

*The caravan is well on its way before there is any sign of its sleeping owner*

**Toad** (*emerging*) Good-morning, Ratty. On your way already! What a lovely morning. I could eat a horse.

**Albert** Oh, could you? Well, I wouldn't say no to some toad in the hole.

**Rat** We've had breakfast.

**Toad** Where's mine?

**Rat** Oh, it's all eaten. You were asleep.

**Toad** That's rather selfish of you.

**Rat** Well, Toady. I must say I eat my words. I'm really enjoying this.

**Mole** Me too.

**Albert** And I'm not wholly discontented myself.

**Rat** The open road. The chequered counties. England spread out in front of us ...

**Toad** We seem to be going very slowly.

**Albert** No, we're not. This is what is known as *ambling*.

**Toad** I can't think why people stare. It's insolent. Those rabbits are even waving. Ignore them Rat.

**Rat** They're just pleased to see us.

**Toad** Can't imagine why. It's just a glorified horse and cart, what's so special about that? And it's so slow, trundling along. Of course that's what this country's like, Rat. England's a caravan. Wants geeing up a bit.

*There is the sound of a car drawing nearer and a distant poop poop*

**Squirrel Samuel** I say, that caravan ought to watch out. There's something coming.

**Squirrel Shirley** And fast too. Somebody ought to warn them. There could be a nasty accident.

**Squirrel Samuel** A very nasty accident indeed.

**Squirrels** (*shouting*) Stop! Stop! Stop!

*Disaster seems unavoidable but by sheerest chance when the collision occurs both car and caravan are already offstage so the audience is spared the frightful sight of horse-drawn meeting horse-powered and horse-drawn ending up in the ditch. As it is, all we hear is a frightful crash and the sound of a car picking up speed and heading for the horizon while a single cartwheel careers on to the stage as witness to the fate of Toad's once proud caravan*

**Squirrel Samuel** Dear oh dear oh dear. Look at that. I saw that coming, you know.

*Rat and Mole rush on*

**Mole** Did you see that!

**Rat** Villains! Road hogs! Tourists. I'll have you in court. You saw that, you were a witness.

*The rabbits to whom Rat is appealing have of course seen nothing and are making themselves scarce*

**Mole** Ratty. They're gone.

**Rat** It's a disgrace!

*Albert comes on, with a few fragments of cart still attached*

**Albert** That wasn't very nice, was it? Could have been quite dangerous.

*Toad now staggers on and it is at once evident that he has had a religious experience*

**Toad** Poop poop. Poop poop.

**Rat** All right, Toady?

**Toad** Ratty. I've had a vision.

**Albert** Shock. Concussion.

**Toad** There was a great creature — like a thunderbolt!

**Albert** I had a cousin fall in the Grand National, same thing.

**Toad** There was a man in a helmet and he was riding a rainbow, then a cloud of dust and the sound of distant trumpets.

**Rat** And the caravan in the ditch.

**Toad** What caravan?

**Mole** Your caravan, Toady. Your pride and joy.

**Rat** It's no use, Moley. He's forgotten the caravan already. Caravans, punts, houseboats — It's all happened before.

**Albert** Funny. Without the cart I feel — a bit — undressed.

**Toad** Rat. You're a man of the world — I wonder — just out of interest — where one would purchase one.

**Rat** Purchase what?

**Toad** One of those — motor car things.

**Rat** Toad, Toad.

**Toad** Poop poop. Poop poop. Poop poop.

*Toad exits*

**Rat** (*calling after*) Toady! Toady!

*Rat, seeing all too clearly what the future has in store, runs after Toad.*