

**SCENE FIVE:        *Down by the Stream***

*The RATS enter. They dash about, moving objects from one side of the stage and back again for no apparent reason! They take their work very seriously. PETER enters.*

**PETER:**    *(To the RATS)* Excuse me!

*The RATS stop for a second to look at PETER, then carry on working.*

**PETER:**    *(Slightly louder)* Excuse me! The rabbits suggested that I come and talk to you. I have a bit of a problem, you see, and I'd really appreciate your help.

**RAT 1:**    We're busy.

**RAT 2:**    Busy.

**RAT 3:**    Busy.

**RAT 4:**    Very busy.

*The RATS continue to run about as PETER tries to talk to them.*

**PETER:**    I'm sorry to disturb you. It won't take long.

**RAT 1:**    No time!

**RAT 2:**    No time!

**RAT 3:**    No time!

**RAT 4:**    No time to spare!

**PETER:**    No, I can see that. It's just that I have this problem at school, you see. I'm being bullied and I don't know what to do about it.

*The RATS all stop moving and look at PETER. The RATS then gather together and talk to each other.*

- RAT 1:** Bullied?  
**RAT 2:** Bullied?  
**RAT 3:** Bullied?  
**RAT 4:** He's being bullied.

*The RATS whisper briefly amongst themselves, then begin dashing around again, giving their advice to PETER whilst they are moving.*

- RAT 1:** Run up their trouser legs.  
**RAT 2:** Run over their faces.  
**RAT 3:** Scurry over their feet.  
**RAT 4:** Scratch about in their skirting boards.  
**PETER:** *(Confused)* What?  
**RAT 1:** Always works for us.  
**RAT 2:** Works for us.  
**RAT 3:** Works for us.  
**RAT 4:** Works for me.  
**PETER:** Well, I'm sure that it does and that's very interesting, but it's not really what I was looking for. Is there anything else you can suggest?

*The RATS all stop moving briefly and consider this. Then they move about again.*

- RAT 1:** We must get on.  
**RAT 2:** Get on.  
**RAT 3:** Get on.  
**RAT 4:** Get on with our work.  
**PETER:** Yes, I can see you're busy. I won't disturb you any more. Do you know anyone else who may be able to help me?

**RAT 1:** Try the wolves.

**RAT 2:** The wolves.

**RAT 3:** The wolves.

**RAT 4:** Over there. (*Points offstage*)

**PETER:** (*Nervously*) Wolves? I'm not too sure about that. Well, thank you anyway. Goodbye.

**RAT 1:** Goodbye.

**RAT 2:** Goodbye.

**RAT 3:** Goodbye.

**RAT 4:** See you!

*PETER exits. The RATS begin to collect up all of the objects on stage.*

**RAT 1:** To the stream!

**RAT 2:** The stream.

**RAT 3:** The stream.

**RAT 4:** Everyone to the stream!

**RAT 1:** (*To RAT 4*) Will you stop doing that?

**RAT 4:** What?

**RAT 1:** Saying different things from the rest of us.

**RAT 4:** (*Protesting*) I don't.

**RAT 1:** Yes, you do. It's starting to get on my whiskers.

**RAT 2:** And mine.

**RAT 3:** And mine.

**RAT 4:** Well I don't mean to do it.

**RAT 1:** Apology accepted. To the stream!

**RAT 2:** The stream.

**RAT 3:** The stream.

*RATS 1,2 and 3 look expectantly at RAT 4.*

**RAT 4:** Race you to the stream! Oh, I've done it again, haven't I...?  
Well, tough toenails, I like being different.

*The RATS exit, continuing to argue. They take all of the objects offstage with them.*