

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.