

# When Toad Came Home

A Play by David Barrett

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## *Dramatis Personae*

Toad  
Badger  
Rat  
Mole  
Watkins, the Butler (a shrew)  
Otter  
Hedgehog  
Rabbit

The Weasels:  
Chief Weasel  
Hannibal  
Horace  
Hubert  
Henry  
Herbert  
Percy

The Fieldmice:  
Freddy  
Fergus  
Bert  
Harry  
Frankie

# WHEN TOAD CAME HOME

*Prologue:* SONG 1 (In front of curtain. Actions mimed by animals)

## Scene 1: The Parlour at Toad Hall

REPRISE OF SONG 1 (optional)

TOAD (Looks in mirror) Oh, what a handsome fellow I am. Wouldn't my ancestors be so proud if they could see me now. (looks at portraits) Horatio Toad, now he was a fine fellow. Battle of Trafalgar, Waterloo, where would we be now if it weren't for poor old Horatio? (looks at watch) Golly gosh it's past time for afternoon tea. What on earth has happened to Watkins? (calls) Watkins ..... I don't know, I just can't seem to get the staff nowadays. Wouldn't you have thought they would be queuing up for a position in my household. Watkins is not such a bad chap. He tries hard but who ever heard of a butler who was hard of hearing. He is always mixing up the orders. I asked him to get cook to do me a roast lamb last night and what did she do me? You've guessed it - toast and jam. (straightens a picture) Ah, Laurence Toad of Arabia, another fine fellow. (doors open) Ah, Watkins, do come in, I see you have brought my tea.

WAT Uh, no sir. I have just brought your tea.

TOAD I beg your ..... Oh, never mind Watkins.

WAT Yes sir I am very behind. That incompetent footman. He asked me if he should polish the door of my pantry. Of course I agreed. No harm in that, keep the rascal out of trouble and the door did need a polish. So what did he do .....? Polished the **floor** so I could not prepare your tea until it was dry. Typical of these squirrels, can't follow a simple instruction. I always say they can't be trained. Will there be anything else, sir?

TOAD Well yes, actually Watkins there is just one other thing.

WAT Very good sir. Then I'll be off.

(exits muttering to himself leaving TOAD exasperated)

TOAD (Approaches a broken painting) Poor old Sir Francis Toad. He has never been the same since those ..... creatures, I can hardly bring myself to say ..... Weasels ..... took up residence. Here in my ancestral home. They are such nasty creatures - always cooking up some wicked scheme. Heaven only knows where they are now. If I had my way it would be 'pop goes the weasel'.

(The doorbell rings then WATKINS appears at the door)

WAT Sir, Mr Pratt and Mr Bowles. (enter RAT and MOLE)

TOAD Oh Watkins, you mean Rat and Mole.

TOAD Come in my friends, it's been such a long time. (*exits WATKINS*)

MOLE Oh Toad we have rather missed your eccentric company, we felt we had to come and see if you are alright, didn't we Ratty?

RAT Of course Toad. Life has seemed rather dull since we taught those little rascals the weasels where they belong. (*TOAD offers tea*)

Thank you Toad. I must say your staff did a splendid job in clearing up the mess.

MOLE But Toad, you do seem rather down in the dumps. There was no permanent damage done, was there?

TOAD My dear friend, the damage cannot be counted in pounds and pennies. It is my pride that's hurt ..... seriously hurt.

RAT Well I know just the thing to cheer you up and help you to forget your troubles. We'll go on a picnic. Just like old times.

SONG 2 In Those Not Too Distant Days

MOLE Until tomorrow then. Three o'clock by the great oak on the bend in the river.

RAT And Toad .....do please try to stay out of trouble until then.

TOAD Gentlemen, I bid you good-day. (*bows*)  
(*RAT and MOLE exit*)  
(*TOAD draws back a curtain to reveal a computer. He rubs his hands in glee and proceeds to work on the keyboard*)

TOAD If only I had discovered computers earlier. What countless years of my life I have wasted waiting for this moment. Life will never be the same again. Now, let me see ..... Toad Hall accounts, month ending August 1921.

Watkins wages: 20 shillings.  
Repairs to panelling in the Great Hall: £95. (*aside*) Account to be sent to the Chief Weasel.  
Repairs to caravan: £20.  
Birthday present for Mole: 5 shillings  
My oh my, am I going to have some fun with this.  
(*exits calling*) Watkins, Watkins.  
(*as TOAD leaves the room, a small weasel enters through the window and relieves TOAD of the computer*)

### *Curtain*

## ***Scene 2: Weasels' Lair***

CHIEF Henry, get that floor scrubbed. Harold, get outside and polish the limousine. Herbert, go and get my violin-case pronto. Horace, some more cigars, I've run out. *(to this, each replies in turn: "Yes, Boss")* Hubert, fetch my ..... Hubert. HUBERT.

HENRY He's gone out Boss.

CHIEF Gone out. What d'ya mean, gone out. He can't just ..... Oh, never mind. The rest of yous come 'ere and listen to what Hannibal has to say, at the double.

HANN Well lads, you know that fat green slimy creature we caused a bit of bovver earlier on .....

HORACE Yea, you mean that Toad.

HANN That's the one. Well, I've been casing the joint where he hangs out, called *(with emphasis)* Toad Hall *(laughter)* and I've got some information you might like to hear. You'll never guess.

HERBERT Go on Hannibal, what is it?

HANN He's got himself ..... a ..... computer. *(much reaction from the Weasels)*

PERCY Hey. You know what this means lads. If we could get our hands on that machine, just think what we could do with it.

HENRY Yea. It could knock years off our campaign to take over the Riverbank and open our new regional headquarters at Toad Hall.

HERBERT Just think: we could cream a little excess cash off the tax man and use the money to become the financial wizards of the wild wood.

HORACE The other animals would not stand a chance. They would all go bankrupt.

PERCY We'd be the scourge of every living creature in the wood.

CHIEF Steady now boys. Don't get carried away. But this much I will tell you; we have to have that computer. I don't care how you do it. Stand on that Toad's little green webbed fingers if you have to but get that computer.

SONG 3 The Computer Song

HENRY Come on lads. What are you waiting for? Let's go. *(much commotion as HUBERT enters, struggling to carry a heavy load)*

CHIEF Hubert, my office, five minutes.

HUBERT But Boss. Wait a minute. I've got something to show you. Look at this. *(gasps from WEASELS and shouts of wow, crickey, crumbs, fantastic, etc. as the computer is revealed)*

CHIEF Well done Hubert. You've got Toad's computer.

HERB Did he sell it to you?

OTHERS Get over, come off it *(and groans)*

CHIEF            This is it boys. There's no stopping us now. Next stop ..... Toad Hall, head office of the Weasel Enterprise Company. And then ..... who knows? Maybe even the Wide World itself. (*cackles of evil laughter*)

***Blackout and Curtain***

### ***Scene 3: The Riverbank***

SONG 2      Reprise (*animals*)

*(Enter RAT confidently, whistling and carrying a picnic basket)*

RAT            Come on Moley, you do lag behind so.

MOLE          Sorry Rat. I find it hard to keep up with you. I've only got little legs.

RAT            This looks like as good a place as any for a picnic. Help me with the cloth. *(they struggle to lay the cloth etc)*

MOLE          Do you think Toad will come? He has little idea of time when he has other things on his mind.

RAT            He'll come, Mole. He wouldn't let old friends down. You lay the cutlery, Mole, while I see if he's approaching. *(RAT walks down centre and peers into f.o.h. Just then three weasels pass by, F.O.H., and RAT hurriedly conceals himself)*

HENRY        I can't wait, Horace. On Tuesday we will be sitting in Toad Hall, masters of the house, our new head office, and with our very own computer. How stupid of that Toad to leave the window open so we could borrow his computer.

HORACE       Sweet revenge, Henry. I remember well the last time we took over the Hall. We were caught off guard by a whole army of animals and driven out.

HANN         Never again. They can't catch up like that twice. In any case, they won't get past our guard again. We will have that secret passage covered this time.

HENRY        I'd like to see them try.

HORACE       Next Tuesday, you say. *(fading into the distance)*

HENRY        That's right. At midnight. We assemble at the old oak.

HORACE       I can't wait.

*(RAT comes out of hiding in great alarm and agitation, muttering to himself. As he runs back to MOLE, a small creature emerges from behind a tree)*

FREDDIE      Oh my, oh help. I must tell the other field mice. *(runs off, F.O.H., in the opposite direction to the WEASELS)*

RAT            Mole, oh Mole. I've got the most dreadful news. You'll never believe what's happened.

MOLE          Now, now, Ratty. Don't upset yourself. It's not the end of the world if Toad can't come. We'll have a nice little picnic .....

RAT            No, Mole, you don't understand. It's the weasels.

MOLE          *(Looking frightened at the mention of weasels)* What's happened?

Ratty, you look as if you've seen a ghost.

*(Enter TOAD)*

TOAD          Hey ho chappies, what a lovely day for a picnic.

*(Stops dead when he sees their faces)*

RAT *(Getting faster and more hysterical)* Oh Toad, I'm so glad you've come. The most awful thing has happened. I just overheard *(breathless)* ..... some weasels talking ..... about ..... taking over Toad Hall ..... stealing something called a ..... computer. Head office ..... secret passage .....

TOAD *(Wailing very loudly and uncontrollably)* No, no, not my computer! No, no, please no.

MOLE *(Scolding)* Hang it all Toad, you haven't started another craze? *(sniffing)* You **promised** that you would keep yourself out of trouble. Computers mean trouble.

TOAD *(Wails again)* But you don't understand. You never understand. I just couldn't help it. I just had to have a computer. Oh no! My accounts. They are all on the computer. Those weasels have all my intimate financial details in their hands. Just think what they could do to my reputation. *(wails again)*

MOLE Why Toad? Have you something to hide?

RAT *(Pulling himself together)* Never mind that. What about Toad Hall? We can't let them take over Toad Hall again. We must get some help, but how?

MOLE *(Forcefully)* BADGER.

OTHERS Where? *(looking around)*

MOLE Badger will help us. He is so generous and wise. He always knows what to do in times of trouble.

SONG 5

TOAD By gad, you're right Moley. We can't deal with this alone. I'll send Watkins into the Wild Wood with a message for Badger to come to Toad Hall.

RAT Toad, why don't you call a big meeting of all the riverbankers. They will all come when they hear that Toad Hall is threatened. We can all go out and spread the news.

TOAD Indeed. Then **tomorrow** it is. Three o'clock in my parlour.

RAT Until tomorrow then.

OTHERS Until tomorrow.

***Blackout and Curtain***

## ***Scene 4: The Parlour at Toad Hall***

*(TOAD, RAT and MOLE are formulating a plan of action, peering at maps and plans on the table)*

- TOAD Well, gentlemen, I am sure the best plan is to attack the little blighters with an army before they can advance on Toad Hall. Chase the little devils out of the Wild Wood for ever.
- RAT No, no, no Toad. You can't just go around getting up a private army and attacking other animals just because you believe they **might** attack you. No, that is not the way.
- MOLE I think we should go and talk to the Weasels and ask them for the computer back.
- TOAD *(Chuckling)* Poor naive little Moley. Do you really think they would hand it back, just like that? *(mocking)* Of course you may have your computer back Mr Toad. Do accept our humble apologies. We only wished to borrow it for a short while.
- RAT They would make fools of us. We would be the laughing-stock of the riverbank. *(the doors open and WATKINS enters)*
- WAT Uh, a Mr Badger is here to see you Mr Toad.
- BADGER *(Entering briskly, clearly cross)* What's all this I hear Toad. The weasels planning some fresh mischief, are they? Oh hello Ratty, Moley.
- MOLE Oh Badger. I'm so glad you're here. We do so need your help. What a mess we're in.
- BADGER No, now Mole. Don't upset yourself. *(Enter WATKINS)*
- WAT Ah, Mr Toad. A rather large group of visitors to see you, Sir. *(Enter an assortment of wild but friendly creatures)*
- ANIMALS *(All speaking simultaneously in a hubbub)* Oh Toad, what are we to do etc etc. *(TOAD goes as if to call them to order but BADGER interrupts)*
- BADGER *(In a commanding voice)* Now then, friends. This hysteria will not help the situation. All of you sit down quickly and we will have an orderly meeting. *(protests from animals as BADGER makes them sit with backs to the audience)* What have we here? *(noticing a small creature coyly hiding behind the others)*
- RABBIT A field mouse. It's a field mouse.
- HEDGEHOG Come on little fellow. This is no place for you. You should be getting home to bed.
- OTTER Run along now, there's a good little chap.
- FREDDIE But, but I want to help. Why shouldn't I stay? I can fight just as well as any of you. *(laughter as the other animals crowd around)*
- BADGER You field mice are too excitable, little chap. You would give the game away before ever we found the weasels.

FREDDIE But please. I want to stay. I ..... I .....

BADGER No. I'm sorry my little friend. Perhaps we will call you once the danger is past.

TOAD Watkins. Please show our little friend the door.

WAT War, my Lord. You expect there to be a war?

MOLE No, door Watkins. *(shouting)* **The door.**

WAT *(Grumbling)* No need to shout at me. I'm not deaf you know. *(exit WATKINS and Fieldmouse)*

BADGER Well gentlemen, the problem is this: Toad has recently bought himself a powerful computer to aid him in the running of the household. We all know that those despicable rodents the weasels have for some time been attempting to high-jack the country's financial market in order to gain political power. Well, unfortunately, they have got their hands on Toad's computer. *(gasps of dismay and utterances of doom from animals)*

RABBIT We're doomed. The weasels will defeat us all.

OTTER Don't speak too soon, Rabbit.

HEDGEHOG We fought them once before and won.

OTTER We can do it again.

RABBIT But how? We have no weapons.

HEDGEHOG We are few in number.

BADGER You must all trust me. I have a plan. *(during this dialogue, the field mouse creeps into view and eavesdrops)* Here's what we must do. We must go to the Wild Wood tonight, under cover of darkness *(squeals of horror)*, discover exactly what those rascals are up to and report them to the tax inspectors. *(many shouts of approval)*

ALL The tax inspectors. Yes, the tax inspectors.

BADGER But we need hard evidence of their crooked dealings and dishonest gains. Enough to put them in jail for the rest of their lives.

TOAD Hear, hear.

RAT Thank you Badger, I knew you would have a plan.

OTTER You're so clever, Badger.

RABBIT We knew we could rely on you.

BADGER All right, steady lads. No need to overdo it. Come on then my good friends, don't delay. We have many preparations to make. We'll assemble at midnight at the gate into the Wild Wood.

TOAD *(Wanting to have the last word)* I declare this meeting well and truly closed.

BADGER Yes. Quite so, Toad.

RAT What're you waiting for? Let's get going.  
*(ANIMALS begin to exit with much commotion)*

### ***Blackout***

## ***Scene 5: The Field Mice Burrow***

*(Enter FREDDIE in a hurry. Others lounging around.)*

FREDDIE Wake up, wake up everybody. We've got a job to do.  
FERGUS *(Yawning)* What's up Freddie? I've not seen you so agitated since Mrs Meadows' cat got the last inch of your tail.  
FREDDIE There's going to be ever such an upset in the Wild Wood tonight. You won't have seen such action since Toad was arrested for stealing that car. *(Others begin to sit up and listen)*  
BERT Why? What's old Toad done this time?  
FREDDIE It's not Toad himself, rather the Weasels.  
FERGUS I'm not getting involved with that lot. If it's anything to do with Weasels you can count me out. *(turns back and reads newspaper)*  
FREDDIE The Weasels have stolen a computer from Toad and plan to use it to set up crooked financial deals which will bankrupt all of us and squeeze us all out of the Riverbank scene for good. They must be stopped.  
HARRY I don't see what all of this has to do with us. We're quite happy here in our burrow. Couldn't we just bury the hatchet and smoke the pipe of peace?  
FREDDIE But Harry. It has to do with the Riverbank and anything which affects the Riverbank must be our concern.  
HARRY What about all the bigger animals? Can't we let them carry the can? After all, it's in their back yard.  
FREDDIE But that's just it. We can't trust **them** to sort it out for us. Most of them are no more than incompetent buffoons. They are planning to go to the Wild Wood tonight to sort the weasels out.  
BERT And what about that hot-headed Mr Toad? Everything he involves himself in is a disaster. Don't you see? Freddie is right. We have to do something about this.  
FREDDIE OK everyone. Here's what we must do. The weasels are really nervous right now. They have financial backers in high places. If those backers realised that the weasels are nothing but a bunch of crooks they would lose all their support and have to leave the Wild Wood in disgrace.  
HARRY I get it. We are going to spill the beans and open a can of worms.  
FREDDIE Nothing so simple, Harry. We are going to pose as tax inspectors and ask to see their books. That should make them show their hand for all the world to see.  
BERT They would not dare allow an inspection. It would expose them as frauds.  
FRED Exactly.  
FERGUS You're mad, all of you. It'll never work. Never.  
BERT I'm with Freddie. How about the rest of you?

HARRY Look Freddie, couldn't we wait 'til daylight? I don't want to go into the Wild Wood in the dark ..... I mean ..... I don't see too well in the dark.

BERT We know what you mean, Harry. None of us wants to go there in the dark but if we leave it 'til tomorrow we'll be too late.

FREDDIE All right then boys. Who's with me and who's not?

HARRY I'm with you Freddie. In for a penny, in for a pound. I won't let the side down.

BERT Count me in too Freddie.

OTHERS Me too. And me. etc.  
*(FERGUS still reads his paper but views this with interest)*

FRED Well done boys. I knew I could count on your help. Let's go and prepare. It's already beginning to get dark.  
*(all begin to exit except FERGUS. When the stage is empty .....)*

FERGUS Hey. Wait for me. Boys ..... **Boys** ..... I'm coming too. Wait for me.

***Blackout and curtain***

## ***ACT 2, Scene 1: The Wild Wood***

*(Enter, a few at a time from various directions, the FIELDMICE, heavily disguised)*

SONG 7 Up Boys and At'Em *(After the song, screams and fieldmice exit)*

*(HARRY and FERGUS enter, backing towards one-another from different directions. They hump and a loud shriek follows from HARRY)*

FRED Shhh. You'll wake up all the animals in the Wild Wood with your noise.

HARRY I thought most of them were nocturnal anyway. That means they'll be awake now doesn't it?

FRED Don't be difficult, Harry. You know what I mean.

FERGUS Well, it seems as if there is no-one about. We might as well be off.  
*(makes to exit)*

BERT Not so fast Fergus. We are very near the Weasels' lair now. You should see some action soon.

FERGUS That's what I'm afraid of.

HARRY I think we should throw in the towel and call it a day.

FRANKIE *(Enters hurriedly)* Hey you guys, I've found the lair. *(breathless)*  
They're all there, all the weasels from the Wild Wood having some sort of assembly. They sound very excited about something - they seem to be preparing for some sort of confrontation.

*(FIELDMICE bluster about in a general sort of panic)*

ALL Confrontation, confrontation!

FERGUS Right, that's it! I'm off. I'm not staying here to be attacked by a vicious band of cut-throats.

FRANK What are you, a mouse or a chicken?

FRED We haven't come all this way to flee at the first sign of trouble.

HARRY No, but we don't want to jump the gun and fall at the first hurdle.

FRED Frankie, have you got the rope

FRANK Yes, Freddie.

FRED And the gags?

FRANK *(Irritated)* **Yes Freddie.**

HARRY Let me do the gags, Freddie. *(others groan)*

*(Noises off like a large group of animals approaching)*

FRED Here come the weasels, lads. You all know what to do.

OTHERS Yes, Freddie.

*(The FIELDMICE conceal themselves behind trees and in dark corners as TOAD and company approach. When the group are in centre stage)*

FRED Right lads, let's get them.

*(War cries etc. as the FIELDMICE burst enthusiastically out of hiding, except FERGUS who remains cowering behind a bush with his hands over his ears)*

HARRY Quick Frankie, the rope.  
FRANK Coming Harry.  
*(They proceed to run the rope around the whole bunch and HARRY is about to start gagging them when BERT shines his torch onto the enemy)*

BERT O my gosh.  
FREDDIE O help.  
FRANK O mother.  
HARRY I do believe we've been led up the garden path and backed the wrong horse.  
BADGER You bumbling idiots. What do you mean by this - lying in wait at the dead of night and ambushing innocent passers by?  
FRED Gosh Badger. We're really sorry. You see, it's rather dark and we mis-took you for someone else.  
TOAD Really? And just who might this 'someone else' be? Clearly not friends of yours if this is the sort of welcome you give them.  
HARRY Anyway, how do you come to be 'just passing by' at this time of night? *(sarcastically)* Just going for a romantic moonlit walk were we? One that just happened to take us near the weasels' lair?  
RABBIT Now, now Harry. No need to be insulting. Let's sort this out in a gentlemanly fashion.  
TOAD The solution is simple. The fieldmice should all go home and we will continue about our business.  
BERT And just what might that 'business' be, Mr Toad?  
HEDGEHOG That's no concern of yours, Bertie. You just run along now and you'll soon be tucked up safe in your cosy warm bed.  
FERGUS *(Coming to and taking an interest in this twist)* Hear, hear. Let's go right now.  
MOLE Yes. I fancy being tucked up in bed with a nice warm cocoa.  
BADGER Not you mole. You're needed here.  
FRED I suppose we have no choice.  
OTTER No choice whatsoever.  
HARRY Then we must eat humble pie and bow out graciously.  
TOAD So long fellows. We'll tell you all about it in the morning.  
*(FIELDMICE exit f.o.h. muttering amongst themselves. As they pass through the audience .....)*  
FRED Don't you worry you guys. Our night's work is not yet over. They haven't seen the last of us yet.  
TOAD Those fieldmice will never learn their lesson. Situations like this are best left to professionals like us.  
BADGER Oh, do be quiet Toad. We'll lose the element of surprise if the weasels hear you twittering on.

RAT                    *(They begin to exit)*  
No far to go now. I remember this old tree stump. If we follow this  
path it leads us right to the weasels' lair. *(fading into the distance)*

*Curtain*

## *Act 2, Scene 2: The Weasels' Lair*

*(All gathered around TOAD's computer)*

- HUBERT That's it lads. I've managed to break the code to hack into the mainframe computer at the local tax office.  
*(hoots of delight from other weasels)*
- CHIEF Well done lad. Now we're really getting somewhere.
- HANN Remember the plan, Hughie. We alter the records to show that we have been overpaying our taxes for the last twenty five years.
- HORACE Yea, then the taxman will realise he's made a big mistake and we get sent a big fat cheque.
- PERCY And maybe even a letter of apology.
- HERB Steady, Percy. Now you're getting into the realms of fantasy.
- HENRY With that sort of cash behind us we will have no trouble finding investors for the new company.
- CHIEF And we will have no trouble with the upkeep of our new headquarters, Toad Hall.
- HANN You mean **Weasel Hall**.  
*(laughs from the other WEASELS)*
- CHIEF OK yous guys. The time has come to make the final plans for tonight's takeover of Toad Hall. Percy, take three men and stand guard outside. The rest of you, gather round. *(all gather round)* Henry, the plans please. *(takes map)* Now this is our route, taking us past the far end of the wood so that nosey Badger doesn't see our movements. We move in groups of two or three so as not to arouse suspicion.
- HERB I've got an idea, boss. Why don't we go in disguise.
- HORACE You gotta be joking Herbert. You've got an accent as rough as sandpaper and a nose that's broken in more places than the white line on the road. People would still recognise you if we painted you yellow and disguised you as a banana.
- HERBERT Look who's talking. You've got ears like two giant cauliflowers and you've broken more peoples' kneecaps for fun than I've had fieldmice for lunch.
- CHIEF Stop your arguing you fools. We'll never get anywhere if we quarrel amongst ourselves. When we arrive at Toad Hall we'll meet up behind the wall at the end of the lawn by the fountain. From there we move to the rear and climb onto the portico to effect entry.
- HENRY Hughie will never climb up there, not unless he goes on a crash diet.
- HUBERT Well if the wind blows too hard, you'll fall straight off you wimp.
- HENRY Who are you calling a wimp? Stoat features.
- HUBERT Ermine the Vermin. *(pouts)*  
*(General disorder breaks out)*  
*(Enter Percy)*
- PERCY Stop! Stop this madness. While you've been at each other's throats

we've had some visitors. They're waiting outside.  
OTHERS Visitors? We're not expecting any visitors, are we? etc.  
PERCY Well Chief. Shall I drag them in.  
HANN What does he mean, drag them in?  
CHIEF Certainly Percy. Show them in.  
*(HANNIBAL, HENRY and HUBERT exit, these last two still abusing one another. Together with the other weasel guards and PERCY, they drag in BADGER, TOAD, RAT, MOLE and the other animals, looking pitiful)*  
CHIEF Well, well, well. Sweet revenge at last. My enemies have all played into my hands. Victory at a stroke. Now Weasel Hall is ours for the taking. *(maniacal laughter followed by cheers from the WEASELS)*

***Blackout and curtain***

## ***Act 2, Scene 3: Somewhere in the Wild Wood***

*(FIELDMICE appear from various directions, dressed as tax inspectors)*

FRED I'm sure it's this way.  
BERT No, it's definitely this way.  
HARRY But we haven't reached the tree stump yet.  
FRANK I'm sure we passed it a while ago.  
FERGUS *(At the rear)* Please let me go in the middle. I don't like it at the front or back.  
FRED Quiet everyone, we must pull ourselves together. Those incompetent buffoons are bound to have got themselves into difficulties. They'll be needing our help.  
BERT But I don't understand how we can help, dressed in these ridiculous clothes.  
FRED We will call the weasels' bluff, Bert. Steal their thunder and put up a smokescreen.  
HARRY *(Aside)* That sounds like it should have been my line.  
BERT I still don't quite follow you, Freddie, but I suppose I will have to trust your judgement.  
FRED Right then. If we are all agreed, we'll head in this direction.  
FERGUS I'm sure it's this way.  
FRANK No, you idiot, that's the way home.  
FRED Nice try, Fergus, but we're not turning back now. Remember the plan everybody. Have courage. Right then. Follow me.  
*(FREDDIE exits one way and all others exit the opposite side apart from FERGUS who is undecided initially but hastily follows the majority)*

***Blackout and curtain***

## *Act 2, Scene 4: The Weasels' Lair*

*(The captured animals are tied up in a circle in the centre with the triumphant weasels encircling them, gloating)*

CHIEF           And so you see, gentlemen, our plan is so brilliant it cannot fail. To all intents and purposes, we are the injured party who suffer as a consequence of others' incompetence.

TOAD            You are nothing but the lowest form of pond-life the scum that floats to the top of the cesspit ..... *(a weasly hand clamps over TOAD's mouth)*

HORACE         I always thought that toads lived in ponds.

BADGER         Come now, Toady. There is nothing to be gained by wasting ones energy on insults. They are like water off a stoat's back.

HUBERT         Very good Badger. Get it lads, 'water off a stoat's back'. Water off a ..... *(gives up and goes to work on computer)*

CHIEF         *(Severely)* **Silence**, you fools. Silence, I say. What are we going to do with you intruders. It would have been better for you if you had remained tucked up in your cosy beds tonight.

HANN            I know, Boss. We've still got some of that dynamite we nicked, er, I mean commandeered from the quarry last year.

HENRY          Yea. We won't be needing this hideout any more after tonight. There's only two exits. We take our stuff, blow the place sky high and this 'orrible lot will be sealed in for ever.

MOLE            No, no, you can't. You simply can't do this to us. We're not fully insured you know.

CHIEF         Alright, you've convinced me! Herbert, see to it will you.

HERBERT        Yes, Boss. Right away, Boss. *(goes to lay dynamite)*

HUBERT         Yahoo, I've done it, I've done it.

PERCY          What is it Hubert? What have you done?

HUBERT         I've got into our file at the Inland Revenue. It says here that we have been overcharged for thirty-five years and we are owed ..... £368,00.

CHIEF         Hooray. We've done it. *(shouts of joy. Exit PERCY on guard)*

TOAD            You filthy low-life scumbags. You're no better than .....  
*(WEASELS ignore TOAD)*

RAT             Don't waste your breath, Toad, they're not even listening.

TOAD            Well Badger? You got us into this mess. How are we going to get out of it?

BADGER         I have been such a fool. If only I had not acted so hastily in sending the fieldmice away. They could have saved us. If only I had not been so proud.

SONG 8

MOLE            Don't be too hard on yourself Badger. None of us had to come here tonight. It was a joint venture. We are in this together.

BADGER Thank you for your words of encouragement, Moley, but I still feel so responsible for this dilemma, and so helpless.

CHIEF What are you two muttering about? Planning to escape are we? Heroic stuff. *(to HUBERT)* Are you ready yet? You'll have to leave that infernal machine - we can't wait any longer.

HUBERT Sorry Boss, but old Toad's got an E Mail letter coming in from Queen Victoria.

CHIEF It's been nice knowing you gentlemen. *(gloating)* Sorry we couldn't extend our hospitality further.

PERCY *(Entering in a great hurry)* Boss, Boss - some unidentified intruders in the Wild Wood approaching our lair. *(all look surprised including TOAD etc)* *(alarmed)* By the way they are dressed, I'd say they were ..... **tax inspectors.**

WEASELS No, no, not tax inspectors, they can't be etc. *(CHIEF looks out of door in horror)*

CHIEF Right lads, a quick exit called for here. No time to grab your stuff. Let's go.

HANN But Boss .....

CHIEF Don't argue, Hannibal. Can't you see when we're beaten. We're rumbled. We can never show our faces in this part of the world again. Let's go. *(HERBERT is the last to leave. As he goes he puts a match to the dynamite, chuckling with delight)*

OTTER No ..... not the dynamite. Help! Help! *(All join in the alarm and cries for help)* *(Enter the tax inspectors, alias the fieldmice. Unaware that the WEASELS have fled, they keep up the pretence, oblivious to the animals cries for help)*

FRED *(Disguising his voice)* This must be the computer they used for the deception. Mr Harry, see if you can get it working, will you?

HARRY Certainly Mr Freddie. *(switches on the computer)* Now let me see. This is most curious.  
 Watkins' wages 20 shillings  
 Repairs to panelling in the great hall £95  
 Repairs to caravan £20  
 Birthday present for Mole 5 shillings .....

*(throughout this the animals become more frantic)*

FREDDIE *(Dropping his guard)* Hey Harry that's Toadies computer isn't it?

TOAD *(Realisation dawning)* Freddie, Freddie, is it really you ..... and the other fieldmice too. I'm so glad to see you.

RABBIT The weasels have gone ..... fled.

F/MICE Hooray, the plan worked.

BADGER Toad ..... the dynamite!

RAT Quick, Freddie, there's dynamite burning above both entrances.

FREDDIE Fergus, Frankie, see to it please.

*(these two grab the sticks of dynamite and throw them into the audience. Sighs of relief from animals)*

- TOAD O, Freddie, how can we ever thank you.
- HEDGEHOG You arrived just in the nick of time.
- MOLE How clever of you to pose as tax inspectors. You certainly frightened off those weasels. We won't ever see them again.
- BADGER It won't take them long to find another patch to work in. Another neighbourhood to terrorise.
- HARRY They'll soon find their feet, dig in their heels and extort themselves a new nest-egg.
- TOAD Ah, gentlemen, if I might have everybody's attention for one moment. *(clears his throat and stands on a chair)* In order to show my appreciation for the help you have given me in my efforts to drive the weasels out of the Wild Wood. I would like to invite all of you to dinner at Toad Hall tomorrow evening at eight. *(Cheers follow. Toad waves them quiet with a gesture)* And now my dear friends, I would like to entertain you by singing just one last song in your honour.
- BADGER Oh no, Toad! You can't, not here.
- TOAD But Badger, I insist. We must celebrate my victory right away.
- FRANK What does he mean, **his** victory
- RAT Alright Toad, but make it a **short** song, and not one of your boastful, conceited ditties.
- TOAD This, gentlemen will be my final effort:  
**Toad's Last Song**
- SONG 9 Toad's Last Song

***Blackout and curtain***

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