

THE PIED PIPER

Ronald Tavel

## THE PIED PIPER

### Characters:

MAYOR

MAYOR'S WIFE

PROFESSOR VON HOCK

RAT

PIED PIPER

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CITIZEN (doubled by Pied Piper)

LITTLE GIRL (doubled by Mayor's Wife)

LITTLE BOY (doubled by Rat)

LAME BOY (doubled by Professor Von Hock)

### Scenes:

Inside the Mayor's house in Hamelin

A street in Hamelin

SCENE I  
MAYOR, RAT, CITIZEN, MAYOR'S WIFE, PROFESSOR VON HOCK

( The Scene is the inside of the MAYOR's house in Hamelin. The MAYOR enters. He is a hero figure. Time: Middle Ages.)

MAYOR Good afternoon, boys and girls. How are you this afternoon?  
Are you well? Are you happy?

( He solicits answers from the audience.)

I hope you are well, because the children in Hamelin town are not well. Alas, they are not well at all. I am the Mayor of Hamelin, that's a little town in old Brunswick, and we have a terrible problem there. Can you guess what it is? Well, we were all living very peacefully and very happily when, suddenly, we were invaded by rats - armies of rats! And they destroyed everything, they ate everything in sight. Huge rats, rats huger than any you could find anywhere you looked for them.

( A mean-looking RAT enters surreptitiously, sneaking up on the MAYOR.)

RAT:(menacingly) Hello, Mayor. Grrrrrrrrr....!!

MAYOR: Yow! There's one now. Oh, help! help!

( The MAYOR runs out. The RAT laughs, dances about through the audience.)

RAT: Ha, ha, ha! Did ya see how scared dat Mayor is of me? Did ya see him run? I'm da leader of all da rats. Dey made me their leader 'cause I'm da biggest, toughest rat of all! I can beat up any dog, I can kill any cat. I bite babies while they sleep, I make little women faint and big, strong women scream and jump on the top of tables.

( He imitates frightened women jumping about.)

I eat all da delicious cheeses stored in vats, I slurp up soup right out of da pots on da stoves.

( Smacking his lips, eating gestures.)

I gnaw through boxes of flour and wheat and cereal and when I'm finished eatin' there ain't a grain left in da cupboard! And I spread da plague! - everybody gets sick because of me. Ha, ha, ha! Ain't I bad? Boy, I bet ya all love me, huh? Now, let's see, where did dat Mayor go? Who saw where he went, huh?

( RAT exits, looking for the MAYOR. The MAYOR re-enters, very upset.)

MAYOR: Oh, my, oh, dear - did you see that big, ugly rat? Well, that's my problem:- how to get rid of those rats.

( An angry CITIZEN enters.)

CITIZEN: Mayor, Mayor, I just saw another rat!

MAYOR (guiltily): Did you? That's funny, I didn't see any.

CITIZEN (fuming): You didn't, didn't you? Well, let me tell you, my dear Mayor, unless you do something to clean up Hamelin town of its rodent population, you won't be Mayor much longer! We'll run you out of Hamelin town!

MAYOR: But what can I do? We've already used up all the government's money and taxes making traps to catch the rats.

CITIZEN: Wasted the government's money, you mean. Those traps don't work. No rat is stupid enough to step into them. There are more rats in Hamelin now than before you started using traps.

MAYOR: I'll have to spend the rent money we collect to brew a poison now. I hope that will work.

CITIZEN: Ha! - you won't be able to! Do you think we are going to pay rent for houses that have big rats in them? We citizens of Hamelin just organized a rent-strike, we won't pay any more rent until every last rat is run out of town. You'll have to find a new way of getting money - you've seen the last of ours!

MAYOR: Oh, dear, but I never needed the rent money more than I need it now.

CITIZEN: That's too bad! And I warn you again, Mayor, get rid of those rats or we'll get rid of you! Good day!

( The CITIZEN stomps out angrily.)

MAYOR: Alas! What shall I do? Does anyone know what I can do?

( MAYOR sings a SONG describing his woes and troubles and the straits he is in. When the SONG is finished, he dries his tears.)

Maybe my wife can help me. Wife, wife, where are you?

( The MAYOR's WIFE enters, worriedly, with a money purse and an alligator pocketbook. She is a dull-witted character.)

WIFE: Did you call for me, husband? You know what I just saw? I just saw--

MAYOR: You saw an elephant.

WIFE: Why, no, not an elephant--

MAYOR: I know, I know, you saw a huge rat. I saw it too. What are we going to do?

WIFE: Well, what you were thinking of before. We must have Hamelin's greatest scientist, Professor Von Hock, brew us a very strong poison.

MAYOR: But we don't even have enough money to buy poison ingredients for Professor Von Hoek, let alone pay his salary. The government funds are empty. All empty.

WIFE: Yes, but we still have some money of our own left. Look, I brought our lives' savings here, yours and mine - all the money we were saving up to go to Florida with next winter.

MAYOR (very concerned): But we can't spend the money we were saving up for Florida. It gets cold here in the winter.

WIFE: I know it does. But getting rid of the vermin is more important, isn't it?

MAYOR: I suppose it is. I suppose it is. Alas! And I wanted to be the man with the Florida tan.

WIFE: And look, I still have my alligator purse that I bought down there last year. We can use this too to pay the Professor.

MAYOR (a little disconcerted): Well, if we have to.

WIFE: And our wedding rings. We may also have to offer our wedding rings as payment.

MAYOR (appalled): Our wedding rings! No, no, anything! - but not

our wedding rings.

WIFE           Don't worry dear, we can always get married again.  
  
After this is all over. Come now, let's have your  
  
ring.

(MAYOR surrenders his ring, puts his arm sentimentally around his WIFE's shoulder.)

MAYOR (exaggeratedly)   Ursula, if we ever get through this, I'll  
  
make it all up to you.... I promise I will.

(A knock on the door is heard. PROFESSOR VON HOCK appears, carrying a huge, black cauldron and briefcase of apparatus; comic character.)

MAYOR           Who's there?

VON HOCK        It is I, Professor Von Hock.

WIFE            Please come in, Professor, we've been expecting you.

VON HOCK        Well, don't expect too much. I'm only human. I have  
  
brought my equipment.

MAYOR           Then you can start to work on the new position immediately?



VON HOCK (putting down the cauldron) Of course, immediately.

Immediately when you pay me my salary.

WIFE Well, here is all our personal savings.

(WIFE gives VON HOCK her money-purse)

VON HOCK (counting the coins) A paltry fee. This is all you two have managed to save?

MAYOR That's every penny.

VON HOCK Huh! Young people today don't know anything about saving money. Spend it all on good times, they do! Why, when I was young we knew how to save our money, we did. A paltry fee, this is a paltry fee, I say.

WIFE Well, take my shiny, expensive, real alligator-skin bag.

VON HOCK (contemptuously holding up pocketbook, disbelievingly)  
My dear girl, this and your savings will hardly even cover my overhead. Why, I had to lay out the cash myself for the ingredients for the poison. And then there's my labor to consider, labor is expensive these

days. And I belong to the exterminator's union, so I  
can't work for just any old fee, you know.

WIFE (hesitatingly, sorrowfully) Oh, take our wedding  
rings then, take them if you must. The poison is the  
only important thing now. Here, take the rings, take  
them quickly before I change my mind - before I cry....

(WIFE gives the rings to VON HOCK who examines them with a  
jeweler's glass.)

VON HOCK Hmmm..... Where'd you buy these - in Woolworth's?

WIFE (being consoled by the MAYOR) Oh! oh .....

VON HOCK Well, all right, you two are taking advantage of me  
and don't think I don't know it. But I'll get to work  
anyhow - out of the goodness of my heart, and don't  
you ever forget it.

(VON HOCK opens his briefcase and takes out his special ingredients  
which he drops into the cauldron and stirs about.)

Here we have some bat wings, an eagle's eye, a stork's  
beak, some frog's legs à la française, a little  
hollandaise sauce, chilli peppers, an old shoe, "Raid",  
"707", and some bluecheese sauce that's gone bad.

Stir them all together and sing a little magic ditty.

(He stirs and sings a SONG, a magical incantation that's more than a little ridiculous. WIFE goes out during this SONG and returns with a huge cheese.)

WIFE            Here's the cheese, Professor.

VON HOCK        I was just going to say, it's about time for my  
                 lunch-break.

MAYOR           No, this is to put the poison on.

VON HOCK        Oh, it is, eh? It looks good enough to eat.

MAYOR           I hope the rats think so.

VON HOCK        Can you doubt it?

MAYOR           Well, they weren't fooled before by the traps we set.

VON HOCK        This time they will be. This poison has no taste,  
                 no scent, no nothing.

MAYOR           Maybe no poison either.

VON HOCK        That'll be enough of that. Just wait till you see

the results.

RAT (offstage) Squeak, squeak!

VON HOCK I smell a rat - I mean, I hear a rat!

WIFE Quickly, pour the poison on the cheese.

VON HOCK (bunglingly) Er - yes - er - quickly, quickly.

(The MAYOR and WIFE help VON HOCK to pour the liquid from the cauldron over the cheese. The RAT is seen offstage watching the whole procedure and laughing to himself.)

MAYOR Here, set it up in the middle where he won't miss it.

Let's hide over there and wait till he eats it and falls down. Then we'll come out and finish him off with sticks.

WIFE Hurry, hurry, here he comes!

VON HOCK Oh, my, yes, here he is.

(MAYOR, WIFE and VON HOCK run behind a screen from which they peek out anxiously. The RAT re-enters, full of confidence and struts about pretending not to notice the baited cheese.)

RAT Now, now, ain't it real quiet around here? Not a creature is stirring, not even a ----- guess?

(AUDIENCE answers "a mouse!")

Dat's right; not even a mouse. Dat's a little rat,  
if you please. Sniff-sniff; I wonder what's for  
lunch? Smethin' sure smells good.

(Then, pretending to see the cheese for the first time.)

Well, what do you know, Danish Blue Cheese, my favorite!

Yummy, yummy!

(He pounces on the cheese and begins devouring it ravenously. Suddenly he grabs his throat, pretends to be stricken and, giving out a cry of mock agony, collapses on the floor. His head lifts slightly, he winks at the audience to assure them that he is all right. He whispers:)

Jist watch dis, kiddies.

VON HOCK That's it! He's dead. I was successful, successful,  
I tell you.

MAYOR Let's finish him off now.

WIFE Hurry, before he revives.

(MAYOR, WIFE and VON HOCK rush from behind the screen and raise up wooden clubs, about to lay them heavily on the recumbent RAT. At that moment the RAT leaps up, a head taller than any of the others, and bellows out the Tarzan ape-call and pounds his chest. The three throw up their clubs into the air and scramble for safety. The RAT remains there laughing.)

RAT Ha, ha, ha! I never felt better in my whole life!

Dat cheese was delicious - and da sauce on top of it  
was scrumptuous.

(He licks his fingers.)

Dousand Island salad dressing, if I'm not mistaken.

Yeah, dem townfolk of Hamelin better think up somethin'

else if dey want to get rid of us rats. Us rats is

strong. We is strong, lemme tellya!

(He gives out with the Tarzan ape-call again, pounds his chest  
triumphantly, and stomps off the stage.)

End of Scene 1

## SCENE II

PIED PIPER, MAYOR, RAT, MAYOR'S WIFE

The setting is a street in Hamelin.

(The PIED PIPER appears on stage. He is tall and thin, wearing a long coat half yellow and half red. He wears a scarf of yellow and red stripes, tied to the end of which is his long, delicate pipe. He plays an appropriately mysterious tune on the pipe.)

PIED PIPER I am the Pied Piper. They call me that because my coat and scarf are parti-colored. Do you see? And do you like my pipe? It is a magic pipe. I have come to see the Mayor of Hamelin. I believe I think I can help him with his problem - for a price, of course.

(The MAYOR enters, absorbed with his troubles, he does not notice the PIED PIPER.)

MAYOR Oh me, oh my, whatever shall I do? Things get worse and worse.

PIED PIPER (playing a bar on the pipe) Hello, my good Mayor. Find day today, isn't it? The sun is shining, the children are playing.

MAYOR My goodness, who are you? I've never seen you before.

PIED PIPER They call me the Pied Piper. I heard there was work for me in Hamelin-town.

MAYOR            You did? Well, we don't have any employment for musicians at the moment.

PIED PIPER       Don't you? I believe you do.

MAYOR            (examining him) What makes you believe so? My, aren't you strange looking though. What a color-scheme. Wherever did you buy that mothy outfit?

PIED PIPER       At John's Bargain Store. But don't judge a book by its cover. It's what I can do that counts.

MAYOR            And just what can you do?

PIED PIPER       Well, you see my pipe? - It has a strange, powerful charm about it. When I play on this pipe, I can draw any living creature that I wish after me. Everything that swims or walks or flies must follow me when they hear my tune.

MAYOR            Well, that's very good to know. I think it's real nice when a worthy musician can get people to come and listen to him these days. But you see, sir, music



is not exactly what we're looking for just now.

PIED PIPER You don't understand. Listen, I make very special use of the charm contained within my pipe. I force toads, newts, snakes and moles out of their hiding places. When they hear my melody, they are forced to follow me. So I lead them off to the river and drown them all. Or else I bring them all together in one big circle, light a fire around them, and burn them up!

MAYOR Then, actually, you're not a musician, you're in the exterminating business.

PIED PIPER That's what I'm trying to tell you. Now when I was in Tartary last year I finished off all the gnats that were stinging everyone and running havoc all over the place.

MAYOR Hmmm, gnats are unpleasant.

PIED PIPER And in Transylvania, I ended the plague of vampire-bats - all by myself.

MAYOR Yes, I heard about that. Dracula sold his estate after that affair.

PIED PIPER And last summer I put a finish to the mosquitoes in southern Florida, the Everglades area, you know.

MAYOR Well, you certainly have an impressive backlog and resumé. I assume your recommendations from former employers are all in order?

PIED PIPER Indeed they are.

MAYOR Then you may be just the man we're looking for.

PIED PIPER I'm certain I am. There's just one thing - a little matter of salary - you see, I'm quite poor, having to wear odds and ends as I do, which you've well noticed --

MAYOR Yes, yes, of course - money. (despairingly) Of course, money. Well, I'm afraid we can't commission you in advance. I'll have to see a sample of your work. Is that O.K. with you?

PIED PIPER If it is with you. Let's say I do in one rat and, if you're satisfied with my work, you can pay me to get rid of all the rats that so infest your fair town of Hamelin.

MAYOR Agreed!

PIED PIPER Then stand aside, stand aside, give me some room and you'll soon be satisfied!

(The PIED PIPER begins playing his pipe and he sings a SONG. The huge RAT appears, listening very carefully and looking very interested.)

MAYOR Yow! There's that big one again!

(The MAYOR runs for cover while the RAT comes out into full view.)

PIED PIPER (alternately playing and speaking) Listen, big old rat, what do you hear?

RAT (stupidly) I'm listenin', I'm listenin'.

PIED PIPER You hear the sound of housewives scraping tripe.  
Scrape, scrape, scrape.

RAT Scrape, scrape, scrape; sounds delicious.

PIED PIPER Now you hear them putting apples, huge MacIntosh apples, full and juicy, into the cider-press. The apple juice is dripping down: dripp drip, drip.

RAT (growing mesmerized) Drip, drip, drip: slurp, slurp! Sounds more like Delicious apples than MacIntosh.

PIED PIPER And now you hear that new sound?

RAT (fascinated) Yeah, yeah.....

PIED PIPER They are opening up pickle jars - sweet pickles, candied pickles, salad pickles, real sour pickles from Delancy Street.

RAT Yummy! Fancy-Delancy pickles. And cold sore - I think I hear cold sore jars.

PIED PIPER You do, you do! And also gallon jars of fruit preserves; you hear them leaving open the pantries full of jam - jam! Still listening?

RAT I am! I am!

PIED PIPER Good! - Now what do you hear, my fine, buck-toothed friend?

RAT (stupidly) I hear dem peppin' da corks off champagne bottles....

PIED PIPER Never mind that - listen! you hear them breaking the hoops of butter barrels.

RAT Yeah, dat's right.

(By now the RAT is almost completely paralyzed by the music and words. And the PIED PIPER continues as if chanting an incantation.)

PIED PIPER Listen, O Leader of the Kingdom of Rats, the world is nothing more than one great big cupboard, one vast enormous pantry - created, built and stocked with goodies for you, just you alone - it has no other purpose than to be a feasting place for you! So munch and crunch, sip, chew, swallow, devour, digest! Take your breakfast, your brunch, your lunch, your dinner, your supper, your midnight snacks - YEA! RAID THE FRIGADAIRE AT THREE IN THE MORNING!

(The RAT sits dumbly, motionless and the PIED PIPER sneaks up behind him with his pipe raised as a club.)

RAT Da whole world is one big pantry, dat's all it is.

PIED PIPER One big pantry full of sweet, sweet, sweet sugar!!!  
Sugar for your tea, sugar for your coffee, sugar for  
your oat-meal, sugar for your grapefruit, sugar for your  
sweetheart, sugar for your sugar for your sugar for your  
sugar for your sugar--- ( he stops, asks out of  
character, total voice change:) Are you completely  
hypnotized now, Mr. Rat?

RAT (automatically) Yeah, I is.

MAYOR (calling out from his safe place) Hit him! Hit him!

PIED PIPER (maliciously) With pleasure! (He renders the coup  
de grace with his pipe on the RAT's head) And down  
you go, you rat-fink!

RAT (passing out) Oooooooooo..... what a dirty trick.....

PIED PIPER (cruelly triumphant) The bigger they are, the harder  
they fall!

MAYOR (coming out from hiding) I would not have believed it,

if I didn't see it with my own eyes.

PIED PIPER (coolly) For mayors, seeing is believing. For rats,  
hearing is believing.

MAYOR And for Pied Pipers?

PIED PIPER For pipers, money is believing.

MAYOR Ah, yes, money.

PIED PIPER (meaningfully) The object of my affection.

MAYOR Is going to change my complexion from white to embarrassed  
red...

PIED PIPER Don't you find my work good?

MAYOR Certainly: the only good rat is a dead rat.

PIED PIPER Then about the matter of money---

( The MAYOR'S WIFE enters at that moment, sees the dead RAT and screams.)

WIFE Eeeeeeeekkkkk!! It's a - a - a- a---

MAYOR

Elephant.

WIFE

I can believe it from the size of that thing. Husband,  
you tell such good elephant jokes.

MAYOR

Now there's nothing to worry about, Ursula: this rat  
came to dinner for the last time. (taking his WIFE aside:)  
Look, Hon, do you have any of your spending left that I  
gave you this week?

WIFE

(VERY House-wife-like) What spending money? You didn't  
give me a cent this week. And everything we have is in  
hock.

MAYOR

To whom?

WIFE

Professor Von Hoek.

MAYOR

But, Ursula, we've got to get our hands on some cash.  
This Pied Piper can rid Hamelin of rats quicker than  
he can shake his pipe at them.

WIFE

How much money does he want?



MAYOR I'm afraid to ask.

WIFE (taking the initiative) Good pied and parti-colored  
Piper, name your fee, to rid us of the rats and leave  
old Hamelin free.

PIED PIPER Madame, one thousand guilders.

MAYOR (shocked) One thousand guilders! Oh me, oh my!

WIFE How much is that in American money?

MAYOR Take fifty.

PIED PIPER Sorry, one thousand is my price.

MAYOR One hundred.

PIED PIPER Nope.

MAYOR One hundred twenty-five.

PIED PIPER Well, if my services aren't worth one thou----

MAYOR One hundred fifty guilders.

WIFE            Going, going, gone-----

PIED PIPER    (starting to go)    I'm afraid I shall have to seek  
employment in another town. I'm sorry I disturbed  
you, my dear Mayor. Good day, Madame, Good day, May---

MAYOR and WIFE (together)    Wait, Pied Piper. We'll pay!

PIED PIPER    One thousand guilders?

MAYOR            (gulping) One thousand guilders.

PIED PIPER    Good, I'll expect payment as soon as the last rat  
has left your fair town forever - which won't be  
very long, I promise you. And so, I'm off to work.

(PIED PIPER goes out jauntily, playing on his pipe. The MAYOR and  
his WIFE clasp each other, very worriedly.)

MAYOR            Ursula, Ursula, where shall we ever get the thousand  
guilders?

WIFE            (distractedly) How much is that in American money?

MAYOR            (not hearing) I'll figure out something - I'll figure

out some way to pay the Pied Piper. Either that - or  
we're lost.

WIFE ( asking the audience) What would you do? Where  
would you get the money?

MAYOR (annoyed) Oh, don't ask them.- how should they know?

WIFE Well, you dontt.

MAYOR But I'll figure something out. I'll get the money to  
pay. Don't worry, I'll save the day.

END of SCENE II

## SCENE III

MAYOR, MAYOR'S WIFE, PROFESSOR VON HOCK, PIED PIPER

(The scene is inside the MAYOR's house. The MAYOR, his WIFE, and PROFESSOR VON HOCK are watching <sup>through</sup> the window with long telescopes. All are on pins and needles.)

VON HOCK     {excited} There, he goes, there he goes, you see him?

There's the Pied Piper!

WIFE           (anxiously) Where? - I don't see anything.

VON HOCK       Over there, at the end of the street.

MAYOR          Yes, yes, I can make out his face. He's smiling in a very peculiar way.

WIFE           Now I see him. Boy, is he ugly.

VON HOCK       Look, he's wrinkling his lips, he's getting ready to blow the pipe.

(The PIPER's magical tune is heard from offstage.)

WIFE           Just look at his eyes twinkle, will you..... I think he's cross-eyed.

(The sound of many rats is heard offstage. First mumbling, then

grumbling, finally rumbling.)

MAYOR           What a racket!   Sounds like the Fourth of July.

VON HOCK        (describing, as if he is a <sup>Sports</sup> ~~sets~~ announcer at a horse-  
 race.   Magical tune continues to play.)   Here they  
 come: just you look at that!   Rats, rats, rats, and  
 rodents tumbling out of all the houses, coming up from  
 the sewer pipes, from the cellars, from the holes  
 in-between the cobblestones.   Great long rats, small  
 weak rats, lean skinny rats, strong muscle-man rats,  
 giant rats, midget rats, white rats, <sup>yellow rats, brown rats, black rats, red rats,</sup> mean rats, dirty  
 rats, granddaddy rats, gay-young-blade rats, housewife  
 rats, uncle rats, fourth-cousin-removed rats, long  
 tail rats, short haired rats, whiskered rats, clean  
 shaven rats, families of rats, four-rat families, five-  
 rat families, ten-rat families, rats, rats, rats, rats,  
 rats, rats, rats, rats ----- here they come, all  
 following the Pied Piper, following him like follow the  
 leader, faster and faster, closer and closer to him  
 they're following, they're going from street to street,

from avenue to avenue, from boulevard to boulevard,  
 step by step by step by step ----- and they're coming  
 around the stretch now, it's the Pied Piper ahead by  
 a nose, and the rats coming up second -----they're  
 nearing Weser river, yes indeedie they are - the Pied  
 Piper makes a sharp turn to the left right on the bank -  
 oops!! there go the rats - one after the other all  
 into the river!

MAYOR They're all plunging into the river! one after the  
 other without stopping!

VON HOCK They're drow<sup>n</sup>ing in the river!

WIFE (a propos of nothing) Too bad they ain't river-rats  
 or they'd be able to swim.

MAYOR There goes the last of them - bubble, bubble, gulp!  
 Drownded, drownded every last one. Hurray!

VON HOCK and WIFE (together) Hurray! Hurray! The Pied Piper  
 saved the day!

MAYOR Run, Professor Von Hock, tell the townsfolk to ring the steeple bells. Announce to every man, woman, and child that Hamelin town is free of vermin at last! Oh, marvelous! What a celebration we'll have tonight!

WIFE Oh, I love a celebration. Let's see now, what'll I wear?

VON HOCK Won't the people rejoice!

MAYOR And get Roter-Rooter and have them stuff up the rat holes and poke out their nests. We don't want any re-infestation, you know.

VON HOCK Er - what's their number?

MAYOR Consult the yellow pages.

VON HOCK (mumbling to himself) Don't know why I never think of that myself.

(VON HOCK exits.)

MAYOR (to audience) Isn't this wonderful? No more rats. Aren't you glad?

WIFE (actor's studio) I don't know.... It seems kind of sunny now without the rats around any more. Kind of lonesome-like.... I was beginning to get used to the little critters. They kind of grew on you after a while, you know.....

(The PIED PIPER enters, plays a bar on his pipe.)

MAYOR Uh-oh: here comes trouble in a red and yellow coat.

PIED PIPER Hello again, Mayor. Hello, Madame Mayoress.

WIFE (to PIED PIPER) There's going to be a big party tonight. Have you got something else besides that outfit you could wear?

PIED PIPER Soon as I receive my fee, I'll be able to afford finer attire.

MAYOR (to WIFE) You had to open your mouth.

PIED PIPER Never you mind, good Mayor: you don't think I could possibly forget my thousand guilders do you? I really don't need your wife to remind me.



MAYOR Oh, I didn't think you'd forget. I only was hoping that you might possibly reconsider---

PIED PIPER What is there to reconsider, pray tell?

MAYOR Well, that's just what I wanted to talk to you about.

PIED PIPER Come now, my fee, there's time a-plenty for conversing after I'm paid.

MAYOR To be sure, to be sure. Er - could I invite you to dinner? The wife here's a splendid little cook.

PIED PIPER I'm certain. My promised fee, please.

MAYOR Er - have you seen the town? Hamelin's quite a place for tourists. Why people come from miles around just to see----

WIFE (trying to help the MAYOR) Just to see our rats -- and you've gone and destroyed them all. You have killed our tourist trade!

PIED PIPER Don't be ridiculous, Madame Mayoress. That's what I was hired to do. And now my thousand guilders, if you don't

mind. I haven't all day to waste here.

MAYOR But you've just come into town. Surely-

PIED PIPER (getting angry) My thousand guilders! You promised me one thousand guilders.

MAYOR (giving up) I am sorry, Mr. Pied Piper, I am very sorry. But we don't have a thousand guilders. We couldn't raise a thousand guilders anywhere in Hamelin.

PIED PIPER You are joking, of course.

WIFE Of course, Er- I mean - no, we're not joking.

PIED PIPER (fuming) Not Joking?? See here, I'll tolerate no further trifling in this matter. I'm in a hurry, do you understand? I'm due in Bagdad by dinner time: the Caliph is to pay me a rich sum for having rid his kitchen of a nest of scorpions yesterday. And I mean to be there in time to collect the gold. So pay me my fee and I shall be off and trouble you no further.

MAYOR But we do not have a cent - not a red cent.

PIED PIPER (shouting) I have just lost my last ounce of patience!  
I demand my promised salary!

MAYOR (to WIFE) Ursula, will you please leave us? We have  
man-to-man business to discuss.

WIFE Certainly. I have to get dressed for tonight, anyhow.  
Toodle-loo.

(WIFE exits. MAYOR paces back and forth, back and forth, thinking  
very hard.)

PIED PIPER Well, I'm waiting, Mayor. I won't wait forever.

MAYOR Listen, Mr. Piper, would you consider payment ~~on~~ the  
installment plan? I get my government pay-check at the  
end of every month. A bona-fide check. I'll give you  
three-quarters of my monthly check as soon as I get it  
and at the end of two years, you'll have all the money  
I promised you.

PIED PIPER Nothing doing.

MAYOR But with interest - <sup>at</sup> ~~and~~ four and a quarter per cent,  
compounded quarterly.

PIED PIPER Ridiculous! I won't wait two years for my money. You  
said you would pay as soon as I finished off the rats.  
Well, I have finished off all the rats. Now, where's  
my money?

MAYOR Please, be reasonable, I don't have it.

PIED PIPER Then why did you ask me to work for you? How dared  
you ask when you knew you didn't have the money.

MAYOR My situation was desperate: the rats were ruining  
everything. We were getting poorer and poorer.

PIED PIPER (stamping about) You lied, Mayor, you lied! You  
promised me money that you didn't have.

MAYOR I didn't lie.

PIED PIPER (screaming) You lied, I say!!

MAYOR I didn't. I said I would pay you - I didn't say when.

- And I will pay you. Only you must wait.

PIED PIPER You didn't say when! It was understood, that as soon as I finished-

MAYOR So you understood - I did not. Listen, Piper, I'll get a part-time job, I'll work late nights until I pay you off.

PIED PIPER What? - you work late nights! Who would hire you? Everyone knows that politicians are only good for politics - that is, for trieking people, particularly out of their salaries!

MAYOR (going down on his knees) I'll put all my clothing in hock-

PIED PIPER All your clothing is already in hock.

MAYOR I'll sell every last piece of furniture-

PIED PIPER Are you joking again? Who'd buy your furniture? Slums are better furnished than this place.

MAYOR Please, sir, have mercy.....

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ma            made me the Mayor of Hamelin. I am the most unlucky  
person in the whole wide world..... I better follow  
that Pied Piper and see what he does..... Yes, I  
better follow him quickly and .....

END of SCENE III

## SCENE IV

PIED PIPER, GIRL, BOY, LAME BOY, MAYOR

(The Scene is again a street in Hamelin. The PIED PIPER appears.)

PIED PIPER Now I shall take my revenge! No man can treat me as

the Mayor of Hamelin just did and get away with it.

First, I take my long pipe of smooth cane and place it

to my lips, like so. Then I blow three notes that are

so sweet they float through an enraptured air....

(He plays three notes on the pipe.)

And now, listen, do you hear that rustling sound? It

is the noise of a merry twosome bustling about. Soon

you will hear the ~~the~~ sound of pattering little feet,

clattering little wooden shoes, chattering little mouths

and clapping little hands.

(He sing a SONG enjoining the two children to come out and follow him. He both pipes and sings. During the SONG a little GIRL comes out and dances merrily about him. By the time he has ended the SONG a little BOY also appears.)

GIRL Hello, Pied Piper, what a pretty song you pipe.



BOY Hello, Pied Piper, pipe your song again.

PIED PIPER Greetings children! Greetings, greetings!

(to audience)

See how they came - like chickens in a farmyard when  
the farmer scatters the chicken-feed. Who are you,  
little girl?

GIRL I am the Mayor's daughter, Mr. Pied.Piper.

PIED PIPER And who are you, little boy?

BOY I am the Mayor's son, Mr. Pied Piper.

PIED PIPER (demoniacally) Excellent, excellent - it is all working  
out according to plan! Listen again, children, and  
tell me what you hear.

(He plays a few bars on his pipe.)

GIRL You want us to come and follow you.

BOY You are going to take us to a happy, joyful country that  
isn't very far from Hamelin-town.

PIED PIPER That's right, that's absolutely right! Listen again and  
tell me what you hear.

(HE pipes again.)

BOY (enraptured) Fountains of soda-water gush in the public  
squares of that country. The houses are made of candy  
and breakfast is ice-cream, lunch is chocolate, and dinner  
is apple pie - every day!

GIRL (enraptured) Sugar sticks and lemon-drops grow on  
trees and flowers have peppermint stems and marshmallow  
petals.

PIED PIPER Correct! correct! Listen again:

(He continues to play while the children describe enthralled the  
visions his music inspires.)

BOY The sparrows will be brighter and more colorful than  
peacocks. The crows will sing sweeter than nightingales.

GIRL The dogs will out-run the swiftest antelope, the cats  
will leap higher than kangaroos.

BOY Honey-bees will not have stings, rattle snakes will not have poison teeth.

GIRL Horses will be born with eagle's wings and we will be able to ride on their backs and fly wherever we want!

PIED PIPER Would you like to go to this marvelous land? - it isn't very far - it isn't very far!

(to audience: he smacks his lips and rubs his hands anticipat<sup>g</sup>atingly.)

BOY AND GIRL (together) Oh, yes, yes! Show us the way! We can't wait! How wonderful it will be to live there!

PIED PIPER (demoniacally) Then follow me: it's only a short walk from here. Ha! Ha! The Mayor's son and daughter - soon my revenge will be complete!

(He begins to pipe again and leads the children about the stage and starts to lead them off. Just then a little LAME BOY with a crutch appears. He moves very slowly and hauntingly.)

LAME BOY Wait for me, please Mr. Pied Piper, wait for me also!

PIED PIPER And who are you?

**BOY and GIRL (together)** He's our other brother. He can't walk very fast because he's lame.

**LAME BOY** Yes, but I heard your song, Mr. Piper, and all the good things you promised. Won't you let me also come along?

**PIED PIPER** If, you, too, are the Mayor's son, you may come along. But you must hurry, for we are late.

The **LAME BOY** starts slowly across the stage. **PIED PIPER** addresses audience:)

Oh, look how slow he is. If we don't hurry, I'm afraid the Mayor will catch up to us and spoil my perfect plan.

Hurry, boy!

**LAME BOY** I'm coming as quickly as I can. Oh, please wait for me. It's so hard for me to walk fast, sir.

**PIED PIPER** (growing nervous) Oh, dear, he is so slow! He'll ruin everything! Oh - I think I hear the Mayor coming - yes - he is coming!

**GIRL** Hurry, Mr. Piper, we are verry, very eager to be on our way.

**BOY** We just can't wait, we can not wait!

**PIED PIPER** Then trip and skip merrily ahead, if you will. Here,  
little lame fellow, take hold of my pipe, I'll help you  
along. That's it. Come on, now. That's it.

**PIED PIPER** gives one end of his pipe to the **LAME BOY** and starts to pull him off. Just then the **MAYOR** appears.)

**MAYOR** (to **LAME BOY**) Willy, Willy, my son, - quick - pull on  
the pipe, pull, pull hard, pull it away from the Piper!  
Quick - do as I say!

**LAME BOY** Daddy! Daddy!

**PIED PIPER** Don't listen to him - let go of my pipe.

**MAYOR** No - pull it away, Willy, pull it out of his hands.  
Without his pipe, the Piper has no magic spell!

**LAME BOY** But, Daddy, Mr. Piper is taking us to a wonderful country  
where everything is beautiful, where every day is a holiday.

**MAYOR** No, no, he's taking you to the Weser River - he'll  
drown you there, my children, my poor children.

PIED PIPER Don't listen to him - what do grown-ups know. Let go of  
my pipe.

LAME BOY He's my Daddy. He always tells me the truth! You are  
a big, bad man, you are, Mr. Piper!

(LAME BOY wrests the pipe out of the PIED PIPER's hand and gives it  
to the MAYOR. Other children are frozen in their tracks.)

PIED PIPER (to LAME BOY) Dunce! Foolish dunce! You ruined everything!

MAYOR No, Willy, you saved us all. Thank you, Willy. Well,  
Pied Piper, you are foiled: without your pipe you have  
no magic charm. Without your pipe you cannot lead my  
children away and drown them in the river, can you?

(The three CHILDREN gather about and hug the MAYOR.)

PIED PIPER (fuming) Give me back my pipe! It's not yours - it is  
my personal property.

MAYOR It is a thing of evil.

PIED PIPER So you consider it - but it is mine: if you take it, that  
is stealing. Children, your father is a thief.

LAME BOY Is that so, Daddy, are you a thief?

GIRL and BOY Are you really a thief, Daddy, like Mr. Piper says?

MAYOR (torn) If I give you this pipe back, you will play on it and lead my children away and I'll never see them again. You will drown them in the Weser River!

PIED PIPER Be that as it may. But if you don't return my pipe to me, you are a thief, and you will have stolen before your very own children's eyes!

MAYOR (to audience) What he says is true. What shall I do? If I give back the pipe, I'll lose my children; if I don't, I'll be a thief.

PIED PIPER Come, come, Mayor, let's have the pipe. You must save your honor.

CHILDREN (together) Oh, Daddy!

MAYOR I know - I'll keep my honor and maybe the pipe and my children too. Mr. Piper, we'll duel for the pipe, and

whoever wins keeps the magic pipe. Agreed?

PIED PIPER (to audience) Ha! ha! The Mayor does not know that I  
am also an excellent swordsman. I've won dueling trophies  
in Cathay and Albion. This will be a simple matter.

(to MAYOR)

I accept, what else can I do? you have the pipe.

(PIED PIPER and MAYOR draw swords and a long, difficult duel ensues. Finally, the PIED PIPER knocks the MAYOR's sword out of his hand, and advances upon him threateningly. The MAYOR resorts to using the pipe as a sword and in the scuffle that follows the PIED PIPER slams onto the pipe with his sword and breaks the pipe in two.)

PIED PIPER (blowing a gut) Eeeecow! My pipe! My pipe, my precious  
pipe! It is broken, smashed, ruined, destroyed!

MAYOR You did it yourself!

CHILDREN Yes, you did it yourself!

PIED PIPER Oh, my magic spells - gone! all gone forever! forever  
gone! And all because I rid a town of rodents, all because  
I tried to help.

(He exits in a great fury.)



**MAYOR** So, dear children, we are together again. Everyone is safe and sound.

**LAME BOY** But what about the wonderful, magic land the Piper promised us?

**MAYOR** I'll try to make Hamelin-town that magic land. If we are all together, happy and peaceful and contented is that not wonderful and magic - as wonderful as things could be?

**GIRL** I suppose so, Daddy.

**MAYOR** Anyhow, next year we'll go to Florida, there's plenty of magic down there. Kids!

(They sing a FINALE SONG and all DANCE together.)

**END of SCENE IV**