

The Wind in the Willows

by Stephen Kingsbury and Ben Sleep

Act One

Scene 1

The Riverbank

RIVERBANKERS appear L+R and pull 'River and Bank' from the basket downstage L+R

CD Tr 1

Song: *On the Riverbank*

Riverbankers

**Ev'ry living creature needs a place to call home,
A place where you feel safe; that you hold dear,
Somewhere to return to when you're far away,
We think we've found the perfect spot right here!**

**The breezes rustle through the reeds,
The river gently flows,
Past meadows, mills and tangled weeds,
To where the weeping willow grows...**

**Right here on the Riverbank,
Is where we choose to spend our days,
And here on the Riverbank,
Is just the place to dream and laze,
This is where we'll stay!**

Darker music while the WILD WOODERS appear and assemble upstage either side of the basket

Wild Wooders

**We live in the Wild Wood. We like it here,
The darkness suits us very well you see,
And from our base in the Wild Wood we're hatching a plan,
To expand our land and grab new territ'ry!**

**Weasels, Stoats and Ferrets too,
Are poised to spoil the plot,
The River has it's merits too,**

We're not content with what we've got!

**Someday this will all be ours,
The greatest empire ever known,
From the Woods to the Riverbank,
This Rustic Reich we plan to own,
Will last a thousand years!**

RAT enters and sets up picnic in front of basket taking things from the basket

Rat **I live on the Riverbank,
Where the pace of life is slow,
I am quite contented here,
It's the only place I know...**

**But later in the summertime,
I see travellers heading South,
Perhaps next year I'll follow them,
And leave the Riverbank,
But for now this is where I belong...**

Riverbankers **Ev'ry living creature needs a place to call home,
A place where you feel safe; that you hold dear,
Somewhere to return to when you're far away,
We think we've found the perfect spot right here!**

From the RIVERBANK chorus, MOLE stands up

Mole Oh My! Oh My! Fresh air! This is fine! This is better than whitewashing! Look
at the beautiful day! Oh look at the sun!

*MOLE begins to work his way through the chorus/material towards DSC to join RAT. As he does
so, the RABBITS begin to chastise him*

Rabbit 1 You should be spring cleaning!

Rabbit 2 Yes it's spring!

Rabbit 3 You don't belong up here!

Rabbit 4 Sixpence for passing our road!

The RABBITS repeat their heckling altogether

Mole Onion Sauce! Onion Sauce!

Rabbit 1 Well, I never...

Rabbit 2 Why didn't you tell him...

Rabbit 3 Why didn't **you** tell him?

Riverbankers **Right here on the Riverbank,**
Rat & Mole **We'll eat our picnics in the sun,**
Riverbankers **And then from the Riverbank,**
Rat & Mole **We'll take a boat out just for fun!**
All **This is paradise!**

Riverbankers **This is the place that we know best!**
Wild Wooders **To rule the country is our quest!**

Riverbankers **Right here on the Riverbank,**
Wild Wooders **Right here in the Wild Wood,**
Riverbankers **Life is easy, life is fine,**
 And here on the Riverbank,
Wild Wooders **And here in the Wild Wood,**
Riverbankers **Some say we're running out of time,**
Wild Wooders **Darkness suits us well...**
Riverbankers **But this is where we'll stay...**
Wild Wooders **It won't be long...**

Wild Wooders **We will take it! We will seize it!**
 We will conquer the Riverbank!

Riverbankers **This is the place that we love,**
 And we'll never leave it!

Wild Wooders **This land is our destiny!**
Riverbankers **This is the place that we love!**

MOLE has made it to USC

Mole *(in awe)* Oh my! ... Oh my!

Rat Hullo Mole!

Mole Oh! ... Hullo Rat!

Rat Everything all right?

Mole Sorry? ... Oh, yes. This has been a wonderful day! What a day I'm having!

Rat Good ho.

Mole So – this – is – a – river!

Rat **The River.**

Mole And you really live by the River?

Rat By it and with it and on it and in it.

Mole What a jolly life!

Rat What it hasn't got is not worth having, and what it doesn't know is not worth knowing.

Mole It's...well, it's beautiful. All this time I've spent, foraging underground, never knowing what was just above my head...or just below your feet!

Rat You mean you've never seen the River before?

Mole Never...

Rat My dear Mole! We shall have to correct that at once! What say we have a little jaunt up river in my little boat!

Mole Oh my! I've never been in a boat...

Rat Never been in a...well, I...what have you been doing then?

Mole Is it quite as nice as all that?

Rat My dear chap, there is nothing, absolutely nothing, half so much worth doing as simply messing – about – in – boats...

BADGER makes his way from the WILD WOOD chorus to USL. He coughs so as to attract their attention

Rat Well I never, what a busy day this is turning out to be! Hullo, Badger!

BADGER is silent

Rat I said... Hullo, Badger!

Badger H'm...company!

BADGER disappears back into the WILD WOOD chorus

Mole Who was that?

Rat That was Badger, and that's just the sort of fellow he is! Simply hates Society! We shan't see any more of him today. I say, could you have a look in the basket? I could do with some more cold chicken.

The MOLE makes his way to the basket, and peering in proclaims:

Mole This is too much! Cold tongue, cold ham, cold beef, pickled gherkins, cress sandwiches, ginger beer, lemonade...Oh my!

Rat Do you really think so? The other animals are always telling me that I'm a mean beast and cut it very fine...

Mole Oh my! Oh my!

Rat Alright, old thing...help yourself.

Mole This is quite simply a wonderful day (*looking at the RIVERBANK chorus*). It's quite simply beautiful.

Rat: Well, yes... You're new to it and of course you don't know. The Riverbank is so crowded nowadays that many people are moving away altogether. Oh no, it isn't what it used to be at all.

MOLE looks SL at the WILD WOOD chorus

Mole What lies over there?

Rat That? Oh that's just the Wild Wood. We don't go there very much, we Riverbankers. The squirrels are all right, and then there's Badger of course. Nobody interferes with him! And there are Weasels, Stoats, Ferrets, they're all right in their way...you can't really trust them though, and that's a fact.

Mole And beyond the Wild Wood?

Rat Beyond the Wild Wood comes the Wide World, and that's something that doesn't matter, either to you or me... Tell you what, why don't we make a day of it?

Mole What do you mean?

Rat Well, we could take a little trip up river, go and see Toad.

Mole Toad?

Rat Oh you must know Toad old thing, he has the best house on the River, although we'd never admit it! The thing is with Toad, he's a little prone to whimsy. Once, it was nothing but sailing, then he tired of that and took to punting...and then last year it was house boating...still, he's a very generous chap. Come on! There's a fair breeze, I say we'd be there in no time!

Mole Oh my! Oh my!

RAT and MOLE pack up the picnic, whilst the chorus put the material back in the basket. TOAD makes his way from the RIVERBANK chorus to upstage behind the basket/screen. RAT and MOLE then 'punt' up the river using the basket for a boat

CD Tr 2

Song: *On the Riverbank - reprise*

Riverbankers
Wild Wooders

**This is the place that we know best!
To rule the country is our quest!**

Riverbankers **Right here on the Riverbank,**
Wild Wooders **Right here in the Wild Wood,**
Riverbankers **Life is easy, life is fine,**
Riverbankers **And here on the Riverbank,**
Wild Wooders **And here in the Wild Wood,**
Riverbankers **Some say we're running out of time,**
Wild Wooders **Darkness suits us well...**
Riverbankers **But this is where we'll stay...**
Wild Wooders **It won't be long...**

Wild Wooders **We will take it! We will seize it!**
We will conquer the Riverbank!
Riverbankers **This is the place that we love,**
And we'll never leave it!
Wild Wooders **This land is our destiny!**
Riverbankers **This is the place that we love!**

Scene 2

The grounds of Toad Hall

TOAD immediately pokes his head through the screen behind the basket and clambers through.

Toad Hooray! This is splendid! How kind of you! Coming all the way to Toad Hall! The finest house on the River, or anywhere else for that matter! I was just going to send a boat down the River for you, Ratty! Both of you! Come inside and have something! You don't know how lucky it is, your turning up just now!

Rat Let's sit quiet a bit, Toady!

Mole This really is a delightful residence

Toad I'll say! Now Ratty, there's something I need your help with, it's dreadfully important!

Rat It's about your rowing I suppose?

Toad O, Pooh! Boating! Silly boyish amusement! I've given that up long ago! Sheer waste of time!

Rat I see...

Toad I've discovered the real thing! The only genuine occupation for a lifetime! I propose to devote the remainder of mine to it... My dear friends... I give you (*he gestures to the basket*) the finest gipsy caravan you will ever see! There's real life for you, embodied in this little cart!

- Mole Oh my! It's wonderful, I've never seen anything like it!
- Rat Yes, well you'd never even seen a boat...
- Toady Now, now Ratty! It's all complete – look... (*he moves to the cart*) biscuits, potted lobster, soda water, bacon, cards, dominoes – all ready for the open road. We'll set off this afternoon!
- Mole Oh my!
- Rat Did I overhear you say 'we'll' and 'set off' and 'this afternoon'?
- Toad Oh don't be stiff and sniffy!
- Rat I don't care! I'm not coming and that's flat! I'm going to stick to my old River, and live in a hole, and boat, as I've always done. What's more, Mole's going to stick with me, aren't you Mole?
- Mole Of course I am...although, I have to say, it does look rather...fun.
- Toad Ratty! 'Live for others!' That's my motto in life!
- Rat Is this really what you want Mole?
- Mole Well, it could be a wonderful adventure...
- Pause*
- Toad Then it's settled! Ratty – harness up the old grey mare!
- Horse (*from RIVERBANK chorus*) What did you say?
- Toad Harness her Ratty!
- Horse No chance!

CD Tr 3

Song: *Life on the Open Road*

The HORSE jumps up and makes her way around the stage, RAT and MOLE chase and, eventually catch her. During the chase they urge each other on, whilst the HORSE berates them, yelling things such as 'Onion Sauce!' and 'How rude, to chase an old grey mare – you should know your betters!', They are egged on by TOAD.

- Toad Well done Mole! Now, let's get her attached and be off!

MOLE and RAT attach the HORSE to the basket

Scene 3

A country road

TOAD, RAT and MOLE sit on the 'caravan' and sing cheerfully...

Toad, Rat, Mole **Rolling down the dusty highway,
A-rolling down the Rolling Downs,
Any way of yours is my way,
As long as we go out of town,
Every day the sun is rising,
On a brand new episode,
Here today and gone tomorrow,
That's the Life on the Open Road...**

Passers by **Look at the lovely gipsy caravan!**
Toad, Rat, Mole **With ev'rything from kitchen sink to frying pan!**
Passers by **Could we maybe cadge a lift?**
Toad, Rat, Mole **We're sorry, there's no room!**

Toad, Rat, Mole **Cruising by the busy hedgerows,
Never see the same place twice,
Looking to the far horizon,
We must admit it looks quite nice!**
Passers By **Home is all we carry with us,**
Toad, Rat, Mole **But I'm the one who pulls the load!**
Horse **Here today and gone tomorrow,**
Toad, Rat, Mole **That's the Life on the Open Road...**

Rat **Every stop we make a brand new friend,**
Mole **A brand new adventure lies around each bend,**
Toad, Rat, Mole **We've all got the travelling bug,
And ev'ry time we stop...
It's only for a minute then we're off again!**

The pace of the music slows. RAT and MOLE are snoozing. TOAD is at the reins. A huge yawn comes upon him...

Toad **This caravan is getting slower,
The snails and slugs are racing by,
What a tedious form of transport!
I must admit I'm getting bored....**

Toad You see, I'm SO bored I can't even be bothered to make my verses rhyme any more!

Toad **A caravan's enough for some folk ,
But not enough for Mister Toad,**

**I really am quite fed up now,
With the Life on the Open Road....**

Music grinds to a halt then builds to crash as they are thrown from the caravan by the speeding motor car (driven by two WEASELS) that crashes through the screen from behind them. As the dust settles we see TOAD sitting transfixed...he begins slowly...

Toad **Poop! Poop!
Poop! Poop!
What a stunning means of locomotion!
What a glorious and stirring sight!
As powerful as the open ocean,
As graceful as a swan in flight!
Now that's the way to really travel,
How it's fenders gleamed and glowed!
Here today, next week tomorrow,
That's a Life on the Open Road...**

**Poop! Poop!
Poop! Poop!**

Rat
Toad & Chorus **A million miles lie before me,
I'll leave a cloud of dust behind,
Amphibian and motor car in motion,
This time he's really lost his mind!
Speeding down the dusty highway,
A thunderbolt and Mister Toad!
Here today, next week tomorrow,
That's a Life on the Open Road...
Toad **Poop! Poop!****

Mole What are we to do?

Rat Nothing at all. You see he is now possessed...a new craze. He'll be like this for days now. Quite useless for all practical purposes. Now let's see what can be done about the caravan.

They examine it... and see it is quite useless

Rat Come on...it's five or six miles to the nearest town.

Mole But what about Toad...supposing another 'thing' comes along?

Rat Oh **bother** Toad! I've done with him!

They walk...TOAD pops up behind them

Toad Poop! Poop!

Rat (*angrily*) Now look here, Toad!

Toad	Poop! Poop!
Rat	<i>(then calmer as he realises that getting angry with TOAD is a waste of time)</i> As soon as we get to the town we'll go to the police station and lodge a complaint about that motor car.
Toad	Police Station! Complaint! How could I complain about that beautiful machine!
Toad	That entrancing sound! That bewitching smell! That Heavenly vision! What a fortunate collision!
Toad & Chorus	That mechanical miracle of shining chrome!
Toad	And, my friends...I owe it all to you!
Toad & Chorus	Speeding down the dusty highway, A thunderbolt and Mister Toad! Here today, next week tomorrow, That's a Life on the Open Road...
Toad	Poop! Poop!
Toad & Chorus	Life on the Open Road...
Toad	Poop! Poop!
Toad & Chorus	Life on the Open Road...
Toad	I'll have that one!
Salesman	But sir, this is the fastest and most expensive motor car we have!
Toad	I'd like it in red please!
Chorus	Life on the Open Road!

Scene 4

The Wild Wood

CD Tr 4

Incidental: *In the Wild Wood*

The mood changes and the two choruses rise simultaneously and move to cover the stage. They slowly take the form of trees. MOLE and RAT have hidden behind the basket upstage. MOLE enters the wood through the screen behind the basket, followed by an anxious RAT. It is getting dark.

Mole Mr. Badger! I say, Mr. Badger!

Rat *(entering)* Mole! I say, Mole...come back, the Wild Wood's not the place for us! It's getting dark for starters...

Mole I, for one, think it rather rude of Mr. Badger that he's allowed this much time to pass before affording me a proper introduction.

Rat Oh Mole, you know that's a little harsh. This is not the time of year for badgers to be wandering around, making the acquaintance of all and sundry. The weather prevents the wood dwellers from venturing too far; this is the time of year when one stays inside, wrapped up warm against the elements. It'll be dark soon y'know Mole. And the wood's not the place to be when it's dark...

Mole Oh, Pooh! I'm not scared of the Wild Wood!

CD Tr 5

Song: *Who's There?*

The 'trees' suddenly and sharply break out of form and hiss at mole, startling him and RAT. They immediately snap back into trees.

Mole Oh My! Oh my!

Weasel 1 Get out of here you fool!

Mole Oh my! Oh my!

Weasel 2 Get back to the Riverbank!

Mole Oh my!

Mole [cont] Come on Ratty, let's go!

Pause

Mole Ratty! Ratty! Where are you?

Rat Mole! Mole! Over here! Oh Mole, wait, wait!

RAT, in great haste, exits through the screen and waits behind the basket as the 'trees' begin to close in around MOLE

Wild Wooders *(as trees)* **Now you're deep in the dark Wild Wood,
You're very much on your own,
It's a lovely night in the dark Wild Wood,
But you really should have stayed at home!**

**Now you're deep in the dark Wild Wood,
You'd better wear a good disguise!
It's a lovely night in the dark Wild Wood,
But you'd better not close your eyes!
Get out! While there's still time!**

MOLE wanders about blindly in the dark, bumping into the trees and tripping over things. The WILD WOOD groups sing from different quarters, confusing MOLE even more.

Wild Wooders A **Ah! Are we over here?**
Wild Wooders B **Ah! No, we're over there!**
Wild Wooders C **Ah! We're in another place!**
All Wild Wooders *(right in front of MOLE, who cannot see them)* **Ah! And now we're in your face!**

Wild Wooders A **Pitter patter pitter patter...**
Wild Wooders B **Pitter patter pitter patter...**
Wild Wooders C **Pitter patter pitter patter...**
All Wild Wooders **Pitter patter pitter patter...**

RABBIT 1 runs on from SR looking for a place to hide

Rabbit 1 Get out, while there's still time!

MOLE turns but RABBIT 1 is gone. RABBIT 2 runs on from SL

Rabbit 2 Get out now!

RABBIT 2 disappears

Mole **And the creepy pitter patter's really driving me insane,
If I pretend it doesn't matter it will surely go away,
Get a grip! There is nothing here to fear!
Though the pattering is getting rather near,
And the sky is getting dim,
And the atmosphere is grim,
This place is unappealing and I have funny feeling,
That I am not alone!**

Wild Wooders **You have strayed into a nightmare,
Wandered into your darkest hour!
Riverbankers are not welcome!
Foreign animals will disappear!**

Mole **What's that?**
Wild Wooders **Just a rustle in the trees!**
Mole **Oh My!**
Wild Wooders **Branches swinging in the breeze!**

Wild Wooders ***(clap)* Hey you!**
Mole **It's all inside my brain!**
Wild Wooders ***(clap)* Twigs crack!**
Mole **There it goes again!**

Mole **Who's there?**
Wild Wooders **There's no one here but you!**

Wild Wooders A **Pitter patter pitter patter...**
Wild Wooders B **Pitter patter pitter patter...**
Wild Wooders C **Pitter patter pitter patter...**
All Wild Wooders **Pitter patter pitter patter...**

Mole **And the creepy pitter patter's really driving me insane,
If I pretend it doesn't matter it will surely go away,
Get a grip! There is nothing here to fear!
Though the pattering is getting rather near,
And the sky is getting dim,
And the atmosphere is grim,
This place is unappealing and I have funny feeling,
That I am not alone!**

Wild Wooders **You have strayed into a nightmare,
Wandered into your darkest hour!
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Foreign animals will disappear!**

Mole **What's that?**
Wild Wooders **Just a rustle in the trees!**
Mole **Oh My!**
Wild Wooders **Branches swinging in the breeze!**

Wild Wooders **(clap) Hey you!**
Mole **It's all inside my brain!**
Wild Wooders **(clap) Twigs crack!**
Mole **There it goes again!**

Mole **Who's there?**
Wild Wooders **There's no one here but us!**

The WILD WOODERS move in on MOLE encircling him. The word 'Mole' occurs on the beat

Weasel 1 **What's the password, Mole?**
Mole **I'm afraid I...**
Weasel 2 **What's the secret sign, Mole?**
Mole **Secret si...?**
Weasel 3 **Where are your papers, Mole?**
Mole **I didn't know...**
Weasel 4 **Can't you read the sign, Mole?**
Mole **"Trespassers will be cooked and eaten"**

Wild Wooders Ha! Ha! Ha!

Chief Weasel We have special places where we put animals like you...that don't belong here.

Wild Wooders **We're masters of this Wild Wood,
And this is one place you should,
Never ever need to be!**

Mole But, I don't understand...

Wild Wooders **You're trespassing on private property!**

Wild Wooders *(marching manically)***You have strayed into a nightmare,
Wandered into your darkest hour!
Riverbankers are not welcome!
Foreign animals will disappear!**

(as trees again) **Now you're deep in the dark Wild Wood,
You're very much on your own!
It's a lovely night in the dark Wild Wood,
But you really should have stayed at home!**

RAT reappears from behind the basket and rushes down to BADGER who is in his place in the Wild Wood chorus, fast asleep. RAT shakes him awake and points to MOLE. BADGER leaps to his feet and makes for the basket, pursued by RAT

**Now you're deep in the dark Wild Wood,
You'd better wear a good disguise!
It's a lovely night in the dark Wild Wood,
But you'd better not close your eyes!
Too late! Now there's no time!**

At the climax of the song, one of the WEASELS has MOLE in a headlock. BADGER leaps on top of the basket.

Badger Silence! Well, well, if it isn't the Weasels and their little friends the Stoats...

Rat Moley! Are you all right?

Badger Might I suggest this isn't the most sensible place to be venturing after dark?

Chief Weasel *(menacingly)* You can say that again...

Badger Quiet!

Chief Weasel Sorry Mr. Badger

Badger I should hope so too, you nasty little rodent.

Rat I'm terribly sorry about this Badger, I should have been more careful

Mole No Ratty! It was all my fault, thinking I had a brave thought in my head. I should have known something like this would happen, Oh my!

Badger And who are you?

Rat This is Mole, Badger.

Badger Well Mole, it seems you may be a little out of your depth here...

Chief Weasel You can say that again...

BADGER leaps down from the basket and approaches WEASEL 1

Badger And as for you, you snivelling little wretch, I suggest you and your friends return to your burrows before I really lose my temper...

CHIEF WEASEL and the BADGER face each other in silence

Chief Weasel Come on lads, there's a nasty smell here all of a sudden.

The two choruses divide and sit down SL and SR as RIVERBANKERS and WILD WOODERS respectively

Mole *(as the WEASELS leave)* Cowards! Too scared to fight eh? Frightened of picking on someone your own size eh? That'll learn you! That'll learn you!

One of the WEASELS turns and hisses at MOLE

Mole Oh My!

Rat You shouldn't say that, Mole!

Mole I'm not scared of them...

Rat No, I mean it's not 'that'll learn them' That's not good English, it's: That'll teach them...

Badger What's the matter with his English? It's the same what I use myself, and if it's good enough for me, it ought to be good enough for you! Anyhow, we don't WANT to teach 'em,' We want to LEARN 'em--learn 'em, learn 'em!

Mole Hear hear!

Badger Anyhow, if we're remarking upon one another's manners, I'd say that we still haven't been properly introduced...

Rat Oh yes! What was I thinking? Badger, this is Mole. Mole, this is Badger.

- Mole How do you do, Mr. Badger?
- Badger Just Badger thank you, Mole.
- Rat Awfully good of you to pop up like that Badger, things were getting a little hot don't you know?
- Mole Oh it's all my fault! If I hadn't been such a silly Mole and let curiosity get the better of me, we wouldn't be in this pickle now! It's not Ratty's fault, Badger, I came in to this wood looking for you and Ratty was trying to look after me...and now we're lost, and it's cold and we've no way of knowing how to get out again!
- Badger Lost?! My dear Mole! This is my home...

CD Tr 6

Incidental: *Badger's Home*

- Badger *(with 'Churchillian' rhetoric)* I've lived in the Wild Wood all my life, I know every nook, every cranny, every brook and stream. It is in me and I in it.
- Mole When one is in, looking out, and with good friends of course, suddenly it doesn't seem half as daunting as when one is out and looking in.
- Badger My dear Mole, the Wild Wood holds many stories. Long before it had planted itself and grown up to what it is now, there was a city – a city of people. They were powerful people, and rich and great builders.
- Mole But what has become of them all?
- Badger Who can tell? People come, they stay for a while, they flourish, they build – and they go. But we remain. There were badgers here, I've been told, long before that same city ever came to be. And now there are badgers here again. We are an enduring lot, and we may move out for a time, but we wait, and are patient, and back we come. And so it will ever be...

The OTTER jumps up from the RIVERBANK chorus.

- Otter Ratty! Thought I should find you here all right! They were all in a great state of alarm along the riverbank when I arrived this morning

The RIVERBANK chorus murmur agreement and concern

- Otter Rat never been home all night – nor Mole neither – something dreadful must have happened they said... Hullo Badger!
- Badger Hullo Otter!
- Otter Thought they might end up with you. 'Don't worry' I said, 'Mr. Badger will look after them if they're in the Wild Wood' I said. And I was right!

Mole Weren't you at all – er – nervous?

Otter Nervous? I'd give 'em nerves if any of 'em tried it on with me!

Mole Oh My!

Badger Well said Otter!

Rat Yes, well said!

Mole I don't know, I don't know - all this fresh air... It can have a very disturbing effect on a Mole. Once well underground, you know exactly where you are. Nothing can happen to you, and nothing can get at you. You're entirely your own master, and you don't have to consult anybody or mind what they say.

Badger That's exactly what I say. There's no security, or peace and tranquillity, except underground. Look at Rat, a couple of feet of floodwater, and he's got to move into hired lodgings.

Rat I say! That's not true!

Badger Isn't it?

Rat Well...yes, alright. But there are many benefits to living on the Riverbank. Each to his own I say.

Mole Well said Ratty.

Badger Well, fair enough. But my point is that even the most impressive abodes can catch you out. Take Toad for example, I say nothing against Toad Hall, quite the best house in these parts, as a house. But supposing fire breaks out – where's Toad? Supposing the tiles are blown off, or walls sink or crack? Where's Toad?

Mole Yes I see.

Badger No, I mean, where's Toad? Why hasn't he come on this little jaunt into the Wood?

Rat Badger – you know Toad, always busy with something.

Badger Still struggling with rudimentary rowing?

Mole We wish.

Rat Yes, I'm afraid it's a little more serious than that.

Badger Oh? Why so?

Rat Toad's latest pursuit is rather more mechanical...

Mole Cars...

Badger Oh...

Rat He seems to rather go in for crashes as well....

Badger Why, how many has he had?

Rat Cars or crashes?

Mole To be fair, it's the same thing.

Rat He's been in hospital three times...

Mole Quite regardless of law and order...

Rat Nothing can make him see sense...

Badger Is that so?

Scene 5

On the road with Toad

CD Tr 7

Song: *Indestructible Toad!*

Toad **The world has always loved the hero,
Those brave and gallant men of fame,
Here comes the latest greatest hero,
And 'Dashing' is his middle name !**

**Now heroes have a trait in common,
One thing they never seem to lack:
In the face of certain failure,
They have the knack of bouncing back!**

**Here comes that:
Indestructible Toad!
Daring adventurous Toad!
Fortune may falter and luck may run out,
I may look defeated,
But I'll get through without a doubt!**

Toad & Chorus **Indestructible Toad!
Handsome and popular Toad!**

Toad **I'm brave and I'm fearless!**

Toad & Chorus **I'm utterly peerless!
The Great Indestructible Toad !**

Chorus **Top of the 'A' list!
The Great Mister T!
Celebrity royalty is he!
He's frivolous and feckless!
He's dangerously reckless!
A superstar with personali-T-O-A-D!**

Toad & Chorus **Indestructible Toad!
Speeding on down the road!**

Chorus **A bit of a flash goof!**

Toad **But totally crash proof!**

Toad & Chorus **The Great Indestructible Toad!**

Policeman **I was proceeding down the road,
All was quiet and all was still,
A peaceful summer's evening,
On the river by the mill,
A sound became apparent,
It grew loud and it grew shrill,
A motor car at break-neck speed,
Came racing down the hill!**

TOAD 'drives' around the stage recklessly

Toad **This motor car is fabulous,
The fastest I could buy,
A super duper speed machine,
This car can really fly!**

Chorus **There's a bendy road ahead of you,
Look out now, Mister Toad!
Assume the crash position,
'Cos you're running out of road!**

TOAD crashes into the POLICEMAN, knocking him over

Policeman **Hey! Hey! Look out!**

Toad **What do think you're doing?!
You're a raving maniac!
You nearly run me over,
And you could have broke my back!
I very sorry officer,
I won't do it again,
I've learned my lesson now,
And so next time I'll take the train!**

Policeman Very well then. You just stay away from those noisy, smelly, dangerous contraptions!

POLICEMAN turns to go

Toad *(under his breath)* Nincompoop!

Policeman What's that?

Toad *(blithely)* Oh... nothing

Policeman *(suspiciously)* Indeed.

He turns to go

Toad *(louder)* Nincompoop!

Policeman *(writing in his notebook)* 'The Toad was heard to utter the word 'Nincompoop'. I have reason to believe this comment was addressed to my personage'.

Toad *(hiding)* Nincompoop!

Policeman *(looking up from his notebook)* Right! That's it! You're nicked!

POLICEMAN runs off completely missing TOAD! TOAD pops up and sings. During this verse TOAD exits.

Toad **That's me the:**
Toad & Chorus **Indestructible Toad!**
 Handsome and popular Toad!
Toad **I'm brave and I'm fearless,**
 I'm utterly peerless,
Toad & Chorus **The Great Indestructible Toad!**

TOAD enters 'driving' another car

Toad **This driving lark is marvellous,**
 The only way to go,
 All other forms of transport,
 Are really far too slow!
Chorus **There's a bendy road ahead of you,**
 Look out now, Mister Toad!
 Assume the crash position,
 'Cos you're running out of road!

TOAD crashes again. During the next verse a bossy, matronly NURSE takes TOAD hobbling to the basket, this time doubling as a hospital bed.

Nurse **Now I know what is best for you,**

**You naughty little imp!
You'll need to stay in bed a week,**

He winces as she moves him

Toad **Now don't be such a wimp!
Oh, lady with the lamp,
I shall submit unto your will,
This Toad is going nowhere,
'Cos this Toad is very ill!**

Toad Thank you for your kindness, dear nurse, but I deserve to suffer alone.

Nurse Very well...Now, rest and recuperation! Rest and recuperation!

NURSE exits. TOAD creeps through the screen and pokes his head round the corner...

Toad **That's me, the:
Indestructible Toad!
Daring adventurous Toad!
Fortune may falter and luck may run out,
I may look defeated,
But I'll get through without a doubt!**

Toad & Chorus **Indestructible Toad!
Handsome and popular Toad!**

Toad **I'm brave and I'm fearless!
I'm utterly peerless!**

Toad & Chorus **The Great Indestructible Toad!**

Chorus **Top of the 'A' list,
The Great Mister T,
Celebrity royalty is he!
He's frivolous and feckless,
He's dangerously reckless,
A superstar with personali-T-O-A-D!**

Toad & Chorus **Indestructible Toad,
Speeding on down the road,
Chorus He's...more nuts than Nero!
Toad But quite the English hero!**

I'm insurmountable,

Chorus **Unaccountable,**

Toad **Undeniable,**

Chorus **Unreliable,**

Toad **Indestructible,**

Chorus **Tax-deductible,**

Toad **Tough and resilient and totally brilliant!**

Toad & Chorus **The In-de-struct-i-ble... Mister...**

BADGER enters

Badger (*roaring*) ...TOAD!

Toad Lawks! Hullo Badger! What a beautiful day, don't you agree? Poop Poop!

Badger I'll give you Poop Poop, you amoral amphibian...

Toad What on earth do you mean?

Badger Your father was a very good friend of mine Toad, and I made a promise to him that I would ensure that the family fortune would be protected and nurtured...wisely invested.

Toad Oh Pish, tosh, poppycock! What's the point in money if you can't enjoy yourself? Anyhow, it has been wisely invested...indeed I can think of no wiser investment than this remarkable machine...

CD Tr 8

Song: *You Exasperating Rogue*

Badger **Look here! I'm quickly losing patience,
You exasperating rogue!
With your 'Pish and tosh and poppycock',
A bounder of a Toad!
Rapscaillon and reprobate,**

Toad **I'm very sorry, Badger,
I've been very, very bad!**

Toad Yes! Yes, you're quite right!

Badger I beg your pardon, Toad?

Toad I said 'you're right'! Satisfied? You're right! You're right! You're right!

Badger And?

Toad And what?

Badger Toad...

Toad And...(whispers) I'm sorry...

Badger I didn't quite catch that Toad...

Toad I said...I'm sorry.

Badger Ratty! Mole! Toad's coming over, he's something to say...

Mole Oh My!

- Rat Well, well Toady...Badger's made you see sense has he?
- Toad I'd just like to say...that I've given it a great deal of thought...and thought very hard about my actions...and...and...I'm not sorry. And it wasn't folly at all! It was simply glorious!
- Badger What! You backsliding animal, didn't you just tell me now, over there...
- Toad Oh yes, yes...over **there**...I'd have said anything 'over there'.
- Badger Then you don't promise never to touch a motor car again?
- Toad Certainly not! On the contrary! I faithfully promise that the first motor car I see...Poop poop!
- Badger Why you little...

WEASELS 1 & 2 rise from the WILD WOOD chorus, cross to the basket and extract an old car horn and steering wheel. They press the horn loudly to make a 'parp parp!' noise

Toad *(dreamily)* Poop poop!

The WEASELS repeat the noise: parp parp!

Toad Poop poop!

TOAD rises dreamily whilst the other friends stay motionless, as if in a dream

Weasel 1 *(loudly, for Toad to hear)* I say! I think we'll leave our very expensive...

Weasel 2 And very fast...

Weasel 1 Bright red motor car just here...

Weasel 2 Do you think we should turn off the engine?

Weasel 1 No need! I'm sure no one would steal this roaring, purring machine.

The horn is squeezed twice: parp parp!

Toad Poop poop!

Weasel 2 We'll just pop into this pub...

Weasel 1 Have a spot of luncheon...

Weasel 2 And leave this magnificent motor right here...

Weasel 1 On the public carriageway...

The WEASELS giggle, lay the steering wheel and horn down on top of the basket and disappear through the screen and head back to their chorus.

Toad (spying the car, dreamily) Poop poop!...Poop poop! Look at it...magnificent...purring...

He produces some goggles, takes the steering wheel and sits on the basket. He toots the horn: Parp parp!

Toad Poop poop! One little ride around the lane couldn't hurt. I'll have it back in time for cheese!

CD Tr 9

Song: *On the Road Again!*

Toad & Chorus	Indestructible Toad!
	Speeding on down the road!
Chorus	A sneaky, sly survivor!
Toad	And one very careful driver!
Toad	I'm on the road again!
Chorus	Look out! It's Toad again!
Toad	More motoring thrills now!
Chorus	Go run for the hills now!
Toad	I'm 'Toad the Joyrider'!
Chorus	A slimy backslider!
Toad	Tough and resilient and totally brilliant!
Toad & Chorus	The In-de-struct-i-ble...Mister...

Scene 6

A Courtroom

The JUDGE pops up from the WILD WOOD chorus

Judge: ...TOAD! You have been found guilty, on the clearest evidence, first, of stealing a valuable motor car; secondly, of driving to the public danger; and, thirdly, of gross impertinence to the rural police. The latter being by far the most serious of your numerous crimes.

Policeman Hear, hear.

Judge Be quiet you nincompoop!

Policeman Er, begging your pardon M'Lud...

Judge Quiet!

The CLERK also pops up next to the JUDGE

Clerk But Your Honour...

Judge I said quiet!

Policeman Yes Your Honour.

Judge Now, Mr...Toad, if that is your real name, these are grave, grave offences – you do understand that?

Toad Oh yes Your Honour, nothing clearer...I am of course most dreadfully, dreadfully sorry...

Judge We shall have to deal with you very seriously.

Toad I've been terribly naughty! It is true! Oh it's true!

Judge Some of these crimes are unforgivable.

Toad I didn't mean to steal; I mean it wasn't really stealing...

Judge Not that! I understand that you verbally abused this officer here...

Toad Oh I didn't mean it Your Honour...

Policeman He called me a...

Judge Quiet you nincompoop! I'm quite capable of getting the details from this wily frog!

Policeman Toad...

Judge How dare you! Never have I been spoken to in such a manner...

Clerk I think he was referring to Mr. Toad, Your Honour.

Judge What?...Oh, right.

Toad It was only in jest!

Judge That's no excuse. No one, whatever their rank, should take the name of the law in vain. Now...what did you call him?

Toad I called him a...a...

Policeman He said I was a...

Judge Quiet you nincompoop! Now...Mr. Toad?

Toad I called him a...nincompoop.

Silence

Judge Disgraceful!

Policeman But you just...

Judge We must focus on the accused officer...this is a court of law and I will not have him or you bring it in to disrepute. Now, Mr. Toad, I am required to adhere to the decision of the jury, who understand their grave responsibility very well.

The WILD WOOD chorus agree and mutter very seriously

Judge Now, whilst they deliberate your fate I suggest you have a long think about what you might want for your last meal. Gentlemen of the jury, I will now ask you to confer amongst yourselves and decide whether this amphibian is guilty of his accused crimes...take as long as you need.

Chief Weasel We find him guilty, M'lud

Judge Good ho! Mr. Toad, you have been found guilty and it is my judgement that you shall be taken from this courtroom to a place of execution where you shall be hung from the neck until...

The CLERK coughs loudly

Clerk Er...M'lud?

Judge What is it?

Clerk Er, we can't actually hang him for these offences, sir...

Judge What? Why not?

Clerk Well umm...

Judge What can we do then?

Clerk Well, some people would consider that stealing the motor car was the worst offence, but cheeking the police undoubtedly carries the severest penalty...

Policeman Quite right!

Judge Quiet, you nincompoop!

Clerk Supposing we say twelve months for the theft, which is mild...and three years for the furious driving, and...fifteen years for the cheek?

Judge Better round it up to twenty to be on the safe side.

Wild Wooders Hurrah! Hear hear! (*etc.*)

Judge Right, it's twenty years for you this time, but if you appear before us again we shall have to deal with you very seriously!

Toad What?!

Judge Take him down...

CD Tr 10

Song: *The End now for Certain*

Chorus

**The end now for certain,
It's Toad's final curtain,
He'll soon be forgot,
Left to rot in a gaol,
He's finally cracked,
At the end of this Act!
Poor Toad is now in a hole!**

-- End of Act 1 --