

The Pied Piper



Of Hamelin

Sample Pages from The Pied Piper of Hamelin

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THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN

LOVINGLY ADAPTED FROM
Robert Browning
BY
Mrs. Evelyn Merritt



The Pied Piper of Hamelin

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Characters

- Narrator One
- Narrator Two
- Narrator Three
- Narrator Four
- Six Townspeople
Including Lady One, Two, Three, and Four, and Man One and Two.
- Six Town Council
Including Council One.
- Rat One, Two, and Three
- Mayor
- Pied Piper
- Julius the Rat
- Peter the lame boy
- Group of Rats & Children
The group that plays the rats could also play the children. Think also of using a class of students in a lower grade to play the rats/children.

Setting

A backdrop upstage of a town square. A platform, steps or benches upstage. This represents the steps of town hall, where the Mayor and Council spend most of the play.

Costume

The costumes should definitely have a medieval tone to them. Long dresses for the girls. Capes or long vests for the boys. The narrators could be dressed in Neutral Clothes with pants and shirts in the same colour to set them apart from the rest. The costume of the Pied Piper is described in the play: he wears yellow and red, has a long coat and scarf. The easiest way to dress the rats is for them to wear grey, brown or black, and wear half masks.

Vocabulary

AUGHT in any degree	PAUNCH a big belly
BEREFT deprived	PIED Patches of two or more colours.
CHAM A Tartar, member of an Asian or Eastern European tribe.	POKE wallet
CONSTERNATION sudden alarm	PORTAL door
DITTY a short, simple song	PSALTERY ancient musical instrument.
ERE before	PUNCHEON large cask
ERMINE a weasel with a white coat	RHENISH Type of wine from the Rhine region
GLUTINOUS gluey	RIBALD vulgar
GUILDER a gold coin	SPRATS a type of herring
HAP happen	STIVER small amount, small coin
KITH AND KIN Friends and family	TABOR drum
METHOUGHT I thought	TRIFLING little value
MUTINOUS rebellious	VERMIN disgusting animals
NODDY a fool	VESTURE clothing
O'ER Over	WHEREIN in what
PATE head	

In the darkness there is the sound of scurrying feet and squeaking.

The lights slowly rise to reveal a stage covered in rats. They are sniffing, crawling over the set, squeaking at each other, being a general nuisance.

Everyone runs onstage shooing the rats away.

ALL: Shoo! Shoo!

The rats scurry off in all directions.

ALL: Phew!

Everyone sees the audience and screams.

ALL: Argh!!!

Everyone scrambles into a group tableau. It looks like a happy family picture. The NARRATORS enter.

NARRATOR ONE:

Hamelin Town's in Brunswick,
By famous Hanover city;

NARRATOR TWO:

The river Weser, deep and wide,
Washes its wall on the southern side;
A pleasanter spot you never spied;

NARRATOR THREE:

But, when begins my ditty,
Almost five hundred years ago,

NARRATOR FOUR:

To see the townsfolk suffer so
From vermin, was a pity.

Everyone throws their arms up in the air.

ALL: Rats!

The happy family picture changes to various poses of horror as the rats slowly creep onstage during the following.

LADIES:

They fought the dogs and killed the cats,
And bit the babies in the cradles,

MEN:

And ate the cheeses out of the vats,
And licked the soup from the cooks' own ladles,

MAYOR & COUNCIL:

Split open the kegs of salted sprats,

NARRATOR ONE:

Made nests inside men's Sunday hats,

NARRATOR TWO:

And even spoiled the women's chats,

NARRATOR THREE:

By drowning their speaking

NARRATOR FOUR:

With shrieking and squeaking,

ALL:

In fifty different sharps and flats.

*There is the deafening sound of squeaking mice.
Everyone holds their hands to their ears.*

RATS: Squeek!

ALL: Shoo! Shoo! Shoo!

The rats run offstage in all directions.

The NARRATORS move downstage.

*Everyone else divides themselves into two groups:
COUNCIL and TOWNSPEOPLE. The MAYOR and
his COUNCIL gather upstage on the steps. The
TOWNSPEOPLE gather together centre stage. The
TOWNSPEOPLE mutter as they move.*

ALL NARRATORS:

At last the people in a body
To the Town Hall came flocking:

TOWNSPEOPLE:

Tis clear!

ALL NARRATORS:

Cried they,

MAN ONE:

Our Mayor's a noddy;

LADY ONE:

And as for our Corporation – shocking!

LADY TWO:

To think we buy gowns lined with ermine,

LADY THREE:

For dolts that can't or won't determine,

LADY FOUR:

What's best to rid us of our vermin!

The TOWNSPEOPLE turn to the MAYOR and his COUNCIL.

MAN ONE: (*shaking his fist at the MAYOR*)

You hope, because you're old and obese,

To find in the furry civic robe ease?

TOWNSPEOPLE:

Rouse up, sirs!

MAN TWO:

Give your brains a racking,

To find the remedy we're lacking,

TOWNSPEOPLE:

Or, sure as fate, we'll send you packing!

The TOWNSPEOPLE exit, muttering to each other. The MAYOR and his COUNCIL move downstage, pacing in circles.

NARRATOR ONE:

At this the Mayor and Corporation,

NARRATOR TWO:

Quaked with a mighty consternation.

NARRATOR THREE:

An hour they sat in council,

NARRATOR FOUR:

At length the Mayor broke silence.

MAYOR:

For a guilder I'd my ermine gown sell;
I wish I were a mile hence!
It's easy to bid one rack one's brain,
I'm sure my poor head aches again,
I've scratched it so, and all in vain
Oh for a trap, a trap, a trap!

NARRATOR THREE:

Just as he said this, what should hap

NARRATOR TWO:

At the chamber door but a gentle tap?

*The NARRATORS tap on the floor. The MAYOR and his
COUNCIL look offstage.*

MAYOR:

Bless us!

NARRATOR ONE:

Cried the Mayor,

MAYOR:

What's that?

NARRATOR TWO:

With the Corporation as he sat,
Looking little though wondrous fat;

NARRATOR THREE:

Nor brighter was his eye, nor moister
Than a too-long-opened oyster,

NARRATOR FOUR:

Save when at noon his paunch grew mutinous
For a plate of turtle green and glutinous.

MAYOR: (*sigh*)

Only a scraping of shoes on the mat?
Anything like the sound of a rat,
Makes my heart go pit-a-pat! Come in!

NARRATOR ONE:

The Mayor cried, looking bigger
And in did come the strangest figure!

*The PIED PIPER enters. The MAYOR and his COUNCIL
form a semicircle around the PIPER. They are all
curious.*

NARRATOR TWO:

His queer long coat from heel to head
Was half of yellow and half of red,

NARRATOR THREE:

And he himself was tall and thin,
With sharp blue eyes, each like a pin,

NARRATOR FOUR:

And light loose hair, yet swarthy skin,
No tuft on cheek nor beard on chin,

NARRATOR ONE:

But lips where smile went out and in;
There was no guessing his kith and kin:

NARRATOR TWO:

And nobody could enough admire
The tall man and his quaint attire.

ALL NARRATORS:

Quoth one:

COUNCIL ONE:

It's as my great-grandsire,
Starting up at the Trump of Doom's tone,
Had walked this way from his painted tombstone!

NARRATOR THREE:

He advanced to the council-table:
And,

PIED PIPER: (*with a bow*)

Please your honours,

NARRATOR THREE:

Said he,

During the following the MAYOR and his COUNCIL get excited by the PIPER's words. They talk quietly to each other and bounce up and down.

PIED PIPER:

I'm able,
By means of a secret charm, to draw
All creatures living beneath the sun,
That creep or swim or fly or run,
After me so as you never saw!
And I chiefly use my charm
On creatures that do people harm,
The mole and toad and newt and viper;
And people call me the Pied Piper.

NARRATOR ONE:

And here they noticed round his neck
A scarf of red and yellow stripe,

NARRATOR TWO:

To match with his coat of the self-same cheque;
And at the scarf's end hung a pipe;

NARRATOR THREE:

And his fingers, they noticed, were ever straying
As if impatient to be playing,

NARRATOR FOUR:

Upon this pipe, as low it dangled
Over his vesture so old-fangled.

PIED PIPER:

Yet,

NARRATOR ONE:

Said he,

PIED PIPER:

Poor piper as I am,
In Tartary I freed the Cham,
Last June, from his huge swarms of gnats,
I eased in Asia the Nizam
Of a monstrous brood of vampyre-bats:
And as for what your brain bewilders,
If I can rid your town of rats
Will you give me a thousand guilders?

MAYOR and COUNCIL:

One? Fifty thousand!

NARRATOR THREE:

Was the exclamation

Of the astonished Mayor and Corporation.

The MAYOR and the COUNCIL give a loud cheer. They clap the PIED PIPER on the back and shake hands with each other. The COUNCIL moves upstage to stand on the steps. The PIED PIPER moves downstage. He is smiling.

NARRATOR ONE:

Into the street the Piper stept,

Smiling first a little smile,

NARRATOR TWO:

As if he knew what magic slept,

In his quiet pipe the while;

NARRATOR THREE:

Then, like a musical adept,

To blow the pipe his lips he wrinkled,

NARRATOR FOUR:

And green and blue his sharp eyes twinkled,

Like a candle-flame where salt is sprinkled;

The PIED PIPER starts to play. Either the actor plays live, or recorder music is heard. As the music plays, the PIPER moves stage left and right. The MAYOR and the COUNCIL sway from side to side as well.

NARRATOR ONE:

And ere three shrill notes the pipe uttered,

You heard as if an army muttered;

As the music plays, there is the rumbling sound of feet. Offstage, everyone runs in place on their toes. Not a stomping sound, but something lighter to imitate the sound of many rats.

NARRATOR THREE:

And the muttering grew to a grumbling;

NARRATOR FOUR:

And the grumbling grew to a mighty rumbling;

NARRATOR TWO:

And out of the houses the rats came tumbling.

The RATS come running on stage from both sides. They run around in circles and patterns. Create specific movements for the RATS. Think about having the RATS run out into the audience, up and down the aisles. After the choreographed movements, the RATS create a tableau on stage and freeze into place as they speak.

RAT ONE:

Great rats,

RAT TWO:

Small rats,

RAT THREE:

Lean rats, brawny rats,

RAT ONE:

Brown rats,

RAT TWO:

Black rats, grey rats,

RAT THREE:

Tawny rats,

RAT ONE:

Grave old plodders, gay young friskers,

RAT TWO:

Fathers, mothers, uncles, cousins,

RAT THREE:

Cocking tails and pricking whiskers,

RAT ONE:

Families by tens and dozens,

RAT TWO:

Brothers, sisters,

RAT THREE:

Husbands, wives.

ALL RATS:

Followed the Piper for their lives.

The music continues as PIED PIPER exits into the audience. All the RATS snap into action to follow. The NARRATORS move to centre stage and follow the action, as do the MAYOR and the COUNCIL. The TOWNSPEOPLE run on and watch. The group forms a pose. The PIPER makes his way back on stage and exits, the RATS following.

NARRATOR ONE:

From street to street he piped advancing,

NARRATOR TWO:

And step for step they followed dancing,

NARRATOR THREE:

Until they came to the river Weser,

NARRATOR FOUR:

Wherein all plunged and perished!

Everyone on stage gives a gasp and a gesture of disbelief in which they freeze. JULIUS the RAT enters and moves downstage.

NARRATOR TWO:

Save one who, stout as Julius Caesar,
Swam across and lived to carry,

NARRATOR THREE:

As he, the manuscript he cherished
To Rat-land home his commentary:

ALL NARRATORS:

Which was,

*As JULIUS speaks the PIPER's music is heard again.
JULIUS looks up, hearing the music.*

JULIUS:

At the first shrill notes of the pipe,
I heard a sound as of scraping tripe,
And putting apples, wondrous ripe,
Into a cider-press's gripe:
And a moving away of pickle-tub-boards,
And a leaving ajar of conserve-cupboards,
And a drawing the corks of train-oil-flasks,
And a breaking the hoops of butter-casks:
And it seemed as if a voice –

Sweeter far than by harp or by psaltery
Is breathed – called out,

The PIED PIPER enters and stands beside JULIUS.

PIED PIPER:

Oh rats, rejoice!
The world is grown to one vast drysaltery!
So munch on, crunch on, take your nuncheon,
Breakfast, supper, dinner, luncheon!’

JULIUS:

And just as a bulky sugar-puncheon,
All ready staved, like a great sun shone
Glorious scarce an inch before me,
Just as methought it said, ‘Come, bore me!’
I found the Weser rolling o’er me.’

JULIUS exits. The rest come out of their freeze, with a shout and start to celebrate. They talk and hug each other. They are very happy. No one talks to or hugs the PIPER. He remains off to the side watching the action.

The NARRATORS move centre.

NARRATOR ONE:

You should have heard the Hamelin people
Ringing the bells till they rocked the steeple.

MAYOR:

Go!

NARRATOR TWO:

Cried the Mayor,

MAYOR:

(talking to the TOWNSPEOPLE)
And get long poles,
Poke out the nests and block up the holes!

Music plays as the TOWNSPEOPLE dance in celebration. They gather long poles and mimic poking and knocking the rats’ nests. When the dance is done, the TOWNSPEOPLE cheer.

MAYOR & COUNCIL:

Consult with carpenters and builders,
And leave in our town not even a trace
Of the rats!

The TOWNSPEOPLE run off.

NARRATOR THREE:

When suddenly, up the face,

NARRATOR FOUR:

Of the Piper perked in the market-place,
With a,

PIED PIPER:

First, if you please, my thousand guilders!

*The MAYOR and his COUNCIL stop their celebration
with a wince. They hem and haw. They look about at
anything but the PIPER.*

MAYOR & THE COUNCIL:

(whispering) A thousand guilders!

NARRATOR ONE:

The Mayor looked blue;

NARRATOR TWO:

So did the Corporation too.

NARRATOR THREE:

For council dinners made rare havoc
With Claret,

NARRATOR FOUR: Moselle,

NARRATOR TWO: Vin-de-Grave,

NARRATOR ONE: Hock;

NARRATOR FOUR:

And half the money would replenish
Their cellar's biggest butt with Rhenish.

MAYOR & COUNCIL:

To pay this sum to a wandering fellow
With a gipsy coat of red and yellow!

The MAYOR draws his COUNCIL into a huddle away from the PIED PIPER.

MAYOR:

Beside,

NARRATOR ONE:

Quoth the Mayor with a knowing wink,

MAYOR:

Our business was done at the river's brink;
We saw with our eyes the vermin sink,
And what's dead can't come to life, I think.

*The MAYOR and the COUNCIL all straighten up.
They nod to each other. THE COUNCIL stand in a
line with their hands behind their backs. The MAYOR
approaches the PIPER.*

MAYOR: *(clapping the PIPER hard on the back)*

So, friend, we're not the folks to shrink,
From the duty of giving you something to drink,
And a matter of money to put in your poke;
But as for the guilders, what we spoke
Of them, as you very well know, was in joke.

MAYOR & COUNCIL: *(laughing)* Ha ha ho ho hee hee!

The PIPER is not laughing.

MAYOR: Beside, our losses have made us thrifty.

ALL COUNCIL:

A thousand guilders! Come, take fifty!

The PIPER backs away from the MAYOR.

NARRATOR TWO:

The Piper's face fell, and he cried,

PIED PIPER:

No trifling! I can't wait, beside!
I've promised to visit by dinner-time
Bagdad, and accept the prime
Of the Head-Cook's pottage, all he's rich in,
For having left, in the Caliph's kitchen,
Of a nest of scorpions no survivor:
With him I proved no bargain-driver,

With you, don't think I'll bate a stiver!
 And folks who put me in a passion
 May find me pipe after another fashion.

MAYOR: (*putting hands on hips*) How?

NARRATOR THREE:
 Cried the Mayor,

MAYOR:
 D'ye think I brook
 Being worse treated than a Cook?
 Insulted by a lazy ribald
 With idle pipe and vesture piebald?
 (*poking the PIPER in the chest*)
 You threaten us, fellow? Do your worst,
 Blow your pipe there till you burst!

The MAYOR and the COUNCIL move upstage to the steps, assuming 'tough' poses. The PIPER moves centre.

NARRATOR FOUR:
 Once more he stept into the street,

NARRATOR ONE:
 And to his lips again
 Laid his long pipe of smooth straight cane;

The PIPER plays his recorder again. Sweet music plays.

NARRATOR TWO:
 And ere he blew three notes – such sweet
 Soft notes as yet musician's cunning
 Never gave the enraptured air,

From offstage there is the rumbling sound of light feet.

NARRATOR THREE:
 There was a rustling that seemed like a bustling,

NARRATOR FOUR:
 Of merry crowds justling at pitching and hustling,

NARRATOR ONE:
 Small feet were pattering, wooden shoes clattering,

NARRATOR TWO:
 Little hands clapping and little tongues chattering,

NARRATOR THREE:

And, like fowls in a farm-yard when barley is scattering,

ALL NARRATORS:

Out came the children running.

Much like the rats, a group of CHILDREN run on stage from both sides. Running in patterns (again, make it an organized dance) As the CHILDREN run about the stage the MAYOR, COUNCIL are frozen.

NARRATOR ONE:

All the little boys and girls,
With rosy cheeks and flaxen curls,
And sparkling eyes and teeth like pearls,

NARRATOR TWO:

Tripping and skipping, ran merrily after
The wonderful music with shouting and laughter.

THE CHILDREN: (cheering) Horray!

NARRATOR THREE:

The Mayor was dumb, and the Council stood
As if they were changed into blocks of wood,

NARRATOR FOUR:

Unable to move a step, or cry,

NARRATOR ONE:

To the children merrily skipping by,

NARRATOR TWO:

Could only follow with the eye,

NARRATOR THREE:

That joyous crowd at the Piper's back.

NARRATOR FOUR:

But how the Mayor was on the rack!

The PIED PIPER exits into the audience once again and all the CHILDREN follow. The NARRATORS slowly move centre stage and watch the action. The MAYOR and COUNCIL join them. The TOWNSPEOPLE enter.



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