dwelling-place it would make for an animal with few wants and fond of a bijou riverside residence, above flood level and remote from noise and dust. As he gazed, something bright and small seemed to twinkle down in the heart of it, vanished, then twinkled once more like a tiny star. But it could hardly be a star in such an unlikely situation; and it was too glittering and small for a glow-worm. Then, as he looked, it

winked at him, and so declared itself to be an eye; and a small face began gradually to grow up round it, like a frame round a picture.

A brown little face, with whiskers.

A grave round face, with the same twinkle in its eye that had first attracted his notice.

Small neat ears and thick silky hair.

It was the Water Rat!

Then the two animals stood and regarded each other cautiously.

‘Hullo, Mole!’ said the Water Rat.

‘Hullo, Rat!’ said the Mole.

‘Would you like to come over?’ enquired the Rat presently.

‘Oh, it’s all very well to talk,’ said the Mole, rather pettishly, he being new to a river and riverside life and its ways.

The Rat said nothing, but stooped and unfastened a rope and hauled on it; then lightly stepped into a little boat which the Mole had not observed. It was painted blue outside and white within, and was just the size for two animals; and the Mole’s whole heart went out to it at once, even though he did not yet fully understand its uses.

The Rat sculled smartly across and made fast. Then he held up his forepaw as the Mole stepped gingerly down. ‘Lean on that!’ he said. ‘Now then, step lively!’ and the Mole to his surprise and rapture found himself actually seated in the stern of a real boat.

‘This has been a wonderful day!’ said he, as the Rat shoved off and took to the sculls again. ‘Do you know, I’ve never been in a boat before in all my life.’

‘What?’ cried the Rat, open-mouthed: ‘Never been in a- you never- well, I-what have you been doing, then?’

‘Is it so nice as all that?’ asked the Mole shyly, though he was quite prepared to believe it as he leant back in his seat and surveyed the cushions, the oars, the rowlocks, and all the fascinating fittings, and felt the boat sway lightly under him.

‘Nice? It’s the only thing,’ said the Water Rat solemnly, as he leant forward for his stroke. ‘Believe me, my young friend, there is nothing- absolutely nothing-half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats. Simply messing,’ he went on dreamily: ‘messing- about- in- boats; messing-’

‘Look ahead, Rat!’ cried the Mole suddenly.

It was too late. The boat struck the bank full tilt. The dreamer, the joyous oarsman, lay on his back at the bottom of the boat, his heels in the air.

‘-about in boats- or with boats,’ the Rat went on composedly, picking himself up with a pleasant laugh. ‘In or out of ‘em, it doesn’t matter. Nothing seems really to matter, that’s the charm of it. Whether you get away, or whether you don’t; whether you arrive at your destination or whether you reach somewhere else, or whether you never get anywhere at all, you’re always busy, and you never do anything in particular; and when you’ve done it there’s always something else to do, and you can do it if you like, but you’d much better not. Look here! If you’ve really nothing else on hand this morning, supposing we drop down the river together, and have a long day of it?’

The Mole waggled his toes from sheer happiness, spread his chest with a sigh of full contentment, and leaned back blissfully into the soft cushions. ‘What a day I’m having!’ he said. ‘Let us start at once!’

‘Hold hard a minute, then!’ said the Rat. He looped the painter through a ring in his landing-stage, climbed up into his hole above, and after a short interval reappeared staggering under a fat, wicker luncheon-basket.

‘Shove that under your feet,’ he observed to the Mole, as he passed it down into the boat. Then he untied the painter and took the sculls again.

‘What’s inside it?’ asked the Mole, wriggling with curiosity.

‘There’s cold chicken inside it,’ replied the Rat briefly; ‘cold tongue cold ham cold beef pickled gherkins salad french rolls cress sandwiches potted meat ginger beer lemonade soda water-’

‘O stop, stop,’ cried the Mole in ecstasies: ‘This is too much!’

‘Do you really think so?’ enquired the Rat seriously. ‘It’s only what I always take on these little excursions; and the other animals are always telling me that I’m a mean beast and cut it very fine!’

The Mole never heard a word he was saying. Absorbed in the new life he was entering upon, intoxicated with the sparkle, the ripple, the scents and the sounds and the sunlight, he trailed a paw in the water and dreamed long waking dreams.

The Water Rat, like the good little fellow he was, sculled steadily on and forbore to disturb him.

‘I like your clothes awfully, old chap,’ he remarked after some half an hour or so had passed. ‘I’m going to get a black velvet smoking-suit myself some day, as soon as I can afford it.’

‘I beg your pardon,’ said the Mole, pulling himself together with an effort. ‘You must think me very rude; but all this is so new to me. So- this- is- a- River!’

‘The River,’ corrected the Rat.

‘And you really live by the river? What a jolly life!’

‘By it and with it and on it and in it,’ said the Rat. ‘It’s brother and sister to me, and aunts, and company, and food and drink, and (naturally) washing. It’s my world, and I don’t want any other. What it hasn’t got is not worth having, and what it doesn’t know is not worth knowing. Lord! the times we’ve had together! Whether in winter or summer, spring or autumn, it’s always got its fun and its excitements. When the floods are on in February, and my cellars and basement are brimming with drink that’s no good to me, and the brown water runs by my best bedroom window; or again when it all drops away and shows patches of mud that smells like plum-cake, and the rushes and weed clog the channels, and I can potter about dry shod over most of the bed of it and find fresh food to eat, and things careless people have dropped out of boats!’

‘But isn’t it a bit dull at times?’ the Mole ventured to ask. ‘Just you and the river, and no one else to pass a word with?’

‘No one else to- well, I mustn’t be hard on you,’ said the Rat with forbearance. ‘You’re new to it, and of course you don’t know. The bank is so crowded nowadays that many people are moving away altogether: O no, it isn’t what it used to be, at all. Otters, kingfishers, dabchicks, moorhens, all of them about all day long and always wanting you to do something- as if a fellow had no business of his own to attend to!’

‘What lies over there?’ asked the Mole, waving a paw towards a background of woodland that darkly framed the water-meadows on one side of the river.

‘That? O, that’s just the Wild Wood,’ said the Rat shortly. ‘We don’t go there very much, we river-bankers.’ ‘Aren’t they- aren’t they very nice people in there?’ said the Mole, a trifle nervously.

‘W-e-ll,’ replied the Rat, ‘let me see. The squirrels are all right. And the rabbits- some of ‘em, but rabbits are a mixed lot. And then there’s Badger, of course. He lives right in the heart of it; wouldn’t live anywhere else, either, if you paid him to do it. Dear old Badger! Nobody interferes with him. They’d better not,’ he added significantly.

‘Why, who should interfere with him?’ asked the Mole.

‘Well, of course- there- are others,’ explained the Rat in a hesitating sort of way.

‘Weasels- and stoats- and foxes- and so on. They’re all right in a way- I’m very good friends with them- pass the time of day when we meet, and all that- but they break out sometimes, there’s no denying it, and then- well, you can’t really trust them, and that’s the fact.’

The Mole knew well that it is quite against animal-etiquette to dwell on possible trouble ahead, or even to allude to it; so he dropped the subject.

‘And beyond the Wild Wood again?’ he asked: ‘Where it’s all blue and dim, and one sees what may be hills or perhaps they mayn’t, and something like the smoke of towns, or is it only cloud-drift?’

‘Beyond the Wild Wood comes the Wide World,’ said the Rat. ‘And that’s something that doesn’t matter, either to you or me. I’ve never been there, and I’m never going, nor you either, if you’ve got any sense at all. Don’t ever refer to it again, please. Now then! Here’s our backwater at last, where we’re going to lunch.’

Leaving the main stream, they now passed into what seemed at first sight like a little landlocked lake. Green turf sloped down to either edge, brown snaky tree -roots gleamed below the surface of the quiet water, while ahead of them the silvery shoulder and foamy tumble of a weir, arm-in-arm with a restless dripping mill-wheel, that held up in its turn a grey-gabled mill-house, filled the air with a soothing murmur of sound, dull and smothery, yet with little clear voices speaking up cheerfully out of it at intervals. It was so very beautiful that the Mole could only hold up both forepaws and gasp, ‘O my! O my! O my!’

The Rat brought the boat alongside the bank, made her fast, helped the still awkward Mole safely ashore, and swung out the luncheon-basket. The Mole begged as a favour to be allowed to unpack it all by himself; and the Rat was very pleased to indulge him, and to sprawl at full length on the grass and rest, while his excited friend shook out the table-cloth and spread it, took out all the mysterious packets one by one and arranged their contents in due order, still gasping, ‘O my! O my!’ at each fresh revelation. When all was ready, the Rat said, ‘Now, pitch in, old fellow!’ and the Mole was indeed very glad to obey, for he had started his spring-cleaning at a very early hour that morning, as people will do, and had not paused for bite or sup; and he had been through a very great deal since that distant time which now seemed so many days ago.

‘What are you looking at?’ said the Rat presently, when the edge of their hunger was somewhat dulled, and the Mole’s eyes were able to wander off the tablecloth a little.

‘I am looking,’ said the Mole, ‘at a streak of bubbles that I see travelling along the surface of the water. That is a thing that strikes me as funny.’

‘Bubbles? Oho!’ said the Rat, and chirruped cheerily in an inviting sort of way.

A broad glistening muzzle showed itself above the edge of the bank, and the Otter hauled himself out and shook the water from his coat.

‘Greedy beggars!’ he observed, making for the provender. ‘Why didn’t you invite me, Ratty?’

‘This was an impromptu affair,’ explained the Rat. ‘By the way -my friend Mr. Mole.’

‘Proud, I’m sure,’ said the Otter, and the two animals were friends forthwith.

‘Such a rumpus everywhere!’ continued the Otter. ‘All the world seems out on the river to-day. I came up this backwater to try and get a moment’s peace, and then stumble upon you fellows!- At least- I beg pardon- I don’t exactly mean that, you know.’

There was a rustle behind them, proceeding from a hedge wherein last year’s leaves still clung thick, and a stripy head, with high shoulders behind it, peered forth on them.

‘Come on, old Badger!’ shouted the Rat.

The Badger trotted forward a pace or two; then grunted, ‘H’m! Company,’ and turned his back and disappeared from view.

‘That’s just the sort of fellow he is!’ observed the disappointed Rat. ‘Simply hates Society! Now we shan’t see any more of him to-day. Well, tell us, who’s out on the river?’

‘Toad’s out, for one,’ replied the Otter. ‘In his brand-new wagger-boat; new togs, new everything!’

The two animals looked at each other and laughed.

‘Once, it was nothing but sailing,’ said the Rat. ‘Then he tired of that and took to punting. Nothing would please him but to punt all day and every day, and a nice mess he made of it. Last year it was house-boating, and we all had to go and stay with him in his house-boat, and pretend we liked it. He was going to spend the rest of his life in a house-boat. It’s all the same, whatever he takes up; he gets tired of it, and starts on something fresh.’

‘Such a good fellow, too,’ remarked the Otter reflectively: ‘But no stability especially in a boat!’

From where they sat they could get a glimpse of the main stream across the island that separated them; and just then a wagger-boat flashed into view, the rower a short, stout figure- splashing badly and rolling a good deal, but working his hardest. The

Rat stood up and hailed him, but Toad- for it was he- shook his head and settled sternly to his work.

‘He’ll be out of the boat in a minute if he rolls like that,’ said the Rat, sitting down again.

‘Of course he will,’ chuckled the Otter. ‘Did I ever tell you that good story about Toad and the lock-keeper? It happened this way. Toad....’

An errant May-fly swerved unsteadily athwart the current in the intoxicated fashion affected by young bloods of May-flies seeing life. A swirl of water and a ‘cloop!’ and the May-fly was visible no more.

Neither was the Otter.

The Mole looked down. The voice was still in his ears, but the turf whereon he had sprawled was clearly vacant. Not an Otter to be seen, as far as the distant horizon.

But again there was a streak of bubbles on the surface of the river.

The Rat hummed a tune, and the Mole recollected that animal-etiquette forbade any sort of comment on the sudden disappearance of one’s friends at any moment, for any reason or no reason whatever.

‘Well, well,’ said the Rat, ‘I suppose we ought to be moving. I wonder which of us had better pack the luncheon-basket?’ He did not speak as if he was frightfully eager for the treat.

‘O, please let me,’ said the Mole. So, of course, the Rat let him.

Packing the basket was not quite such pleasant work as unpacking the basket. It never is. But the Mole was bent on enjoying everything, and although just when he had got the basket packed and strapped up tightly he saw a plate staring up at him from the grass, and when the job had been done again the Rat pointed out a fork which anybody ought to have seen, and last of all, behold! the mustard pot, which he had been sitting on without knowing it- still, somehow, the thing got finished at last, without much loss of temper.

The afternoon sun was getting low as the Rat sculled gently homewards in a dreamy mood, murmuring poetry-things over to himself, and not paying much attention to Mole. But the Mole was very full of lunch, and self-satisfaction, and pride, and already quite at home in a boat (so he thought) and was getting a bit restless besides: and presently he said, ‘Ratty! Please, I want to row, now!’

The Rat shook his head with a smile. ‘Not yet, my young friend,’ he said ‘wait till you’ve had a few lessons. It’s not so easy as it looks.’

The Mole was quiet for a minute or two. But he began to feel more and more jealous of Rat, sculling so strongly and so easily along, and his pride began to whisper that he could do it every bit as well. He jumped up and seized the sculls, so suddenly, that the Rat, who was gazing out over the water and saying more poetry-things to himself, was taken by surprise and fell backwards off his seat with his legs in the air for the second time, while the triumphant Mole took his place and grabbed the sculls with entire confidence.

‘Stop it, you silly ass!’ cried the Rat, from the bottom of the boat. ‘You can’t do it! You’ll have us over!’

The Mole flung his sculls back with a flourish, and made a great dig at the water. He missed the surface altogether, his legs flew up above his head, and he found himself lying on the top of the prostrate Rat. Greatly alarmed, he made a grab at the side of the boat, and the next moment- Sploosh!

Over went the boat, and he found himself struggling in the river.

O my, how cold the water was, and O, how very wet it felt. How it sang in his ears as he went down, down, down! How bright and welcome the sun looked as he rose to the surface coughing and spluttering! How black was his despair when he felt himself sinking again! Then a firm paw gripped him by the back of his neck. It was the Rat, and he was evidently laughing- the Mole could feel him laughing, right down his arm and through his paw, and so into his- the Mole’s- neck.

The Rat got hold of a scull and shoved it under the Mole’s arm; then he did the same by the other side of him and, swimming behind, propelled the helpless animal to shore, hauled him out, and set him down on the bank, a squashy, pulpy lump of misery.

When the Rat had rubbed him down a bit, and wrung some of the wet out of him, he said, ‘Now, then, old fellow! Trot up and down the towing-path as hard as you can, till you’re warm and dry again, while I dive for the luncheon-basket.’

So the dismal Mole, wet without and ashamed within, trotted about till he was fairly dry, while the Rat plunged into the water again, recovered the boat, righted her and made her fast, fetched his floating property to shore by degrees, and finally dived successfully for the luncheon-basket and struggled to land with it.

When all was ready for a start once more, the Mole, limp and dejected, took his seat in the stern of the boat; and as they set off, he said in a low voice, broken with emotion, ‘Ratty, my generous friend! I am very sorry indeed for my foolish and ungrateful conduct. My heart quite fails me when I think how I might have lost that

beautiful luncheon-basket. Indeed, I have been a complete ass, and I know it. Will you overlook it this once and forgive me, and let things go on as before?’

‘That’s all right, bless you!’ responded the Rat cheerily. ‘What’s a little wet to a Water Rat? I’m more in the water than out of it most days. Don’t you think any more about it; and, look here! I really think you had better come and stop with me for a little time. It’s very plain and rough, you know- not like Toad’s house at all but you haven’t seen that yet; still, I can make you comfortable. And I’ll teach you to row, and to swim, and you’ll soon be as handy on the water as any of us.’

The Mole was so touched by his kind manner of speaking that he could find no voice to answer him; and he had to brush away a tear or two with the back of his paw. But the Rat kindly looked in another direction, and presently the Mole’s spirits revived again, and he was even able to give some straight back-talk to a couple of moorhens who were sniggering to each other about his bedraggled appearance.

When they got home, the Rat made a bright fire in the parlor, and planted the Mole in an arm-chair in front of it, having fetched down a dressing-gown and slippers for him, and told him river stories till supper-time. Very thrilling stories they were, too, to an earth-dwelling animal like Mole. Stories about weirs, and sudden floods, and leaping pike, and steamers that flung hard bottles- at least bottles were certainly flung, and *from* steamers, so presumably *by* them; and about herons, and how particular they were whom they spoke to; and about adventures down drains, and night-fishings with Otter, or excursions far a-field with Badger.

Supper was a most cheerful meal; but very shortly afterwards a terribly sleepy Mole had to be escorted upstairs by his considerate host, to the best bedroom, where he soon laid his head on his pillow in great peace and contentment, knowing that his new-found friend the River was lapping the sill of his window.

This day was only the first of many similar ones for the emancipated Mole, each of them longer and full of interest as the ripening summer moved onward.

He learnt to swim and to row, and entered into the joy of running water; and with his ear to the reed-stems he caught, at intervals, something of what the wind went whispering so constantly among them.

## II

### THE OPEN ROAD

‘RATTY,’ said the Mole suddenly, one bright summer morning, ‘if you please, I want to ask you a favour.’

The Rat was sitting on the river bank, singing a little song. He had just composed it himself, so he was very taken up with it, and would not pay proper attention to Mole or anything else. Since early morning he had been swimming in the river, in company with his friends the ducks. And when the ducks stood on their heads suddenly, as ducks will, he would dive down and tickle their necks, just under where their chins would be if ducks had chins, till they were forced to come to the surface again in a hurry, spluttering and angry and shaking their feathers at him, for it is impossible to say quite *all* you feel when your head is under water. At last they implored him to go away and attend to his own affairs and leave them to mind theirs. So the Rat went away, and sat on the river bank in the sun, and made up a song about them, which he called ‘DUCKS’ DITTY.’

All along the backwater,  
Through the rushes tall,  
Ducks are a-dabbling,  
Up tails all!  
Ducks’ tails, drakes’ tails,  
Yellow feet a-quiver,  
Yellow bills all out of sight  
Busy in the river!  
Slushy green undergrowth  
Where the roach swim-  
Here we keep our larder,  
Cool and full and dim.  
Everyone for what he likes!  
We like to be  
Heads down, tails up,  
Dabbling free!  
High in the blue above  
Swifts whirl and call-  
We are down a-dabbling ,  
Up tails all!

‘I don’t know that I think so *very* much of that little song, Rat,’ observed the Mole cautiously. He was no poet himself and didn’t care who knew it; and he had a candid nature.

‘Nor don’t the ducks neither,’ replied the Rat cheerfully. ‘They say, “*Why* can’t fellows be allowed to do what they like *when* they like and *as* they like, instead of other fellows sitting on banks and watching them all the time and making remarks and poetry and things about them? What nonsense it all is!” That’s what the ducks say.’

‘So it is, so it is,’ said the Mole, with great heartiness.

‘No, it isn’t!’ cried the Rat indignantly.

‘Well then, it isn’t, it isn’t,’ replied the Mole soothingly. ‘But what I wanted to ask you was, won’t you take me to call on Mr. Toad? I’ve heard so much about him, and I do so want to make his acquaintance.’

‘Why, certainly,’ said the good-natured Rat, jumping to his feet and dismissing poetry from his mind for the day. ‘Get the boat out, and we’ll paddle up there at once. It’s never the wrong time to call on Toad. Early or late he’s always the same fellow. Always good-tempered, always glad to see you, always sorry when you go!’

‘He must be a very nice animal,’ observed the Mole, as he got into the boat and took the sculls, while the Rat settled himself comfortably in the stern.

‘He is indeed the best of animals,’ replied Rat. ‘So simple, so good-natured, and so affectionate. Perhaps he’s not very clever- we can’t all be geniuses; and it may be that he is both boastful and conceited. But he has got some great qualities, has Toady.’

Rounding a bend in the river, they came in sight of a handsome, dignified old house of mellowed red brick, with well-kept lawns reaching down to the water’s edge.

‘There’s Toad Hall,’ said the Rat; ‘and that creek on the left, where the notice board says, “Private. No landing allowed,” leads to his boat-house, where we’ll leave the boat. The stables are over there to the right. That’s the banqueting-hall you’re looking at now- very old, that is. Toad is rather rich, you know, and this is really one of the nicest houses in these parts, though we never admit as much to Toad.’

They glided up the creek, and the Mole shipped his sculls as they passed into the shadow of a large boathouse. Here they saw many handsome boats, slung from the crossbeams or hauled up on a slip, but none in the water; and the place had an unused and a deserted air.

The Rat looked around him. ‘I understand,’ said he. ‘Boating is played out. He’s tired of it, and done with it. I wonder what new fad he has taken up now? Come along and let’s look him up. We shall hear all about it quite soon enough.’

They disembarked, and strolled across the gay flower-decked lawns in search of Toad, whom they presently happened upon resting in a wicker garden-chair, with a preoccupied expression of face, and a large map spread out on his knees.

‘Hooray!’ he cried, jumping up on seeing them, ‘this is splendid!’ He shook the paws of both of them warmly, never waiting for an introduction to the Mole. ‘How kind of you!’ He went on, dancing round them. ‘I was just going to send a boat down the river for you, Ratty, with strict orders that you were to be fetched up here at once, whatever you were doing. I want you badly- both of you. Now what will you take? Come inside and have something! You don’t know how lucky it is, your turning up just now!’

‘Let’s sit quiet a bit, Toady!’ said the Rat, throwing himself into an easy chair, while the Mole took another by the side of him and made some civil remark about Toad’s ‘delightful residence.’

‘Finest house on the whole river,’ cried Toad boisterously. ‘Or anywhere else, for that matter,’ he could not help adding.

Here the Rat nudged the Mole. Unfortunately the Toad saw him do it, and turned very red.

### 3.4 The Arabic Target Text (Translation):

#### النسيم في الصفصاف

على ضفة النهر

كان الخلد يعمل بجد طوال الصباح في تنظيف ربيعي لبيته الصغير، مبتدئاً بالفُرَش ثم بماسحات الغبار على درجات السلالم و الكراسي ، مستخدماً الفرشاة و الدلو ذو الماء الكلسي حتى دخل الغبار حنجرته و عينيه و تلتخ فراؤه الأسود بلطخ الكلس و ألمه ظهره و تعبت ذراعيه . كان جو الربيع يملأ الهواء في الأعلى و الأرض في الأسفل و المكان حوله و يتغلغل حتى في بيته الصغير المنخفض و المظلم بروح الغضب الإلهي و الشوق.

و ياللعجب ! فقد طرح فرشاته أرضاً قائلاً : " ياللسأم ! " و " ياللضجر ! " و قال أيضاً : " أوقف التنظيف الربيعي ! " و اندفع خارجاً من المنزل حتى دون أن يلبس معطفه.

و في الأعلى كان ثمة شيئاً ما يستحته بقوةٍ ، فاتجه نحو القناة الصغيرة شديدة الانحدار التي توصله إلى السكة ذات الحصى و التي يملكها حيوانات مكان إقامتهم أقرب إلى الشمس و الهواء. و هكذا نبش و خمش و خربش و تحمّل الوضع الصعب ثم تحمّل و خربش و خمش و نبش عاملاً بنشاط بمخالبه الصغيرة و متمتماً لنفسه : ' إلى الأعلى إلى

الأعلى ! حتى وصل في النهاية و قفز مخرجاً أنفه إلى ضوء الشمس ووجد نفسه يتدحرج على العشب الدافئ في  
المرج الفسيح .

" هذا حسن ! " قال لنفسه " و هذا أفضل من الماء الكلسي ! " . سفعت أشعة الشمس فراءه بحرارتها و داعبت  
نسماتٌ لطيفة جبهته الحارة، و بعد أن عاش منعزلاً في قبوه لمدة طويلة فإن تغريد العصافير في أذنيه البلديتين بدا و  
كأنه الصراخ. قافزاً على قوائمه الأربعة حالاً، فرحاً بالحياة و مسروراً بالربيع دون تنظيفه؛ تابع طريقه عبر المرج  
حتى وصل السور في الجانب الآخر.

"توقف" قال الأرنب العجوز الذي يقف عند الفجوة " سنة بنسات تعرفه المرور في الطريق الخاص". و في لحظة  
طرح أرضاً بواسطة الخلد العجول و الهازيء الذي قفز على طول سياج الشجيرات مماًزحاً الأرانب الأخرى التي  
اختلست النظر من ججورها لتعرف سبب الشجار. " حساء البصل ! حساء البصل ! " قال باستهزاء و كان قد ذهب  
قبل أن يفكروا بإجابة مقنعة تماماً. ثم بدؤوا جميعاً يتمتمون لبعضهم البعض: " يا لك من غبي! لم تخبره؟ " " حسناً  
لم لم تقل- " " كان ينبغي عليك أن تذكره- " و هكذا بالطريقة المعتادة ، و لكن طبعاً كان الأوان قد فات كما هي الحال  
دائماً.

كان رائعاً أن يبدو كل شيء حقيقياً. تجول في المروج هنا و هناك بنشاط على طول الأسيجة الشجرية و عبر  
الأجمات مكتشفاً طيوراً تبني و أزهاراً تتبرعم و أوراقاً تنمو في كل مكان و كل شيء يبدو سعيداً و في حالة نمو و  
انشغال. و بدل أن يحس بضميره يؤنبه بشدة و يهمس له " التنظيف" فقد أحس بطريقة ما كم كان رائعاً الشعور بأن  
يكون هو ذلك الكسول بين كل هؤلاء السكان المنشغلين. و بعد كل هذا لم يكن الجزء الأفضل في العطلة أن تريح  
نفسك كثيراً و أنت ترى كل أولئك الأصحاب يعملون بجد.

ظنّ أنّ سعادته قد اكتملت و هو يتجول قُدماً بلا هدف، و فجأةً وقف عند حافة نهر يفيض. لم يسبق له أن رأى نهراً  
في حياته – هذا الحيوان الممتلئ و المتلو ذو الشعر الأملس الذي يركض و يضحك؛ فيمسك الأشياء مقرقراً و يفلتها  
ضاحكاً و يرمي نفسه على أصدقاء جدد و هم يحاولون الإفلات و يمسك بهم ثانية. كان كل شيء فيه اهتزاز و ارتجاف  
و كان اللمعان و البريق و الوميض و صوت حفيف و عباب يثرثر و يصدر فقاعات. كان الخلد مسحوراً و مفتوناً و  
مسلوب اللب. هروا الخلد عند ضفة النهر كما يهرول أي شخص و إذ ذاك حيث بدا صغيراً جداً عندما مر بجانب  
الرجل الذي كان يمسك إحدى القصص المثيرة، و عندما تعب في النهاية جلس عند ضفة النهر بينما النهر ما زال  
يثرثر معه سلسلة هذر لأروع القصص في العالم و تتطلق من قلب الأرض لتصب في البحر النهم أخيراً.

و لما جلس على العشب و نظر عبر النهر استرعى انتباهه حفرة مظلمة في الضفة مقابله و تقع تماما فوق حد الماء و أخذ يتأمل حالما كم سيكون مسكنا دافئا و جميلا لحيوان ذو احتياجات قليلة و مولع بالإقامة الأنيقة جانب النهر فوق مستوى الفيضان و بعيدا عن الضوضاء و الغبار. و بينما كان يحدق بدا له أن هناك شيء لامع و صغير لمع في داخلها و تلاشى ثم لمع مرة أخرى كنجم صغير. و لكن من الصعب أن يكون نجما في حال كهذه و كان صغيرا و لامعا جدا أكثر من الحباب. ثم و بينما كان ينظر نحوه غمزه و أفصح عن نفسه بأنه عين؛ و أخذ وجه صغير يكبر حولها تدريجيا كما الإطار حول الصورة.

وجه بني صغير ذو شوارب. وجه مدور غامض يحمل في عينيه نفس الوميض الذي اجتذبه أول مرة، ذو أذنان صغيرتان انيقتان و شعر حريري سميك. لقد كان جرد الماء! وقف الاثنان و حيا أحدهما الآخر بحذر.

" مرحباً أيها الخلد!" قال جرد الماء.

" مرحباً أيها الجرد!" قال الخلد.

" هل تود المجيء؟" تساءل الجرد في الحال.

" حسناً، من الجيد أن نتحدث " قال الخلد متردداً حيث أن النهر و الحياة عند ضفة النهر و طرقها كان شيئاً جديداً بالنسبة له.

لم يقل الجرد شيئاً و لكن انحنى و فك حبلاً و شده ثم قفز بخفة إلى القارب الصغير الذي لم يكن الخلد قد انتبه إليه. كان القارب مطلياً بالأزرق من الخارج و بالأبيض داخله و كان يتسع لاثنتين فقط؛ و في الحال طار قلب الخلد نحوه مع أنه لم يفهم بعد استخداماته تماماً.

جذّف الجرد ببراعة عبر النهر و همّ بالإسراع. و بينما كان الخلد يخطو بحذر شديد نحو الأسفل، رفع الجرد مخلبه الأمامي قائلاً " اتكئ على هذا" و "الآن اقفز بقوة!". اندهش الخلد و ابتهج عندما وجد نفسه جالساً بحقٍ عند طرف قارب حقيقي.

" يا له من يوم رائع!" قال الخلد بينما انطلق الجرد ممسكاً بالمجداف ثانيةً. " هل تعلم أنني لم أركب قارباً قط طوال حياتي كلها. "

" ماذا؟" صاح الجرد فاتحاً فمه: " لم تركب يوماً—أنت أبدأ—حسناً ، أنا—ماذا كنت تفعل إذا؟"

" هل ركوب القارب شيء جميل جداً كما هو كل شيء؟" سأل الخلد بخجل، مع أنه كان مستعداً لتصديق ذلك تماماً

حالما استراح في مقعده متحسناً الوسائد و المجاذيف و مساند المجاذيف و جميع التجهيزات الرائعة و شعر أن القارب يهتز تحته بخفة.

" تقول جميل؟ إنه الشيء الوحيد،" قال جرد الماء بتجهم عندما انحنى للأمام أثناء تجديفه. " صدقتني يا صديقي الصغير، لا يوجد شيء- لاشيء مطلقاً- يستحق فعله كثيراً مثل التسكع بالقارب. التسكع ببساطة" تابع على نحو حالم: " التسكع - بالقارب؛ التسكع- ".

" انظر أمامك أيها الجرد" صرخ الخلد فجأة. و لكن كان الأوان قد فات. ضرب القارب كامل منعطف الضفة و استلقى المجذف الحالم المسرور على ظهره أسفل القارب رافعاً قدميه في الهواء. "- التسكع في القوارب - أو بالقوارب،" تابع الجرد باطمئنان ناهضاً مع ضحكة لطيفة. " لايهم سواء كنت في داخلهم أو خارجهم. لا يبدو أن هناك شيء ذو أهمية و هنا يكمن السحر. سواء ابتعدت أو لم تتبعد، و سواء وصلت إلى قدرك المحتوم أو إلى مكان آخر أو حتى أنك لم تصل إلى أي مكان آخر فأنت دائماً مشغول و لكنك لاتفعل شيئاً محددًا؛ و عندما تفرغ منه هنالك دائماً شيء آخر تفعله و يمكنك أن تفعله إذا أحببت و لكنك تفضل ألا تفعل. أصغ إلي، لنفترض أننا نزلنا معاً أسفل النهر -إذا لم يكن لديك ما تفعله هذا الصباح- و قضينا يوماً طويلاً هناك؟

هزّ الخلد أصابع قدميه بسعادة غامرة ثم أخذ نفساً عميقاً و تنهد برضا تام، و استرخى على الوسائد الطرية بسرور.

"ما أروع هذا اليوم!" قال هو. " دعنا نبدأ في الحال".

" إذاً تمسك بقوة لدقيقة!" قال الجرد و ربط حبل المركب في حلقة موجودة عند رصيف الميناء ثم صعد إلى جحره في الأعلى و ظهر ثانية بعد مدة قصيرة يترنح تحت ثقل سلة غذاء ممثلة مصنوعة من الخيزران.

" ادفع هذه تحت قدميك" قال للخلد بينما كان يضعها في المركب. بعد ذلك فك عقدة الحبل و أمسك المجاذيف ثانية.

"ماذا يوجد فيها؟" سأل الخلد و هو يتلوى بفضول، " يوجد فيها دجاج بارد،" أجاب الجرد باختصار؛ " لسان و لحم غنم و لحم بقر و مخلل الخيار و سلطة و لفائف فرنسية و شطائر الرشاد و لحم مقدر و شراب الزنجبيل و عصير الليمون و مياه غازية-"

" أرجوك توقف، توقف،" صاح الخلد في نشوة : " هذا كثير جداً"، " هل تظن ذلك حقاً؟" تساءل الجرد بجدية.

" لكن هذا ما أخذه معي دائماً في نزاهات صغيرة كهذه؛ إلا أن الحيوانات الأخرى تقول أنني حيوان بخيل و أحسبها بدقة!"

لم يسمع الخلد كلمة مما قاله الجرد فقد كان منغمساً في الحياة التي دخلها للتو و نشوان بالتألق و خريير الماء و الروائح العطرة و الأصوات و ضوء الشمس، ثم مرّ قدمه في الماء و حلم احلام يقظة طويلة. و لأن الجرد كان ذلك الرفيق الطيب المتواضع فقد كان يجذف باستمرار ثم توقف ليقطع عليه تلك الأحلام.

" أنا معجب بثيابك كثيراً أيها الرجل الكبير، " أبدى ملاحظته هذه بعد مرور حوالي نصف ساعة أو أكثر. "يوما ما سأشتري لنفسى بذلة مخملية سوداء اللون حالما أستطيع دفع ثمنها. " " أستميحك عذراً " قال الخلد و هو يشد نفسه بجهد. " مؤكد أنك تعتقد أنني وقح و لكن كل هذا هو شيء جديد جدا علي. إذأ- هذا- يُسمّى نهراً! "

" النهر، " صححها له الجرذ.

" و أنت تعيش قرب النهر حقاً؟ يا لها من حياة رائعة! "

" قرب النهر و به، و على النهر و فيه، " " إنه أخ لي و أخت و عائلة و صحبة و طعام و شراب و مكان اغتسال بطبيعة الحال. إنه عالمي و لا أريد شيئاً آخر سواه. ما ليس فيه لا يستحق عناء الحصول عليه و ما لا يعرفه لا يستحق المعرفة. يا إلهي! ما أروع تلك الأيام التي قضيناها معاً! لقد تميزت دائماً بالأشياء المثيرة و المرح، سواء في الصيف أو الشتاء، و الربيع أو الخريف. يفيض الطابق الأرضي عندي و الدهاليز بسوائل سيئة عندما تبلغ الفيضانات ذروتها في شهر شباط و يجري الماء ذو اللون البني بجانب غرفة نومي المفضلة؛ و مرة أخرى عنما تتحسر مخلقة وراءها بقعاً من الوحل ذات رائحة تشبه رائحة كعكة الخوخ.

" و لكن ألا يصبح ذلك شيئاً مملاً مع مرور الوقت؟ " تجرأ الخلد و سأل. " أنت و النهر فقط و لا أحد آخر تتحدث معه؟ " .

" لا أحد آخر ل - حسناً، لن أقسو عليك، " قال الجرذ برفق. " أنت حديث العهد به و مؤكد أنك لا تعرف. ضفة النهر مزدحمة جداً هذه الأيام حتى أن بعض الناس ترتحل جماعات هذه الأيام: لا هي ليست أبداً كما هي عادة. إن ثعالب الماء و طيور القاوند و طيور الغطاس الصغير و طيور السحنون، كل أولئك موجودون طيلة اليوم و دائماً يطلبون منك أشياء تفعلها لهم و كأن المرء ليس لديه ما ينجزه لنفسه! "

" ماذا يوجد هنالك؟ " سأل الخلد مشيراً بإصبعه نحو الخلف عن غابة شكلت مروجاً مائية على إحدى ضفتي النهر على نحو مظلم.

" تلك؟ إنها الغابة فقط، " أجاب الجرذ باختصار. نحن لا نذهب هناك كثيراً. نحن الذين نعيش عند ضفاف النهر. " " أليسوا - أليسوا أناساً لطفاء أولئك الذين يعيشون هناك؟ قال الخلد و هو متوتر قليلاً. " حسناً، " أجاب الجرذ، " دعني أفكر. السناجب لا بأس بهم و بعض الأرناب أيضاً، إلا أن الأرناب مجموعة خليط. ثم بالتأكيد هنالك بادجر. إنه يعيش في قلب الغابة و لا يود العيش في أي مكان آخر حتى لو دفعت له مقابل ذلك. أه يا عزيزي بادجر! لا أحد يتدخل في شؤونه و خير لهم ألا يفعلوا، " أضاف الجرذ بجدية. " لماذا، و من الذي سيتدخل في شؤونه؟ " سأل الخلد. " حسناً، بالتأكيد هنالك آخرين، " وضح الجرذ بطريقة فيها شيء من التردد.

" هناك حيوانات ابن عرس و حيوانات القاقم و الثعالب و هلم جراً . كلهم لابس بهم نوعاً ما – و لي صداقات متينة معهم - و عندما نلتقي نمضي اليوم معاً- و كل ما هنالك و لكنهم يهربون في بعض الأحيان، لا يمكن إنكار ذلك، فإذا حسناً، لايمكنك الوثوق بهم فعلياً و هذه هي الحقيقة."

كان الخلد يعرف جيداً أن الإسهاب في الحديث عن مشكلة وشبكة الحدوث أو حتى التلميح إليها هو ضد آداب سلوك الحيوانات و لهذا فقد غير الموضوع. "

و ماذا يوجد خلف الغابة أيضاً؟" سأل هو: " ذلك المكان الكئيب و المعتم، و ما يبدو للمرء أنها هضاب ربما لا تكون كذلك، و أشياء تبدو مثل دخان المدن أو أنها مجرد سحب تسوقه الرياح؟"

" خلف الغابة يوجد العالم الكبير" قال الجرذ. " و هذا شيء ليس ذا أهمية لي أو لك. لم أذهب هناك يوماً و لن أفعل أبداً و لا حتى أنت أيضاً إذا كان لديك عقل على الإطلاق. من فضلك لا تعاود ذكر ذلك ثانية. و الآن إذن! وصلنا إلى مياهنا المنعزلة أخيراً حيث سنتناول طعامنا."

و لما ابتعدا عن الجدول الرئيسي، وصلا إلى ما يشبه للوهلة الأولى البحيرة الصغيرة المحاطة باليابسة. و كانت طبقة من العشب الأخضر تغطي كلا طرفيها، و كانت جذوع الأشجار بنية اللون التي تشبه الأفاعي تبرز تحت سطح الماء الساكن، بينما الحافة الفضية و السقوط المزبد للماء عند السد أمامهم يتزامن مع عجلة الطاحونة التي تلف بلا هواده و التي تحوي بدورها بيت الطاحونة ذا القبة المثلثية و تشبع الجو بتمتمات هادئة و كنيية و خانقة. إلا أنه مع ذلك هناك أصوات واضحة لأناس يتكلمون بمرح من وقت لآخر. كان ذلك رائعاً للغاية حتى أن الخلد لم يتمالك نفسه فرفع كنانا يديه و قال متعجباً: " يا إلهي ! يا إلهي ! يا إلهي !".

أحضر الجرذ القارب نحو الضفة النهر بسرعة معينة الخلد الذي لا يزال مذهولاً ليصل الشاطئ بأمان، و أرجح سلة الغداء خارجاً. و رجاه الخلد أن يترك له معروف إفراغها بنفسه؛ و كان الجرذ مسروراً جداً لتلبية رغبته و ليتمدد على العشب بكامل جسمه و يستريح، بينما نشر صديقه المتحمس غطاء الطاولة و مده؛ مخرجاً كل الرزم الغامضة واحدة تلو الأخرى و مرتباً محتوياتها ترتيباً مناسباً و هو لا يزال يتمتم " يا إلهي ! يا إلهي !" كلما أخرج شيئاً جديداً. و عندما أصبح كل شيء جاهزاً قال الجرذ: " و الآن، ابدأ الأكل أيها الرفيق القديم!"، و في الواقع فقد امتثل الخلد بسرور لهذا الأمر فقد بدأ التنظيف الربيعي في ساعة مبكرة من الصباح كما يفعل الناس عادة، و لم يتوقف ليأكل أو يشرب شيئاً؛ و قد مرّ بتجربة عظيمة منذ ذلك الوقت البعيد و الذي يبدو الآن و كأنه قد مضى لعدة أيام خلت. " إلام تنظر؟" قال الجرذ في الحال عندما هدأت حدة جوعهما و حيث أمكن لعيني الخلد أن تجولا خارج غطاء الطاولة قليلاً.

" أنا أنظر " قال الخلد " إلى سلسلة من الفقاعات التي تسير على سطح الماء. لقد فاجأتني على نحو مضحك. "

"فقاعات؟ أوه!" قال الجرذ وسقسق بسعادة و كأنه يدعو أحداً ما إلى وليمة.

ظهر خطم عريض لامع فوق حافة ضفة النهر، و جذب ثعلب الماء نفسه خارجاً و نفض الماء عن معطفه.

" أيها الشحاذون الجشعون " قال ثعلب الماء و هو يتجه نحو الطعام. " لم تدعني يا راتي؟ ". " لم نحضّر لهذا مسبقاً" وضح الجرذ. " بالمناسبة، صديقي السيد خلد."

" فخور بالطبع" قال ثعلب الماء، و أصبح الاثنان صديقين في الحال. " إنها الضوضاء في كل مكان" تابع ثعلب الماء. " يبدو أن كل من يعيش في النهر قد خرج إلى الضفة اليوم. لقد جئت إلى هذه المياه الراكدة لأحظى بلحظة سكونية و إذ بي أصادفكم هنا أيها الزملاء! أرجو عفوكم – على الأقل- لم أقصد ذلك و أنتم تعلمون."

كان هنالك حفيف خفهم يصدر من كومة أوراق شجر لا تزال تتكدس بسمك منذ السنة الماضية. و أطل من خلفها رأس مخطط بأكتاف عريضة و أنعم النظر نحوهم.

" تفضل يا صديقي القديم بادجر! " صاح الجرذ.

خطا بادجر خطوة أو اثنتين للأمام ثم نخر قائلاً : " آه، رفقة،" و أدار ظهره و اختفى عن ناظرهم.

" هكذا هو نوعه!" " علق قائلاً الجرذ خائب الأمل. " إنه يكره المجتمع ببساطة! لن نراه بعد الآن طوال اليوم. حسناً أخبرنا من يوجد على ضفة النهر؟ "

" العلجوم هناك لمرة واحدة" أجاب ثعلب الماء. " في قاربه الجديد كلياً و ملابسه الجديدة و كل شيء جديد!" و نظر كل منهما نحو الآخر و ضحكا.

" فيما مضى لم يكن يهتم سوى بالإبحار" قال الجرذ. " ثم ملّ ذلك و تحول إلى الإبحار بالقارب المطاطي. و لم يكن هنالك شيء يسعده أكثر من الإبحار بهذا القارب طوال اليوم و كل يوم و الفوضى التي يسببها. في العام الفائت كان مهتماً بالإبحار في القارب السكوني و كان علينا جميعاً أن نذهب لنبقى معه في قاربه السكوني و أن نتظاهر بأننا قد أحببناه. و كان على وشك أن يمضي بقية حياته في ذلك القارب السكوني. دائماً يتكرر نفس الشيء، يحب شيئاً ما كثيراً ثم يملّه و يبدأ شيئاً جديداً."

" يا له من صديق طيب أيضاً" قال ثعلب الماء متأملاً: " إلا أنه لا يوجد استقرار خاصة في القارب!"

و حينما جلسوا كان بإمكانهم رؤية الجدول الرئيسي عبر الجزيرة التي تفصلهم عنه؛ و بعد ذلك بقليل لمع قارب في الأفق و كان المجدف شخصاً ممتلئاً و قصيراً، صحيح أنه يخوض في الماء على نحو سيء و يتمايل بالقارب كثيراً

إلا أنه كان يبذل أقصى ما في وسعه. وقف الجرذ و حياه إلا أن العلجوم – بما أنه كان هو- هزّ رأسه و تابع عمله مقطب الوجه.

" سيكون خارج القرب خلال دقيقة إذا ما استمر على هذا النحو،" قال الجرذ و هو يجلس ثانية.  
" بالطبع سيكون،" قال ثعلب الماء ضاحكاً. " هل حصل و أخبرتك تلك القصة الجميلة عن العلجوم و حارس القناة؟  
لقد حصلت هكذا. كان العلجوم .....".

و انحرفت ذبابة صغيرة شاردة كانت تطير بتقلب عبر التيار، نشوانة و متأثرة بالدماء الشابة التي تسري في عروق ذبابة صغيرة ترى الحياة. ثم كانت دوامة من الماء و صفعة و لم تعد ترى الذبابة الصغيرة و لا حتى ثعلب الماء.  
نظر الخلد إلى الأسفل و كان الصوت ما يزال يرن في أذنيه و لكن طبقة العشب التي كان يفترشها ثعلب الماء كانت خالية تماماً. لم يعد يرى ثعلب الماء كما الشفق البعيد. و كان هناك مجموعة فقاعات على سطح الماء مرة أخرى.  
دندن الجرذ لحناً و تذكر الخلد قاعدة السلوك الحيواني التي تمنع أي نوع من التعليق على الاختفاء المفاجيء لأصدقاء المرء في أية لحظة و لأي سبب كان أو حتى دون سبب على الإطلاق.

" حسناً، حسناً،" قال الجرذ. " أفترض أنه علينا التحرك من هنا. و أتساءل أينما أفضل في حزم سلة الغداء؟ لم يتكلم و كأنه كان متحمساً لتلك الصفقة على نحو مريع.  
" آه، دعني أفعل ذلك من فضلك،" قال الخلد. و هكذا سمح له الجرذ بالتأكيد.

لم يكن حزم السلة أمراً ممتعاً كفضها. إنه ليس كذلك أبداً. إلا أن الخلد انحنى ليحزمها مستمتعاً بكل شيء حتى عندما انتهى من حزم السلة و ربطها بالشريط بإحكام، رأى طبقةً من جهة العشب يحدق فيه. و عندما انتهى من العمل ثانية، لفت الجرذ نظر الخلد لشوكة بإمكان أي شخص رؤيتها، و في النهاية لاحظ أنه كان ما يزال هناك إناء الخردل الذي جلس عليه دون أن يعلم، و بطريقة ما انتهى هذا الأمر أخيراً دون غضب.

كانت شمس الأصيل آخذة في الغياب بينما كان الجرذ يجذب باتجاه البيت على نحو حالم، متمتماً ببعض الشعر لنفسه دون أن يلقي كثير البال للخلد. لكن الخلد كان يشعر بالشبع كثيراً من الغداء و كان يشعر بالرضا عن نفسه و بالفخر، و كان يشعر و هو في القارب كأنه في بيته ( هكذا كان يظن) ثم بدأ يشعر بالقلق قليلاً : و في الحال قال :

"من فضلك راتي، اريد أن أجدف الآن"، هز الجرذ رأسه مبتسماً و قال " ليس الآن يا صديقي العزيز، اصبر حتى أعطيك بعض الدروس فالأمر ليس سهلاً كما يبدو".

بقي الخلد هادئاً لدقيقةٍ أو اثنتين، إلا أنه بدأ يشعر بالغيرة من الجرذ أكثر فأكثر و هو يجذب على طول النهر بقوة و سهولة ، و بدأ غروره يهمس له بأنه يستطيع القيام بذلك هو أيضاً. وثب الخلد على قوائمه و قبض على المجاذيف

على غفلةٍ من الجرذ الذي كان يحدق بعيداً عبر النهر متمتماً ببعض الأشعار لنفسه و الذي بُغت و وقع عن مقعده على ظهره و ارتفعت رجلاه في الهواء للمرة الثانية، بينما أخذ الخلد المنتصر مكانه و أحكم قبضته على المجاذيف بثقة كاملة.

" توقف عن ذلك أيها الأحمق ! " صرخ الجرذ من أسفل القارب، " لا يمكنك فعل ذلك ! سوف تقلب بنا القارب ! ".  
قذف الخلد مجاذيفه إلى الخلف بتباهٍ ثم أنزلها بقوة في الماء و لم يعد يرى السطح بأكمله فقد طارت رجليه فوق رأسه و وجد نفسه مستلقياً عند رأس الجرذ المنبطح. و لشدة خوفه وضع قبضته على جانب القارب و في اللحظة التالية كان قد خاض في الماء !  
لقد انقلب القارب و وجد نفسه يصارع في النهر.

يا إلهي كم كان الماء بارداً ، و يا إلهي كم أشعره بالبلل و كيف دخل أذنيه بينما كان هو ينحدر إلى الأسفل، إلى الأسفل، إلى الأسفل ! و كم بدت الشمس ساطعةً و مرحةً عندما صعد إلى السطح و هو يسعل و يبصق ! و كم كان يأسه كبيراً عندما وجد نفسه يغوص في الماء ثانيةً. حينذاك أمسكت يد قوية به خلف رقبته. لقد كان الجرذ و من الجلي أنه كان يضحك و استطاع الخلد أن يحس بضحكه تماماً تحت ذراعه و عند يده و يالتالي عند رقبة الخلد.  
استطاع الجرذ أن يمسك بمجذاف و يدفعه تحت ذراع الخلد ثم فعل نفس الشيء بذراعه الآخر و سبح خلفه دافعاً ذلك الحيوان العاجز نحو الضفة و ساحباً إياه خارج الماء، ثم واضعاً إياه على الضفة ككتلة من التعاسة ممثلةً ولينةً و عندما دلكه الجرذ قليلاً و أبعد بعض البلل عنه، قال له: " و الآن يا صديقي القديم ! هرول على طول السكة جيئة و ذهاباً قدر ما تستطيع حتى تعود دافئاً و جافاً ثانيةً بينما أغوص لأحضر سلة الغداء."

و هكذا فإن الخلد البائس المبتل من الخارج و الخجل من الداخل ظل يهرول حتى أصبح جافاً إلى حد ما، بينما غاص الجرذ في الماء ثانيةً و استعاد القارب و قومه و جاء بقاربه إلى الشاطئ بالتدرج، و غاص لإحضار سلة الغداء بنجاح في النهاية و كافح ليرسو بها على الضفة.

و عندما أصبح كل شيء جاهزاً للانطلاق من جديد، أخذ الخلد الواهن و المكتئب مكانه في مؤخرة القارب؛ و لما انطلقوا، قال الخلد بصوت خفيض و مليء بالعاطفة: " راتي يا صديقي الكريم! أنا متأسف بالفعل لما بدر مني من تصرف جاحد و سخيف. ينقبض قلبي بشدة عندما أفكر كيف أنني قد أضعت سلة الغداء الجميلة تلك. بالفعل لقد كنت أحمقاً و أنا أعترف بهذا. فهل لك أن تتجاوز عن ذلك هذه المرة و تسامحني، و تترك الأمور تسير كما كانت عليه من

قيل؟"

" لا بأس عليك، بارك الله فيك! " أجاب الجرذ بابتهاج. " و ماذا يعني قليل من البلب للجرذ الماء؟ فأنا أقضي معظم وقتي في الماء لا خارجه. لا تفكر في الموضوع مجدداً و أصغ لما سأقول ! أنا أفكر جيداً أنه من الأفضل لك أن تأتي و تعيش معي لبعض الوقت. إنه بسيط و غير منظم، و أنت تعلم أنه لا يشبه بيت العلجوم على الإطلاق و لكنك لم تر ذلك بعد؛ فلا أزال أستطيع جعلك مرتاحاً. سأعلمك كيف تجذف و كيف تسبح و قريباً ستصبح بارعاً في الماء كأي منا."

تأثر الخلد كثيراً بطريقة الكلام اللطيفة تلك حتى أنه لم يجد ما يقوله؛ و كان عليه أن يمسح دموعه أو اثنتين بظهر يده. و لكن الجرذ نظر في اتجاه آخر لطفاً منه، و انتعشت روح الخلد من جديد في الحال، حتى أنه كان قادراً على الرد بوقاحة و على نحو مباشر على دجاجتي الماء الللتين كانتا تسخران من مظهره المبلل.

و عندما وصلا البيت، أشعل الجرذ ناراً وضاءة في غرفة الجلوس و أمدّ الخلد بكرسي ذي ذراعين للجلوس أمامها، ثم أحضر له ثياب النوم و خُفاً و قص عليه حكايات النهر حتى جاء وقت العشاء. لقد كانت هذه القصص مثيرة جداً لحيوان يقطن في باطن الأرض كالخلد. كانت القصص عن السدود و الفيضانات المفاجئة و أسماك الكراكي القافزة و السفن البخارية التي كانت تلقي عبوات صلبة- على الأقل كانت العبوات تُلقى بالتأكيد من تلك السفن البخارية و بالتالي بواسطتهم؛ و كانت أيضاً عن طيور مالك الحزين و كم كانوا محدودين أولئك الأشخاص الذين كانوا يتحدثون معهم؛ و عن المغامرات أدنى المجاري، و عن ليالي الصيد مع ثعلب الماء أو الرحلات في الحقول البعيدة مع بادجر. كان العشاء وجبة ممتعة بالفعل؛ و لكن بعده بوقت قصير كان على المضيف المحترم أن يرافق الخلد النعسان بشدة إلى أفضل غرفة نوم في الطابق العلوي حيث وضع رأسه على الوسادة حالاً في سلام و اطمئنان كبيرين، مدركاً أن صديقه الجديد ' النهر ' يلتف عند عتبة نافذة المنزل.

كان هذا اليوم هو الأول من بين أيام أخرى كثيرة للخلد المتحرر، و كان كل واحد منها أطول من الآخر و مليئاً بالمتعة كما الصيف اليانع يسير فُدماً. تعلم السباحة و التجديف، و هام بمرح المياه الجارية؛ و أصغى سمعه إلى بعض عيدان القصب التي كان يمسكها، و التي كانت تصدر أصواتاً بين الفينة و الأخرى كلما دخلت فيها الرياح.

الفصل الثاني :

### الطريق المفتوح

في صباح أحد أيام الصيف الساطعة، قال الخلد فجأة " راتي، من فضلك أود أن أطلب منك معروفاً". كان الجرذ يجلس عند ضفة النهر يغني أغنية صغيرة. كان قد ألفها بنفسه للتو و لهذا كان مستغرقاً جداً فيها، و لم يكن ليلقي بالأ

كثيراً للخلد أو لأي شيءٍ آخر. و قد بدأ السباحة في النهر مع أصدقائه البط منذ الصباح الباكر. و عندما كان البط ينقلب رأساً على عقب فجأة، كما يفعل البط عادة، كان الجرذ يغوص و ينكز رقابها، و بالتحديد تحت المكان الذي يفترض أن يكون ذقنها، هذا إذا كان للبط ذقون أصلاً، حتى يجبرها على الصعود إلى السطح ثانية في عجلة و هي تغمغم غاضبة و تنفض ريشها عليه، لأنه من المستحيل أن تقول كل ما تشعر به حقاً و رأسك تحت الماء. و في نهاية المطاف كانوا يناشدونه أن يبتعد عنهم و أن يهتم بشؤونه و يتركهم لشأنهم. و هكذا ابتعد الجرذ، و جلس في الشمس عند ضفة النهر، و ألف أغنية عنهم سمّاها " أغنية البط " :

على طول الطريق في المياه الراكدة

تبدو في اندفاعها كلها طويلة

تلهو البطات في الماء

رافعة أذيالها في الهواء!

أذيال البطات و أذيال الضفادع

و أقدامها الصفراء تهتز انفعالاً

و مناقيرها الصفراء لم تعد تُرى

مشغولة بما في الماء!

عند الشجيرات الخضراء الموحلة

حيث يسبح الشبوط

و هنا نحفظ مخزون طعامنا

بارداً و زاخراً و بعيداً عن الضوء

كلّ على هواه

و نحن نحب أن تكون

رؤوسنا في الماء و أذيالنا في الهواء

و نلهو بحرية !

عالياً في السماء الزرقاء  
تدور طيور السمّامة و تصيح –  
و نحن نلهو و رؤوسنا في الماء  
و أذيالنا في الهواء

" لا أعرف إن كانت هذه الأغنية جيدة جداً يا راتي " أبدى الخلد ملاحظته بحذر. لم يكن الجرذ نفسه شاعراً و لم يكن ليهتم بمن عرفها؛ فقد كان صريحاً.

" و لا حتى البط يعرفون أيضاً " أجاب الجرذ بمرح. " هم يقولون: ' لماذا هو غير مسموح لبعض الرفاق أن يفعلوا مايشاؤون و عندما يشاؤون و كيفما يشاؤون بينما البعض الآخر يجلس على الضفاف يراقبهم طوال الوقت و يبدي ملاحظات و ينشد شعراً و أشياء أخرى عنهم؟ ما هذا الهراء كله !' ، هذا ما يقوله البط. "

" إذاً هو كذلك، إذاً هو كذلك " قال الخلد بحماسة.

" كلا، هو ليس كذلك ! " صرخ الجرذ بغضب.

" حسناً إذن، ليس كذلك، ليس كذلك، " أجاب الخلد على نحو مهديء. " و لكن ما أردت سؤالك عنه كان أأن تأخذني لزيارة السيد العلجوم ؟ لقد سمعت الكثير عنه و أود أن أتعرف به شخصياً. "

" و لم لا ، بالطبع، " قال الجرذ طيب القلب قافزاً على قدميه و طارداً الشعر من رأسه بقية اليوم. " أخرج القارب و سوف نجذب إلى هناك في الحال. إنه وقت مناسب جداً لزيارة السيد علجوم. هو دائماً الشخص عينه سابقاً أو لاحقاً. فهو دمث الخلق دائماً و مسرور برؤيتك دائماً و حزين لفراقك دائماً ! "

" لا بد أنه حيوان لطيف جداً، " قال الخلد عندما صعد القارب و أمسك بالمجاديف بينما جلس الجرذ بارتياح على متن القارب.

" هو أفضل الحيوانات بالفعل، " أجاب الجرذ، " فهو بسيط جداً و ودود و عطوف جداً. قد لا يكون ذكياً جداً – فلا يمكن أن تكون عباقرة جميعنا؛ و ربما يكون متباه و متكبر معاً إلا أنه يملك صفات عظيمة، بالطبع لديه. " بعد دورانها حول المنعطف في النهر وصلا إلى بيت قديم وفخم و جميل ، ذي قرميد أحمر معتق و كذلك مروج خضراء معتنى بها جيداً تصل إلى حافة النهر.

" هذا هو بيت العلجوم، " قال الجرذ؛ و " الغدير الذي يقع على الجهة اليسرى حيث توجد لوحة الإعلانات التي كتب عليها : " مكان خاص. غير مسموح بالرسو " يقود إلى قاربه السكني حيث سنترك قاربنا هناك. توجد الحظائر هناك

على الجهة اليمنى. و أمّا قاعة الاحتفالات التي تراها الآن فهي قديمة جداً. إن العلجوم غني بلا ريب و أنت تعرف، حيث يعتبر هذا البيت واحداً من أجمل بيوت هذه المناطق مع أننا لم نعترف بذلك للعلجوم مطلقاً. " انسلا في الغدير و أرسل الخلد مجاديفه حينما مرّاً بالقرب من القارب السكني. و هنا رأيا الكثير من القوارب الجميلة، بعضها مرمي عند العوارض و البعض الآخر تجدها مقطورة عند مزلق القوارب، غير أنه لا يوجد أي واحد منها في الماء؛ و تدل رائحة المكان على أنه مهجور و غير مستخدم.

نظر الجرذ حوله و قال: " فهمت الآن. انتهى أمر الإبحار بالقوارب، لقد سئم منه و اكتفى. و أتساءل عن السرعة الجديدة التي تستحوذ عليه الآن؟ أسرع و دعنا نبحث عنه. سوف نعرف كل شيء عن ذلك بتمامه في الحال." ترجلاً من مركبهما و أخذاً يتنزهان عبر المروج البهيجة المزينة بالزهور بحثاً عن العلجوم الذي صادف و التقياه في الحال يستريح على كرسي الحديدية المصنوع من الخيزران و تعابير الانتشغال بادية على وجهه، و خريطة قد استقرت على ركبتيه.

قفز العلجوم لدى رؤيتهما و صاح مرحباً و قال: " هذا رائع!" . صافح كلاهما بحرارة، و تابع قائلاً و هو يرقص حولهما دون انتظار التعريف بالخلد: " يا لك من شخص لطيف!" " كنت على وشك إرسال قارب إلى أدنى النهر لأجلك يا راتي، بأوامر صارمة بإحضارك إلى هنا في الحال و بأي وضع كنت. أنا أحتاجك بشدة – كلاكما. و الآن ماذا تتناولان؟ تعاليا إلى الداخل و تناولا شيئاً!" " دعونا نجلس هادئين قليلاً يا عزيزي العلجوم!" قال الجرذ و هو يرتمي على إحدى الأرائك بينما ارتمى الخلد على الأخرى بجانبه و أبدى ملاحظة لطيفة عن مسكن العلجوم البهيج.

" أجمل بيت على ضفة النهر كلها،" صاح العلجوم بصوت عالٍ. و لم يستطع تجنب أن يضيف: " أو أي مكان آخر، من وجهة نظري،".

عند ذلك لكز الجرذ الخلد و لكن لسوء الحظ رآه العلجوم يفعل ذلك فاحمر وجه العلجوم خجلاً.

#### 4. The Application of Skopos Theory in Translation of “ The Wind in the Willows”

##### 4.1 Summary of the Chosen passage

The first chapter opens with the main character, the Mole, engaged in hard spring cleaning of his house. He leaves his house going up to the fresh air above, meeting the birds singing and the other animals working busily. On the river bank, he meets the Water Rat, a polite and civilized animal who invites Mole to live with him and teaches him the secrets of the river life. Mole accepts Water Rat’s invitation and quickly feels at home on the river bank. He and Rat, along with Rat’s friend, the Otter, spend many days wandering in and out the river. In the next chapter Mole asked Rat to meet Mr. Toad, a rich and somewhat spoiled creature. He is also careless and indulges himself with many obsessions of new things, such as boating, horse ride caravan and finally motorcars. He does it all because he always feels bored with one after another.

##### 4.2 The Importance of the Chosen Passage

The chosen passage occupies pages 3 to 26, which is the first chapter “The River Bank”, and pages 29-34 from the second chapter “The Open Road”. The first chapter is the opening chapter; and as such it is tremendously important and full of significant information. As writing for children is an art and craft, the author opens the novel with an event full of motion, when Mole, the main character begins spring cleaning his little house. This grabs the readers’ attention and urges them to continue reading. The first chapter is like an appetizer, which brings the reader smoothly, and hooks his/her imagination to dwell with the events of the story. At the end of the chapter, the reader is left wondering what will happen next.

##### 4.3 Translated Examples:

To examine how the skopos theory can be useful in translating CL, ten examples were chosen from the translated passage of the story *The Wind in The Willows* and analyzed drawing on this theory and its main principle: The ends justify the

means. The purpose here is to provide the young readers with an interesting story charged with simple and memorable language to increase their vocabulary in their mother tongue and to add to their knowledge new concepts from other cultures. So the translator here is an expert who can judge what to add or omit from the ST to make it more appropriate with the TT reader's needs.

1.

St: *The Wind in the Willows*

TT: النسيم في الصفصاف

In rendering the title the problem is in the word (wind) whether to render it as (ريح) which can indicate that the weather is windy and can give the sense of something bad happening; or to render the word as (النسيم) which can be more attractive, and gives a good impression and that the weather is moderate and everything is good.

In Arabic the word (النسيم) always carries a positive connotation as the known collocation in Arabic "النسيم العليل", while the word (الريح) could carry both positive connotation as in the Holy Quran "فسخرنا له الريح تجري بأمره رخاء حيث أصاب" 36 سورة ص- as well as negative meaning as in the Holy Quran "و في عادٍ إذ أرسلنا عليهم الريح العقيم" 41 الذاريات - " و في عادٍ إذ أرسلنا عليهم الريح العقيم"

So drawing on the skopos theory, the translator could choose the simple and appropriate word to render the word (wind) as (النسيم).

2.

ST: So he scraped and scratched and scabbled and scrooged and then he scrooged again and scabbled and scratched and scraped, working busily with his little paws and muttering to himself, 'Up we go! Up we go!' (p4).

TT:

و هكذا نبش ، خمش ، خربش ، تحمّل الوضع الصعب ثمّ تحمّل أكثر ، خربش ، خمش نبش عاملاً بنشاط بمخالبه الصغيرة و متمتماً لنفسه : ' إلى الأعلى ! إلى الأعلى !'

It is clear that the above example is full of synonymous verbs with alliteration. The use of synonyms in a text directed to children helps a lot in enhancing their language, and the use of simple, alliterative language full of synonyms is one of the traits of CL. The translator, whose main interest is the TT reader, should also be loyal to the source

text and should try to render such synonyms to achieve the same goal and effect as those in the ST.

The use of synonyms is not the only aspect of CL, but the use of alliteration is also considered as one of the most important aspects of CL. So, the translator here opted for rewriting the ST following its style of using synonyms ending with the same letter.

To reverse the arrangement of the verbs in the above example is a good technique used by the author to attract the readers' attention as well as to entertain them. The translation here tries to trace the same steps by taking into consideration the target text requirements.

The English text of this novel is very rich and the issue of markedness is obvious. The connection of the verbs in the above example using (and) is marked in English, and the translator needs to be alert enough to such important aspects of discourse. So using disconnection between the verbs in Arabic is one of the solutions to achieve a good effect in the TT.

3.

ST:

'Up we go! Up we go!' till at last, pop! His snout came out into the sunlight, and he found himself rolling in the warm grass of great meadow.

TT:

" إلى الأعلى ! إلى الأعلى ! " حتى وصل في النهاية و هبّ قفز مخرجاً أنفه إلى ضوء الشمس ووجد نفسه يتدحرج على العشب الدافئ في المرج الفسيح .

The problem in this example lies in the rendering of the word (pop), which indicates the sound of jumping. The translator here used a slang to render this word. Pragmatically, this brings the meaning of the sentence nearer to the target text receiver – the child- and helps keeping the occurrence of language smooth and acceptable. The skopos theory here allows the use of some colloquial words to help making the translation clearer.

4.

ST: All was a-shake and a-shiver- glints and gleams and sparkles, rustle and swirl, chatter and bubble.

TT:

كان كل شيء ينبض بالحياة فقد كان اللمعان و البريق و الإشعاع و صوت حفيف و دوامات و ثرثرة و بقبقة.

Once again the use of synonyms and alliteration (a- shake and a- shiver, glints and gleams) represent problems for translation, but this example can also be represented through the use of a word with a picture which could be an attractive element for the child reader.

The use of synonymous dichotomies like (rustle and swirl) and (chatter and bubble) and the structure of the text show the author's profession in style.

The use of (wa) in rendering this example into Arabic is appropriate, as it adds life to the picture the author of the source text tried to draw in the imagination of the child reader.

Pragmatically, (a-shake and a-shiver) could be rendered into Arabic as (ينبض بالحياة), which means moving beyond literal translation towards semantic translation; a functional translation strategy.

5.

ST: The Mole was bewitched, entranced, fascinated. (p6).

TT:

لقد كان الخلد مسحوراً و مفتوناً و مسلوب اللب.

The use of more than two adjectival synonyms in one sentence is intended to attract the readers' attention and to enhance their vocabulary. To disconnect the adjectives results in unmarkedness in the English language. The translator kept it unmarked in the Arabic rendering by using the (wa) conjunction.

6.

ST: It was so very beautiful that the Mole could only hold up both forepaws and gasp, 'O my! O my! O my!' (p 16).

TT.

كان ذلك في منتهى الروعة حتى أن الخلد لم يتمالك نفسه فرفع كلتا يديه و قال متنهداً : " يا إلهي ! يا إلهي ! يا إلهي ! إلهي !".

Repetition is usually a linguistic device that children use when they admire or want something badly. So the repetition of (O my) three times in one sentence indicates the author's intention to be near the child's way of expression. Here the translator follows the principle of loyalty to the source text and keeps the repetition in the Arabic translation.

The other issue in this example relates to the rendering of (It was so very beautiful). In the literal translation, it could be (كان ذلك جميلاً جداً), but to be more rhetorical and to

enhance the children's vocabulary in their own language (as they are the translator's main target customers within the framework of the skopos theory adopted here), the translator chose to render it as (كان ذلك في منتهى الروعة).

7.

ST: A swirl of water and a 'cloop!' and the May-fly was visible no more.(p 20).

ثم كانت دوامة من الماء ، صفعة ولم تعد ترى الذبابة الصغيرة ولا حتى ثعلب الماء.

This example indicates the use of sound language. In rendering it, the translator imagined the scene and found it effective to render it as (صفعة أو ضربة). The use of sound language is marked, and the translator needs to keep this markedness by choosing a suitable rendering like (صفعة). The repetition of (and) in the source text is also marked in English, and its effective rendering may require the use of disconnection rather than connection.

8.

ST: Greatly alarmed, he made a grab at the side of the boat, and the next moment- Splloosh! (p 22).

ولشدة خوفه وضع قبضته على جانب القارب وفي اللحظة التالية - طش !

The use of sound language as in the above example is marked. The translator tried to translate the word (splloosh) as (خاض في الماء) to express what the word means, but using a word like (طش) will better deliver the meaning and keep the child reader entertained.

The other issue in this example is the translating of the phrase (Greatly alarmed). In parts of speech, this is made up of an (adverb + past participle) and could be rendered as (خائفاً بشدة), but in the TT it is rendered as (ولشدة خوفه) to go along with the Arabic language system for appropriateness and effectiveness.

9.

St: Look here! If you've really nothing else on hand this morning, supposing we drop down the river together, and have a long day of it?' (p24).

أصغ إلي، إذا لم يكن لديك ما تفعله هذا الصباح فلم لا ننزل معاً أسفل النهر ونمضي بقية اليوم هناك ؟

In this example, the rendering of the underlined phrase is not literal. It is a collocation, something marked in English, and the translator should keep this markedness. It does not mean to (look) literally, but to (pay attention) for the coming

talk. The same goes for (have nothing on hand), which means (not busy), and (supposing), which gives the meaning of (why not) in this text.

10.

ST: As he sat on the grass and looked across the river, a dark hole in the bank opposite, just above the water's edge, caught his eye,

(p 6).

TT:

و لما جلس على العشب و نظر عبر النهر استرعى انتباهه حفرة مظلمة في الضفة مقابله و تقع تماما فوق حد الماء.

In translation it is good to be literal as much as it works and helps in achieving the desired meaning and effect. However, when it does not give its expected results, the translator should move to the free strategy to achieve this goal.

When trying to translate the underlined clause in this example literally, it will result is nonsense. So within the skopos theory, the translator, who is expected to do his best to convey the appropriate meaning of the source text to the target text reader, will act as an expert to search for the meaning of the whole clause as a collocation (catch one's eye = لفت نظر، استرعى انتباه)، which is marked in English, to be the effective rendering in Arabic and where markedness is maintained.

As seen from the above examples, the translator, keeping in mind the principles of the skopos theory, has tried to convey the meaning with simplicity while staying as much as possible nearer to the original meaning, in order to convey the intent of the original text author to the target text reader in simple and amusing ways.

This chapter has discussed some examples where the skopos has been applied in the translation of a passage from *The Wind in the Willows*, a text directed to children. The next and final chapter concludes the thesis and offers some recommendations for the translation of CL.

## 5. Conclusion

The aim of this thesis is to provide the translation into Arabic of a passage from the hugely popular novel *The Wind in the Willows* and a commentary on the translation. This text is an example of good CL that should be read by all children of all cultures. The skopos theory of translation seems to present more freedom to the translator to fulfill the work.

Despite the multiplicity of translation theories and the available strategies, translating literature remains problematic in itself. This becomes more difficult when it comes to CL translation because of the specificity of the TT recipient (the child). In this thesis, the skopos theory is used as a guide to produce a child-friendly translation into Arabic. To show this, the commentary part of the thesis discusses examples to show how this can be useful for CL translation.

In cross cultural communication, the translator plays an important role of mediation. Translation helps in conveying the traditions and thoughts of one group of people to another, the thing which elaborates and enhances the heritage of both. Translated literature plays this very role, and when comes to a special kind of literature like CL, it becomes obvious how important the role it plays in bringing up children and opening their minds onto new worlds which are different from their own in many aspects. All this will add considerably to the way they will perceive life in their later years.

The adoption of the skopos theory, which opens avenues for further investigations since its potential "has yet to be exploited" ( Snell-Hornby, 1990:85), in translating CL would result in a more successful, valuable and beneficial literature for a special group of readers, namely children.

Perhaps, it can be recommended that the translation of children-oriented texts should lead to products that more interesting and captivating for children. For this end, further investigation of the most appropriate strategies that could be exploited to accomplish a child-friendly literature through translation. The reason is simple: CL is an important genre in the canon of the world literature and has become an important field of research.

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