

## Hamelin

This is the story of The Pied Piper of Hamelin and this is the way that I tell it.

In the year 1284, in the town of Hamelin, there was a plague of rats. They had rats in the ditches, rats on the floor, rats in the houses and rats in their britches! There were so many rats that even the cats had left!

But that year, a stranger came to Hamelin, dressed in a long flowing coat of many colours. Some people said it was Joseph but soon he became known as Brightman. He said that he could get rid of the rats for the right sum of money. The elders of the town agreed to pay him if only he could rid them of the rats.

Brightman took out his pipe and began to play. To everyone's amazement, the rats streamed out of the houses and followed Brightman. Rats, rats, everywhere, chased after Brightman out of the town, across the hills, squealing and squeaking till they came to the River Weser. Brightman strode into the river and the rats followed him only to drown in one swirling mass!

That afternoon, Brightman returned to the town but the elders refused to pay him any money. The days ran by like rabbits and still the elders tried to pretend that the rats had not been that much of a problem.

A month later, Brightman returned to Hamelin. Dressed in a scarlet cloak, wearing a strange mask, for one last time, he demanded his money. And one last time, they refused. So he took out his pipe and played. But this time it was not the rats that followed him, it was the children.

Children, children everywhere, chattering and chortling into the mountains. Chattering and chortling, they ran after the piper, following his tune. Chattering and chortling into the distant hills.

And they were never seen again.