

The Pied Piper

A long time ago there was a small town with too many rats. The rats ate all the food and made people sick. They bit babies and old people. There were so many rats, thousands and thousands, that the people in the town couldn't kill them all.

They almost gave up. Then, a Pied Piper came to town. ("Pied" means his clothing was many different colors. "Piper" means he played music on his pipe.) The Pied Piper told everyone he could kill the rats. The people asked him for help. They promised to pay him lots of money to kill the rats.



A picture of the Pied Piper

The Pied Piper walked to a park. He started playing a strange song on his pipe. One by one, all the rats came to him. The rats came out of the houses and out of the buildings. They came out of the kitchens and closets. They jumped off the roofs and climbed up from the basements. Soon, all the rats were in the park with the Pied Piper.

The people were afraid, but they couldn't stop watching. The Pied Piper played his music and slowly walked to the river. The rats followed him. The Piper stopped at the river, but the rats didn't stop, and soon they all drowned in the water.

The Piper walked back to the small town. The people were celebrating! They were so happy the rats were all gone. But they were still very poor from the rats. When the Pied Piper asked for his money, the Mayor smiled. He said, "The rats are all dead! Why should we pay you?"

The Pied Piper said nothing. He left, and the town had a big party. But late that night, the Piper came back. He went to the park and played a new song. The adults couldn't hear it, but one by one the children of the town walked to the park. Soon, all the children were there. The Pied Piper played his music and walked away from the town. He walked all the way to a mountain. The children followed him. A door opened in the mountain, and the Piper and all the children walked in. When the last child walked through the door, the door closed, and no one ever saw the Pied Piper or the children again.

Questions

1. Why didn't the people pay the Piper?
2. What do you think happened to the children?
3. What's the idea of this story? Do you like it?