

The Tale of Elm Tree Wood

Scene 1-The Introduction

Cast-6 Trees, Shrew, Bunny, Buck, Squirrel 1, Squirrel 2, Badger, Weasel 1 and 2 and Stoat 1 and 2.

Elm trees are narrators. It is autumn morning.

Elm Tree 1: Welcome to the Elm Tree Wood
You've arrived at break of day

Elm Tree 2: All is still and quiet now
But this way it shall not stay.

Elm Tree 3: Our autumn leaves are rustling
Falling gently to the ground

Elm Tree 4: We will wake our little friends now
From their slumber safe and sound.

Elm Tree 5: For it is time you meet them
For our story to be told

Elm Tree 6: Excitement and adventure
One of heroes brave and bold.

ALL ELMS: Our old branches will keep them
Out of danger if we can
But we cannot save them from
The strength and power of Man.

Elm Tree 1: Oh look I see one stirring
Waking from his slumbers deep

Elm Tree 2: Who is it? Little shrew I think
From his tiny hole he peeps....

Characters:

Shrew: bossy boisterous...too big for his boots

Bunny and Buck: lazy, dozy, very chilled out pair

Squirrels: active, energetic, goody two shoes types!

Stoats and weasels: devious lot

Badger: brains and brawn- leader that everyone looks up to, respects.

Shrew: (*looks at the audience then sniffs around his area and then very noisily- shouting*) Breakfast! Breakfast! Breakfast! That's all I have on my mind this morning. Hey Bunny, Buck! Got any nibbles going. I'm starving!

Bunny: (*slowly and yawning*) Surely it's not morning already! Give me five more minutes in my burrow.....**please!** (*shuts her eyes*)

Buck: Yes, come back to bed Bunny- I hardly slept a wink last night with all your snoring... (*Shrew giggles*)

Squirrel 1: (*jumping onto the stage and giving Bunny and Buck a start as they are just nodding back off*) Morning you guys! Oh sorry Bunny, sorry Buck- did I wake you? We've been up for hours- haven't we darling?
(*Shrew, Buck and Bunny raise their eyes and yawn*)

Squirrel 2: (*getting out a note pad and pencil*) Yes we have- let me just check... We've found and hidden (*pause*) 552 acorns already this morning and it's only (*pause and looking up at the sun*)-5.17am to be precise!

Buck: Is that really the time...come back to bed Bunny. That's an order!
(*Lying down again*).

Badger: No time for sleep on this beautiful autumn morning Buck-now **that's** an order! (*Buck and Bunny immediately stand up - in fact all animals stand to attention on the entrance of Badger*) Well done you Squirrels! Collecting for winter I see...and it's only round the corner. Busy busy busy everyone! Come on step to it!

Busy, Busy, Busy, Busy

Happy, busy, celebratory, uplifting...

Busy, busy, busy, busy
Store and gather everyone
As autumn turns to winter
Come and join the fun!

Now autumn leaves are falling
From the great Elms we love so
We animals must get to work
In the very best way we know

Busy, busy, busy, busy
Store and gather everyone
As autumn turns to winter
Come and join the fun!

During the chorus the animals can have a "conveyer belt" of nuts and seeds moving along a line as they sing- with some choreographed simple dance.

End of song enter band of stoats and weasels...

Stoat 1: MMMMMM! (*Rubbing his tummy*) I thought I could smell something tasty! Shrew is that you? (*Stoats and weasels laugh*)

Weasel 1: Anyone for scrambled squirrel? (*More laughter*)

Stoat 2: Tasty bit of rabbit on toast for breakfast would go down a treat! (*More laughing*)

Badger: (*protecting other animals*) Aah! Stoats ...Weasels...how wonderful you could join us...unfortunately we were just...err leaving... good bye! (*All animals exit except weasels and stoats*)

Weasel 2: Good bye for now dear old badger...you saved your little friends this time but don't worry-

All weasels and stoats: WE'LL BE BACK!

All exit

Scene 2- The Discovery

Cast-6 Tree Nymphs, Trixie and Tristan, 4 elm trees, Mummy, Daddy, George and Elizabeth.

It is winter. On the stage are the 4 elms. The rest of the characters are off stage.

Elm Tree 1: Now you have met the creatures
Who live here beneath our boughs
Becoming rather fond of them
In spite of all their rows.

Elm Tree 2: But here's a little secret
We Elm Trees will tell you

All Elms (*whisper*): There are other living beings
In this wood- yes it is true!

Elm Tree 3: In fact I hear their wings now
They are so fair and light

Elm Tree 4: They're known here as the tree nymphs
Who come at start of night.

Music as Tree Nymphs enter. They are in pairs and here there will be some dancing on their entrance. Then-

Tree Nymph 1: Quick we better hide!

Tree Nymph 2: I can hear Trixie and Tristan coming now!

We are now aware that they are playing hide and seek .All run off behind trees giggling and hide while Trixie and Tristan wander on after them counting....with their eyes semi closed!

Trixie: 16, 17, 18, 19 20- ready or not here we come!

Looking around they suddenly hear someone coming-noise children and adults. Trixie keeps looking but Tristan stops to listen. Where are you! Come out come out wherever you are!

Tristan: Hey Trixie can you hear that noise- it sounds like **you know whats...** Quick! We'd better hide too!

Tristan and Trixie run and hide.

Enter family of Mum, Dad and their 2 children George and Elizabeth.

George: Let's stop here for our picnic Dad? I'm starving!

Elizabeth: You're always hungry George!

Daddy: Look, children- we need to get home now...it's getting dark and your mother isn't really wearing the right shoes for a walk in the woods and...

Mummy: (*shouting*) **And I've got blisters!** I'll be glad when they cut down this awful wood... I read it in the papers- (*holds paper up to look at it*) they're going to cut it all down in the spring to build some new flats! And I'll be pleased to see the back of it! (*Drops the paper and all family exit*)

Trixie and Tristan come out of their hiding places. All the tree nymphs slowly start to come out from their hiding places.

Tristan: (*picking up newspaper and holding it up*) Did you hear that! Come out of your hiding places quickly! Something terrible is going to happen!

Tree Nymph 3: We heard! They are going to cut down Elm tree Wood!

Tree Nymph 4: Come together everyone!

Tristan puts newspaper in pocket...Start singing

The Tree nymphs -light and ethereal but main verse stronger

In a circle

Bright, light, ignite!
Glinting, glowing oh so white,
Tree nymphs unite,
Flying in the night.

Guarding the elms our wings aglow
Softly so softly we fly
Protecting trees from evilness
And nasty passers by.

Bright, light, ignite!
Glinting, glowing, oh so white
Tree nymphs unite
Flying in the night.

All Tree Nymphs exit flying out. 2 Tree Nymphs remain.

Tree Nymph 5: We can't stop this on our own! We will need help...

Tree Nymph 6: We must go to find Old Lady Tawny- the wisest creature in the Woods - she may know what to do!

Lights out. Rest of characters exit...

Scene 3- The Mission

Cast-4 big parts- Trixie, Tristan, Lord Hooter, Old Lady Tawny,
Tree Nymph 1,2,3,4 very small,
Tree Nymph 5 and 6,7 bit bigger,
Weasel 1,2, and Stoat 1 and 2 verse speaking.

It is night-time in the wood. There is a back drop showing silhouettes of trees with no leaves on. Spooky and eerie music.

Tristan and Trixie lead on the other 6 tree nymphs, creeping very slowly looking around tentatively.

Trixie: Come on Tristan! I think we must be nearly there by now!

Tristan: But it's so....**dark** and it's so....**spooky!** Let's go back to our bit of the wood, Trixie. I don't think we are going to find this Old Lady Tawny...in fact...I don't even think she exists! *Folds his arms and starts walking off the other way.*

Trixie: *(dragging him back)* Look Tristan- **we** think that **this** wood- **our** home is going to be demolished...that means **no home** for us...or any of the other creatures who live here. Is that what you want?

Tristan: *(sheepishly)* No.

Tree Nymph 1: Well we can't do this on our own!

Tree Nymph 2: And the only creature we know who may have an idea is Old Lady Tawny...

Tree Nymph 3: So let's stay together everyone!

Tree Nymph 4: And keep on moving!

We have to keep on moving

During the chorus- tree nymphs holding hands/ marching/ face audience...line in the front of the stage some kind of choreographed movement. During the verses...sing more hushed...we see stoats and weasels enter the stage...then one of the tree nymphs will turn round at the end of the verse and they will scamper away. This happens twice. They are an ominous presence.

CHORUS

**WE HAVE TO KEEP ON MOVING
WE MUST FIND THE ONE WE NEED
WE HAVE TO KEEP ON MOVING
YES ON THIS WE'RE ALL AGREED.**

Though it's dark and dank and spooky, (spoken -spooky)
On this long and winding road
Though our hearts are oh so heavy
With this great and onerous load.

CHORUS

Though there could be ghosts and ghoulies, (spoken -ghoulies)
Rats or bats around the bend
Who could jump out from the tree tops
And pretend to be our friend.

**We have to keep on moving
OH Yes it's VERY true
We have to keep on moving
Friends forever through and through.**

Lord Hooter: Good night! WHOOOOOO goes there?

Trixie: We have come to see you Old Lady Tawny.

Lord Hooter: (*laughing*) Pray tell me do I look like a lady? I am Lord Hooter- Lady Tawny's life long mate. And you- what in heavens type of creature are you?

Tree Nymph 5: We are tree nymphs. We live amongst the branches of the elm trees. But we have a big problem and we thought your wife might help us.

Lord Hooter: Well, you've arrived at the right time! Looks like she is just back from hunting...with my dinner I hope!

Old Lady Tawny flies in gracefully with musical accompaniment.

Old Lady Tawny: Good night! Whoooooo are yoooooo?

Trixie: I am Trixie the tree nymph and these are my friends. We have some terrible news to tell you!

Tree Nymph 6: (*holding up the newspaper cutting*) This spring the humans are going to cut down Elm Tree Wood!

Tree Nymph 7: They want to build flats here so that means very soon none of us will have a home! What can we do?

Old Lady Tawny: Well that is clear as crystal!

Tristan: Is it?

Old Lady Tawny: Why of course! Let me ask you one question! Why don't you want this wood to be cut down?

Tristan: Because it's our home of course...well, home to so many of us!

Old Lady Tawny: Well you have to find the people who want to cut it down and tell them that! All of you! Maybe they don't know how important it is to you...well to all of us. Go and gather all the creatures of this wood and tell them the news...hurry...there's no time to waste!

Exit all characters. Enter Weasels and Stoats. Ominous and dark music as they enter...

Weasel 1: I see a little plan for us
Could go the way **we** choose

Weasel 2: Let's go see dear old badger
We don't have time to lose.

Stoat 1: We'll tell him 'bout these tree nymphs
And their ways so nasty too

Stoat 2: The animals will be scared stiff
They won't know what to do!

All: So they will need protecting
Come to us to help them fight
But of course when they come closer
We will take a great big bite!
Weasels and stoats take a bite and then rub their tummies and exit.

Scene 4- The Meeting

Cast-Badger, Squirrel 1,2, Bunny, Buck, Shrew, Sir Stanley Stoatsford 7th, Weasel man 1 and 2, Stoats man 1, Stoats man 2, Trixie, Tristan, Lord Hooter and Old Lady Tawny.

We see Shrew on his own with a big sack labelled SQUIRREL'S ACORNS. Squirrel's is crossed out and has SHROOs written above it. He is munching through A LOT of them and he has a very fat tummy. He eats quickly and is clearly wary of some one approaching... Squirrels come on to the stage. They move very quickly and are looking keenly for their acorns.

Bunny and Buck are snoozing in their warren.

Squirrel 1: I know I put them around here somewhere darling!

Squirrel 2: And I thought I put them around here somewhere darling!

Shrew: What's that?

Squirrel 1: Oh good morning Shrew! Our acorns of course... We hid (*pause gets out note pad*) 543 about 35 days ago...or was it 534 37 days ago...I'm not sure and ...

Squirrel 2: (*sadly holding up one acorn*) And we've only found 1! Have you seen them Shrew?

Shrew: (*hides bag and sheepishly*) Acorns....no...can't say I've seen any acorns at all...nope...no idea at all about acorns...

Bunny:(*yawning*) Hey guys...Can you keep the noise down... a girl needs her beauty sleep you know!

Buck: (*also yawning*) It's not morning yet is it?

Badger enters.

Badger: It certainly is Buck! No time for lie -ins this morning- not for anyone, not even for Badgers it seems...the Stoats and Weasels have called for a meeting. They say it is of the utmost importance that we all attend.

Bunny and Buck lie back down and groan.

At this point a fanfare is played for the arrival of the weasels and stoats.

Stoats man 1: Please be upstanding for the one ...the only Sir Stanley Stoatsford the seventh and his band of merry stoats men and weasel men!

Sir Stanley enters with stoat men and weasel men. Stoats are pure white as it is winter.

Buck and Bunny jump out of bed and hide behind Badger along with the Squirrels and Shrew. All the creatures seem very scared. There is a big distance between the 2 groups- they are on either side of the stage.

Badger: Good Morning Sir Stanley. We are here as you asked. Now tell us what this meeting is all about.

Sir Stanley: *(menacingly)* A matter of grave importance to this wood, dear old Badger. We know of some wicked creatures called Tree Nymphs who are on their way to find you **right now**...

All creatures gasp!

Weaselman 1: They have a plan to take over this wood!

Weaselman 2: They will **tell** you that the humans are going to chop it down!

Weasel 1: But **of course** they're not going to!

All weasels and stoats laugh.

Stoatsman 2: A clever plan indeed...but **we** have a better one!

Creatures are bending forwards to listen and also weasels and stoats bending forward...Pause

Sir Stanley: If you come to live in **our** dens then **we** can protect **you** from their evil **clutches!**

(All weasels and stoats reach out to try to grab one of the creatures. They retreat once more behind Badger. Music intro to song begins)

Come to live with us!

Chorus

**You can come to live with us
Oh what a lovely treat!
Keeping you so safe and warm
In our den we'll eat!**

These tree nymphs are scary and evil,
Their teeth brightest yellow and long
They come out at night
When the moon is bright white
Grabbing all with their arms oh, so strong!

(During both the verses the weasels and stoats creep closer towards the terrified creatures and on the last line reach out to grab them. The creatures then retreat.)

Chorus

These tree nymphs are dangerous and nasty
Their faces a hideous sight
Their mission is clear
They want to live here
And won't stop till you lot take your flight!

Chorus

Badger: We are left with no choice! We must come to live with you!

Old Lady Tawny and Lord Hooter enter. She has a piece of newspaper in her beak.

Old Lady Tawny: Wait one minute Badger! We have something that may change your mind! Read this!

She hands the piece of paper to Badger. All look over Badgers shoulder and all read:

All creatures: MR. LAMONT, PROPERTY MOGUL EXTRAORDINAIRE,
TO DEVELOP ELM TREE WOOD SITE INTO LUXURY APARTMENT
COMPLEX! *All creatures gasp*

Lord Hooter: And we have **twooooo** tree nymphs here for **yooooo** to meet....not the monsters that these weasels have described to you!

Trixie and Tristan fly in. Creatures are amazed. More gasping!!

Trixie: We live here too and don't want our home to be destroyed anymore than you do!

Tristan: We all need to work together to make a plan!

Badger: *(furious and in a very deep voice showing his claws looking at weasels and stoats)* What do you have to say for yourselves! Weasels! Stoats! Get out of my sight before I do something I regret! I banish you from this wood! Be gone all of you! *(turning to the rest of the creatures and beckoning them together)* We have to make a plan!
Weasels and Stoats run off stage. Lights off as all huddle together to make a plan.

Scene 5 The Confrontation

Cast-18 parts- 6 Blossom trees, Mr. Lamont (the land owner), Brian, the chief builder, Badger, Buck and Bunny, Shrew, Squirrel 1 and 2, Tristan and Trixie, Tree Nymph 1 and Tree Nymph 2.

It is Spring. The Trees are covered in blossom. The animals are on stage but hiding. Tree Nymphs are off stage.

Blossom Tree 1: So blossoms on our branches
And the sun is shining bright
New buds are slowly opening
And the days draw out the night.

Blossom Tree 2: Spring now has come upon us
Time of joy oh it should be

Blossom Tree 3: Time for brand new life around us
Time for fun and family.

Blossom Tree 4: So why the sad long faces
On these little creatures here?

All blossom trees: They may lose their home today
This wood they hold so dear!

Blossom Tree 5: They have this one chance only
Mr. Lamont they must persuade,
This landowner has all the power
And his big plans are made.

Blossom Tree 6: He's coming with the builder
They know this to be true
And now in wait they are for him

All blossom trees: So let's see what they do!

Enter Mr. Lamont and Brian the chief builder.

Mr. Lamont: (*proud and a little pompous*) So, Brian, as my chief builder I want to run through with you the plans for my **luxury** development. The car park would be over there, this area would be the sports complex- gym, pool, sauna that kind of thing.

Brian the builder: *(very keen to please)* Excellent Mr. Lamont...my thoughts exactly.

Badger comes out of his hiding place. Badger stands behind Mr. Lamont and coughs to get his attention.

Badger: Excuse me Mr. Lamont?

Mr. Lamont looks around to see what the noise is but does not initially see Badger.

Mr. Lamont: What was that noise Brian? I thought I heard something. *Badger coughs again. Mr. Lamont turns around and sees Badger this time. He is surprised but his face breaks into a smile.*

Mr. Lamont: Is that a Badger, Brian? I didn't know that Badgers lived in these woods? *(Brian tries to interject but is left open mouthed as Badger gets in first)*

Badger: Oh yes Sir- for many of us creatures, The Elm Tree Wood is our home...

Mr. Lamont looks very taken aback that the Badger speaks and as more creatures start to show themselves and speak he shows more and more astonishment!

Mr. Lamont: Well really...I

Buck and Bunny wake up from their warren and interject

Bunny: So that's why we wanted to talk to you Sir! *(nudges Buck to wake him)*

Buck: Yes, to ask you to stop your plans to cut down **our** wood!

Shrew: *(popping out of his hole and quite angrily)* Most of us have lived here for all our lives you see!

Squirrel 1: And our grandparents lived here and our great grand parents...

Squirrel 2: *(holding up her 2 baby squirrels)* And our children have been born here...

Brian: Don't listen to them Mr. Lamont...this is a fantastic business opportunity!

Shrew: *(with hands on hips and angrily)* Well the least you can do is listen to this- **both** of you- before you make up your minds...

Excuse me Mr. Builder!

Chorus

Don't take away our home please sir
It's here we want to be
Don't take away our home please sir
Just listen to our plea.

Excuse me Mr. Builder
But this place is Badgers set
You want to put some flats up
To get lots of cash I bet!
But a badger needs a home sir
For him and his family
The best place is a deep dark hole
In the shelter of a tree.

Chorus

Excuse me Mr. Builder
But this place is squirrel's dray
Not for long her place of rest
If you get **your** own way!
But look her little babies
They need a place to sleep
Twigs and leaves will cradle them
And warm and snug will keep.

**Don't take away our home please sir
This place that we love so
Don't take away our home please sir
Where d'you think we should go?**

*BIG PAUSE as all look at Mr. Lamont to wait for his response
He thinks about it for a while and looks around. Finally he speaks.*

Mr. Lamont: I'm sorry...really I am. But as Brian says -this is a very good business opportunity. You'll find somewhere else to live, I'm sure of it. Come on Brian. Let's go.

*All animals look devastated and Mr. Lamont and Brian start to exit.
Suddenly we hear the tree nymph music and Trixie and Tristan fly in.*

Tristan: Wait one second! You **can't** cut down Elm Tree Wood!

Trixie: Don't you know that we are the last tree nymphs in all the world.
If you cut down these elm trees we will have no home and we will surely
be gone forever.

Mr. Lamont: Am I seeing things Brian?! Are there really fairies in this
wood?

*Tree Nymph 1 and 2 enter from other side. Tree Nymph 2 is holding The
TREE NYMPH MANUAL*

Tree Nymph 1: Not fairies...tree nymphs!

Tree Nymph 2: And it is written in the Tree Nymph Manual that
All Tree Nymphs?:" whosoever shall cut down The Elm Tree Wood shall
be cursed for the next 1000 years."

Mr. Lamont looks as if he may faint. He rubs his brow.

Mr. Lamont: Right! That's decided it Brian! Lovely to meet you all! Tree
Nymphs, Badger, Squirrels- good luck! I'm off!

*Mr. Lamont runs off stage with Brian following him waving his clip board.
Lights out.*

Celebratory music as we go into Scene 6.

Scene 6- The Celebration

Class 1L- 16 parts

It is summer.

Cast- 4 Summer Elms, Shrew, Buck, Bunny, Badger, Squirrel 1, Squirrel 2, Tristan, Trixie, Weasel 1 and 2, Stoat 1 and 2.

Summer Elm 1: Now the end of our story
Is well and truly here
We Elms are saved from harm now
So we do not need to fear.

Summer Elm 2: It is a summer's morning
Here in this wood we love so
And so they stir, the creatures,
From above and from below.
Squirrels, owls, shrew and bunnies all start to wake up.

Summer Elm 3: But don't you all forget now
There is something unresolved
Those weasels and stoats are banished still
Badger stated it brave and bold.

Summer Elm 4: But look I see one lurking
In the shadows hide they do
Hope they don't bring bad tidings
Let's go see what they're up to.

Shrew is eating from a big bag of acorns labelled Squirrel's acorns but this is crossed out to say Shrew's acorns as in Scene 4. He eats very noisily and it is apparent that he is getting to his last few acorns as he really has to reach down in to this big bag to get them out.

Shrew: *(holding up an acorn)* My last delicious acorn! *(He pops it in his mouth and rubs his tummy.)* A nice little forty winks in the summer sun now I think! *Shuts his eyes and savours it before lying back to enjoy the sunshine.*

Squirrels 1 and 2 enter and see the bag left empty on the floor. They pick it up and prod Shrew angrily who has dozed off.

Squirrel 1: *(crossly)* Shrew! *Shrew sits bolt up right and looks guilty.*
Squirrel holds out the empty bag. What do you have to say about this?

Shrew: I...um... I...can explain everything!

Squirrel 2: Stealing our acorns! What ever did you think you were doing?
Buck and Bunny wake up.

Bunny: What's all the noise about? Ruining my beauty sleep again?

Buck: Yes stop that racket and let a rabbit get the rest he needs!

Badger also wakes up. He stands up angrily and with puts hands on his hips. All the creatures stand to attention.

Badger: Do I hear arguing on this beautiful summer morning? A few weeks ago we were not even sure we would all be here together in this wood! Now please let's put aside our differences and be happy that this wood is still our home!

Shrew walks over to the squirrels sheepishly.

Shrew: I'm sorry.

They give him a hug.

Menacing weasel music as they enter.

Weasel 1: Does that go for us then dear old Badger. Put our differences aside too can we?

Stoat 1: We would so love to come back and live here too.....

Weasel 2: Back to our rightful homes...

Stoat 2: And we are sorry... really we are....

There is a pause.

Badger: Well...I suppose this wood is your home too and if you do promise to behave yourselves...

All stoats and weasels: Why of course!

Tristan and Trixie music. Then they enter.

Tristan: Well don't worry! We will be keeping an eye on all you stoats and weasels!

Weasels and stoats cross their arms and look disappointed.

Trixie: Yes! And we will always protect each other and work together!

All gather in a line for last song...with arms round each other or linked in some way.

Elm Tree Wood Celebration

Thanks to every one of us
We still have our homes today
Living together in harmony
Our Wood is here to stay!

Thanks to every one of us
We still have our homes today
Working together in harmony
Our Wood is here to stay!

Our homes are saved, our mission complete.
We fought for what we knew was right!
Our homes are saved, our mission complete.
We fought for what we knew was right!

Thanks to every one of us
We still have our homes today
Living together in harmony
Our Wood is here to stay!

Thanks to every one of us
We still have our homes today
Working together in harmony
Our Wood is here to stay!
Our Wood is here to stay!