

Sunrise Fairy Tales

The Pied Piper Of Hamelin

3 E





Long, long ago, Hamelin was a town situated on the banks of River Weser in the north of Germany.

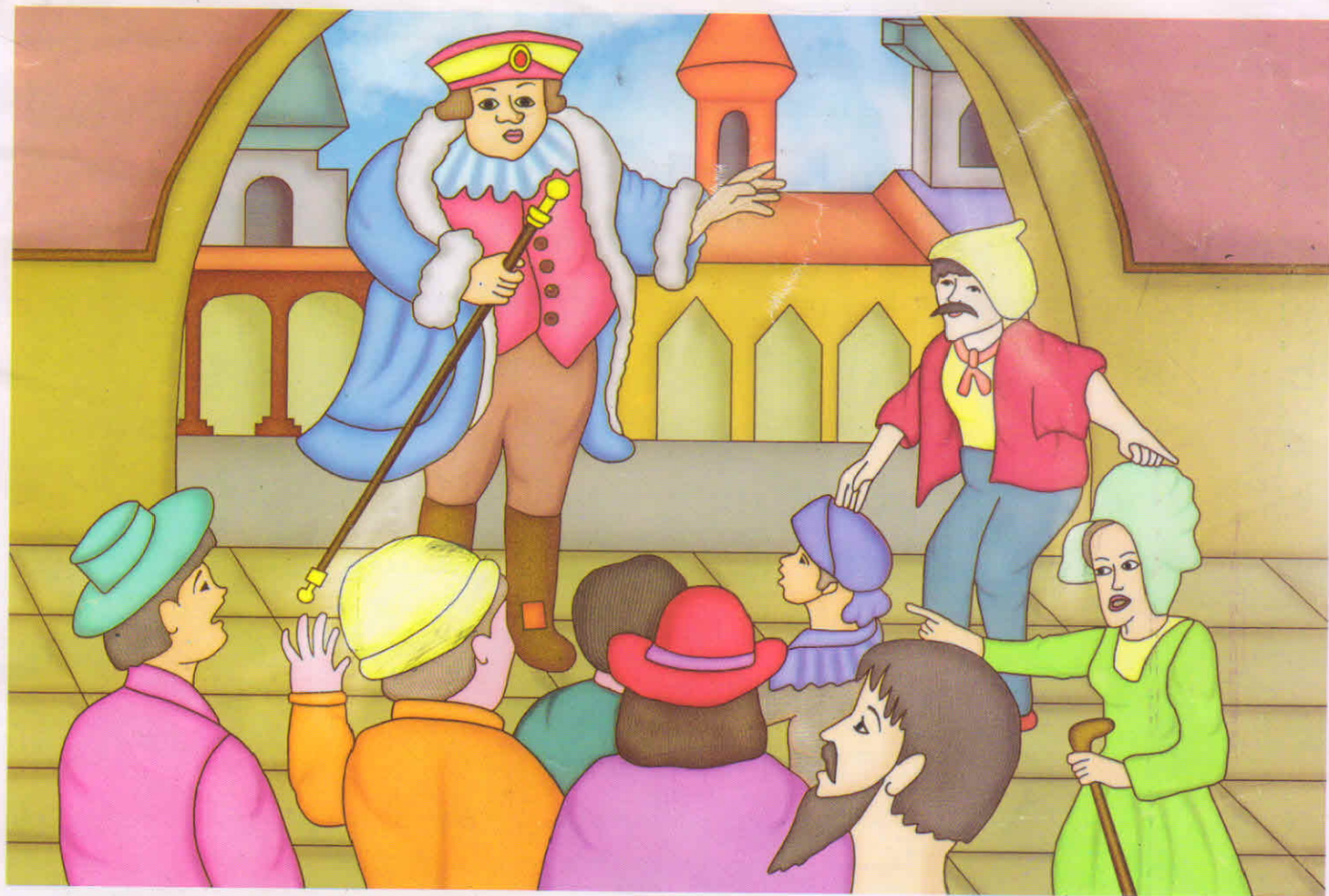
It was prosperous town as its people were hard working. In their leisure they enjoyed grand parties.

The butchers, the bakers, the green-grocers were kept busy supplying food for these parties. The millers and dress-makers spent all their time making lovely hats and gorgeous gowns for the ladies. The city Councillors and the Mayor governed the town well. All was joy and happiness in the town of Hamelin.

Then tragedy struck and the joy vanished. The town's people began to be plagued by rats. These rats fought the dogs and killed the cats. They bit the babies in the cradles and ate all the food in the cupboards. As if that was not enough, they would swarm the dining tables as soon as the food was laid and devour everything. Nothing was safe from them. They ate up everything kept in sacks in the store houses. They destroyed clothes and laid eggs in hats and coat pockets. Shrieking and squeaking there were everywhere, in all shapes, sizes and colours.

"Oh, I'm so hungry!" cried everyone. "And so sleepy





for we can neither eat nor sleep for the fear of the rats!" "Help us! You have to do something to earn the fat wages we pay you!" cried the people as they gathered in the Town Hall. The Mayor had called an emergency meeting of the Councillors to decide the issue. "There must be something we can do or else our lovely town will be ruined," said the worried Mayor, as he stood before the Councillors for, the rats had chewed a hole in his chair.

"Our Mayor is a fool! And his Councillors are stupid!" shouted the people outside, in great anger.

"We spend our hard earned money to pay you, give you costly gowns lined with furs, and now, in this crisis, you

cannot help us?" shrieked the crowd, shaking their fists! "I can help you if you wish," said a voice and all heads turned to behold the speaker. In walked the strangest man they had ever seen. He was tall and thin, with blue eyes as sharp as pins. He had light coloured hair, but no beard or moustache. He wore a long cloak and strange, yellow shoes. On his head was a red hat with a blue feather curling down. In his hand he held a gold pipe and on his lips was a cunning smile. "Give me a thousand guilders and I will rid you of the vermins!" he said again in a sharp voice.

"A thousand guilders! Take fifty thousand guilders but free us from this calamity!" cried the Councillors and





the townsmen in one voice. "Who are you and what can you do?" asked the Mayor who had kept quiet all this while.

For it was the huge amount that bothered him. "They call me the Pied Piper!" he replied.

"I have the power to draw after me all creatures living under the sun, whether they creep, or swim, or fly, or run, through magic!" he added. "I have helped many a people this way and you can test me."

"Let him try!" cried all.

The Mayor was convinced. "Get rid of the rats and we will pay you fifty thousand guilders," he said.

The Pied Piper walked to the edge of the crowd. A

strange smile played on his lips and there was a strange twinkle in his eyes. Lifting the pipe to his lips, he began to play. A curious tune floated on the breeze. It promised good things to eat. The tune echoed all over the town. It was first a rustle, then a whispering which grew into a scattering and then a chattering and clattering!

Out poured rats of all shapes, sizes and colour! With a roar the huge body of rats rushed towards the Piper! The Pied Piper led them away from the town, all the while playing. The rats rushed after him.





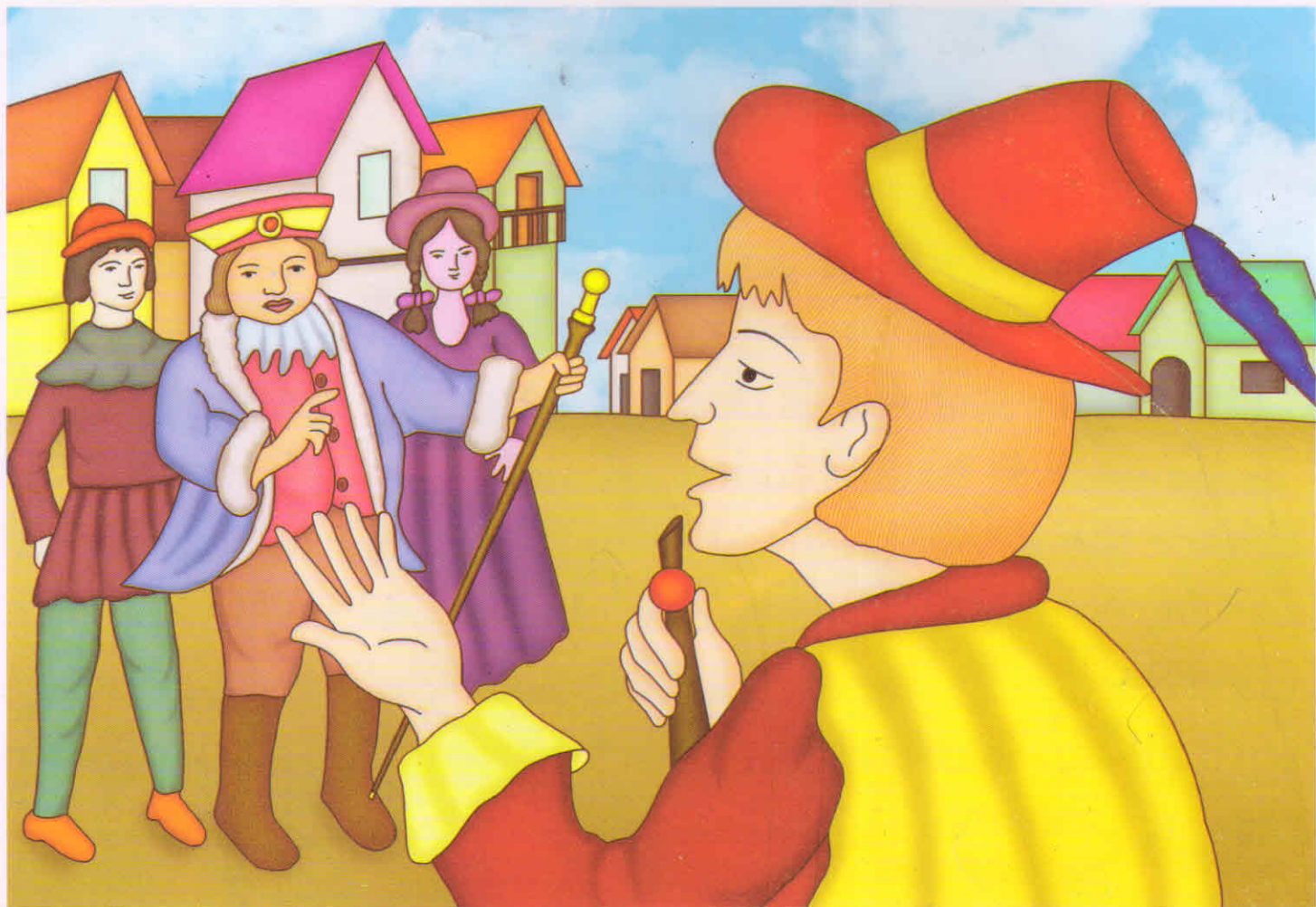
"What a feast we shall have!" thought the rats as they clamoured over each other in their rush to get to the Pied Piper. The Piper continued down the streets of the town and out of the town gate with the rats pouring after him like a river. The Mayor, the Councillors, the people stared in amazement! Never had they seen such a sight! The Piper walked on towards the River Weser. And the rats followed, all the while smelling the goodies.

The River Weser looked like a river of honey to them and how delicious it looked. And all the rats jumped

into the river and to behold. Everyone of them perished. The Pied Piper stopped playing and walked back. There was great rejoicing at the Town Hall. The Mayor and the Councillors beamed at each other.

"Hurrah! It's done. We are rid of the terrible vermins!" they cried. "We can now eat and sleep in peace!" shouted the people. Everyone was chattering, laughing and dancing in the streets. The Mayor and the Councillors shook each other by the hand. "Congratulations! We can all stay in office indefinitely!" They exclaimed in joy.





A public holiday was announced. A grand party was organised. The butchers, the bakers, the green-grocers, the millers and the dress makers got busy again. Great festivities were all around.

"Give me my money and I shall be away," spoke a voice. It was the stranger, the Pied Piper, standing before the Mayor and the Councillors, asking for his money. "Fifty thousand guilders! It's too much! We can't afford it!" cried the Councillors. "Alright. Pay me a thousand and I shall be satisfied," replied the stranger. "The rats have been so destructive. We have to spend a lot in repairs. We cannot give you that much," exclaimed the Mayor.

"You are cheating me. Give me the money and let me go!" said the Pied Piper once again.

"You just played on the pipe. Anyone could have done that! We'll give you fifty guilders!" bargained the Mayor. The Piper turned and walked out in anger.

"They will pay for this dearly!" thought the Pied Piper as he walked to the centre of the town. Then turning to face the town, he lifted the pipe to his lips and began to play. A tune filled with the sights of an enchanted land filled the air. It promised green valleys full of trees laden with all kinds of fruits, of sandy beaches, of games to play, and of tables laden with cakes, chocolates and





ice-creams. It was filled with everything that a child's heart desired. Suddenly a pattering of little feet was heard. Then jostling and pitching, chattering and clapping came the children of Hamelin.

With sparkling eyes and dancing feet they rushed after the Pied Piper! The Pied Piper walked out of the town gate. Tripping and skipping merrily ran the children after him.

"Does the same fate as the rats await our children?" thought the people as they watched helplessly, their feet frozen. "They will surely perish in the river!" lamented everyone silently.

But just before reaching the river the Pied Piper turned and wound his way uphill.

The merry procession made its way up the Koppelberg Hill and the people heaved a sigh of relief!

"Now they are safe. They won't drown!" was the thought in each heart and yet they were powerless to call back the children.





"He will never be able to cross the top of the tall hill," said the Mayor to reassure everyone.

"And then the Piper will stop and our children will come back!" But as the group reached the mountain side, a huge door opened and the children disappeared into it. The Pied Piper was the last to enter. "Wait! Wait for me please! Don't go away!" shouted a lame boy, as he hobbled on his walking-stick, far behind the others. But the door had closed when he reached it. Regretfully he turned back.

To this day it is believed that the lost children of Hamelin live with the Pied Piper in a joyous land where the sun is brighter, birds sing all day, fruits and all kinds of delicious goodies is everywhere.

It is a land filled with joy and sorrows have no place there!

