

# CHAPTER 1

Have you heard about the story of the Pied Piper of Hamelin? Like many fairy tales, it is **set** in **medieval** Europe. And like many fairy tales, it has an important lesson to teach us. But, **unlike** many fairy tales, it is a true story.

Hamelin is a real town in Germany. It is in the northwest of the country, just southwest of the city of Hanover. You can visit it today.

The story comes from a **stained glass** window in the church. It shows a man with a pipe who is walking in front of a group of children. They are walking away from the town. The earliest history book of Hamelin, from 1384, says, “It is one hundred years since our children left.”

Stained glass was expensive, so you would only make a window about an important event. To remember an event after one hundred years means it was a very important event.

**set** (verb) If a story is set in a certain place or time, it happens there and then.

**medieval** (adjective) connected with the Middle Ages

**unlike** (preposition) different from

**stained glass** (noun) coloured glass, used especially in church windows



*The story comes from a stained glass window in the church.*

No one is **exactly** sure what happened to Hamelin's children, but the tale of the Pied Piper of Hamelin has become very famous.

Here is that story.

Once upon a time, in 1284, there was a town called Hamelin. It was a very fine town with lots of fine people living there. But, like many towns at that time, it had rats. Too many rats!

Rats are **trouble**. They are brown animals, with **sharp** claws and big teeth. They have a long furry body and a long pink tail. They are smaller than rabbits but bigger than mice. They **destroy** things easily and they can carry **diseases**.

**exactly** (adverb) completely, fully

**trouble** (noun) problem or a difficult situation

**sharp** (adjective) having a thin edge or point

**destroy** (verb) to damage something very badly

**disease** (noun) illness



*But, like many towns at that time, it had rats.*

Rats are so quick and clever that you **rarely** see them. But you can hear them! They come into your home and scurble around. They eat all your food and chew the furniture. They squeak and they fight and they make beds in the walls.

“Whatever shall we do?” said the people of Hamelin. “We need to **get rid of** these **pests!**”

So they went to the Town Hall to **complain** to the mayor. They were very angry. They **demand**ed that the mayor do something about all the rats.

“Those bad rats!” said a man. “They fight the dogs and kill the cats! And bite babies in their cots!”

“One ate my cheese,” said a woman. “And licked the spoon of my soup!”

“That is nothing!” said another man. “One made a nest in my best hat!”

**rarely** (adverb) not often

**get rid of someone/something** (phrase) to make yourself free of someone/ something that you don't like

**pest** (noun) an animal that causes problems

**complain** (verb) to say or write that you are unhappy

**demand** (verb) to ask for something

The mayor was not a clever man. He was also lazy. How did such a man become mayor? No one knows. But he was the mayor, and so he had to do something about the rats.

“Do not worry,” he said to the people. “I will **fix** this rat problem. I will get rid of them for you.”

Then he went and hid in the Town Hall because he did not know how to get rid of the rats.

He hid there for a while. Then he heard a knock at the door.

“Come in!” said the mayor.

A strange man walked in. He was very tall and thin. He had long blonde hair.

He had bright blue eyes that **shone** with cleverness and he wore **unusual** clothes of many colours. And he carried a pipe.

A pipe is a musical instrument. It is a long tube that you blow into. Your fingers cover different holes to make different sounds when the blown air comes out. It is similar to a recorder, but different to a flute, which you play sideways.

The strange man **bowed** to the mayor.

“I am the Pied Piper,” he said. “I have come to help you with your rat problem.”

**shine** (verb) to be bright; to produce bright light

**unusual** (adjective) different

**bow** (verb) to bend your head forwards (e.g. to show respect)



*"I am the Pied Piper," he said.  
"I have come to help you with your rat problem."*



## CHAPTER 2

The mayor was very excited. Someone had come to save Hamelin! They were here to get rid of all the rats!

“How will you do it?” said the mayor.

“I have a special **talent**,” said the piper. “I can make any animal follow me. This is how I **make my living**. My job is to go from town to town and save them from pests.”

“And you will do this for Hamelin?” said the mayor.

“Of course,” said the piper. “I only ask for one thousand coins.”

“One thousand!” said the mayor. “You can have TEN thousand if you can get rid of all the rats in Hamelin and stop the people being angry at me!”

“One thousand will do,” smiled the piper.

He bowed and went out onto the streets.

The people of Hamelin looked at the Pied Piper. He looked very strange. He was very different to them. They watched him put the pipe to his lips and play a tune. It was a very lovely tune. He played it very well. Everyone listened. It was **enchanting**.

**talent** (noun) a special ability to do something well

**make a living** (idiom) to earn money

**enchanting** (adjective) very attractive



*They watched him put the pipe to his lips and play a lovely tune.*

“Look!” said a child.

The people turned to look. The rats stopped what they were doing. They put their heads out of holes to listen to the music too. The people were **amazed**.

“Quick!” said a man. “Hit that rat! Get him while he’s out!”

“No,” said another. “We must stay quiet.”

One by one, all the rats came out. They came out of the houses and out of the shops. Out of boxes and cupboards. Out of **attics** and **basements**.

So many rats! They all came out to listen to the piper’s music.

The piper began to walk and the excited rats watched him. As he got further away, they followed him. They did not want to miss the music.

As more and more rats followed him, the piper began to dance. The rats danced too. They jumped and danced as they followed the piper all the way out of town. But the piper did not stop playing his pipe. He continued to play and dance as he went further and further away from the town. And the rats followed him. They were very happy. They were jumping and dancing and having a lovely time.

**amazed** (adjective) feeling or showing great surprise

**attic** (noun) a room at the top of a building and that’s just below the roof

**basement** (noun) a room in a building below the level of the ground

## Quiz-2

Choose the correct answer.

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**bowed**   **cheered**   **clapped**   **complained**   **fix**   **landed**  
**led**   **owed**   **punished**   **skipping**   **shone**   **set**

1. She ..... when the orchestra finished playing.
2. The bee ..... on the bright, yellow sunflower.
3. The children were ..... in the playground.
4. The mechanic at the garage tried to ..... my old car.
5. I ..... to the waiter that my soup was cold.
6. Her new story was ..... at the seaside.
7. We ..... the horses out of the stable and into the field.
8. The man ..... when his team scored a goal.
9. The actor ..... when he met the Queen at the theatre.
10. The diamond ..... under the lights in the jewellery shop.
11. She stole the purse and Mum ..... her.
12. The woman ..... the vet money for her dog's operation.