



Scene 1

(**Intro Music** plays (*CD track 9*) as the cast members take their places.
On a small stage to one side, newsreaders Trevor and Moira sit at a desk. They wear antlers/ears/horns, and maybe face-paint to represent their animal characteristics, but formal suits to show their newsreader status. In a semi-circle on the main stage sit Elders 1, 2, 3 and 4, Chip, and chief-elder Snowy on a throne or elevated platform – see staging suggestions/ costumes. A statue of a goddess stands to one side – see staging suggestions/ scenery. The **News Theme Tune** plays (*CD track 10*) and Trevor and Moira begin reading the news.)

Trevor ~ This is the Forest News, and the main story today is that the animal elders are meeting to discuss forest policies. Items on the agenda include the need for affordable housing for the growing population of rabbits. Also, there's panic amongst squirrels, as the share price of nuts plummets to an all-time low! How's the weather looking, Moira?

Moira ~ Well, Trevor, it's great news for ducks with floods on their way! Strangely, though, many other areas are suffering from droughts, as climate patterns continue to baffle experts. But now we'll go straight over to the forest and show you the action at this week's meeting of the elders.

Elder 1 ~ (*standing*) So, that's decided. The bears will be sent a stern letter requesting that they 'do their business' in the woods, and not around the bathing pond. Now, are there any other matters to discuss?

(*Elders 5, 6, 7, 8 and Weezil enter with an arrogant swagger.*)

Chip ~ Ah Weezil, it's so good you and the other elders managed to make it.

Weezil ~ Thanks, Chip. Sorry we're late, but we were chatting to some humans.

Elder 2 ~ Humans! Are you crazy?

Elder 5 ~ Lovely chaps. They've been telling us all about their marvellous idea to expand their city.....into this forest.

Elder 3 ~ An expansion plan! But that's impossible! They can't!

Elder 6 ~ But you didn't hear what they had to say. They were very persuasive.

Weezil ~ My fellow elders, this is a fantastic opportunity for us to team up with the humans. Just think, we could have central heating, motorized vehicles.....

Elder 7 ~ High-definition TV, computer games, fast food restaurants.....

Elder 4 ~ But at what cost? Humans are greedy, wasteful.....and dangerous!

Weezil ~ Are you sure we can't convince you...?

Song 1 – What Kind Of World (*CD track 11, lyrics p17*)

(*Elders supported by whole cast. During the song Snowy is deep in thought.*)

Weezil ~ So, should we allow the humans to expand their city into our forest?

(*All the elders shout their opinions.*)

Snowy ~ Silence! This must be decided in the traditional way – one elder, one vote. Those in favour of allowing the humans to come.....(*Weezil and Elders 5-8 raise their hands*) And all those against.....(*Chip and Elders 1-4 raise their hands*) It is a tied vote – five in favour, five against.

Weezil ~ Then it rests with you, Snowy. As chief elder you have the casting vote. Only you can decide our future.

Elder 2 ~ Please Snowy, see sense! Don't be swayed by promises made by....

Snowy ~ Silence! I shall let Natura, queen of the forest spirits, decide!

(*Snowy approaches the statue and kneels.*)

Elder 8 ~ (*sarcastically*) Well, oh wise chief? Did she say anything?

Snowy ~ Natura will need time. I shall stay here and await her decision. Leave me, all of you, and return at sunrise.

(Everyone exits, *The lights fade and Snowy falls asleep at the foot of the statue.*
An **Owl Hoots** (CD track12), then we hear the **Voice of Natura** (CD track13).

Note – you can either use the voice of Natura on the CD, or alternatively have an actor dressed as the goddess come on and speak the lines to Snowy. As she speaks Snowy wakes up and listens in awe.)

Natura ~ Snowy, Snowy. This is Natura, queen of the forest spirits. You are troubled, I can tell. You have an important decision to make, and you want to be sure you make the right one. But I cannot give you the answer. You must find it for yourself. Travel to the city, learn from what you see, then decide what is best for the forest and all who live here. But be careful! You are not familiar with the ways of humans. Take a loyal friend with you, for comfort and to help bear the burden – you will surely need it. Good luck, Snowy.

(*Natura exits, the lights come up, and Weezil, Chip and the elders enter.*)

Snowy ~ Natura has spoken. I must venture to the city.

Elder 7 ~ But the council needs to make a decision. The humans are waiting.

Snowy ~ Then they must wait a little longer until I return. I am to take one of you with me, and I have decided it will be you, Chip. We leave immediately.

Weezil ~ (*aside*) Ha! With those two out of the way I can set to work 'persuading' the others to see my point of view. Mmm, I can almost taste that....what did the humans call it....that quarter-pounder with cheese!

(*All exit as Intro Music plays (CD track 14)*)

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