

The pied piper

A Medieval Musical Mystery
Play
for Grownups,
as well as Children

Book & Lyrics by
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Adapted from *The Piper* by
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Music by
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CAST*(in order of appearance)*

Father Anselm, *a young priest* – **Tenor**
 Cheat-the-Devil, *a strolling player* - **Tenorino**
 Old Ursula, *a gossip* - **Mezzo**
 Old Claus Vandergelder, *a miser* -
 Barbara, *daughter of Jacobus* - **Coloratura**
 Veronika, *wife of Kurt* - **Mezzo**
 Kurt Fugger, *the syndic (councilor)* - **Bass**
 Hans Wurstschlacter, *the butcher* -
 Axel Eisenhauer, *the smith*
 Jacobus Gesellschafter, *the burgomeister* – **Baritone**
 Reynard the Fox, *later, the Pied Piper aka Tyl Eulenspiegel (and, perhaps, Death)* -- **Baritone**
 Franz Schumacher, *the cobbler*
 Fritz Schwagstorf, *the sacristan*
 Martin Mauerwaccher, *the watchman*
 Marta, *Hans' wife*
 Hilda, *Axe's wife*
 Gerda, *Martin's wife*
 Irma, *Franz' wife*
 Orso, *the Bear, later Michael, the sword-eater* – **Lyrical Baritone**
 Magda, Ute & Gieselle, *the Tarts*
 Herman Kalkriese, *the Town Crier*
 Wende, *Herman's wife*
 Children:
 Jan, *Veronika's lame son* - **Treble**
 Friedele
 Viko
 Ilse
 Trude
 Rudi
 Kuno
 Gretl
 Clara
 Liesl
 Ferde
 Famke
 Inge
 Nils & Fesche, *Acolytes, Kurt's sons from his first marriage*
 Plague, Famine, War, *Three Strolling Players* – **Bass, Baritone, Tenor**
 Court Dancers/Strolling Players
 Townspeople, Priests, Nuns, Lost Souls, Noah, Noah's Family, "God", Angels, Animals, Etc.,
Mimes/Dancers
 and Other Children *(as desired)*

NOTE: It may be possible to use puppets, either hand-held or marionettes, for some roles, such as "God," Angels and Animals.

MUSICAL SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

Act I

Prologue: Somewhere in the Holy Roman Empire, 1384. *Late summer.*

1. *Plain Chant/The Mystery Play (Overture)*...Anselm , Strolling Players, Orchestra
- Scene 1: Market Square at Hamlin on the Weser. *Three days after the Rats were Piped away.*
2. *Drinking Catch/The Piper Must be Paid (Rats)*... Jacobus, Kurt, The Piper, Barbara , Old Claus, Old Ursula, Michael, Cheat-the-Devil, Ensemble
 3. *Proud Barbara*Michael, Barbara , Gossips
- Scene 2: A Side Street & Inside Kurt's House. *Immediately following.*
4. *Three Strollers (Dance)*.....Magda, Ute, Gieselle, Famine, Plague, War
 5. *Little Lame Lamb (Baa, Baa, Blacksheep)*.....Children, Gossips
 6. *Who Made Me?*.....Jan & Veronika
- Scene 3: Barbara's Garden. *Shortly thereafter.*
7. *Proud Barbara*.....Barbara , Michael
 8. *Enchantment*.....Michael, Cheat-the-Devil, Barbara
- Scene 4: A Side Street. *Immediately following.*
9. *Marry the Moon*.....Michael, Cheat-the-Devil
- Scene 5: Market Square. *Shortly thereafter.*
10. *What Will Happen Next? & Rainbow Shoes*.....Jan, Veronika , Piper
 11. *Mice (Dance)*.....Children, Piper, Cheat-the-Devil
 12. *Nothing/Plain Chant (Reprise)*.....The Piper, Choir
 14. *The Piper Must be Paid (Reprise)*.....Jacobus , The Piper, Kurt
 15. *Mice (Reprise) /Kinder-spell (Dance)*.....Children, The Piper, Fritz, Acolytes
 16. *The Piper Must be Paid (Reprise)*...Fritz, Veronika , Kurt , Old Ursula, Old Claus, Ensemble
- Scene 6: The Cross Roads. *Shortly thereafter*
17. *Mice (Dance -Reprise)*.....The Piper, Children
 18. *Three Strollers (Dance)*.....Famine, Plague, War
 19. *The Search (Piper! Piper!)*.....Parents, Veronika
- Scene 7: Inside the Hollow Hill. *A week later*
20. *I Dreamed/Dogs & Cats*...Jan, Ilse, Rudi, The Piper, Trude, Children
 21. *Make Believe/Rainbow Shoes*.....Jan, The Piper, Children, Strolling Players
 22. *Birds*.....Jan, The Piper, Children, Strolling Players
- Scene 8: Barbara's Garden. *Immediately following. Afternoon.*
23. *The Plot*...Kurt, Anselm, Jacobus , Cheat-the-Devil, Barbara
- Scene 9: A Side Street. *Shortly thereafter*
24. *This Fool*.....Cheat-the-Devil, Michael
- Scene 10: Barbara's Garden. *At moonrise.*
25. *Nightingale*.....Michael , Barbara
 26. *What the Neighbors Say/Hamlin*... Barbara , Michael, Kurt, Jacobus, Anselm, Men
- Scene 11: The Cross Roads. *Two days later*
27. *The Chase (Dance)*.....Michael, Cheat-the Devil, Ensemble
- Scene 12: Inside the Hollow Hill. *Immediately following.*
28. *Barbara*..... Michael, The Piper, Cheat-the-Devil, Plague, Famine, War
 29. *Cats/Rainbow Dance*.....Piper, Cheat-the-Devil, Children, Strolling Players
- Scene 13: The Cross Roads. *Shortly thereafter.*
30. *Barbara (Reprise)/This Same Old Devil*.....Michael , The Piper
 31. *Hamlin (Reprise)*.....The Piper, Michael
- Scene 14: Ruined Chapel on the Road to Rudersheim. *Immediately following.*
32. *Plain Chant (Reprise)*.....Michael , Ensemble
 33. *The Piper's Spell (Dance)*...The Piper, Michael , Barbara, Ensemble

34. *Finaletto*.....Barbara, The Piper, Michael, Ensemble
- Act II
- Prologue: Montage: Cross Roads & Inside the Hollow Hill. *Immediately following.*
35. *Entr'Acte*.....Kurt, Jacobus, Anselm
- Scene 1: Inside the Hollow Hill. *Some time later.*
36. *Lady-in-the-Moon (Dance)*...Cheat-the-Devil, Barbara, Michael , Court Dancers
37. *Enchantment (Reprise)*.....Michael & Barbara, Ensemble
38. *Let It Be Sung*Barbara , Michael, The Piper
- Scene 2: The Cross Roads, Inside the Hollow Hill & Hamlin. *The next 3 days & nights.*
39. *Vision of the Virgin*.....Veronika
40. *The Bright World*.....The Piper, Veronika
41. *Limbo (Dance)*.....Cheat-the-Devil, Jan, Children, Mimes
42. *Hamlin (Reprise)*.....The Piper, Veronika
43. *Plain Chant (Reprise)/Hamlin as the Hell-mouth (Dance)*...Cheat-the-Devil,
Plague, Famine, War, Magda, Ute, Gieselle, Ensemble
44. *The Lonely Man*.....The Piper, Veronika
- Scene 3: The Market Square & Inside the Church. *Early the Next Morning*
45. *Plain Chant/The Sermon/Candles*...Anselm, Marta, Hans, Ilse, Hilda, Gerda, Martin,
Axel, Old Ursula, Old Claus, Franz, Fritz
46. *The Homecoming*.....Jacobus, Barbara, Michael, Ensemble
- Scene 4: The Cross Roads, The Ruined Chapel & Hamlin Montage. *Immediately following.*
47. *The Lonely Man/Limbo (Reprise) & The Black Death (Dance)*...The Piper, Jan,
Veronika, Barbara, Michael, Children, Cheat-the-Devil, Ensemble
48. *Three Strollers (Reprise)*.....Famine, Plague, War & Piper
- Scene 5: Market Square at Hamlin. *That Afternoon.*
49. *Finale: The Piper Must be Paid*.....The Full Company
- Epilogue: Elsewhere in the Holy Roman Empire. *Some time thereafter.*
50. *The Mystery Play*.....Strolling Players
51. *Encore: Rainbow Shoes*.....The Full Company
52. *Exit Music*.....Orchestra
- Lyrics for “Plain Chant” & “Rainbow Shoes,” & “Let It be Sung” (Refrains) by Josephine Preston Peabody

Note:

The action of the musical is continuous—cinematic—with a single intermission. Scenery should resemble tapestries, or illustrations from a medieval manuscript, and may be fragmentary. The costumes for the townspeople should be in subdued colors—brown, gray and blue. Married women wear off-white wimples and veils; unmarried women show their hair—Barbara either in plaits, or unbound and flowing as a bride—the Tarts, in outlandish styles, to complement their bare breasts. Nuns and priests wear black, the nuns with off-white wimples. Kurt, Tyl, Fesche, Veronika & Jan wear burgundy. Jacobus wears dark green; Barbara, light green, except for her wedding gown—Michael wears matching colors.

The Strolling Players are dressed in motley and the Tarts in various combinations of pink and orange. The Children, in the Hollow Hill, should wear their nightclothes, augmented with bright colors. The Court Dancers wear transparent fabric—they are figments of Barbara’s imagination—in pastels, with gold and silver detailing; and masks, or elaborate headgear—heart-shaped, hennin, steeple hats, turbans, sugar-loafs, chaperones, liripipes, etc.—even Robin Hood-style cocked hats.

The music is through composed, with several extended musical scenes, and dances, all of which employ varied distinctive themes. In addition, there are several songs in the traditional format, as well as spoken dialogue. The orchestration should include samples of period instruments— lute, serpent, shawm, rebec, crumhorn, sackbut, hautboy, etc.

When pronouncing Barbara, the accent is on the second syllable, and the second “a” is pronounced as “eh”. Fugger is pronounced with a long “u”—or, the “oo”—as in “ food.”

Tyl Eulenspiegel was a robber, brigand, trickster and confidence man who actually lived in 14th century Germany, a sort of Robin Hood who though captured several times and supposedly hanged, escaped, becoming a legend and honored with several statues. He may have been the archetype for the Pied Piper, who to say the least is an obsessive-compulsive character with what may be described as having a Messiah complex, saving the children from the agonies of the Black Death by sealing them in a cave.

Act I

Prologue: (A large gothic arch, with a crenellated battlement forms the proscenium, framed by two smaller arches, which have practical doors. The production curtain is a scrim painted like a tapestry—divided into horizontal panels, each with cells—rather like a comic strip in the Sunday supplement. Each cell in the tapestry represents a different event in the traditional version of the story about to be told. The houselights dim and we hear a plain song chanted offstage. Father Anselm enters thru the SR door, in front of the scrim.)

CHOIR

DIES IRAE, DIES ILLA
 SOLVET SAECULUM IN FAVILLA
 TESTE DAVID CUM SYBILLA
 QUANTUS TREMOR EST FUTURUS
 QUANDO JUDEX EST VENTURUS
 CUNCTA STRICTE DISCUSSURUS!

ANSELM

YOU, WHO NOW HEED THE COLORS OF THIS SHOW,
 LOOK TO YOUR LAUGHTER!
 IT DOTHS BODY FORTH
 A JUDGMENT THAT MAY
 IN THE TIME HEREAFTER
 TAKE YOU UNAWARE
 SUNSTRUCK WITH MIRTH,
 TWIXT HEAVEN AND HELL
 LIES THE TREMBLING EARTH
 WHERE MORTAL MEN DWELL
 SOME WIND OF WRATH SHALL SCOURGE
 WE SINNED—A SCATH SHALL PURGE
 TO NOTHINGNESS
 FOR ALL OUR FLATTERING
 NO MATTER WHAT ONE BELIEVES
 IS JUST NATTERING
 LIKE UNTO THE CHATTERING LEAVES...

This tale of greed you may think you know...these poor players shall tell...watch it if you dare!
(He exits thru the SL door, and we hear the plain song again.)

CHOIR

INTER OVES LOCUM PRAESTA
 ET AB HOEDIS ME SEQUESTRA
 STATUENS IN PARTE DEXTRA
 CONFUTATIS MALEDICTIS
 FLAMMUS ACRIBUS ADDICTIS
 VOCA ME CUM BENEDICTIS

(The Orchestra picks up the melody and the tempo, segueing into the Overture, during which the scrim becomes transparent. We see a procession of Strolling Players, trudging through a limbo, perhaps against a black curtain—pulling their pageant wagons—but walking in place. The black drop flies out, revealing the market square of Hamlin on the Weser. The year is 1384, a hundred years after the time that the so-called Holy Roman Empire passed from the control of the Hohenstaufen dynasty to the Hapsburgs; also a time of conflict between the emperor and the pope—and the Black Death—or bubonic plague. The plague originally struck between 1347 and 1349, but recurring outbreaks continued into the next centuries.)

Scene 1: The market Square at Hamlin on the Weser.

(UC is a street leading to the town gate, which has a practical portcullis. URC is the church, with an open shrine containing a large sculpted crucifix, with the figure of Christ. Three steps lead up to the door. DR of that, JACOBUS' house, the façade at a diagonal to the open square, from URC to DR. It has a front stoop, with a balustrade and two steps at either end. ULC is the Rathaus, or town hall, also with three steps; DL of it, the house of KURT, its façade also at a diagonal to the square, from ULC to DL, also with a stoop.

There are narrow house fronts R & L, above and below these units, their second floors projecting over the square. DS, R & L, are corner houses with projecting second floors, and practical casement windows. The walls are made of field stone and half-timbered, with red tile roofs. Narrow cobble streets lead away between houses whose gables all but meet overhead.

It is a late summer afternoon, with a holiday crowd, most of them drinking beer or wine. In the open casements, R & L, opposite each other sit Old URSULA and OLD CLAUS. In the center of the square now stand three pageant wagons—portable stages whose scenes represent “heaven” SR, “hell” SL, and “the world” CS.

On the center wagon is “Noah’s Ark,” a rude, painted, wooden, cut-out flat, with a tented top: out of the portholes appear the masks of animals, worn by the players inside. One is a Bear (Orso), played by MICHAEL, the sword-eater; one is a large Reynard-the-fox, later apparent as the PIPER. On the “hell” wagon, there is a large gaping mouth, complete with fangs; leering eyes and horns are seen above the lips.

The interior is a fluttering piece of red fabric, into which a mountebank dressed in scarlet—CHEAT-THE-DEVIL, is poking LOST SOULS with a pitchfork. His mask is decorated with curling goat’s horns and the ears of a mule. “God” and his Angels appear on the SR, wagon, which is furnished with a “Jacob’s Ladder,” by which they climb to heaven. The performance is in full swing when the curtain goes up.

Prostitutes and pickpockets ply their trade, as do street vendors. There are jugglers, tumblers, stilt-walkers, fire-eaters, etc. JACOBUS, the burgomeister, or mayor, stands on the steps of his house. BARBARA, daughter of JACOBUS, loiters by the center wagon. On the opposite side of the stage, VERONIKA, the sad young wife of KURT, watches from the steps of her house, keeping her little lame boy, JAN, close beside her.

Shouts of delight greet the end of the show; the CHILDREN continue to scream with joy whenever an animal looks out of the Ark. MEN & WOMEN pay scant attention either to JACOBUS, when he speaks—himself none too sober—from his doorstep, prompted by KURT; or yet to ANSELM, the priest, who steps forward, with lifted hands, at the end of the play.)

TOWNSMEN

IN THE PUBLIC HOUSE TO DIE—
 THAT’S OUR RESOLUTION
 LET STRONG WINE TO OUR LIPS
 BE NIGH
 AT LIFE’S DISSOLUTION
 (AT OUR EXECUTION)
 THAT WILL MAKE THE ANGELS CRY
 WITH JOYFUL ELOCUTION
 GRANT THESE SINNERS
 O GOD ON HIGH
 GRACE AND ABSOLUTION
 SINCE OUR THROATS ARE GETTING DRY
 WE’LL ACCEPT YOUR CONTRIBUTION

JACOBUS

(Prompted by KURT:) And now—good townsmen all—seeing we stand delivered and secure—as once—you chosen creatures of the ark—for a similitude—

IN THIS HARVEST SEASON
 GONE IS THE REASON
 FOR OUR FEAR OF FAMINE—
 IF YOU EXAMINE THE CAUSE

IT MAY GIVE PAUSE—
 DESPITE THE LACK OF CATS
 FROM THE HAGUE TO PRAGUE
 NO MORE MICE OR RATS
 REMAIN TO PLAGUE—

HANS, AXEL & OTHERS

AS NEAR AS WE CAN DETERMINE
 THERE ARE NO MORE VERMIN
 TO CARRY THE FLEAS
 THAT CAUSE THE DISEASE
 WE WERE DREADING
 SPREADING THROUGHOUT GERMANY!

CROWD

HURRAH! HURRAH!

ANSELM

Tis meet we render thanks more soberly!

HANS

Soberly, soberly, aye!

JACOBUS

For our deliverance—and now, ye ken, it will be three days—
 SINCE WE BEHELD OUR LATE DEPARTED PEST
 OUR MOST UNWELCOME GUEST

OLD URSULA

What does he say?

REYNARD (PIPER)

(From the Ark,) Oh, how felicitous!

MARTA

HE'S ONLY SAYING THERE BE NO MORE RATS

ENSEMBLE

RATS! RATS! RATS! RATS! RATS! RATS! RATS! RATS!

JACOBUS

THREE DAYS IT IS AND NOT ONE MOUSE
 ONE MOUSE, ONE MOUSE, I SAY!
 NO-O-O! QUIET...AS A MOUSE
 AND NOW...
 NOT A LOUSE IN THE HOUSE—
 NOT A RAT!

ENSEMBLE

RATS! RATS! RATS! RATS! RATS! RATS! RATS! RATS!

JACOBUS

You have seen Noah and the Ark most aptly happening by
 WITH THESE TRAVELING PLAYERS—

KURT

THESE SELFSAME PURVEYORS
 OF IMMODESTY AND IMPROPRIETY—

ANSELM

GODLESS IMPIETY, SORCERY—

KURT

CAUSE FOR ANXIETY, IMMORALITY—

ANSELM

NO SIGNS OF REMORSE—ER—HE!

KURT

THEIR TRADE PLYING, DEFYING MORTALITY
CORRUPTING SOCIETY!
LIKE RATS!

CROWD

RATS! RATS! RATS! RATS! RATS! RATS! RATS!

JACOBUS

You have marked the judgment—you have seen the lost souls sent to hell—and nothing more to do—(KURT *prompts him.*) Yes, yes—and now...

(HANS WURSTSCHLACHTER *steps out of the crowd.*)

HANS

Has no man seen the piper? Please, your worships—

OTHERS

Aye, aye, so! Aye, where is he? Ho—the Piper!

JACOBUS

The Piper, my good man?

HANS

He that charmed the rats!

OTHERS

YES, YES—THAT CHARMED THE RATS!

RATS! RATS! RATS! RATS! RATS! RATS! RATS! RATS!

JACOBUS

Why, no man knows—which proves him such a random instrument as Heaven doth sometimes send us, to our use. Or, as I do conceive, no man at all—a man of air; or, I would say—delusion! He'll come no more!

REYNARD

(*From the Ark,*) Eh?—Oh, indeed! (*He yips like a fox.*)

JACOBUS

Tis clearest providence. The rats are gone. The man is gone. And there is none to pay—save peaceful worship!

REYNARD

Oh, indeed! (*He yips again.*)

(*There is a sudden chorus of derisive animal noises from the Ark, delighting the Crowd.*)

KURT

Silence—You strollers there! Or I will have you jailed, one and all!

CROWD

No, Kurt the Syndic, no!

BARBARA

(*To Jacobus:*) No, no! Ah, Father—

BID THEM STAY AWHILE
AND PLAY IT ALL AGAIN—
OR, IF NOT ALL—

DO LET US SEE THAT SAME GOOD YOUTH REMAIN—

WOMEN

THE LAD WHO'S BLOND AND TALL
WITH HIS TOOTHsome GUILE—

BARBARA

WHO SWALLOWED SWORDS
AND FIRE WITHOUT PAIN

BETWEEN THE ARK PRESERV-ED
AND THE LORD'S ANGELS PERFERVID

CROWD

I MUST ADMIT THE THOUGHT OF IT
HAS A CERTAIN STYLE
IF KURT HAD A SENSE OF HUMOR
WERE'NT SUCH A DOOM AND GLOOMER
IT WOULD MAKE HIM SMILE

CHILDREN

Oh, can't we see the animals in the ark? Again? Oh, can't we see it all again? Oh, leave out Noah! And let's have only bears and dromedaries, and the other ones—!

KURT

Silence!

BARBARA

And the sword-swallower!

REYNARD

Michael-the-sword-eater, laurels for thee!

(The BEAR disappears; MICHAEL puts his own head out of the porthole and gazes fixedly at Barbara.)

ANSELM

Good people—you have had your shows. And it is meet, that having held due feast—both with our market and this miracle—we bring our holiday to a close with prayer and public thanks to Saint Willibald, upon whose day the rats departed thence.

REYNARD

Saint Willibald!

BEAR

Saint Willibald!

OTHER ANIMALS

(Looking out portholes,) Saint Willibald! Saint! Oh!

CROWD

Saint Willibald!

AND WHAT HAD HE TO DO
WITH RIDDING US OF RATS?
RATS! RATS! RATS! RATS! RATS! RATS! RATS! RATS!

HANS

TWAS THE PIPING MAN
WHO CAME AND STOOD HERE IN THE MARKET PLACE
AND SWORE TO DO IT FOR ONE THOUSAND GUILDERS!
A SUM THAT QUITE BEWILDERS!

FRANZ

Aye, and he did it, too!—Saint Willibald!

(There is renewed uproar from the Crowd.)

KURT

(To Jacobus :) DRIVE OUT THE MOUNTEBANKS!

TIS EVER SO—

DISMISS THEM WITH OUR THANKS

BID THEM GO!

ADMIT THEM TO THE TOWN AND YOU MUST PAY!

THEIR SINGLE SHOW THAT LASTS A DAY

WITH RIOTING FOR A WEEK!

TYPICAL OF GYPSY, JEW AND GREEK—

Look yonder at your daughter!

(BARBARA lingers by the Ark, gazing with girlish interest at MICHAEL, who gazes at her, his Bear mask in his hand for the moment.)

JACOBUS

Barbara!

(She turns back, with an angry glance at Kurt.)

AXEL

BY YOUR LEAVE, MASTERS! I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW
HOW DID SAINT WILLIBALD PREVAIL AGAINST THE RATS?

ENSEMBLE

RATS! RATS! RATS! RATS! RATS! RATS! RATS! RATS!

AXEL

THAT—I WOULD LIKE YOU TO SHOW
I, WHO HAVE MADE OF STRONG WROUGHT IRON TRAPS,
TWO HUNDRED
THIRTY-NINE!

HILDA

TWO HUNDRED THIRTY-NINE!

REYNARD

AND SO WOULD I!
MAKE ME OUT A LIAR!

HANS

SO PLEASE YOUR WORSHIPS, MAY IT PLEASE THE CRIER
NOW WE BE HERE, TO CRY THE PIPING MAN

MARTIN

A STRANGER-MAN, IN DIVERSE COLORS WAS CLAD

HANS

DRAVE AWAY THE HORDE OF RATS!

ENSEMBLE

RATS! RATS! RATS! RATS! RATS! RATS! RATS! RATS!

AXEL

TO OUR GREAT BENEFIT; AND WE BE ALL JUST MEN

OTHERS

AYE! AYE! AMEN!

WOMEN

AMEN! OUR LADY AND THE BLESSED SAINTS!

JACOBUS

WHY, FAITH, GOOD SOULS,
IF YE WILL HAVE HIM CRIED

CROWD

A BARGAIN—IT CANNOT BE DENIED!

JACOBUS

SO BE IT—THE WAYS OF HEAVEN ARE STRANGE
MARK HOW OUR ANGEL
OF DELIVERANCE CAME
THIS PIPING FELLOW WITH NO NAME
IN MOTLEY PIED, EVEN AS THE VILEST PLAYER
I'M ONLY JUST THE MAYOR—
BUT CRY HIM IF YOU WILL—PEACE TO YOUR LUNGS
HE WILL NOT COME

(KURT wrathfully consults with JACOBUS, signals the TOWN CRIER.)

CRIER

OYEZ! OYEZ! OYEZ!
WHEREAS, NOW THREE DAYS GONE
OUR PLAGUE OF RATS

CROWD

RATS! RATS! RATS! RATS! RATS! RATS! RATS!

CRIER

WAS WHOLLY DRIVEN HENCE
OUR CITY CLEANSED
OUR PEACE RESTORED AFTER SORE THREAT
OF FAMINE
BY A STRANGE MAN, WHO CAME NOT BACK AGAIN
NOW, THEREFORE, IF THIS MAN HAVE EARS TO HEAR
LET HIM STAND FORTH
OYEZ! OYEZ! OYEZ!

(Trumpet. Everyone looks around. REYNARD steps out of the Ark and comes DS slowly, with a modest air. KURT points him out, threateningly, and the CROWD bursts into derisive laughter. REYNARD takes off his mask slowly, revealing a handsome, but scarred face.)

ALL

THE MAN! THE MAN!

KURT & JACOBUS

The Devil! Tis—

ALL

THE PIPER!

(He regards them all with debonair satisfaction; then reverses his headpiece and holds it upside down with a confident smile.)

PIPER

THREE DAYS OF REST, YOUR WORSHIPS, YOU HAVE HAD
I SEE NO SIGNS OF VERMIN
SO FAR AS I CAN DETERMINE HEREBOUT
NO MORE TO EXTERMINATE NEARABOUT
THAT THEY SHOULD DISAPPEAR
IS SOMETHING VERY QUEER
THE RATS ARE GONE, EVEN TO THE NETHERMOST TAIL
AND I'VE FULFILLED MY BARGAIN
IS IT GRANTED?

ALL

(Murmurs:) AYE! AYE! THE PIPER! (Growing into cheers, yells, shouts, whistles.)

PIPER

THANK'EE—MY THOUSAND GUILDERS, IF YOU PLEASE

JACOBUS

ONE THOU—COME, COME! THIS WAS NO SOBER BARGAIN!
NO MAN IN REASON COULD

PIPER

ONE THOUSAND GUILDERS
YOU PROMISED YOU'D MAKE
GOOD

KURT

One thousand rogueries!

JACOBUS

YOUR JEST HAS GONE TOO FAR!
BRING OUT THE TAR
AND FEATHERS!

AXEL

LUCKY, IF HE GETS AUGHT—TWO HUNDRED TRAPS!

HILDA

AND NINE—AND THIRTY!

AXEL

BY SAINT WILLIBALD!

THE PEOPLE

SAINT WILLI....

AXEL

WHEN DID I GET PAID?

HILDA

SAY, NOW!

PIPER

...ONE THOUSAND GULDERS!

ALL

JUST ASK AXEL'S WIFE HILDA!

FRANZ

GIVE HIM A HUNDRED

HANS

DOUBLE!

KURT

HE'S JUST ASKING FOR TROUBLE

MARTA

YOU WERE FOOL TO MAKE THIS AGREEMENT WITH HIM!

ASK OLD CLAUS

HE HAS THE GULDERS AND HIS HOUSE WAS FULL
OF RATS!

ENSEMBLE

RATS! RATS! RATS! RATS! RATS! RATS! RATS! RATS!

OLD CLAUS

(Leaning out of his window,) YOU JADE! AND I, THAT HOARD AND SAVE
AND LAY BY ALL THAT I HAVE FROM YEAR TO YEAR
TO BUILD MY MONUMENT WHEN I AM DEAD
A FINE NEW TOMB THERE, IN SAINT BONIFACE
INSTEAD OF LYING IN A PAUPER'S GRAVE
AM I TO PAY FOR ALL YOUR CITY RATS?

ENSEMBLE

RATS! RATS! RATS! RATS! RATS! RATS! RATS! RATS!

OLD URSULA

(Leaning out, opposite,) RIGHT, NEIGHBOR, RIGHT WELL SAID!
PIPER, HARK HERE!
PIPER, HOW DID YE CHARM THE RATS AWAY?

PIPER

THE RATS WERE LED BY—CU-RI-OS-I-TY!
TIS SO WITH MANY RATS—AND ALL OLD WOMEN—
SAVING YOUR HEALTH!

JACOBUS

NO THOUGHT FOR THE PUBLIC WEAL
IN THIS BASE GRASPING ON—

PIPER

WE HAD A DEAL—ONE THOUSAND GUILDERS!

KURT

FOR PIPING

AXEL

ENOUGH OF ALL THIS GRIPING

PIPER

SHALL I PIPE THEM BACK AGAIN?

WOMEN

MERCIFUL HEAVEN! GOOD SAINT BONIFACE!
GOOD SAINT WILLIBALD! PETER AND PAUL
DEFEND US!

HANS

NO, NO; NO FEAR OF THAT
THE RATS BE DROWNED
WE SAW THEM WITH OUR EYES

PIPER

NOW WHO SHALL SAY
THERE IS NO RESURRECTION FOR A MOUSE?

JACOBUS

ANOTHER PLAGUE HE'LL SEND US!

KURT

DO YOU BUT CROP THIS FELLOW'S EAR!

VERONIKA

AH, KURT!

JACOBUS

(To Kurt:) DEAL PATIENTLY, GOOD NEIGHBOR
ALL IS WELL.

ALL

PAY THE PIPER FOR HIS LABOR

JACOBUS

(To Piper:) WHY DO YOU NAME A PRICE SO LAUGHABLE,
MY MAN?
CALL YOU TO MIND; YOU HAVE NO CLAIM
NO SCRIP TO SHOW
YOU CLING UPON—

PIPER

YOUR WORD

JABOBUS

I WOULD SAY—JUST—

PIPER

YOUR WORD

JACOBUS

UPON—

PIPER

YOUR WORD—
SURE, T'WAS A ROTTEN PARCHMENT!

JACOBUS

OUR TOWN IS THRIVING—YOU WOULD BE WISER—

PIPER

THIS IS A BASE, CONNIVING MISER
STAND FORTH, CHEAT-THE-DEVIL!

(Cheat-the-Devil enters from the Hell-Mouth. People shrink back, then come closer.)

BE NOT AFEARED. HE PLEASD YOU ALL, OF LATE
HE HATH NO STING—SO, BOY! DO OFF THY HEAD—

(Cheat-the-Devil takes off his mask, revealing a pale, plain, unhappy young face, gentle and half-witted.)

Michael, stand forth!

(Michael (the sword-eater) enters from the Ark.)

BARBARA

That goodly sword-eater!

PIPER

SO, MICHAEL, SO
THESE BE TWO FRIENDS OF MINE
PAY NOW AN EVEN THIRD TO EACH OF US
OR, TO CONTENT YOUR DOUBTS, TO EACH OF THESE
DO YOU PAY, HERE AND NOW FIVE HUNDRED GUILDERS
WHO GETS IT MATTERS LITTLE, FOR US, FRIENDS
BUT YOU WILL PAY THE SUM, FRIEND—
YOU WILL PAY!

HANS, AXEL & CROWD

COME, THERE'S AN HONEST FELLOW. AYE, NOW, PAY!
THERE'S A GOOD FRIEND—WOULD I HAD THE SAME.
ONE THOUSAND GUILDERS!
NO, TOO MUCH.
NO, NO!

KURT

PAY JUGGLERS?—WITH A ROPE APIECE!

JACOBUS

WHY—SO—

PIPER

THEY ARE MY FRIENDS AND THEY SHALL SHARE WITH ME
TIS TIME THAT HAMELIN RECKONED US FOR MEN
HATH EVER DEALT WITH US AS WE WERE VERMIN

JACOBUS

WHETHER YOU SHALL HAVE YOUR PRICE
THE COUNCIL MUST DETERMINE

PIPER

NOW I HAVE RID YOU OF THE OTHER SORT
RIGHT YOU THAT SCORE!

KURT

THESE OUTCASTS!

PIPER

SAY YOU SO?
MICHAEL, MY MAN!
WHICH OF YOU HERE WILL TRY TO MATCH HIM
AND EAT FIRE OR GLASS? WHAT SAY YOU?

MICHAEL

NO, NO MORE GLASS TODAY, I PRAY YOU

PIPER

THEN FIRE AND SWORD! SO!

THERE'S NOT ONE MAN IN HAMLIN, HERE

SO HONEST AS HIS WORD

STROLLER! A PRETTY CHOICE YOU LEAVE US

QUIT THIS STROLLING LIFE OR STROLL INTO A CAGE

FOR ONE WHO GREW UP FREE PLAYING ON THE STAGE

WHAT DO YOU OFFER HIM?

A MAN EATS FIRE—SWORDS, GLASS, YOUNG APRIL FROGS—

CHILDREN

DO IT AGAIN! DO IT AGAIN!

PIPER

YOU SAY TO SUCH A MAN—COME BE A MONK, A WEAVER

A PRETTY CHOICE

ANSELM

BETTER THAT THEN A DRUNK DECIEVER

PIPER

WHAT BETTER CAUSE HAVE WE TO REJOICE?

HERE'S CHEAT-THE-DEVIL, NOW!

FRANZ

BUT WHAT'S HIS NAME?

PIPER

WHAT WOULD YOU? HE DOESN'T KNOW—NOR DO I

BUT FOR THE SOMETHING HE'S SEEN OF LIFE

MAKING MEN MERRY, HE'D KNOW SOMETHING MORE

THE GENTLEST DEVIL WHO EVER SPIKED LOST SOULS

INTO HELL-MOUTH—FOR NOTHING-BY-THE-DAY!

OLD URSULA

PIPER, WHY DO YOU CALL HIM CHEAT-THE-DEVIL?

PIPER

BECAUSE HIS DEVILTRY IS ALL A CHEAT—

HE IS NO DEVIL—BUT A GENTLE HEART

FRIEND MICHAEL HERE HAS PLAYED THE

DEVIL BETIMES

BECAUSE HE CAN SO BRAVELY BREATHE OUT FIRE

INSPIRING DESIRE ON A YOUNG MAIDEN'S PART

HE PLIED THE PITCHFORK SO WE CRIED FOR MERCY

HE RECKONED NOT THE STOUTNESS OF HIS ARM

BUT CHEAT-THE-DEVIL HERE—HE WOULD NOT HURT

WHY—KURT, THE SYNDIC—THRUSTING HIM

INTO HELL (*Laughter from the Crowd.*)

CHEAT-THE-DEVIL

NO, NO—I WILL NOT HURT HIM!

PIPER

Easy, boy! (*To the Townsfolk:*) Merry gentlemen! And—if ye will have reasons, good—ye see, I want one thousand guilders.

JACOBUS

In all surety, payment you'll have, my man. But—

HANS

As to his friends—if that yon devil be as fleet with his hands as he be slow of tongue—why, I'll take him for apprentice.

MARTA

NOW, THAT WOULD SMACK OF PRIDE!

PIPER

NO DOUBT HE'S NEVER SUFFERED FROM
A LACK OF PRIDE—

Your trade?

HANS

I'm Hans, the butcher—

PIPER

Butcher?

CHEAT-THE-DEVIL

Butcher! Oh, no! I couldn't hurt the animals!

MARTA

Tis a fool!

FRANZ

I'll take this fellow that can swallow fire—he's somewhat old for me, but he can learn my trade
—

IRMA

A pretty fellow!

PIPER

SO SAYS THIS MASTER'S BRIDE!

What's your name and trade?

FRANZ

FRANZ—THE COBBLER—

PIPER

FRANZ—THE HOBBLER—

MORELIKE!

MICHAEL

I? What, I? Make shoes? I swallow fire!

KURT

Enough! I'll not believe it! Enough!

(The Piper signals to Michael and Cheat-the-Devil. During the following, they join the other Players. They take off their costumes, pack their bundles and strike their wagons, leaving the space clear DS of the Church and shrine. They all exit except for Michael, who hangs about, still gazing at Barbara.)

JACOBUS

Good people, we have wasted time enow—you see this fellow, that he has no writ—

PIPER

Why not, then? Twas a bargain!

IF YOUR WORD HOLDS ONLY WHEN
ON PARCHMENT WRIT—
WHAT OTHER YOU COMMIT—

KURT

We cannot spend clerkship on them that neither write nor read—

WHAT GOOD WOULD PARCHMENT DO THEM?

PIPER

FOR WITNESSES TO TESTIFY WHEN YOU TRY TO SCREW
THEM!

JACOBUS

My good man!

PIPER

Who says I cannot read? Who says I cannot?

KURT

WE'VE BROUGHT THE FOX TO BAY—

OLD CLAUS

Piper, don't tell me you can read in books!

PIPER

BOOKS! WHERE'S A BOOK? SHOW ME A BOOK, I SAY!

OLD URSULA

The Holy Book! Bring that—or he'll bewitch you!

PIPER

Oh, never fear! I charm but children—and fools! Now that the rats are gone—bring me a book—a big one! *(Aside, during the following business,)*

TYL EULENSPIEGEL IS JUST A POOR WIGHT
WHO NEVER BEFORE HAD ANY NEED;
NOW I WISH I'D LEARNED TO READ.
TO DEFEND MY LEGAL RIGHT TO PAYMENT,
IN MY PRESENT PLIGHT, WHAT THEY SAY MEANT
NO SORT OF SENSE.
I'LL GET NO RECOMPENSE FOR RIDDING THEM OF
THE RATTISH BLIGHT, THOUGH WELL I MIGHT—
UNLESS I RID THEM OF THEIR GREED.....

(Murmurs from the Crowd, who move toward the Church. Brother Anselm enters with a small Acolyte—the two carrying a very large “illuminated” Gospel. Anselm eyes the Piper gravely, and opens the book, which the boy supports on his head and shoulders.)

Ho! Tis too heavy! Come, you cherub head! Here's too much laid on one guardian angel!
(Beckons another small boy, and sets the book on their two backs.) Well? Well? What now?
(He looks in frank bewilderment at the eager crowd.)

CROWD

Read! Read!

KURT

He cannot read!

PIPER

(To Anselm:) Turn—turn—there's nothing there! *(Anselm turns pages. Piper looks on blankly.)*
Ah! Turn again! The big red letter! *(He takes the pipe from his belt.)* No! The green!

THE GREEN ONE—SO!

(He starts to pipe—for the first time. The music is hypnotic, exotic, erotic.)

KURT

NO WONDER HE CAN'T READ A BOOK
HE'S NEVER EVEN SEEN ONE!

CROWD

Sure, tis a madman! But hear him piping! What is he doing?

WHAT TUNE IS HE PLAYING?

PIPER

WHAT THE GREEN ONE IS SAYING—

(Burst of laughter from the crowd. Jan, the little lame boy on the steps, reaches out his arms suddenly and gives a cry of delight.)

JAN

Oh! I love the Piper!

(He goes, with his crutch, to the Piper, who turns and embraces him.)

JACOBUS
(To the People,) Leave off this argument!

KURT
 Into the rathaus!

JACOBUS
 Saint Willibald!

PIPER
 That saint!

KURT
 Hence, wandering dog!

PIPER
 Oho! Well—

EVERY SAINT MAY HAVE HIS DAY
 BUT THERE ARE DOG DAYS A-COMING!
 WHERE THERE IS PIPING—
 THERE MUST BE DRUMMING!

(To Anselm:) You there! You—brother—father—uncle—you! Will you let them in to say their prayers and mock me through their fingers? Tell these men to settle it among their mouldy pockets, whether they will keep their oath! Then I will go.

KURT
 Away with you!

ANSELM
 The Piper should be heard. You know it well—render unto Caesar, therefore, that which is Caesar's—

PIPER
 But give the Devil his due!

JACOBUS
 We must take counsel over such a sum.

(Beckoning to the others, he and KURT go into the Rathaus, followed by all the Men. They pointedly slam the door in the Piper's face. ANSELM & his ACOLYTES exit into the church, carrying the Gospel. The children play "Mouse," back and forth, round and about the square. BARBARA stands talking to VERONIKA. The Women sit on their doorsteps and spin wool with small hand-held distaffs; some of them gossip. MICHAEL, like a man in a dream, comes down toward BARBARA, who gazes back at him, fascinated through her laughter. The rest freeze.)

BARBARA
 Is it for pay you loiter, master player?

MICHAEL
 I am glad at least, fair lady, to think how my poor show did give you pleasure.

BARBARA
 Were you not paid enough?

MICHAEL
 NO—ONE MORE LOOK. THAT WOULD BE FULL MEASURE.

BARBARA
 Here, then—still not enough?

MICHAEL
 NO! ONE MORE SMILE—I SHALL FOREVER TREASURE

BARBARA
 Why would you have me smile?

MICHAEL
 Oh, when you smiled, it was—like the sunlight coming through some window there—*(pointing to the "rose" window of the church,)* some vision of Our Lady.

(BARBARA drops her flowers—he picks them up and gives them back slowly.)

BARBARA

Who are you? You are someone in disguise.

MICHAEL

A man—that passes for a mountebank—an able-bodied vagabond. A gypsy, tramp and thief.

BARBARA

No, more!

MICHAEL

What, then?

BARBARA

You are of noble birth. Tis some disguise, this playing with the fire.

MICHAEL

Yes—for today, I lord it with the fire—but it has burned me...here! *(Touches his breast.)*
(BARBARA turns back to see Michael withdrawing reluctantly, and throws a rose to him with sudden gaiety.) For me, my Lady-in-the-Moon?

BARBARA

JUST THE MAYOR'S DAUGHTER—FROM HER DOOR-GARDEN
 TIS A HUMBLE ROSEBUD—I BEG YOUR LORDSHIP'S PARDON

MICHAEL

Has your garden a fountain?

BARBARA

To quench the flame in your heart?

MICHAEL

Just my thirst.

BARBARA

Farewell to you, sword-swallower, farewell!

MICHAEL

(Looks back.) Farewell to you, my Lady-in-the-Moon. *(Exits.)*

Scene 2: A Side Street. *(Immediately following. Three Tarts—Magda, Ute & Gieselle—who are also strolling players, and perhaps a bit shopworn, enter with their companions for the night: three men later identified as Strollers—but not members of the company. They perform a reprise of the a kind of eccentric dance, rather like marionettes, to the music of the Drinking Catch. They still wear their makeup and costumes from the Mystery Play. They are followed by the CHILDREN and their MOTHERS.)*

CHILDREN

BAA BAA BLACK SHEEP, HAVE YOU ANY WOOL?
 YESSIR, YESSIR, THREE BAGS FULL
 ONE FOR MY MASTER AND ONE FOR MY DAME
 ONE FOR THE LITTLE BOY WHO'S HALT AND LAME
 HE CAN'T FOLLOW ANY FASTER.....

GOSSIPS

(Individual voices:) POOR LITTLE JAN, IT'S REALLY A SHAME
 BRAVE LITTLE MAN, HE DOES WHAT HE CAN
 NOT SO MUCH, HOBBLER ON HIS CRUTCH
 NO LEAPFROG OR HOPSCOTCH,
 HE CAN ONLY SIT AND WATCH
 WHILE THE OTHERS ROMP,
 HE CAN ONLY STOMP ALONG

CHILDREN

CAN'T RUN OR JUMP, JUST LOOK AT LUMP
 THO' HE'S A DOG, HE CATCHES UP QUICKER!
 BUT HE'S GOT FOUR LEGS AND NOT JUST THREE
 ROLLS OVER AND BEGS!
 JAN'S NOT AT ALL LIKE YOU AND ME!

SOLO GOSSIP

CHILDREN, DON'T SNICKER!

GOSSIPS

(Individual voices:) YOU KNOW IT'S WRONG TO TEASE
 HE MUST FIND IT SO FRUSTRATING
 THE OTHERS RUN OFF AND LEAVE HIM WAITING AT THE
 GATE
 WHEN THEY'RE PLAYING TAG, HE'S THE ONE WHO'LL LAG
 I WOULD HATE TO HAVE MINE SUFFER SUCH A FATE
 WHAT A TERRIBLE DISEASE!
 COULD BE WORSE! MAYBE IT'S A CURSE....
 HIS MOTHER'S FROM FOREIGN PARTS....
 ONE OF THEM GYPSY TARTS.....OR MAYBE A HEBREW....
 KURT WOULDN'T HAVE MARRIED HER IF THAT WAS TRUE....
 BUT IT'S SAID HE'S GOING TO PUT HER ASIDE
 TAKE HIMSELF A BLUE-EYED BLONDE FOR A BRIDE....
 STILL SHE'S BEEN A TENDER MAM FOR HIS THREE
 NO MORE THAN HER OWN
 AT LEAST HE HAS HIS PET LAMB
 HE MUST PLAY ANOTHER GAME....

CHILDREN

BAA BAA, BLACK SHEEP, HAVE YOU ANY WOOL
 YESSIR, YESSIR, THREE BAGS FULL
 ONE FOR MY MASTER....HE CAN'T FOLLOW ANY FASTER.....

(The interior of Kurt's house is revealed. There is a gothic fireplace with curtained alcoves on either side, one of which is open, showing a bed. One wall has a bay window with a window seat, the other has a cabinet against it. There are also a table and chairs and a shrine with a kneeler.)

JAN

MOTHER, SAY, WHO MADE ME?
 DO YOU KNOW WHO MADE ME?

VERONIKA & JAN

GAVE ME (YOU) LIFE AND BADE YOU (ME) FEED
 BY THE STREAM AND O'ER THE MEAD
 GAVE YOU (ME) VISIONS OF THE LIGHT

VERONIKA

GAVE YOU A SOUL, GENTLE, BRIGHT
 GAVE MY JAN HIS TENDER VOICE
 MAKES HIS MOTHER'S HEART REJOICE
 LITTLE JAN, WHO MADE THEE?
 DO YOU KNOW WHO MADE THEE?

VERONIKA & JAN

(Kneeling to pray,)

HOW LIGHT IS THE SHEPHERD'S SWEET LOT
 FROM THE MORN TO THE EVENING HE STRAYS
 HE SHALL FOLLOW THE SHEEP THAT HE'S GOT
 AND HIS TONGUE SHALL BE FILLED WITH PRAISE
 LITTLE LAMB, I'LL TELL THEE
 LITTLE LAMB, I'LL TELL THEE

VERONIKA

HE WAS A LAD WITHOUT A NAME
 FOR HE CALLS HIMSELF A LAMB
 HE WAS MEEK AND HE WAS MILD
 HE WAS LIKE A LITTLE CHILD
 HE WAS A CHILD LIKE A LOST LAMB—
 I NEVER KNEW HIS NAME—
 BUT I LOVED HIM ALL THE SAME

JAN

BUT WILL GOD STILL BLESS ME?

VERONIKA & JAN

YES, HE HEARS THE LAMB'S INNOCENT CALL
 AND HE HEARS THE EWE'S TENDER REPLY
 HE IS WATCHFUL WHILE THEY ARE ASLEEP
 FOR THEY KNOW THEIR SHEPHERD'S NEARBY...

(The scene changes.)

Scene 3: Barbara's garden. *(This is represented by a scrim, and a couple of gothic "tree" portals, with stylized trunks, limbs & foliage. There is a stone bench, RC, and a shrine LC. UC is a fountain. UR & UL are practical sections of wall. The scrim is painted like a tapestry in the "mille fleur" (thousand flower) style—there are, in fact, a thousand painted blossoms—in the grass, shrubs and leaves of the trees; as well as rabbits, squirrels, weasels and birds—perched, standing, swimming and on the wing. Beyond the wall of the garden, the painted roofs of Hamlin are visible. The only thing missing is a unicorn—but that comes later. Barbara is alone, dancing.*

MICHAEL and CHEAT-THE-DEVIL climb over the wall UR. Instead of his red costume, he wears rustic clothes. He has a garland round his neck, another on his head.)

BARBARA

GAZING IN MY MIRROR I VERY OFTEN WONDER
 WHAT AM I GOING TO LOOK LIKE IN ANOTHER YEAR?
 IT ISN'T THAT I'M SO VAIN—
 HOW AM I TO EXPLAIN?
 WHY DO I SEE IN MY FACE A FUTURE THAT I FEAR?
 DAZING SIGHTS STILL UNCLEAR...
 MY WORLD IS TORN ASUNDER!
 BY HOPE I AM FORSOOK...
 I SIMPLY DISAPPEAR...
 NO TRACE OF ME WILL REMAIN...
 AM I GOING INSANE?
 THIS IS MY DECISION;
 THIS IS MY SOLEMN VOW—
 LET KURT FIND ANOTHER COW TO BREED!
 I'LL FOLLOW MY VISION
 WHEREVER IT MAY LEAD...
 AMAZING AS IT IS QUEER
 OR DO I BLUNDER
 INTO A LAND FAR FROM HERE?
 FAR BEYOND MY WILDEST NOTIONS
 NO LOVE PHILTRES OR MAGIC POTIONS—
 NOTHING IN MY PRAYER BOOK CAN COMPARE
 TO THIS ANGEL OF MY DEVOTIONS...
 GAZING ON THIS PAINTED SAINT I SEE
 A KNIGHT IN SHINING ARMOR
 WITH A HALO
 BEYOND REPINING FAR MORE
 TO WHOM I KNEEL, APPEAL, AND PRAY--LO!
 SAINT MICHAEL, PLEASE, WON'T YOU COME
 AND RESCUE ME?

MICHAEL

SHE IS SO BEAUTIFUL
 HOW DARE I TELL HER
 MY HEART HOW BEAUTIFUL
 THE BLESSED SAINT—

CHEAT-THE-DEVIL

MICHAEL, I'M BEGGING YOU
 PLEASE DON'T FAINT—

(Michael falls from the wall into the garden, landing on a bush. Barbara screams.)

BARBARA

You—you are robbers?

MICHAEL

No! No—I—no! Fear nothing, fairest lady. You are safe. Pray you, there's no danger.

PRAY YOU, CATCH YOUR BREATH!

CHEAT-THE-DEVIL

WE'RE LIKE TO CATCH OUR DEATH!

BARBARA

HOW DID YOU STEAL HENCE?

CHEAT-THE-DEVIL
OVER THE WALL—T'WAS NO DEFENCE

BARBARA

You do not want my pearls? Pearls are the tears of the moon!
(Her hands go to the pearls around her neck—a single strand—and other jewelry, which is minimal, a ring, perhaps a bracelet. MICHAEL and CHEAT-THE-DEVIL assume the parts they may have played in a romantic farce.)

MICHAEL

No! Blood on the moon! Fear nothing, maiden. I will tell you all. Come; sit you down. Cheat-the-Devil shall keep watch from yonder wall, lest that any pass.

CHEAT-THE-DEVIL

Fear nothing. None will pass. They are too sure. The devil has his crossways! Sit you down!

MICHAEL

Poor shining dove—I would not hold you here against your wish—tis only I—

BARBARA

Oh! You have come to save me! All this, for love of me?

MICHAEL

Look, I will guard you, like a princess here---

BARBARA)

Ah! My heart! Oh, you have saved me! I am yours—yours—yours!

MICHAEL

Mine? No, not mine!

CHEAT-THE-DEVIL

You have charmed her wits away!

BARBARA

When did you love me? Was it on first sight?

MICHAEL

I—love thee?

CHEAT-THE-DEVIL

Ho, help! Good Michael, Michael, loose the charm! Michael, have mercy! She's bewitched!

MICHAEL

Cock's faith! Still mocking! Well you know, it will not play such games for me!

CHEAT-THE-DEVIL

Be soothed—'twas as I guessed...and then—lopped ears for two—what is it? What? WHAT?

MICHAEL

Why—what may come to pass here in the heart.—there is one very charm—

BARBARA

Oh! Oh! Tell me first...

MICHAEL

Are you brave?

BARBARA

Oh! 'Tis some enchantment!

MICHAEL

'Tis a love potion!

BARBARA

What is in it?

MICHAEL

Why, sooth, the only charm in it—is love—it is clear well water.

BARBARA

Only well water?

MICHAEL

Love is only love—it must be potions, then?

CHEAT-THE-DEVIL

This lady thirsts for magic!

(MICHAEL takes the drinking horn attached to his belt and crosses up to the well. He ties the long green scarf, which he had around his shoulders to the horn and lowers it out of sight into the well, while Barbara watches and, perhaps, echoes him.)

MICHAEL

MAIDEN , YOUR EARS
SO—HEARKEN
BEFORE YOU DRINK OF THIS
IS IT YOUR WILL
FOREVER TO BE GONE FROM HAMLIN?

BARBARA

I MUST—I MUST...

MICHAEL

FIRST YOU LOSE
YOUR HEART AND SHOES
FROM HAMLIN
PUT OFF NOW, THE DUST
THE COPPER WILL GO TO RUST
AND THE GOLD WILL TURN TO MOULD
THE COBBLE STONES
THE LITTLE PRYING WINDOWS
THE STREETS THAT DREAM OF
WHAT THE NEIGHBORS SAY
THINK YOU WERE NEVER BORN THERE
THINK SOME BREATH WAKENED YOU
EARLY
EARLY ON ONE MORNING
DEEP IN A GARDEN
BUT YOU KNOW NOT WHOSE
WHERE VOICES OF WILD WATERS
RAN
SHAKING DOWN MUSIC FROM
GLAD MOUNTAIN TOPS
WHERE THE STILL PEAKS
WERE BURNING IN THE DAWN
LIKE FIERY SNOW
DOWN TO THE LISTENING VALLEYS
THAT DOFF THEIR BLUE MIST
ONLY TO SHOW
SOME DEEPER BLUE
SOME HAUNT OF VIOLETS
NO VOICE YOU HEARD
NOTHING YOU FELT OR SAW
SAVE IN YOUR HEART
THE TUMULT OF YOUNG BIRDS
A NESTFUL OF WET WINGS
AND MORNING CRIES
THROBBING FOR FLIGHT!
THEN—FOR YOUR NEW SOUL

NEW WAKENED—FELT A THIRST
 YOU TURNED TO WHERE
 THAT CALL OF WATER LED
 LAUGHING FOR TRUTH—ALL
 TRUTH AND STAR-LIKE LAUGHTER!
 BEAUTIFUL WATER
 THAT WILL NEVER STAY
 BUT RUNS AND LAUGHS
 AND SPARKLES IN THE HEART
 AND SENDS LIVE LAUGHTER
 TRICKLING EVERYWHERE
 AND KNOWS THE THOUSAND
 LONGINGS OF THE EARTH!
 AND AS YOU DRANK IT THEN
 DRINK HERE—

(He offers her the drinking horn. Overcome for the moment, she draws away; then she drinks. Cheat-the-Devil crosses down and speaks stealthily to Michael, who is still staring at her. They exit, over the wall again and Barbara reprises part of Michael's song.)

Scene 4: The Side Street. *(Immediately following. Michael & Cheat-the-Devil enter.)*

CHEAT-THE-DEVIL
 MICHAEL, COME AWAY!
 FOR ALL OUR SAKES
 THIS IS BAD WEATHER BREEDING
 TAKE TO YOUR HEELS!
 YOU ARE NOT HEEDING...

MICHAEL

HOW MY HEAD REELS!

CHEAT

BEFORE SHE WAKES

SEE HOW THIS IS PROCEEDING

FALSE AS IT FEELS

ADVICE YOU'RE NEEDING

MICHAEL

MY HEART SHE STEALS!

I'M LIKE TO DIE!

CHEAT

AND SO AM I

WE'LL ALL THREE LIE A-BLEEDING!

EVEN THOUGH IT COMES FROM A FOOL!!

ONE WHO NEVER WENT TO A SCHOOL

ONE WHO'S INCLINED TO GIBBER AND DROOL ...

MAYHAP GOD MAKES ME HIS TOOL?

RID HER OF THE SPELL

SHE IS DISTRACTED—

MICHAEL

HOW I CANNOT TELL--

CHEAT

THE PART OF A LOVER CAN BE OVERACTED!

MICHAEL

I WILL MARRY HER—

CHEAT

AND CARRY HER AWAY?

WHERE?

ARE YOU MOON MAD?

IN LOVE SO SOON?

AS WELL AS TRY TO MARRY THE MOON!

MICHAEL

MARRY THE MOON!

NO, NO, THE MOON FOR YOU!

MOONCALF!

CHEAT

THAT WOULD MAKE THE LITTLE DOG LAUGH...

THOUGH I MAY BE A LOON

YOU ARE THE MADDER MAN BY HALF—

LIKE THE AUBURN HAired BABOON

OR THE BARBARY APES

AT WHICH EVERYONE GAPES

OR THE LONG-NECKED, SPOTTED GIRAFFE

ONE OF THE ALMIGHTY'S JOKES

CHEAT

AT WHICH EVERYONE POKES FUN

LIKE A SCAPEGRACE

WITH HIS GRACELESS ESCAPES

OR A RANDY PRIEST WITH A LICKERISH NUN

YOU DANCE TO A LOVER'S TUNE

ONCE PLAYED BY THE PIPER

YOU CANNOT SWIPE HER
 FOR THEN IT WILL BE HEY! DIDDLE! DIDDLE!
 THE CAT WILL PLAY UPON HER FIDDLE
 AND THE DISH WILL RUN AWAY WITH THE SPOON!

MICHAEL

I MUST BE MAD ASKING A FOOL!

CHEAT

THE MORE FOOL YOU!
 I'VE OFTEN HEARD TELL OF
 LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT
 UNDER THE LADY'S SILVER SHOON...
 BUT LOVE BY DAYLIGHT
 A FARTHING FOR THE WISHING WELL!

MICHAEL

ARE YOU MAD? TIS ALMOST MOONRISE!

CHEAT

WHY, ARE THERE STARS IN YOUR EYES?
 THE SUN'S STILL HIGH
 TIS BARELY AFTERNOON!

MICHAEL

I MUST FIND THE PRIEST TO WED US!

CHEAT

I THINK HE'D RATHER THE BOTH OF YOU WERE DEAD!
 THERE'S THAT MAD OLD MONK WHO LIVES OVER THE HILL
 PERHAPS HE'D BE WILLING FOR A SILVER SHILLING—

MICHAEL

I'LL COME BACK BY THE FULL MOON I VOW!
 BUT HOW?

CHEAT

AS WELL TO ASK IT OF THE COW!

MICHAEL

WHAT COW?

CHEAT

THE ONE THAT JUMPED OVER...

MICHAEL

WHY DO YOU RUB YOUR BUM?

CHEAT

I DO BUT RUB MY WITS
 WHERE MY BRAIN SITS
 BUT MY BUM IS NUMB
 SO I MUST BE DUMB!

MICHAEL & CHEAT

I (YOU) CANNOT THINK...I (YOU) MUST BE MUTE

I (YOU) DARE NOT PURSUE HER

MICHAEL & CHEAT

IF I (YOU) SHOULD TRY TO WOO HER
 THERE WOULD BE MUCH TO RUE
 SHE WOULD KNOW ME (YOU) FOR A FOOL
 AS MUCH BRAIN AS A THREE-LEG-GED STOOL
 I'D (YOU'D) FALL DOWN IN A FAINTING SWOON
 I (YOU) WOULD BE ABASHED

ALL MY (YOUR) HOPES DASHED
CHEAT
 YOU COULD BORROW THE PIPER'S MAGIC FLUTE
 TO HELP YOU PLEAD YOUR SUIT
 YOUR TREE MIGHT BEAR FRUIT
 AND LEAVE POOR CHEAT-THE-DEVIL
 IN THE CORNER
 LIKE LITTLE JACK HORNER
 CRAVING HIS GREEN CHEESE PIE...
 GREEN CHEESE OF WHICH THE MOON IS MADE
 BY THE LADY IN THE MOON.....

(MICHAEL exits.)

(He exits as the scene changes.)

Scene 5: The Market Square. *(Jan clings once more to the Piper, who is teaching him to play, while the other children hang about. VERONIKA enters from her house. JAN is playing on his shepherd's pipe.)*

VERONIKA

The Piper taught you all his tricks, didn't he? You bewitched them!

PIPER

Yes, so it seems—but how? Upon my life—tis more than I know—*(to Jan:)* Yes, a little more.

VERONIKA

Do they always succeed?

PIPER

(Rapidly, half in earnest and half in whimsy,)

NOT EVEN SO
SOMETIMES THEY WORK
AND SOMETIMES NO
SOME THINGS UPON MY SOUL
I CANNOT DO
SOME ARE TOO HARD
YET, YET I LOVE TO TRY
AND MOST, TO TRY WITH ALL
THE HIDDEN TRICKS I HAVE
THAT I HAVE NEVER COUNTED
THROUGH

VERONIKA

Where are they?

PIPER

(Touching his heart,) Here.

VERONIKA

What are they?

PIPER

(Tantalizingly)

HOW DO I KNOW?
IF I KNEW ALL, WHY SHOULD
I CARE TO LIVE—SO, SO!
I'M VERY OFTEN VEXED
AND FREQUENTLY PERPLEXED
I SOMETIMES THINK I'M HEXED
BUT IF I KNEW THE TEXT
HOW COULD I PLAY THE GAME?

VERONIKA

And what is your game?

PIPER

THE GAME IS—
WHAT-WILL-HAPPEN-NEXT!

VERONIKA

AND WHAT WILL HAPPEN?
WILL YOU BEWITCH ME?
WILL YOU UNSTITCH ME?
AH! HOW DO I KNOW?

PIPER

WILL THEY TAR AND PITCH ME?
AH! HOW DO I KNOW?
IT KEEPS ME SEARCHING

PIPER

THE WORLD OVER
THOUGH MEN MAY CALL ME MAD
AT BEST THEY THINK ME BAD
STILL IT MAKES ME SAD—AND GLAD
IT'S STRANGE TO FIND OUT
SHOULD I BE OF MY MIND OUT
WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT?
I AM VERY OFTEN VEXED

AND FREQUENTLY PERPLEXED
I CANNOT READ THE TEXT...

And mark you this: the strangest miracle...

VERONIKA

Yes?

PIPER

Stranger than the Devil—or the judgment—

STRANGER THAN PIPING—
STRANGER THAN CHARMING—
EVEN WHEN I PIPE
FOLKS FIND IT MOST ALARMING
FOLKS ALWAYS GRIPING
EVEN WHEN THEY'RE FARMING
AT THE VERY LEAST THEY SNIPE
I NOTICE NOW AND THEN—
MICE—OR EVEN MEN—
THEY ARE ALWAYS VEXED
EACH ONE OF THEM PERPLEXED
THEY WILL SWEAR I'VE HEXED
FOR NONE OF THEM CAN GUESS
IS THE ANSWER NO OR YES?
I DO NOT SEEK FORTUNE OR FAME
I HAVE NO SENSE OF SHAME—

VERONIKA

Darling—

PIPER

Is this your boy?

VERONIKA

Aye, he is mine. He loves your piping so.

I'VE LED A LIFE THAT'S TAME
LIKE ALL THE OTHERS
I'VE TRIED TO ACT JUST THE SAME
AS THOSE DOCILE MOTHERS

PIPER

And I love his.

VERONIKA

WITH JAN MY ONLY JOY!

MARTA

(To the Piper:)

POOR LITTLE BOY!
HE WAS BORN LAME!

PIPER

Tis all of us are lame! But he flies! He flies! Wearing...rainbow shoes!

VERONIKA

Jan, stay here if you will, and hear the pipe at church time.

PIPER

Will you?

JAN

Mother, let me stay here with the lonely man.

PIPER

The lonely man?

(JAN points to the statue of Christ in the niche by the church door. VERONIKA crosses herself. THE PIPER stares at the statue.)

VERONIKA

Jan always calls him so.

PIPER

And so would I!

VERONIKA

A MAN IN ALL RESPECTS
 WHOM ALL THE WORLD
 REJECTS
 YET HE NEVER NEGLECTS
 THE CHILDREN
 I WONDER AT THE EFFECTS
 BEWILD'RIN'
 ONE OF THE USUAL SUSPECTS
 EVEN THOUGH HE COMMITS NO
 CRIME HERE
 WHY SHOULD I SIMPLY SIT AND BIDE
 MY TIME HERE?
 I WONDER WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT.
 TO GO CHASING AFTER THE RAINBOW...
 DISGRACING KURT?
 WITH MY FACEFUL OF DIRT?
 NOT TRIPPING OVER MY SKIRT?
 STAY GRACEFUL AND MILD
 LIKE A SABBATH BABE FOREVER?
 INSTEAD OF GROWING OLD
 OVERTOLD, LIKE YESTERDAY'S NEWS?
 TO ALWAYS HAVE FUN
 AND BE IMPOSSIBLY CLEVER?
 SHOW NO CONCERN FOR WHAT THE
 NEIGHBORS SAY?
 TO RUN AND PLAY IN THE SUN
 ALL THE LIVELONG DAY?
 TO LEARN WHATEVER THE
 WISE OLD OWL MAY KNOW?
 TO BE BOLD AND DARING AND WILD?
 THE GYPSY LIFE SHARING?
 TO JOIN IN YOUR DANCE AND SONG?
 NEVER SCORNING OR SCARING MY CHILD
 NOT TO SPEND THE REST OF MY LIFE
 AS A RICH MAN'S HOUSEKEEPER—
 COOK, NURSEMAID AND DUST-SWEEPER—
 NOT EVEN TO SLAKE HIS LUST
 DESPITE THAT HE CALLS ME HIS WIFE!
 FAREWELL TO THE PAIN—
 SO MUCH TO GAIN—
 SO LITTLE TO LOSE!
 HOW I LONG FOR A PAIR OF RAINBOW
 SHOES!

It grieves him that the head is always bowed and stricken...but he loves more to be here than yonder in the church.

PIPER

And so do I!

VERONIKA

What would you, darling, with the lonely man?

JAN

To see him smile.

(The women murmur. The Piper draws VERONIKA further aside.)

PIPER

You are some foreign woman, are you not? Never from Hamlin!

VERONIKA

No, not I—

HILDA

(To her child,) Then run along and ask the piper if he'll play again the tune that charmed the rats.

IRMA

They might come back!

OLD URSULA

Piper! I want the tune that charmed the rats! If they come back, I'll have my grandson play it!

PIPER

I pipe but for the children.

ILSE

(Dropping her doll and picking it up again,)

Oh, do pipe something for my puppe!

HANSEL

OH, PIPE AT ME! NOW I'M A MOUSE! I'LL EAT YOU UP!

CHILDREN

OH, PIPE! OH, PLAY!

OH, PLAY AND MAKE US DANCE!

PIPER

IT WOULD APPEAR THAT HERE'S MY CHANCE

CHILDREN

OH, PLAY AND MAKE US RUN AWAY

FROM SCHOOL

(CHEAT-THE-DEVIL enters.)

PIPER

WHY, WHAT ARE THESE?

CHILDREN

(Scampering round him.) WE'RE MICE, WE'RE MICE, WE'RE MICE!

WE'RE MICE, WE'RE MICE, WE'LL EAT UP EVERYTHING!

PIPER

TELL ME, DO YOU WANT SOME CHEESE?

CHILDREN

PLEASE!

CHEAT-THE-DEVIL

YOU'RE A FOOL IF YOU DO NOT DROOL FOR CHEESE!

CHILDREN

(Scampering round him.) WE'RE MICE, WE'RE MICE, WE'RE MICE!

WE'RE MICE, WE'RE MICE, WE'LL EAT UP EVERYTHING!

PIPER

IF YOU ARE MICE YOU MUST BE QUIET AND NICE—
CHILDREN

DON'T TEASE—
OH, PIPE! OH, PLAY!
OH, PLAY AND MAKE US DANCE!

PIPER

NO, IT IS TOO HIGH A PRICE!

GERDA

Tis church time! La, what will the neighbors say?

ILSE

Oh, please, do play something for my puppe!

MARTA

Do hear the child! She's quite the little mother!

PIPER

A little mother? Ugh! How horrible! (*To ILSE:*) Drop the ugly thing!

IRMA

Now, on my word! And what's amiss with mothers? Are mother's horrible?

PIPER

NO, NO. BUT—CARE, AND WANT, AND PAIN AND AGE...
AND PENNY WEALTH AND PENNY COUNTING
PENNY PRIDES AND FEARS
OF WHAT THE NEIGHBORS SAY...
OF WHAT THE NEIGHBORS SAY!

HILDA

And were you born without a mother then?

THE OTHERS

Ah I told you! He's no man! He's of the devil!

PIPER

I'm no different than other men—

IRMA

Who was your mother?

PIPER

Mine! Nay, I do not know.

HER NAME WOULD BE A BITTER TASTE UPON
MY TONGUE
FOR WHEN I SAW HER LAST, I WAS BUT A LITTLE LAD
SHE WAS A THING SO TRODDEN, LOST AND SAD
I CANNOT THINK THAT SHE WAS EVER YOUNG
SAVE IN HER CHERISHING VOICE
SHE WAS A STROLLER

(The Women move aside, two by two, and listen unwillingly from the doorsteps with looks of dread and aversion, as the Piper continues:)

SHE WAS A STROLLER—AND SHE STARVED AND SANG

PIPER

AND LIKE THE WIND, SHE WANDERED AND WAS COLD
OUTSIDE YOUR LIGHTED WINDOWS, AND FLED BY
STORM-HUNTED, TRYING TO OUTSTRIP THE SNOW
SOUTH, SOUTH, AND HOMELESS AS A BROKEN BIRD
LIMPING AND HIDING—AND SHE FLED AND LAUGHED

WHEN WINTER CAME SHE HUGGED ME CLOSE MY FACE SHE KISSED
 MY HANDS SHE CHAFFED
 AND KEPT ME WARM—AND DIED!
 TO YOU, A NOTHING
 NOTHING, FOREVER, OH, YOU WELL-HOUSED MOTHERS!
 AS ALWAYS, ALWAYS FOR THE LIGHTED WINDOWS
 OF ALL THE WORLD, THE DARK OUTSIDE IS NOTHING
 AND ALL THAT LIMPS AND HIDES THERE IN THE DARK
 FAMISHING—BROKEN—LOST!
 AND I HAVE SWORN
 TORN FROM HER ARMS THE MOMENT I WAS BORN
 I NEVER KNEW HER SO WHY DO I MOURN?
 FOR HER SAKE AND FOR ALL,
 THAT I WILL HAVE SOME JUSTICE, ALL SO LATE
 YET THIS IS THE INESCAPABLE FATE
 FOR WRETCHED MEN
 FOR ALL OUR JIGGING AND JOGGING
 THE BEST WE CAN EXPECT IS A FLOGGING
 OUT OF THESE SAME SMUG TOWNS THAT DRIVE US FORTH
 AFTER THE SHOW—OR SCHEME TO CAGE US UP
 OUT OF THE SUNLIGHT
 LIKE A SQUIRREL'S HEART
 TORN OUT AND DRYING IN THE MARKET PLACE!
 MY MOTHER! DO YOU KNOW WHAT MOTHERS ARE?
 YOUR CHILDREN! DO YOU KNOW THEM?
 AH, NOT YOU!
 THERE'S NOT ONE HERE BUT IT WOULD FOLLOW ME
 FOR ALL YOUR BLEATING!

IRMA

Kuno, come away! (*The CHILDREN cling to the PIPER. ANSELM re-enters.*)

PIPER

OHO! OHO! LOOK YOU?
 YOU PREACH—I PIPE!

(*The Men re-enter from the Rathaus, KURT & JACOBUS murmuring dubiously. The PIPER sets JAN down and steps forward, smiling.*)

JACOBUS

(*Smoothly,*) HEM! MY GOOD MAN, WE HAVE FAITHFULLY DEBATED

KURT

YOUR SERVICES ARE OVERRATED
 AS WE STATED

JACOBUS

WHETHER YOUR DEMAND OF SO GREAT A SUM
 MIGHT BE FULFILLED—

PIPER

FOR A SILVER SHILLING, THEY'RE WILLING TO BE SHILLED

JACOBUS

As by some miracle—

BUT, NO—THE MONEYS WE ADMINISTER

KURT

I FEEL THERE'S SOMETHING SINISTER

JACOBUS

WILL NOT ALLOW IT

KURT & ANSELM

I TROW IT, I VOW IT

JACOBUS

NOR WILL THE COMMON WEAL

KURT & ANSELM

WE GUARD WITH ZEAL, DESPITE YOUR EFFORTS TO STEAL

JACOBUS

Therefore, for your late service—

HERE YOU HAVE FULL FIFTEEN GUILDERS

AND A PRETTY SUM, INDEED, FOR PIPING

FROM THE SLATE OUR DEBT TO YOU—

WE'RE WIPING!

KURT

Take them! *(Holds out a purse to the Piper.)*

JACOBUS

Either that, or, to speak truly, nothing! *(The Piper is motionless.)* Come, come. Nay, count them if you will!

KURT

Time goes!

PIPER

AYE. AND YOUR OATH?

KURT

NO MORE; ENOUGH. *(Drops the purse at the Piper's feet.)*

(There is a sound of organ music from the church.)

VERONIKA

Ah, Kurt!

KURT

(To the Crowd,) WHAT DO YOU, MEWLING OF THIS FELLOW'S RIGHTS?

HE HAS NONE!

WIT YOU WELL, HE IS A STROLLER, HE IS A WASTREL

AND THE SHADOW OF A MAN!

YOU WASTE THE DAY AND DALLY WITH THE LAW

SUCH AS HE HAVE NO RIGHTS; NOT IN THEIR LIFE

NOR BODY!

WE ARE IN NO WISE BOUND. NOTHING IS HIS.

HE MAY NOT CARRY ARMS; NOR HAVE REDRESS

FOR ANY HARM THAT MEN SHOULD PUT UPON HIM

SAVING TO STRIKE A SHADOW ON THE WALL!

HE IS A NOTHING, BY THE STATUTE BOOK

AND BY THE BOOK, LET HIM LIVE OR DIE,

LIKE TO A MASTERLESS DOG!

(The Piper stands motionless, head upraised, not looking at Kurt. The people, half cowed, half doubting, murmur and draw back. Lights appear in the church windows; the music continues. Kurt and Jacobus lead the people into the church. The last one in is Barbara, looking over her shoulder at Michael. Jacobus comes back out and picks up the purse, carrying it with him as he exits again.)

VOICES

(Laughing, drunkenly,) One thousand guilders to a masterless dog!

(Others laugh too, pass by, with pity and derision, echoing:) Masterless dog!

(Only the Children are left, dancing round the motionless figure of the Piper.)

CHILDREN

OH! PIPE AGAIN! OH, PIPE AND MAKE US DANCE!
 OH, PIPE AND MAKE US RUN AWAY FROM SCHOOL!
 OH, PIPE AND MAKE BELIEVE WE ARE THE MICE!

(He looks down and around at them; then up at the houses. He puts his finger to his lips; then begins, very softly to pipe the "Kinder-spell." Old Claus and Old Ursula seem to doze at their windows. In the church, the singing of the choir is heard:)

CHOIR

DIES IRAE, DIES ILLA
 SOLVET SAECLUM IN FAVILLA
 TESTE DAVID CUM SYBILLA
 QUANTUS TREMOR EST FUTURUS
 QUANDO JUDEX EST VENTURUS
 CUNCTA STRICTE DISCUSSURUS!
 INTER OVES LOCUM PRAESTA
 ET AB HOEDIS ME SEQUESTRA
 STATUENS IN PARTE DEXTRA
 CONFUTATIS MALEDICTIS
 FLAMMUS ACRIBUS ADDICTIS
 VOCA ME CUM BENEDICTIS

(The Children stop first, and look at him, fascinated; then they laugh, drowsily, and creep closer—Jan always nearest. They crowd around him. He pipes louder, moving backwards, slowly with magical gestures, towards the side streets and the closed doors. The doors open, everywhere. Out come the Children: little ones in nightgowns; bigger ones with playthings, toy animals, and dolls. He pipes, happier and louder. Children pour in, R & L. Motion and music fill the air. The Piper lifts Jan, who drops his little crutch, to his shoulders and marches off, up the street to the rear, still piping.

Last, out of the church, come tumbling the two little Acolytes, Nils and Fesche, in their red robes and white chasubles, and Fritz the Sacristan after them. He trips over them in his amazement and terror; they follow the rest of the vanishing children and they are gone. Fritz rushes to the bell rope and pulls it. The bell sounds heavily. The people come out of church. The old folks lean from their windows.)

OLD URSULA

The bell! The bell! The church bell! They're bewitched! I told you all—I told you—devil's bargains! *(The bell rings again.)*

KURT

Fritz the sacristan! Give by the bell. What means this clangor?

FRITZ

(Still pulling the bell rope,) They're bewitched! Bewitched!

URSULA

They're gone!

(Kurt and Jacobus enter from the Church.)

KURT

Your wits, you mean!

OLD CLAUS

They're gone! They're gone! They're gone!

FRITZ

The children!

OLD URSULA

With the Piper! They're bewitched!

OLD CLAUS

I saw it with these eyes! He piped away the children!
(Panic in the Crowd. They bring lamps and candles. VERONIKA holds up the forgotten crutch.)

VERONIKA

Jan—my Jan!

KURT

Your boy! But mine, my three—all fair and straight—

HILDA

(To Kurt,) Twas your false bargain—yours, who would not pay the Piper—but we pay!

ANSELM

Bewitched! Bewitched! The boys ran out—I ran after them!

SOMETHING IN RED DID TRIP ME—

THE COLD HAND OF DEATH DID GRIP ME

TWAS THE DEVIL—THE DEVIL! *(Rings the bell.)*

OLD URSULA

AH, RING ON, AND RING THE BELL

UNTIL IT CRACK

I TOLD YOU SO—YOU'LL NEVER HAVE

THEM BACK!

(They all exit and the scene changes.)

Scene 6: The Crossroads. *(Wooded country with hills in the distance. There is a signpost with arrows; one points to Hamlin, the other to Rudersheim. Atop it is a roadside shrine with a crucifix. There may be a stand of tall, scraggly trees, with dense undergrowth, SL. A ruined stone wall, with a mass of weeds and vines, and bushes as well, SR..)*

The PIPER enters, followed by the CHILDREN, still dancing with a birdlike kind of innocence.

Three Strolling Players, or simply Strollers—men well past their prime—enter SR..

They are what the Piper, Michael (the sword-eater) and Cheat-the-Devil might become in 20 or 30 more years—seedy, down at the heels—but something more. One, who wears bits of armor,

nurses a lame knee; the second, evidently mute, his throat bandaged, talks in signs to the others; the third, a thin man with a blind patch, munches bread and cheese from a wallet. All have the look of hunted and haunted men. They speak only in whispers to each other, but their hoarse laughter breaks out now and then. They perform a dance that can only be described as eccentric, accompanying themselves on flute, tabor and tom-tom. They all have bells at their wrists and ankles. They are reminiscent of the Three Stooges without the manic grace. They exit. The townspeople enter, including Veronika. They all carry lanterns, weapons, flasks, wallets for food, etc. They cross the countryside, weaving in and out of the trees, climbing rocks and hills.)

ALL

THE CHILDREN! THE CHILDREN!
 WHERE ARE THE CHILDREN?
 PIPER! PIPER! PIPER!
 WHERE ARE THE CHILDREN?
 WE SEARCHED THE HILLS
 WE PRAYED FOR DAYS
 WE FASTED TWENTY HOURS—
 MINE! MINE!
 MINE—MINE—MINE—MINE!

(Calling their names over and over: JAN! FRIEDELE'! ILSE', TRUDE'! RUDI!
 KUNO! GRETL! CLARA! LIESL! VIKO! INGE!
 FERDE'! FAMKE'! NILS! FESCHE'!

VERONIKA

BLESSED VIRGIN! AH, LISTEN!
 MOTHER OF GOD
 OUR CHILDREN—LIVE!
 THE PIPER! PIPER!

ALL

THEY'RE SPELLBOUND! MARK ME!

VERONIKA

AYE, THEY ARE—SPELLBOUND:
 FAST BOUND—BY ALL THE HARDNESS
 OF OUR HEARTS
 CAGED—IN THE IRON OF OUR MONEY LUST

ALL

NO, NO! NOT ALL! NOT I!
 NOT MINE—NOT MINE!
 NO, NO—IT IS NOT TRUE

VERONIKA

OUR BLASPHEMIES—OUR CUNNING AND
 OUR FEAR

ALL

NO, NO! WHAT CAN WE DO?
 SHALL THESE THINGS BE?
 SHE'S MAD! (They exit, dejectedly, SL.)
 THEY ARE BEWITCHED!

VERONIKA

THANK GOD! I KNEW, I KNEW!
 WE COULD NOT THINK THEM LOST
 BEWITCHED! OH, BUT THEY LIVE!

Scene 7: Inside the Hollow Hill. *(The houses of Hamlin have been reversed—each façade is turned to reveal its opposite side—except that these are not interiors of houses. Dim-lighted, it shows some signs of masonry—arches and columns—part cavern, part the cellar of a ruined, burned down, forgotten old castle in the hills. A rocky flight of steps UC leads to a ramshackle wooden door. The Children are asleep in alcoves, right and left, curled together like kittens or puppies. The only light comes from a hole in the roof and a small fire SR, where the Piper sits, stitching at a bit of red leather. At his feet is a row of bright colored small shoes. Huddled DL, are the three Strollers.*

He looks up now and then, to recount the children, then goes back to work with a quizzical look on his face. A shaft of sunlight steals thru the hole in the roof. As it increases, we see that the walls of the cavern are brightly painted with fantastic animals and images from fairy tales. There may even be the medieval equivalent of playground equipment: swings, teeter-totters, etc. Jan, who sleeps nearest the Piper, wakes up.)

JAN

OH! I THOUGHT I HAD A DREAM!

PIPER

(Softly,)

AHA!

JAN

I THOUGHT...I DREAMED...
SOMEBODY WANTED ME

PIPER

SOHO!

JAN

I THOUGHT...SOMEBODY
WANTED ME
THAT'S HOW IT SEEMED

PIPER

(With watchful tenderness,) HOW THEN?

JAN

I THOUGHT I HEARD SOMEBODY
CRYING

PIPER

PFUI! WHAT A DREAM!
DON'T MAKE ME CRY AGAIN

JAN

OH, WAS IT YOU? OH, YES!

PIPER

(Aside,) NO MICHAEL YET!

(JAN begins to laugh softly, in a bewildered way, then grows quite happy and forgetful. While the other children waken, he reaches for the pipe and tries to play it, to the Piper's amusement. ILSE & HANSEL wake.)

ILSE

OH!

HANSEL

OH!

PIPER

AHA!

ILSE

I THOUGHT I HAD A DREAM

PIPER

AGAIN?

ILSE

IT WAS SOME LADY CALLING ME

HANSEL

YES, AND A FAT MAN CALLED US
TO COME QUICK;

A FAT MAN, HE WAS CRYING—
ABOUT ME!

THAT SAME FAT MAN I DREAMT OF

YESTERDAY

PIPER

COME, DID YOU EVER SEE A FAT MAN
CRY—ABOUT A LITTLE BOY?

(The Strollers are convulsed with hoarse laughter.)

HANSEL

NO—NEVER!

ILSE

NEVER!

OH, WHAT A FUNNY DREAM!

PIPER

(Checking the Strollers, with a gesture of warning towards the door.)

STRANGE SIGHTS OF HAMLIN
THROUGH THESE LITTLE WINDOWS
COME HERE, YOU DREAMER
TELL ME WHAT HE SAID

HANSEL

HE ONLY SAID “COME HOME!”

BUT I DIDN’T GO

I DON’T KNOW WHERE

OH, WHAT A FUNNY DREAM!

ILSE

MINE WAS A BAD DREAM
MINE WAS A LOVELY LADY
AND SHE WAS BY THE RIVER
STARING IN

PIPER

YOU WERE THE LITTLE GOLDFISH
NO ONE COULD CATCH
OH, WHAT A FUNNY DREAM! *(Aside,)*
NO SIGN OF MICHAEL —YET. *(Aloud,)*
COME, BREAD AND BROTH!

(The Children crowd around him.) HERE—NOT ALL AT ONCE

THREE AT A TIME; TIS SIMPLER
HERE, YOU KITTENS. EAT AWHILE
SO, THERE ARE TEARS IN HAMELIN
WARM, WET TEARS
AND MAYBE, SALT. WHO KNOWS?

RUDI

(The last to waken.) OH, WAS I DREAMING?

PIPER

OH, I WAS DREAMING, TOO!

CHILDREN

OH, TELL IT TO US!

PIPER

I DREAMED...A STORK...
HAD NESTED IN MY HAT

CHILDREN

OH!

PIPER

AND WHEN I WOKE—
CHILDREN
 YOU HAD—

PIPER
 ONE HUNDRED CHILDREN!
CHILDREN
 OH, IT CAME TRUE!
 OH, OH; IT ALL CAME TRUE!

STROLLERS
 AH, HO, HO, HO!

(The mute stroller stands, stretches, and steals toward the stairs, stopping to slip a blind-patch over one eye. The Piper goes to him with one stride, seizing him by the shoulder.)

PIPER
(To him, and the others:) LOOK YOU—NO MICHAEL YET!
 AND HE IS GONE FULL THREE DAYS NOW
 THREE DAYS—IF HE BE CAUGHT
 WHY THEN—THE LITTLE RAVENS
 SHALL BE FED! *(Groans from the Strollers.)*
 ENOUGH THAT CHEAT-THE-DEVIL
 SNEAKED OUT TOO
 NO FOOT BUT MINE SHALL QUIT
 THIS FOXHOLE NOW! *(To the Strollers:)*
 AND YOU—THINK PRAISE FOR ONCE
 YOU HAVE NO TONGUE,
 AND KEEP THESE MAGPIES QUIET *(Turns away.)*
 AH, THAT GIRL!
 THE BURGOMEISTER’S BARBARA!
 BUT FOR HER AND MOONSTRUCK MICHAEL’S
 “ONE MORE LOOK!”
 WHERE IS HE NOW?
 AND WHERE ARE WE? *(Turning back to the Children,)*
 SO! SO!

(The Three Strollers huddle together, with renewed looks of anxiety and wretchedness. Their laughter at the Children breaks out forlornly now and then. The Piper shepherds the Children, but with watchful eyes and ears towards the stairs, always. His action grows more and more tense.)

RUDI
(Over his broth,) OH, I REMEMBER NOW! BEFORE I WOKE—
 OH, WHAT AN AWFUL DREAM!

ILSE
 OH, TELL US, RUDI—OH SCARE US—
 RUDI, SCARE US!

RUDI
(Bursting into tears,) ...LUMP WAS DEAD! LUMP, LUMP! *(The Children wail.)*

PIPER
 WHO’S LUMP?

RUDI
 OUR DOG!

PIPER
(Shocked and pained,) THE DOG! NO. NO.

HEAVEN SAVE US—I FORGOT ABOUT THE DOGS!

RUDI

HE WANTED ME THERE!
AND I ALWAYS WASN'T THERE!
AND PEOPLE TIED HIM UP—
AND OTHER PEOPLE
PRETENDED THAT HE BIT
HE NEVER BITES!
HE WANTED ME
UNTIL IT BROKE HIS HEART
AND HE WAS DEAD!

PIPER

AND THEN HE WENT TO HEAVEN
TO CHASE THE HAPPY CATS
UP ALL THE TREES
LITTLE WHITE CATS
HE WEARS A GOLDEN COLLAR
AND SOMETIMES—

(Aside,)

I'D FORGOT ABOUT THE DOGS—AND CATS!
WELL, DOGS—AND CATS—MUST SUFFER
SO THAT MEN GROW WISE
T'WAS EVER SO *(He turns to give Jan a piping lesson.)*

CHILDREN

OH, WHAT A FUNNY DREAM!

(Suddenly he lifts his hand. They listen and hear a dim sound of distant chanting, going by on some neighboring road. The Piper is puzzled; the Strollers are plainly distressed.)

CHOIR

DIES IRAE, DIES ILLA
SOLVET SAECLUM IN FAVILLA
TESTE DAVID CUM SYBILLA
QUANTUS TREMOR EST FUTURUS
QUANDO JUDEX EST VENTURUS
CUNCTA STRICTE DISCUSSURUS!

JAN

WHAT IS IT?

PIPER

PEOPLE; PASSING DOWN BELOW
IN THE DARK VALLEY.

(He looks fixedly at the Children.) DO YOU WANT TO SEE THEM?

CHILDREN

DON'T LET THEM FIND US!
WHAT AN UGLY NOISE!
NO, NO—DON'T LET THEM COME!

PIPER

HARK YE TO ME.
SOMEDAY I'LL TAKE YOU OUT
WITH ME, TO PLAY
HIGH IN THE SUN
CLOSE TO THE WATERFALL
AND WE WILL MAKE BELIEVE
WE'LL MAKE BELIEVE

WE'RE HIDING! (*The Strollers rock with mirth.*)

CHILDREN

YES, YES! OH, LET US MAKE BELIEVE!

STROLLERS

OHO, HO, HO! A-MAKE-BELIEVE! HO! HO!

PIPER

BUT, IF YOU'RE GOOD—YES, VERY, VERY SOON

I'LL TAKE YOU AS I PROMISED

I'LL TAKE YOU RIGHT UP TO THE MOON

WITH THE GYPSIES—

CHILDREN

GYPSIES, OH!

PIPER

YES, WITH THE GYPSIES. WE SHALL GO AT NIGHT

WHEN THE MOON IS SHINING BRIGHT

WITH JUST A TORCH—

IT CANNOT BURN OR SCORCH—

CHILDREN

OH!

PIPER

LIKE FIREFLIES! WILL-O-THE-WISPS!

AND MAKE BELIEVE WE'RE HIDING ALL THE WAY

TIL WE COME OUT INTO A SUNNY LAND

ALL FLOWERS AND SUNLIGHT, YES

AND FOLKS THAT SING!

FAR, FAR AWAY—FOREVER!

(Jan pipes a measure of the "Kinder-spell," brokenly.)

OH, WASN'T THAT ONE BEAUTIFUL?

SO! YOU SHALL BE MY MASTER SOMEDAY

YOU SHALL PIPE FOR ME!

JAN

NOW YOU—

PIPER

(Taking the pipe,)

WE'LL CROSS THE RAINBOW BRIDGE BY DAY

AND BORROW A SHEPHERD-CROOK!

AT NIGHT WE TAKE TO THE MILKY WAY

AND THEN WE FOLLOW THE BROOK

WE'LL FOLLOW THE BROOK WHATEVER WAY

THE BROOK SHALL SING OR THE SUN SHALL SAY

OR THE MOTHERING WOOD DOVE COOS

AND WHAT DO I CARE, WHAT ELSE I WEAR

IF I KEEP MY RAINBOW SHOES!

(He points to the little row of bright shoes. The Children scream with joy. Ilse and Hans (the butcher) run back.)

CHILDREN

OH, DEAR! WHAT LOVELY SHOES!

WHICH ARE MINE?

OH, OH! WHAT LOVELY SHOES!

WHICH ARE MINE?

PIPER

TRY, TIL YOU SEE. (*Picking up the red pair,*)
 BUT THESE—THESE ARE FOR JAN

(*Jan is perched SR, shy and silent with pleasure. The Piper crosses to him and puts the shoes on for him. There is some difficulty with the boy's lame foot.*)

ILSE

OH, THOSE ARE BEST OF ALL! AND JAN—

PIPER

AND JAN IS NOT TO TRUDGE, LIKE YOU
 JAN IS TO WEAR BEAUTIFUL SHOES
 SHOES MADE, MOST OF ALL, TO LOOK AT!

(*From a trunk, near CS, he takes a large pair of bird's wings and attaches them to Jan's shoulders.*)

CHILDREN

OH! WHERE DID YOU FIND THE WINGS?

PIPER

THERE WAS SOME HUNTER IN THE WOODS
 WHO KILLED MORE BIRDS THAN HE COULD
 CARRY HOME
 HE DID NOT WANT THESE
 THO THE STARLING DID
 WHO COULD NOT USE THEM MORE!
 AND SO—AND SO,
 THEY TRIM A LITTLE BOY.

(*Jan is radiant. He stretches out his arms and legs and pats the feathers. The Children try on their shoes and caper about.*)

CHILDREN

OH, JAN! OH, JAN! OH! SEE MY SHOES!

PIPER

(*Looking at Jan,*) HEY DAY, WHAT NOW?

JAN

I WISH...

PIPER

WHAT DO YOU WISH? WISH FOR IT!
 IT SHALL COME.

JAN

(*Pulls him closer and speaks shyly.*) I WISH—THAT I COULD SHOW THEM—
 TO THE MAN—THE LONELY MAN

(*The Piper looks at him and backs away; sits down helplessly and looks at him again.*)

PIPER

YOU—TWOULD MAKE ME A PROUD MAN.

JAN

OH! IT WOULD MAKE HIM SMILE!

(*The Children dance and caper. Trude wakes up and joins them. Sound of distant chanting again.*)

CHOIR

INTER OVES LOCUM PRAESTA
 ET AB HOEDIS ME SEQUESTRA
 STATUENS IN PARTE DEXTRA
 CONFUTATIS MALEDICTIS
 FLAMMUS ACRIBUS ADDICTIS
 VOCA ME CUM BENEDICTIS

TRUDE

I HAD A DREAM!

PIPER

(Pretending to be amazed.) A DREAM! *(He reflects for a moment.)*

I KNOW!

OH, WHAT A FUNNY DREAM!

(He laughs, joined by the Strollers and the Children, who caper about as the scene changes.)

Scene 8: Barbara's Garden. *(Immediately following. Anselm (the priest), Kurt (councilor) & Jacobus (the mayor) enter. Cheat-the-Devil is hiding behind the wall USL, eavesdropping. Barbara (daughter of Jacobus (the mayor)) is USR, also hiding.)*

KURT

THAT YOUNG SWORD EATER
BARBARA SEEMED SO KEEN
ABOUT
HAS BEEN SEEN ABOUT
SO THE GOSSIPS SAY

JACOBUS

I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU
MEAN

ANSELM

ABOUT THE PIPER
LET US TAKE HIM HOSTAGE

JACOBUS

HE WAS A HANDSOME ONE—
WE COULD RANSOM ONE—

KURT

BAIT THE TRAP WITH
GIBBET MEAT—

JACOBUS

OR BETTER YET, THE IDIOT,
TOO—

ANSELM

I REPEAT—WHAT TO DO?

KURT

WHEN THE PIPER COMES TO
SEEK THEM OUT—

ANSELM

TRIES TO SNEAK THEM OUT
HERE'S WHAT WE'LL DO

TRIO

THEN WE'LL TAKE THEM
AND WE'LL BREAK THEM
ON THE RACK

JACOBUS

LET US WAIT UNTIL WE
HAVE GOT THE CHILDREN
BACK

KURT

NILS AND FESCHE AND THE
OTHERS—EVEN JAN, I
SUPPOSE—

ANSELM

HEAVEN KNOWS!
AND THEIR FATHERS—

KURT

ARE SUCH BOTHERS!

JACOBUS

OR, THEIR MOTHERS—SOME
HAVE BROTHERS WHO ARE
GROWN—WILL ATTACK US
THEY WILL RACK US
OR AT LEAST THEY'LL
SACK US
IF WE APPEAR TO BE SLACK

KURT

BETTER YET—HERE'S WHAT
WE'LL DO—

THE SWORD-SWALLOWER
 WE SHALL FOLLOW
 TIL HE LEADS US
 TO THE PLACE WHERE
 THEY HAVE THE CHILDREN
 HID—

JACOBUS

BUT THE PIPER STILL MIGHT
 KILL THEM—

ANSELM

GOD FORBID!

JACOBUS

DO WHAT WE WILL—HE COULD
 KILL THEM
 AS A SACRIFICE

ANSELM

DO WE GIVE THEM—LAMBS TO
 THE SLAUGHTER—SUCH A
 TERRIBLE PRICE?

JACOBUS

DO YOU HAVE BETTER ADVICE?

KURT

SPEAKING OF HER—
 WHERE'S YOUR DAUGHTER?
 IF SHE SHOULD OVERHEAR
 SHE COULD QUEER
 OUR WHOLE BLOODY PLOT

JACOBUS

WHAT SHALL I DO WITH HER?
 WHAT IF SHE STRAYED?
 FOREVER?

HE SHALL NOT STEAL HER!

BARBARA

IF HE COMES, I MUST FOLLOW HIM!

KURT

YOU, JACOBUS, ON TO RUDERSHEIM—

JACOBUS

AND LEAVE HER HERE? NO! NO!

ANSELM

THEN TAKE THE GIRL TO RUDERSHEIM

BARBARA

—TO RUDERSHEIM? NO, NEVER! NEVER!

ANSELM

HEarken—YOU, JACOBUS, GO TO
 RUDERSHEIM—AND TELL THE NUNS
 TELL THE GOOD NUNS –

BARBARA

NO, NO! I DARE NOT HAVE IT!

OH, THEY WOULD SEND AND
 TAKE ME!

NO! NO! NO!

ANSELM

YOU FOUND HER SORE BEWITCHED
 THERE, IN THAT HAUNT OF DEVILS
 TELL THEM YOU ARE AN HONEST
 PITEOUS MAN
 DESIRES TO MARRY HER TO CHRIST

JACOBUS

NO CHURCH COULD SO RECEIVE
 A DANCING NUN

BARBARA

TO BE A NUN—NO! NO!
 TO BE WALLED UP IN A CONVENT
 I'LL BE SENT
 HOW MY LIFE WILL BE SPENT!

ANSELM

THE TOWNFOLK DEMAND HER
 IN RETURN FOR THEIR CHILDREN
 THE BAD BARGAIN WITH THE PIPER
 AND THE THOUSAND GUILDERS
 YOU MUST REPENT!

JACOBUS

SPEAKING OF HER—
 IF YOU LOVE HER—
 THERE IS ONE MORE
 THOUGHT THAT I'VE GOT—

KURT

I'LL SEND VERONIKA THERE
 SINCE SHE'S PROVEN BARREN
 I CAN GET A DIVORCE
 WITH LITTLE REMORSE
 AND THERE SHE SLEEPS
 UNTIL HER WITS BE SOUND

JACOBUS

SHE SHALL BE YOURS
 BUT DARE I LEAVE HER?

KURT

NO; GUARD HER, YOU!
 ANON, ANON!
 UNTIL WE CATCH THE CULPRIT—

TRIO

(Alternating lines:)

WE COULD BOIL HIM IN
 HOT OIL
 THERE'S THE THUMB-SCREW
 DON'T BE DUMB—SCREW
 BEHEADING!
 THAT I'M DREADING
 THE IRON MAIDEN
 PERFORATING

I'M DEBATING
 WE'LL CUT OFF HIS EARS
 AND SLIT HIS NOSE
 THAT'S VERY INSTRUCTIVE
 THEN WE'LL CUT OUT
 HIS TONGUE
 THAT IS COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE
 A DEMONSTRATION OF
 CASTRATION—
 HE'LL BE WELL-HANGED
 IF HE'S HUNG
 THEN THERE'S PRESSING
 WITH STONES
 HE WILL SOON BE CONFESSING
 TIL WE BREAK ALL HIS BONES
 WE COULD TRY THE DUCKING
 STOOL—HOT COALS IN HIS
 HANDS AND ON HIS FEET
 WE COULD BURN HIM AT
 THE STAKE—
 BREAK HIM ON THE WHEEL
 WHAT I'M SAYING—
 WE'LL TRY FLAYING
 WITH KNIVES OF VERY
 SHARPEST STEEL

KURT

IF HE SHOULD ATTEMPT
 TO ABDUCT HER—
 YOU'LL INSTRUCT HER

JACOBUS

SHE WOULD SLAP HIM!

KURT

WE'D KIDNAP HIM
 INSTEAD
 WE COULD CLAP HIM
 INTO JAIL
 HE WOULDN'T LOOK
 SO DAPPER—BUT RATHER
 UNKEMPT
 WE COULD DROWN HIM
 IN THE CRAPPER

ANSELM

THAT WOULD MEND, TOO
 THAT WOULD LEND TO
 OTHERWISE

ANSELM

HE WOULD TEND TO
 BE QUITE DEAD!

TRIO

THERE'S AN END TO HIS TALE! *(They exit.)*

CHEAT-THE-DEVIL

THREE BLIND RATS
 WHO THINK THEY'RE CATS
 TWO ARE FAT—AND ONE
 WHO'S THIN
 THEY'LL CUT OFF OUR TAILS
 IF THEY GET THE CHANCE
 BUT WE SHALL LEAD THEM
 A MERRY DANCE
 THAT IS, OF COURSE
 IF MICHAEL PURSUES
 HIS ROMANCE—
 WHO IS SMARTER?
 WHO IS QUICKER?
 IT REALLY MAKES ME
 WANT TO SNICKER—
 I MUST WARN MICHAEL
 THEY ARE SETTING A TRAP—(*The music continues as the*

scene changes.)

Scene 9: A Side Street. (*Immediately following. Cheat-the-Devil and Michael enter.*)

CHEAT-THE-DEVIL

Look you—you must wait. We must be cunning. There's a squirrel, mark you, hopped after me!
 He would have found us out. I wanted him; I loved him.

BUT AWAY HE RAN—
 FOR ONCE A SQUIRREL FALLS A-TALKING—
 FOR ONCE A SQUIRREL FALLS A-TALKING—AH!
 ONCE ON THE ROAD, I WAS WALKING
 I MET A COUNTRY MAN

ASKED ME THE WAY. AND NOT A WORD I SPOKE—
 HE THOUGHT IT WAS A JOKE
 TIS FAR THE WISEST
 IF YOUR HEAD YOU PRIZEST.
 TWENTY RIDDLES HE ASKED ME
 I SMILED AND WAGGED MY HEAD
 ANON CRIES HE
 “THIS FOOL IS DEAF AND DUMB”
 TIS BETTER TO BE THOUGHT A FOOL
 BY KEEPING MUM
 THAT MADE ME ANGRY
 BUT STILL I SPOKE NOT
 UNTIL THE DAY THAT FROGS AND RAVENS
 CROAK NOT
 AND I WOULD NOT HURT HIM
 HE WAS A BAD MAN
 BUT I LIKED HIS MULE
 AND THE MULE LIKED ME
 FOR YOU SEE
 THAT EVEN THOUGH I GIBBER AND DROOL
 STILL I’M SMARTER THAN A THREE-LEGGED STOOL!

MICHAEL

Hurry to the Piper under the hill. Tell him what has happened.

Scene 10: Barbara’s Garden. *(That night at moonrise. Michael enters behind the wall UR, warbling like a nightingale.)*

BARBARA

NIGHTINGALE
 WARBLING IN THE DARK
 UNDER THE MOON
 IN A FIELD OR A PARK
 IF YOU HEAR ME
 COME TO CHEER ME
 I BEG YOU COME SOON

MICHAEL

I'LL SPEAK NOT A WORD
 MY MELODY I'LL SING
 MY HEART IS A BIRD
 LONGING TO TAKE WING

BARBARA

NIGHTINGALE
 LISTEN—DO YOU HARK?
 NEVER AT NOON
 YOU ARE NO MEADOW LARK
 IF YOU ARE NEAR
 VOICE SWEET AND CLEAR
 YOUR MIDNIGHT TUNE

MICHAEL

POOR, WOUNDED BIRD
 WITH A BROKEN WING
 LONGING TO BE HEARD
 MY RHAPSODY I'LL SING

BARBARA

NIGHTINGALE
 HEAR THE WATCHDOGS BARK
 THIS IS NO BOON
 MARK
 THE PRICE IS DEAR
 VOICE SWEET AND CLEAR
 YOU CRY OR CROON
 NIGHTINGALE

MICHAEL

NIGHTINGALE
 BEATING YOUR BREAST
 ON THE BARS OF YOUR
 CAGE
 LONGING TO NEST
 IN THE LEAVES ON THE
 BOUGH OF A TREE
 IN THE FOREST FOR
 AN AGE
 NO SINGING BIRD
 EVER MADE
 A MIDNIGHT SERANADE
 NO COOING DOVE
 EVER SANG OF LOVE
 LIKE THE NIGHTINGALE

BARBARA

HUSH! FOR THE THRUSH—
 NO WHIPPOORWILL
 EVER WILL
 THRILL MY HEART
 LIKE YOU!

MICHAEL

I'VE COME TO SEE YOU

(He slips over the wall.)

BARBARA

COME TO SEE ME
NIGHTINGALE
I WANT TO BE YOU
LONGING TO TAKE
FLIGHT
NOT QUITE DYING
OF FRIGHT
FLEEING MY FATHER'S
RAGE

MICHAEL

IT WILL BE ALRIGHT
IF IT COMES TO A FIGHT
I WILL HAPPILY ENGAGE
NIGHTINGALE
I'VE COME TO FREE YOU
FROM YOUR GILDED CAGE

BARBARA

DON'T COME TO FREE ME

MICHAEL

NIGHTINGALE

BARBARA

NIGHTINGALE—THERE'S
DANGER IN THE DARK
UNDER THE MOON
I MUST PLAY THE NARK
IF YOU SHOULD HEAR
YOUR LIFE I FEAR—
ITS LOSS NO BOON—
NIGHTINGALE
COME NOT TOO SOON!

(Kurt, Jacobus, Anselm, and the other men enter stealthily during the following and hide behind the shrubbery, the fountain, trees, etc.)

Sir Knight, take me with you!

MICHAEL

I am no knight, Lady—merely Michael, the sword-eater.

BARBARA

Oh, it is true! You are a sword-eater!

MICHAEL

Is it your will forever to be gone from Hamlin?

BARBARA

I must—I must!

MICHAEL

Your mother?

BARBARA

I have no mother—she is dead! Nor any father, more! He gave me up!

MICHAEL

That he did—for a round one thousand guilders!

BARBARA

When did you love me? Was it on first sight?

That day—that day when—
MICHAEL
 Ah! That day of doom! Where are the children? Are they safe?
BARBARA
 Oh! Your good faith! They are safe!
MICHAEL
 I knew it!
BARBARA
 And so are you! But never shall they come to Hamlin more—and never shall you go to be a nun!
MICHAEL
 Ah? To be shut up...forever—young—alive!
BARBARA
 ALIVE AND SINGING; YOUNG—YOUNG—
 FOUR THICK WALLS AND NO MORE SUN
MICHAEL
 THINK YOU I WOULD NOT STEAL ALL THINGS ALIVE
 OUT OF SUCH DOOM—
BARBARA
 HOW CAN I BREATHE? OR LAUGH?
MICHAEL
 MUSIC AND NO WANDERING
 NO LIFE!
 WHEN THERE ARE THINGS IN CAGES
 YOU SHALL BE FREE—
 AND NEVER COME MORE BACK
 AGAIN
BARBARA
 WHERE ARE YOU TAKING ME?
MICHAEL
 I DARE NOT TAKE HER
 WHERE THE CHILDREN ARE
 UNDER THE HILL
 AND YET
 POOR, SHINING DOVE
 I WOULD NOT HOLD YOU HERE
 AGAINST YOUR WISH
 WHAT IS YOUR WILL?
BARBARA
 I KNOW NOT; AND I CARE NOT!
MICHAEL
 OH, LITTLE BIRD
 IS THAT YOUR ONLY SONG?
(The Men burst from their hiding places. They pursue Michael around the garden and over the wall. The following speeches overlap.)
MICHAEL
 Cock's blood! So it was all a trap! Why did you steal my heart?
KURT
 Knave!
JACOBUS
 Thief!
ANSELM

Liar!

JACOBUS

Give me breath!

KURT

You shall not steal her!

ANSELM

She shall not follow you!

KURT

This is too much!

ANSELM

Stealer of the children!

JACOBUS

Why did you come to her and steal her wits away?

ANSELM

Damsel, sit you down! You shall not follow him!

JACOBUS

Ah, me! I'm spent!

KURT

Now, take the girl to Rudersheim!

(They exit as the street drop comes in, where the chase continues into the next scene.)

Scene 11: The Countryside. *(The TOWNSMEN pursue MICHAEL in and out of the trees, uphill and down but he manages to elude them; at last they dejectedly give up and return to Hamlin.)*

Scene 12: Inside the Hollow Hill. (Sometime thereafter. The Children are napping. The Strollers have taken up guard duty on the steps. There is the sound of someone crying: “Cuckoo—Cuckoo!” outside the door.)

CHEAT-THE-DEVIL

Quick, quick! I’ve something here—
(The Strollers open the door. Cheat-the-Devil enters and they close the door behind him. He carries a couple of large baskets.)

PIPER

(Sharply, to himself:) No Michael yet! (To Cheat-the-Devil:) Michael! Where’s Michael?

CHEAT-THE DEVIL

Look what I have—guess, guess!
(Showing his baskets to the Children. He opens one of them.)

CHILDREN

Cakes! (*Cheat-the-Devil is sad.*) Shoes! (*He is sadder.*) Then honey!
 (*He radiantly undoes the second basket and displays a honeycomb. The Strollers, too, rush upon him.*)

PIPER

Ah! Cheat-the-Devil! They would crop your ears! I've had no word of Michael! Where had you this?

CHEAT-THE-DEVIL

Why, such a kind old farmer! He'd left his beehives. They were all alone. And the bees know me. So I brought this for you. (*To the Strollers:*) I knew they'd like it. Oh, you're happy now!

PIPER

But—Michael—have they caught him yet?

CHEAT-THE-DEVIL

Oh, not they! Michael's safe!

NOW I AM SAFE

NOW I AM HOME AT LAST!

PIPER

MET YOU ANY PEOPLE ON THE WAY, SINGING?

CHEAT-THE-DEVIL

NO, GROWLING—GROWLING DREARY PSALMS
 ALL ON A SUNNY DAY!

BEHIND THE HEDGES, I SAW THEM GO

THEY GO FROM HAMELIN NOW

AND I KNOW WHY! (*The Piper beckons him away from the Children.*)

THE MAYOR'S BARBARA

MUST GO TO RUDERSHEIM

TO BE A NUN!

PIPER

TO BE A NUN!

CHEAT-THE-DEVIL

A penance for them all! She weeps; but she must go! All they, you see, are wroth against him—he must give his child—

PIPER

A nun!

CHEAT-THE-DEVIL

Forever! She, who smiled at Michael. Look you, she weeps. They are bad people all—
 (*Looking at Children,*) Nothing like these—these are beautiful!

PIPER

Tell me, quick—when shall it happen?

CHEAT-THE-DEVIL

Why, it falls today. I saw two herds of people going by to be there, well aforetime, for the sight. And she is going last of all, at noon; all sparkling, like a bride. I heard them tell—
 (*Michael enters in mad haste. They rush upon him with exultation and relief. He shakes them off, doggedly.*)

MICHAEL

No, never, never—no, it shall not be!

PIPER

So! You had liked to have hanged us—

MICHAEL

What of that?

PIPER

All for a lily maiden—you do not know—

MICHAEL

I know! Tell me no more—I say it shall not be!

PIPER

To heel, lad! No, I follow! (*Cheat-the-Devil starts up the stairs too.*) None but I! Go! Go!
(*Michael rushes out again.*)

MICHAEL

Ah—your pipe! How will it save her? Tune your pipe to compass that!

PIPER

(*To Cheat-the-Devil:*) Do you bide here and shepherd these lambs. (*Indicates Children.*)

CHILDREN

Where are you going? Take us too! Us too! Take us with you? Take us!

PIPER

(*Distracted,*) No, no, no! You shall be kittens all! And chase your tails ‘til I come back! So here!
(*Catches HANSEL and ties a long strip of leather, which serves as a tail, to his costume; then whirls him about.*)

CHILDREN

Me too! Me too!

CHEAT-THE-DEVIL

Let me make the tails—let me! (*Seizing shears and leather.*)

PIPER

Faith, and you shall! A master tailor! Come, here’s food for thought. Think all—(*To the Strollers:*)

AND HOLD YOUR TONGUES THERE!
IF A CAT—IF A CAT HAVE
AS ALL MEN SAY—NINE LIVES
AND IF NINE TAILORS GO TO MAKE A MAN
HOW LONG, THEN, SHALL IT TAKE ONE MAN
TURNED TAILOR
TO KEEP A CAT IN TAILS UNTIL SHE DIE?

(*Cheat-the-Devil is perplexed, then subdued; the Children whirl about..*)

But here’s no game for Jan—stay! Something else—

(*He runs to the trunk, UC, and takes out a long crystal on the end of a string, with a glance at the sunlight coming thru the hole in the roof. The Children watch. The Strollers exit into the wings.*)

Be quiet now—chase not your tails too far....’til I come home again....

CHILDREN

COME HOME—COME HOME!

PIPER

AND YOU SHALL SEE MY—

CHILDREN

SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL!

OH, OH, WHAT IS IT?

OH, AND WILL IT PLAY?

WILL IT PLAY MUSIC?

PIPER

YES! THE BEST OF ALL!

(*He releases the crystal and it flies up into the light. Rainbows strike the walls.*)

CHEAT-THE-DEVIL, JAN, CHILDREN

OH, HOW BEAUTIFUL! HOW BEAUTIFUL!

PIPER

AND HEAR IT PIPE AND CALL

AND DANCE AND SING
 HEYAH! AND HARK YOU ALL
 YOU HAVE TO MIND—
 THE RAINBOW!

(He climbs the stairs, pipe in hand. The Children whirl about chasing their colorful tails. Cheat-the-Devil and Jan stand open-mouthed with happiness, watching the rainbow as the scene changes.)

Scene 13: The Crossroads. *(Shortly thereafter. The Piper dances on, SR, wearing his multicolored cloak, under which he has a bundle of some sort. He is followed by the Strollers, who continue, across to SL, and exit. Michael enters dejectedly after them.)*

MICHAEL

TO LOCK HER UP! A MAIDEN SHUT AWAY—
 OUT OF THE SUN.
 TO CAGE HER THERE, FOR LIFE
 CUT OFF HER HAIR; PRETEND THAT SHE IS
 JESUS' WIFE
 SHE MIGHT AS WELL BE DEAD!
 HORRIBLE! HORRIBLE!
 NO, I'LL NOT ENDURE IT!

I'LL END THIS MURDER!
 HE SHALL GIVE UP HIS—
 BUT NEVER SO! NOT SO!
 WHILE I DO LIVE
 TO LET THINGS OUT OF CAGES!
 QUICK! TELL ME!

PIPER

Patience!

MICHAEL

Patience? Death—and hell! Oh, save her—save her! Give the children back—

PIPER

Never! Have you betrayed us?

MICHAEL

I! Betrayed?

PIPER

So, so, Lad.

MICHAEL

But to save her—

PIPER

There's a way—trust me! We save her, or we swing together—
 MERRILY, IN A ROW—

How did you see her?

MICHAEL

BY STEALTH; TWO DAYS AGO

At evening hard by the vine-hid wall of her own garden; I made a warbling like a nightingale and she came out to hear—

PIPER

(Fingering his pipe noiselessly,) Poor nightingale!

MICHAEL

Oh, but the scorn of her!

PIPER

She smiled on you?

MICHAEL

Until she heard the truth. A juggler—truly—and no wandering knight! Oh, and she wept! Let us all hang together!

PIPER

Thanks. Kindly spoken. Not this afternoon!

MICHAEL

You know that they are given up for dead?

PIPER

Truly?

MICHAEL

Bewitched?

PIPER

So are they.

MICHAEL

Sold to the devil?

PIPER

(Pacing softly up and down, with the restless cunning of a squirrel at watch for a predator—or a buried walnut.) PFUI! BUT WHO ELSE OF COURSE

THIS SAME OLD DEVIL

THIS KIND OLD DEVIL
 WHO TAKES ON HIM ALL WE DO!
 WHO ELSE IS SUCH A REFUGE
 IN THIS WORLD?
 WHO COULD HAVE BURNED THE ABBEY
 IN THIS PLACE?
 WHERE HOLY MEN DID LIVE?
 WHY, TWAS THE DEVIL!
 AND WHO DID GUARD US ONE
 SECLUDED SPOT
 BY BURYING US A WIZARD
 AT THE CROSSWAYS
 SO NONE DARE SEARCH THE HAUNTED
 EVIL PLACE
 THE DEVIL FOR A LANDLORD—SO I SAY!
 AND ALL WE POOR, WE STROLLERS
 FOR HIS TENANTS
 WE GYPSIES AND WE PIPERS
 IN THE WORLD
 AND A FEW HERMITS
 AND SWORD-SWALLOWERS
 AND ALL THE CASTAWAYS
 THAT HOLY CHURCH MUST
 PUT IN CAGES—CAGES—TO THE END!

(To Michael (the sword-eater), who is overcome,) TAKE HEART! I SWEAR
 BY ALL THE STARS THAT CHIME
 I'LL NOT HAVE THINGS IN CAGES!

MICHAEL

BARBARA! SO YOUNG—
 SO YOUNG, AND BEAUTIFUL!

PIPER

AND FIT TO MARRY WITH FRIEND MICHAEL!

MICHAEL

DO NOT MOCK—

PIPER

I MOCK NOT—BAA—BAA—BARBARA!

MICHAEL

AYE, SHE LAUGHED ON THAT FIRST DAY
 BUT STILL SHE GAZED—I SAW HER ALL
 THE WHILE!
 I SWALLOWED—

PIPER

PRODIGIES!
 A THOUSAND SWALLOWS
 AND NO SUMMER YET!
 BUT NOW—TIS LATE TO ASK—
 WHY DID YOU NOT SWALLOW HER FATHER?
 THAT HAD SAVED US ALL!

MICHAEL

THEY WILL BE COMING SOON
 THEY WILL CUT OFF ALL HER BRIGHT HAIR—

AND WALL HER IN FOREVER!

PIPER

NEVER! THEY SHALL NOT—I SWEAR!

MICHAEL

WILL YOU GIVE THEM BACK? NOW?

PIPER

I WILL NEVER GIVE THEM BACK
BE SURE!

MICHAEL

OH, GOD!

PIPER

AND I SWEAR THAT HE SHALL GIVE
HER UP TO NONE BUT THEE!

MICHAEL

YOU CANNOT DO IT!

PIPER

(He laughs up to the treetops.) AND THE LORD GOD,
WHERE WILL HE GET HIS HARPERS
AND HIS SINGING MEN
AND THEM THAT LAUGH FOR JOY?
FROM THE HAMLIN GUILDS?
WILL YOU IMAGINE KURT THE SYNDIC
TRYING TO SING?

(He looks at his pipe again; then listens intently.)

MICHAEL

HIS LEAN THROAT FREEZE!
BUT SHE—BARBARA! BARBARA—

PIPER

PATIENCE! SHE WILL COME
DRESSED LIKE A BRIDE

MICHAEL

AH, DO NOT MOCK ME SO!

PIPER

I MOCK NOT!

MICHAEL

SHE WILL NEVER LOOK AT ME!

PIPER

RATHER THAN BE A NUN, I SWEAR SHE WILL
LOOK AT YOU TWICE—AND WITH A LONG LOOK!

(The Plain Chant is heard off left. The Piper hands Michael the bundle.)

CHOIR

DIES IRAE, DIES ILLA
SOLVET SAECLUM IN FAVILLA
TESTE DAVID CUM SYBILLA
QUANTUS TREMOR EST FUTURUS
QUANDO JUDEX EST VENTURUS
CUNCTA STRICTE DISCUSSURUS!

PIPER

BAH, HOW THEY WHINE!
WHY DO THEY DRAG IT SO?

MICHAEL

OH, CAN IT BE THE LAST OF ALL?
 OH, SAINTS—O BLESSED FRANCIS,
 URSULA, CATHERINE! HUBERT—
 APPOLONIA, JUDE, AND PETER
 AND CRISPIN—PANTELEONE—PAUL!
 GEORGE OF THE DRAGON!
 MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL!

PIPER

MICHAEL THE SWORD-EATER, CAN'T
 YOU SWALLOW A CHANT?

(The scrim flies out, as the scene changes.)

Scene 14: Ruined Chapel on the road to Rudersheim. *(Immediately following, without any break in the action. There are the remains of a ruined chapel—perhaps a bell tower, with a window halfway up the winding stair—U C, and more trees. The castle is visible in the distance.)*

PIPER

ALL WILL BE WELL, THE BELL TOWER!
 TAKE CARE!

CHOIR

INTER OVES LOCUM PRAESTA
 ET AB HOEDIS ME SEQUESTRA

(Michael climbs up inside the ancient tower, putting his head out of the window, warily; then ducks down again as the Piper waves to him cheerily. He points to the tower's top, and stands a moment, showing his disapproval of the singing. He fingers his pipe as the procession enters, covers his head with the hood of his cloak, and as far as the characters entering SL are

concerned, disappears. Men enter together, first, led by priests; then the women, led by nuns. Father Anselm enters followed by Jacobus, who is very meek; Kurt enters, very stern—everyone is assembled—except for Veronika. The piping begins softly, high in the air. The hymn wavers; when the Men reach CS, it breaks down.)

STATUENS IN PARTE DEXTRA
CONFUTATIS MALEDICTIS
FLAMMIS ACRIBUS ADDICTIS
VOCA ME CUM BENEDICTIS

(They look up bewildered; then, with every sign of consternation, struggle and vacant fear, they begin to dance willy-nilly. Their faces work; they struggle to walk on; but it is useless. The music whirls them irresistibly into a jagged pace of $\frac{3}{4}$ time, that jogs their words when they try to speak, into the same dance measure. One by one—two by two they go—round and round like bobbing corks at first, with every sign of struggle and protest. Fat priests waltz together—Kurt the fierce, and Jacobus the meek— hug each other in frantic endeavor to be released. Their words jolt insanely.)

KURT & JACOBUS

NO, NO—NO, NO—NO, NO—
NO, NO!
YES, YES—I, YES—YES, YES—
YES, YES!

CHOIR

LA—CHRYMOS—A—DIES—ILLA—
BEWITCHED—THE DEVIL—
BEWITCHED—BEWITCHED!
I WILL NOT—WILL NOT—WILL—
I WILL!
NO, NO—BUT WHERE—HELP—
HELP—TO ARMS!
SUPPLI—CANTI—SUPPLI—OH!
TO HAMLIN—BACK—TO HAMLIN—
STAY!
NO, NO—NO, NO—AWAY—AWAY!

(They dance out, compulsively, SR, towards Rudersheim. Kurt and Jacobus are still whirling.)

KURT & JACOBUS

YES, YES—YES, YES—LET GO—LET GO!
NO, NO—I WILL NOT—NO...NO! (Exit L, still dancing.)

CHOIR

(They re-enter, SR, still dancing.) KEEP TIME, KEEP TIME!

HAVE MERCY—TIME!
OH, LET ME—GO—LET GO—
LET GO—LET GO!
YES, YES—YES, YES—NO, NO—
NO—NO!

(Barbara appears, SL, pale and beautiful, richly dressed in white, with flowing hair. She wears a long veil crowned with a wreath of white flowers. She is wan and exhausted. The dance mania, as it seizes her, makes her circle slowly and dazedly, with a certain pitiful silliness. The nuns and monks accompanying her, point in horror. But they, too, dance off with each other, willy-nilly—like leaves in a tempest. Barbara is left alone, still circling slowly. The piping sounds softer. She staggers to the tower, and keeps on waving her hands and turning her head, vaguely, in time to the music. Michael, dressed in a monk's robe, approaches her. They perform a pas de deux.)

MICHAEL

SHE IS SO BEAUTIFUL—HOW DARE I
TELL HER?
MY HEART, HOW BEAUTIFUL!
THE BLESSED SAINT!
FEAR NOTHING, FAIREST LADY
YOU ARE SAVED

(She looks at him unseeingly, and continues to dance. He puts out his arms to stop her.)

PRAY YOU, THE DANGER'S GONE
PRAY YOU, TAKE BREATH!
TIS MICHAEL THE SWORD EATER *(The piping ceases.)*

BARBARA

(Murmuring,) YES, YES—I MUST—I MUST—I MUST...

MICHAEL

LOOK, I WILL GUARD YOU LIKE A
PRINCESS HERE
YES, LIKE OUR LADY'S ROSE VINE

BARBARA

(Gasping,) AH! MY HEART!
OH! YOU HAVE SAVED ME
I AM THINE! THINE! THINE!

MICHAEL

MINE?
WHEN DID YOU LOVE ME?
WAS IT ON FIRST SIGHT?

BARBARA

I LOVE THEE!
WHERE ARE YOU TAKING ME?

MICHAEL

(To the Piper:) ALL THIS, YOUR WORK!

PIPER

NOT MINE! THIS IS NO CHARM
IT IS ALL YOUTH—NO GRIEF
NO WEARINESS—THO BRIEF
ITS CHEERINESS—THERE'S
RELIEF
SHE SHALL FOLLOW YOU
AND BE YOUR BRIDE
BOTH OF YOU SHALL BIDE
AND I MUST GO TO FOLLOW
THE RAINBOW!

(The three of them exit. The Three Strollers enter, then Kurt, Jacobus, Anselm, Townspeople, Priests and Nuns come whirling back onstage from both R & L. Old Ursula & Old Claus have a dance specialty.)

KURT & JACOBUS

NO, NO—NO, NO—NO, NO—
NO, NO!
YES, YES—I, YES—YES, YES—
YES, YES!

CHOIR

LA—CHRYMOS—A—DIES—ILLA—
BEWITCHED—THE DEVIL—

BEWITCHED—BEWITCHED!
 I WILL NOT—WILL NOT—WILL—
 I WILL!
 NO, NO—BUT WHERE—HELP—
 HELP—TO ARMS!
 SUPPLI—CANTI—SUPPLI—OH!
 TO HAMLIN—BACK—TO HAMLIN—
 STAY!
 NO, NO—NO, NO—AWAY—AWAY!

KURT & JACOBUS

YES, YES—YES, YES—LET GO—LET GO!
 NO, NO—I WILL NOT—NO...NO!

CHOIR

KEEP TIME, KEEP TIME!
 HAVE MERCY—TIME!
 OH, LET ME—GO—LET GO—
 LET GO—LET GO!
 YES, YES—YES, YES—NO, NO—
 NO—NO!

(They keep dancing madly as the curtain falls.)

Prologue: Montage. *(Immediately following. KURT & JACOBUS are still dancing. Inside the Hollow Hill, the Children and Cheat-the-Devil are continuing their games. The orchestra renders a musical pastiche as the scene fades.)*

KURT & JACOBUS

NO, NO—NO, NO—NO, NO—
 NO, NO!
 YES, YES—I, YES—YES, YES—
 YES, YES!
 HELP—TO ARMS!
 SUPPLI—CANTI—SUPPLI—OH!
 TO HAMLIN—BACK—TO HAMLIN—
 STAY!
 NO, NO—NO, NO—AWAY—AWAY!

YES, YES—YES, YES—LET GO—LET GO!
NO, NO—I WILL NOT—NO...NO!

(They dance off as the scene changes.)

Scene 1: Inside the Hollow Hill. *(Some time thereafter. There is a Court Masque in progress. This is Barbara's fantasy wedding, with Michael as the groom. Her simple wedding dress from the previous scene now has an over gown with long sleeves and a very long train, which is carried by the Little Girls. She wears a coronet on her veil. Michael is dressed as a prince, also with a long robe, and a crown—his train is carried by the Boys. There is also a flower girl who scatters rose petals. Cheat-the-Devil is the Court Jester. Jan is the ring-bearer and the Piper may play the role of the Archbishop.*

The dancers wear the highest medieval fashions in transparent fabric—bright pastels, with appliquéd heraldic devices trimmed with gold and silver—and, obviously, masks: animals from the Ark, two-by-two, with elaborate hats. At least four of the dancers—male—wear heraldic animal heads: unicorn, stag, griffin (with wings) and manticore (half-lion, half man) and tails. They are shirtless. The rest of the men are bare-chested, but their jackets and coats have sleeves and are closed at the waist.

*The women are bare-breasted, but otherwise modestly dressed.
A pair of knights joust with each other on horseback. There are heraldic banners—crescent
moons on dark blue—and perhaps a banquet table. After the dance is concluded, there is a
choral reprise of “Enchantment:” This is a serenade for Barbara.)*

ENSEMBLE

FIRST YOU LOSE
YOUR HEART AND SHOES
FROM HAMLIN
PUT OFF NOW, THE DUST
THE COPPER WILL GO TO RUST
AND THE GOLD WILL TURN TO MOULD
THE COBBLE STONES
THE LITTLE PRYING WINDOWS
THE STREETS THAT DREAM OF
WHAT THE NEIGHBORS SAY
THINK YOU WERE NEVER BORN THERE
THINK SOME BREATH WAKENED YOU
EARLY
EARLY ON ONE MORNING
DEEP IN A GARDEN
BUT YOU KNOW NOT WHOSE
WHERE VOICES OF WILD WATERS
RAN
SHAKING DOWN MUSIC FROM
GLAD MOUNTAIN TOPS
WHERE THE STILL PEAKS
WERE BURNING IN THE DAWN
LIKE FIERY SNOW
DOWN TO THE LISTENING VALLEYS
THAT DOFF THEIR BLUE MIST
ONLY TO SHOW
SOME DEEPER BLUE
SOME HAUNT OF VIOLETS
NO VOICE YOU HEARD
NO VOICE YOU HEARD
NOTHING YOU FELT OR SAW
SAVE IN YOUR HEART
THE TUMULT OF YOUNG BIRDS
A NESTFUL OF WET WINGS
AND MORNING CRIES
THROBBING FOR FLIGHT!
THEN—FOR YOUR NEW SOUL
NEW WAKENED—FELT A THIRST
YOU TURNED TO WHERE
THAT CALL OF WATER LED
LAUGHING FOR TRUTH—ALL
TRUTH AND STAR-LIKE LAUGHTER!
BEAUTIFUL WATER
THAT WILL NEVER STAY
BUT RUNS AND LAUGHS
AND SPARKLES IN THE HEART

AND SENDS LIVE LAUGHTER
 TRICKLING EVERYWHERE
 AND KNOWS THE THOUSAND
 LONGINGS OF THE EARTH!
 AND AS YOU DRANK IT THEN
 DRINK HERE— *(They disappear as the vision fades.)*

PIPER

OUT OF YOUR CAGE
 COME OUT OF YOUR CAGE
 TAKE YOUR SOUL ON A
 PILGRIMAGE
 PLEASE IN YOUR SHOES
 AN IF YOU MUST
 BUT OUT AND AWAY
 BEFORE YOU'RE DUST
 SCRIBE AND STAY-AT-HOME
 SAINT AND SAGE
 OUT OF YOUR CAGE
 OUT OF YOUR CAGE
 MIND YOUR EYES
 TUNE YOUR TONGUE
 LET IT NEVER BE SAID
 BUT SUNG—SUNG!
 WE HAVE SAVED HER
 LOOK YOU
 WE HAVE SAVED THEM ALL
 NO PRISON WALLS AGAIN
 FOR ANYTHING SO YOUNG
 IN HAMLIN THERE
 WAKE HER AND SEE

MICHAEL

AYE, WAKE HER. BUT FOR ME, HER
 SLEEP IS GENTLER

CHEAT-THE-DEVIL

WHERE ONCE OUR HEARTS WERE HARD
 NOW THEY'RE SENTIMENTLER

PIPER

NAY, BUT WAIT A BIT—GOOD FAITH
 WAIT,
 WE HAVE BROKE THE BARS OF IRON
 NOW
 STILL THERE ARE GOLDEN—TIS HER
 VERY SELF
 IS CAGED WITHIN HERSELF
 ONCE COAX HER OUT
 ONCE SET HER OWN HEART FREE
 WAKE HER, AND SEE!
 OUT OF YOUR CAGE
 OUT OF YOUR CAGE!
 MAIDEN, MAIDEN—
 MIND YOUR EYES

TUNE YOUR TONGUE
LET IT NEVER BE SAID
BUT SUNG—SUNG!

BARBARA

(Murmuring,)

YES, YES—I MUST—I MUST—I MUST!

MICHAEL

LOOK, I WILL GUARD YOU LIKE A
PRINCESS HERE

YES, LIKE OUR LADY'S ROSE VINE

BARBARA

AND TELL ME—TELL ME, YOU—WHAT
HAPPENED THEN?

PIPER

WHAT DO YOU SEE?

BARBARA

AH? *(She looks before her, with wide, new eyes.)*

PIPER

DO YOU SEE—A—

BARBARA

...MICHAEL!

PIPER

DO! AND, A GOOD ONE.

AND YOU CALL HIM?

BARBARA

...MICHAEL.

PIPER

AND IS HE COMELY AS A MAN SHOULD BE?
AND STRONG? AND WEARS GOOD PROMISE
IN HIS EYES?

AND KEEPS IT WITH HIS HEART

AND WITH HIS HANDS? *(She nods like a child.)*

AND WOULD YOU FEAR TO GO WITH HIM?

BARBARA

NO, NO!

PIPER

THEN REACH TO HIM WITH THAT LITTLE
HAND OF YOURS

(Michael, wonderstruck, falls on his knees before her, taking her hand fearfully.)

BARBARA

(Timidly,)

AND CAN HE TALK?

PIPER

YES, YES—THE MAN'S BEWILDERED

FEAR NOTHING. YOU ARE SO DUMB, MAN!

ONLY HE KNEELS; HE CANNOT YET BELIEVE

SPEAK ROUNDLY TO HIM—WILL YOU GO WITH HIM?

BARBARA

YES! YES! YES!

PIPER

HE WOULD BE GENTLER TO YOU THAN A
FATHER

HE WOULD BE BROTHERS—FIVE—AND

DEAREST FRIEND
AND SWEETHEART—AYE, AND KNIGHT AND
SERVINGMAN!

BARBARA

YES, YES, I KNOW HE WILL
AND CAN HE TALK, TOO?

PIPER

LADY, YOU HAVE BEWITCHED HIM!

MICHAEL

OH! DEAR LADY—WITH YOU I DARE NOT
OPEN MY MOUTH—SAVE TO SING OR PRAY!

PIPER

LET IT BE SINGING!
LAD, TIS A BEWILDERED MAIDEN
WITH NO HOME SAVE ONLY THEE
SHE IS MORE A CHILD THAN YESTERDAY

MICHAEL

OH, LORDLY WONDROUS WORLD!
HOW IS IT, SWEET, YOU SMILE UPON ME NOW?

BARBARA

SURE, I HAVE EVER SMILED ON THEE
HOW NOT? ARE YOU NOT MICHAEL?
AND THOU LOVEST ME—AND I LOVE THEE!
IF I UNLOVED YOU EVER, IT WAS SOME SPELL—
BUT THIS—AH, THIS IS I!

(Rapturously,)

(Michael, on his knees, winds his arms about her.)

PIPER

IT IS ALL TRUE—IT IS ALL TRUE
LAD, DO NOT DOUBT
THE GOLDEN CAGE IS BROKEN

MICHAEL

OH, MORE STRANGE THAN MORNING DREAMS
I AM LIKE ONE NEW-BORN
I AM LIKE A SPEECHLESS BABE
AND THIS IS SHE—MY MOON I CRIED FOR
HERE

PIPER

SHE IS YOUR BRIDE

MICHAEL

YOU WILL NOT FEAR TO COME WITH ME?

BARBARA

WITH THEE?
WITH THEE! AH, LOOK! WHAT HAVE I MORE
THAN THEE?
AND THOU ART MINE, TALL FELLOW!
HOW COMES IT NOW
RIGHT HAPPILY I AM DRESSED SO FAIR?

(She touches her finery, her long pearl strings, joyously.)

AND ALL THIS CAME SO NEAR TO BURYING;
THIS!

MICHAEL

(Kissing her hair,) AND THIS DEARER GOLD!

BARBARA

ALL, ALL FOR THEE!

(She leans over him and playfully binds her hair about him.)

LOOK—I WILL BE YOUR GARDEN
THAT WE LOST

YEA, ANYWHERE—EVERYWHERE
IN EVERY WILDERNESS
THERE NONE SHALL FRIGHTEN US
WITH A FLAMING SWORD
I WILL BE YOUR GARDEN!

(We hear the sound of Veronika's herd-bell approaching.)

PIPER

SEE—HOW THE SUNLIGHT SHALL
POUR RED WINE
TO MAKE YOUR MARRIAGE FEAST
AND DO YOU HEAR THAT FAIRY BELL?
NO FEAR!

TIS SOME WHITE EWE SHEEP
SEEKING HER WHITER LAMB
GO; FIND OUR HERMIT
AND HE SHALL BLESS YOU
AS HERMITS CAN
AND BE YOUR PLEDGE FOR SHELTER
THERE'S THE PATH—
FOLLOW EACH OTHER CLOSE

BARBARA

BEYOND THE MOON

MICHAEL

BEYOND THE SUN

PIPER

IN THE SILVER EVENING
OR THE GOLDEN AFTERNOON
AND ALL IS WELL!

(He gives Michael his patchwork cloak to wrap around Barbara and himself, and they exit.)

IF YOU CAN ONLY CATCH THEM
WHEN THEY ARE YOUNG
MIND YOUR EYES, TUNE YOUR TONGUE
LET IT NEVER BE SAID—BUT SUNG—SUNG!
LET THE WHITE ROSE GARLANDS BE HUNG
LET THE CHAPEL CHIMES BE RUNG
KISS THE LIPS THAT BEES HAVE STUNG
DON'T LIVE UNDER A HILL LIKE A HERMIT
GOD WILL GIVE YOU THE PERMIT
CLING TO HER AS YOU HAVE NEVER CLUNG
WHILE YOU ARE STILL YOUNG!

(The scene changes.)

Scene 2: The Cross Roads. *(The Piper enters. A sheep bell is heard off Right. He becomes more watchful, as a wild creature might. A woman's voice calls like the wind: "Jan! Jan!" The Piper, tense and cautious, moves downstage L, as Veronika calls again.)*

VERONIKA

Jan!

PIPER

Hist! Who dares?

VERONIKA

Jan!

PIPER

Who dares, I say? A woman—tis a woman!

(VERONIKA enters on the road from Hamlin. Her head is bare and her clothing disheveled; perhaps she is barefoot. She is very pale and worn, and drags herself along with the sheep bell in her left hand, a walking stick in her right. She looks about her, holds up the bell and shakes it

once softly, covering it with her fingers again; then she sits wearily down at the foot of the shrine, and covers her face. The Piper watches with breathless wonder and fascination; it seems to horrify him.)

VERONIKA

(With a sharp breath:) ...AH—AH—AH! (She kneels at the roadside shrine.)

THEY COME...THEY COME!
 OPEN YOUR EYES A MOMENT!
 BLOW THE FAINT FIRE
 WITHIN YOUR HEARTS
 THEY COME!
 YOUR LONGING BRINGS THEM—
 AYE, AND MINE—AND MINE!
 HEED NOT THE GRAVE MAKERS
 MOTHER MARY
 LIVE, LIVE AND LAUGH ONCE MORE
 OH! DO YOU HEAR?
 LOOK, HOW YOU HAVE TO WAKEN
 ALL THESE DEAD
 THAT WALK ABOUT YOU!
 OPEN THEIR DIM EYES
 SING TO THEM WITH YOUR HEART
 HOLY MOTHER
 AS HE IS PIPING, FAR AWAY, OUTSIDE!
 WAKEN THEM—CHANGE THEM!
 SHOW THEM HOW TO LONG
 TO REACH THEIR ARMS
 AS YOU DO—FOR THE STARS
 AND FOLD THEM IN
 STAY BUT ONE MOMENT—STAY
 AND THINE OWN CHILD
 SHALL DRAW THEE BACK AGAIN
 DOWN HERE TO MOTHER THEM—
 MOTHER US ALL!
 OH, DO YOU LISTEN?
 DO I HEAR YOUR ANSWER?
 I HEAR! I HEAR....

PIPER

(Under his breath,) That woman! (He raises the hood of his cloak. Veronika lifts her head suddenly, and sees the motion.)

VERONIKA

He is coming! He is here!

(She darts towards him. He springs away.)

Oh, God of Mercy It is only you! Where is he? Where are you hiding him?

PIPER

(Confusedly,) Woman...what you do wandering with that bell?

VERONIKA

Oh! Are you man or devil? Where is my Jan? Jan—Jan—the little lame one! He is mine. He lives; I know he lives. I know—yes, yes....

(She crouches where she is, watching him.)

PIPER

Surely he lives!

VERONIKA

Lives! Will you swear it? Ah—I will believe! But he...is not so strong as all the others.

PIPER

(Aside.) Aye! How horrible!

(To her:) Sit you down here. You cannot go away while you are yet so pale. Why are you thus?

(She looks at him distractedly.)

VERONIKA

You, who have torn the hearts out of our bodies and left the town like a place of graves—why am I spent? Ah! Ah! But he's alive!

PIPER

Alive? What else? Why would he not be living?

VERONIKA

I do not know....

PIPER

Do you take me for the Devil?

VERONIKA

I do not know....

PIPER

Yet you were not afraid?

VERONIKA

What is there now to fear?

PIPER

Where are the townsfolk?

VERONIKA

They are all gone to Rudersheim...

PIPER

How so?

VERONIKA

There, for a penance, Barbara—Jacobs's daughter—will take the veil. His one—for all of ours—it will be over now.

PIPER

Have none returned?

VERONIKA

I know not; I am searching since the dawn.

PIPER

Today?

VERONIKA

And every day.

PIPER

That sheep bell, there—why do you ring it?

VERONIKA

Oh, he loves them so...the lambs. I knew if he but heard it he would follow, and if he could... only, the ways are rough—

PIPER

No more. I know!

VERONIKA

And he had lost his crutch.

PIPER

(Like a wounded animal,) Let be! You hurt me—

VERONIKA

You—a man of air?

PIPER

I am no man of air

VERONIKA

What are you then? Give them to me, I say. You have them hid under a spell.

PIPER

Yes.

VERONIKA

Give them back to me!

PIPER

No!

VERONIKA

But they all...are living? On your soul?

PIPER

Will you believe me?

VERONIKA

And you hold them safe?

PIPER

Safe.

VERONIKA

Shut away?

PIPER

From Hamlin? Forever!

VERONIKA

And are they...warm?

PIPER

Yes.

VERONIKA

Are they happy? Oh, that cannot be! But do they laugh sometimes?

PIPER

Yes.

VERONIKA

Then you'll give them back again!

PIPER

No. Never!

VERONIKA

I must be patient....

PIPER

WOMAN, THEY ALL ARE MINE
I HOLD THEM IN MY HANDS
THEY BIDE WITH ME
WHAT'S BREATH AND BLOOD—
WHAT ARE THE HEARTS OF CHILDREN,
TO HAMLIN—WHILE IT HEAPS ITS
MONEYBAGS?

VERONIKA

YOU CARED NOT FOR THE MONEY

PIPER

NO? YOU SEEM A FOREIGN WOMAN
COME VERY FAR, THAT YOU SHOULD
KNOW

VERONIKA

I KNOW. I WAS NOT BORN THERE
 BUT YOU WRONG THEM
 THERE WERE YET A FEW
 WHO WOULD HAVE DEALT WITH YOU
 MORE HONESTLY
 THAN THIS JACOBUS, OR—

PIPER

OR KURT THE SYNDIC!
 BELIEVE IT NOT
 THOSE TWO BE TONGUE AND BRAIN
 FOR THE WHOLE TOWN!
 I KNOW THEM. AND THAT TOWN
 STANDS AS THE WILL OF OTHER TOWNS
 A SCORE
 THAT MAKE US WANDERING POOR
 THE THINGS WE ARE!
 IT STANDS FOR ALL
 UNTIL THE END OF TIME
 THAT TURNS THIS BRIGHT WORLD BLACK
 AND THE SUN COLD
 WITH HATE, AND HOARDING—
 ALL TRIUMPHANT GREED
 THAT SPREADS ABOVE THE ROOTS
 OF ALL DESPAIR
 AND MISERY, AND ROTTING OF THE SOUL!
 NOW THEY SHALL LEARN—
 IF MONEYBAGS CAN LEARN—
 WHAT TURNS THE BRIGHT WORLD BLACK
 AND THE SUN COLD

VERONIKA

AND WHAT'S THIS CREATURE
 THAT THEY CALL A CHILD?
 AND WHAT'S THIS WING-ED THING
 MEN NAME A HEART?
 NEVER TO BIND, NEVER TO BE BID STILL
 AND WHAT THIS HUNGER AND THIS THIRST
 TO SING
 TO LAUGH, TO FIGHT—TO HOPE, TO BE
 BELIEVED?
 AND WHAT IS TRUTH?
 AND WHO DID MAKE THE STARS?

(Lights come up behind the scrim, revealing the interior of the Hollow Hill, except that this time it is her vision of Heaven. The Children are all dressed in their nightclothes as before, but now each as wings attached to his or her shoulders. Cheat-the-Devil, dressed as an angel, leads them—and the Strolling Players—in a dance. The lights fade, and the vision disappears;)

PIPER

I HAVE TO PAY FOR FIFTY THOUSAND HATES
 GREEDS, CRUELTIES; SUCH BARBAROUS
 TORTURED DAYS
 A TIGER WOULD DISDAIN

FOR ALL MY KIND!
 NOT MY OWN MOTHER
 NOT MY OWN OF KIN
 ALL, ALL, WHO WEAR THE MOTLEY IN THE HEART
 OR ON THE BODY—FOR ALL THE CAGED GLORIES
 AND TRODDEN WINGS
 AND SORROWS LAUGHED TO SCORN
 I—I—AT LAST!

VERONIKA

AH, ME! HOW CAN I SAY:
 YET MAKE THEM HAPPIER THAN THEY LET YOU BE?

PIPER

WOMAN, YOU COULD! THEY KNOW NOT HOW TO BE
 HAPPY!
 THEY TURN TO DARKNESS AND TO GRIEF
 ALL THAT IS MADE FOR JOY
 THEY DEAL WITH MEN AS,
 FAR ACROSS THE MOUNTAINS, IN THE SOUTH
 MEN TRAP A SINGING THRUSH, PUT OUT HIS EYES
 AND CAGE HIM UP AND BID HIM THEN TO SING—
 SING BEFORE GOD WHO MADE HIM—YES,
 TO SING!

(The lights come up behind the scrim again, revealing a scrim painted as the Hell Mouth. This, too, becomes transparent, revealing the Market Square at Hamlin, lit in lurid shades of red and green. Cheat-the-Devil appears as the Archfiend this time, driving the adults—some of them nude—before him in panic and despair. We hear the Plain Chant as a discordant dirge, or perhaps as shrieks and screams. The vision fades once more.)

VERONIKA

(Aside:)

BUT I MUST BE PATIENT

PIPER

YOU KNOW, YOU KNOW, THAT NOT ONE
 DARED, SAVE YOU—
 DARED ALL ALONE AT NIGHT
 TO SEARCH THIS DEVIL'S HAUNT

VERONIKA

THEY WOULD HAVE DIED—

PIPER

BUT NEVER RISKED THEIR SOULS!
 THAT I KNEW ALSO

VERONIKA

AH!

VERONIKA

AH, YET I COULD LAUGH, PIPER
 YET I COULD LAUGH, FOR ONE TRUE
 WORD—BUT, NOT OF ALL MEN—

PIPER

—THEN OF WHOM?

VERONIKA

OF KURT

PIPER

BAH! KURT THE COUNCILLOR! A MAN
TO CURSE

VERONIKA

HE IS MY HUSBAND

PIPER

YOURS? I KNEW IT NOT. YOURS?
BUT IT CANNOT BE! HE COULD NOT
FATHER THAT LITTLE JAN—
THAT LITTLE SHIPWRECKED STAR

VERONIKA

OH, THEN YOU LOVE HIM!
YOU WILL GIVE HIM BACK?

PIPER

THE SON OF KURT?

VERONIKA

NO, NOT HIS SON! NO, NO
HE IS ALL MINE, ALL MINE
KURT'S SONS ARE STRAIGHT
AND RUDDY, LIKE KURT'S WIFE OF
HAMLIN THERE
WHO DIED BEFORE

PIPER

AND YOU WERE WED...

VERONIKA

SO YOUNG
IT WAS LIKE SOME DREAM BEFORE
THE SUNRISE
THAT LEFT ME BUT THAT LITTLE
SHIPWRECKED STAR

PIPER

WHY DID YOU MARRY KURT THE
COUNCILOR?

VERONIKA

HE WANTED ME...
ONCE I WAS BEAUTIFUL...

PIPER

WHAT, MORE THAN NOW?

VERONIKA

MOCK IF YOU WILL

PIPER

!? MOCK YOU?
OH, WOMAN... YOU ARE VERY BEAUTIFUL

VERONIKA

I MEANT, WITH MY POOR SELF, TO BUY
HIM HOUSE, AND WARMTH AND SOFTNESS
FOR HIS LITTLE FEET
OH, THEN I KNEW NOT—WHEN WE SELL
OUR HEARTS

WE BUY US NOTHING

PIPER

NOW YOU KNOW

VERONIKA

I KNOW
 MY DEAREST HOPE IT WAS, TO KEEP HIS
 HEART
 ALONE AND BEAUTIFUL, AND CLEAR AND
 STILL
 AND TO KEEP ALL THE GLADNESS IN MY
 HEART—THAT BUBBLED FROM NOWHERE!
 FOR HIM TO DRINK—
 AND TO BE HOUSELESS OF ALL OTHER
 THINGS
 EVEN AS THE LONELY MAN—

(The Piper is startled.)

WHERE IS THE CHILD?

VERONIKA

OH, WILL YOU NOT GIVE HIM TO ME?

PIPER

HOW GIVE YOU YOURS AGAIN,
 AND NOT THE OTHERS?
 WHAT A LIFE FOR HIM! *(She hides her face.)*
 AND KURT THE SYNDIC
 LEFT WITHOUT HIS SONS
 BAH! DO NOT DREAM OF IT!
 WHAT WOULD KURT DO?
 AND HEARKEN HERE!
 SHOULD ANY HUNT ME DOWN,
 TAKE CARE. WHO THEN COULD
 BRING THE CHILDREN BACK?

VERONIKA

JAN! JAN!

PIPER

HE LOVES ME. HE IS HAPPY

VERONIKA

NO! WITHOUT ME? NO

PIPER

HE HAS NOT EVEN ONCE CALLED YOU

VERONIKA

AH! AH...THE SPELL—

PIPER

(Startled,)

REMEMBER—IF ONE WORD OF THINE BETRAY ME
 SET ON THE HOUNDS TO TRACK DOWN
 AND SLAY ME
 THEY WOULD BE LOST FOREVER
 THEY WOULD DIE
 THEY WHO ARE IN MY KEEPING

VERONIKA

THEY ARE ONLY DREAMING—SLEEPING
 WEEPING
 YEA, I HEAR. BUT HE WILL COME...
 OH, HE WILL COME TO ME
 SOON—SOON.....

(She goes, haltingly, along the road to Hamlin—the Piper, alone, stands spellbound, breathing hard and looking after her. Then he turns his head and doggedly crosses the other way. The Three Strollers enter and try to engage him in their dance, but he refuses and exits. They finish their measure and exit as the scene changes.)

Scene 3: The Interior of the Church and the Market Square. *(Early the Next Morning. It is so dark that only a bleak twilight glimmers; the little streets are dim. In Kurt's house, there is one window light behind a curtain in the second story. At their casements, down right and left, sit Old Ursula and Old Claus, wan and motionless as the dead. UR, coming from the church, we hear the Plain Chant.*

The church bell, which likewise seems to have aged, croaks softly twice. Fritz, the sacristan, stands by the bell-rope. Perhaps we actually see the interior of the church, with its gothic arches, stained glass windows, the people kneeling in pools of dim light.)

OLD URSULA

NO, NO. THEY'LL NEVER COME
I TOLD YE SO. THEY ARE ALL
GONE

OLD CLAUS

THERE WILL BE NOTHING YOUNG

TO FOLLOW US TO THE GRAVE

BOTH

NO, NO—NOT ONE!

(They look unnaturally cold and colorless. Martin, Marta, Hilda, Gerda, Irma, Hans, Axel, Franz—all treat each other with painstaking, stricken kindness. They speak in broken voices. FRITZ rings the church bell. ANSELM enters and performs the ritual of the Mass.)

HANS

WELL, WELL—

AXEL

GOD KNOWS! *(The bell sounds again, twice.)*

FRITZ

NEIGHBOR, HOW FARE YOUR KNEES?

(Axel smooths his right leg and gives a jerk of pain—they all move stiffly.)

HANS

FRITZ, GIVE BY THE BELL!

IT TOLLS LIKE—OH,

WELL, WELL!

HERMANN

IT DOES NO GOOD

IT DOES NO GOOD AT ALL

ANSELM

RATHER, I DO BELIEVE IT MADE THE DEMONS

I HAVE GIVEN IT MUCH THOUGHT

FRANZ

—OVER YOUR SHOES!

HILDA

LET HIM CHIRP THEOLOGY

HE HAD NO CHILDREN

ANSELM

I'M AN ALTERED MAN

NOW WERE WE NOT PROCEEDING SOBERLY

SINGING A GODLY HYMN, AND ALL IN TUNE

BUT YESTERDAY, WHEN WE PASSED BY—

GERDA

DON'T SAY IT!

DON'T NAME THAT CURSEFUL PLACE!

FRANZ

AND MY POOR HEAD; IT GOES ROUND YET

AROUND—AROUND—AROUND

AS I WERE NEW ASHORE

FROM THE HIGH SEAS

STILL DANCING—DANCING—

AXEL

NEIGHBOR, SAY NO MORE

MARTIN

EVEN AS YOU HEARD, THE FARMER'S

YOKEL FOUND ME

CLASPING A TREE, AND PRAYING TO

STAND STILL!

AXEL

AYE, AYE—BUT THAT IS NAUGHT

HANS

ALL NAUGHT BESIDE

IRMA

BETTER WE HAD THE RATS AND MICE
AGAIN, THOUGH THEY DID EAT US
HOMELESS—IF WE MIGHT ALL STARVE
TOGETHER!

OH, MY HANSEL! OH, MY GRETLE!

ANSELM

HOPE NOT, GOOD SOULS! REST SURE
THEY WILL NOT COME!

MARTA

WHO WILL SAY THAT?

ANSELM

(Points to the sign on the Rathaus wall.) NOT I! BUT THE INSCRIPTION—

AXEL

OF OUR OWN MAKING?

ANSELM

ON THE RATHAUS WALL!
AT OUR OWN BIDDING IT WAS MADE AND
GRAVED—
HOW ON THAT DAY AND DOWN THIS VERY
STREET
HE LED THEM—HE, IN HIS CLOAK OF MANY
COLORS
THE STRANGE MAN, WITH HIS PIPING
AND THEY WENT—AND NEVER CAME AGAIN!

HILDA

BUT THEY MAY COME!

ANSELM

MARBLE IS FINAL, WOMAN—NAY, POOR SOUL!
WHEN ONCE A MAN BE BURIED, AND OVER HIM
THE STONE DOES READ *HIC JACET*—OR HERE LIES
WHEN DID THAT MAN GET UP?
THERE IS THE STONE
THEY COME NO MORE
FOR PIPING OR FOR PRAYER
UNTIL THE TRUMPET OF THE LORD GABRIEL
AND IF THEY CAME, TIS NOT IN HAMLIN MEN
TO ALTER ANY STONE SO GRAVEN
MARBLE IS FINAL—

FRITZ

THO IT BE COLD COMFORT!
MARBLE HAS THE LAST WORD—EVER

HANS

OH, MY LITTLE ILSE!
OH, AND LUMP—POOR LUMP!
MORE THAN A DOG COULD BEAR—
MORE THAN A DOG—

ANSELM

BEAR UP, SWEET NEIGHBORS

WE ARE ALL BUT DUST
 NO MICE, NO CHILDREN—
 HEM! AND NOW JACOBUS—
 HIS CHILD, NOT EVEN SAFE WITH HOLY CHURCH
 BUT LOST AND GOD KNOWS WHERE!

IRMA

BEWITCHED! BEWITCHED!

GERDA

KIND SAINTS! ME OUT AND GONE TO EARLY MASS
 AND ALL THIS MORTAL CHURCHTIME
 THERE'S A CANDLE
 A CANDLE BURNING IN THE CASEMENT THERE
 YOU WASTEFUL MAN!

MARTIN

COME, COME! DO NOT BE CHIDING
 SUPPOSE THEY CAME HOME AND COULD NOT
 SEE THEIR WAY?
 SUPPOSE—OH, WIFE!
 I THOUGHT THEY'D LOVE THE LIGHT!
 I THOUGHT—

TOWNSPEOPLE

(Individual lines:)

THE TOYS ARE NEGLECTED
 THE GAMES GO UNPLAYED
 THE ONES WE CORRECTED
 WHERE HAVE THEY STRAYED?
 WHERE ONCE THEY SNUGGLED
 ALL SAFE IN THEIR BEDS
 WE WORKED AND WE STRUGGLED
 TO KEEP THEM SHELTERED AND FED

WOMEN

THE CRADLE I'M NO LONGER ROCKING
 NO LITTLE STOCKING DO I MEND
 NO POT OF PORRIDGE DO I TEND

MEN

THERE'S NOT ONE MAN WHO DANGLES
 HIS CHILD UPON HIS KNEE
 NO CLAP OF LITTLE HANDS
 NO MORE THE SLAP OF LITTLE SANDALS
 OR THE PATTERN OF LITTLE FEET
 AS THEY GAMBOLED IN THE STREET...

WOMEN

NO MORE THE SOUND OF LITTLE VOICES
 SINGING—SHOUTING—CRYING—
 SHRILL—OR SWEET—REPLETE—
 PLEADING—NEEDING—MOCKING!
 NO CALL FOR CONSTANT TENDING;
 NO MORE CAUSE FOR MENDING
 A LITTLE STOCKING...

TOWNSPEOPLE

THOUGH THEY WERE SOMETIMES MISCHIEVOUS
 THE NEST IS EMPTY NOW

NOTHING I TROW HAS BEEN SO GRIEVOUS
 THE FLEDLINGS HAVE FLOWN
 I NEVER THOUGHT THAT THEY WOULD LEAVE US
 UNTIL THEY WERE GROWN

FRANZ

Aye, now! There's another light in Kurt the Syndic's house.
(They all turn and look up. Other burghers join the group—all walk lamely and look the picture of wretchedness. The gothic arches and windows disappear.)

MARTA

His wife, poor thing!

WENDE

Dear God, be with her.

GERDA

AYE, FOR ONCE THEY SAY
 KURT 'S STIFF NECK IS BROKEN

HILDA

A TRUER WORD WAS NEVER SPOKEN
OLD URSULA & CLAUS

There will be nothing young to follow us to the grave!

IRMA

They tell, she seems sore stricken..

MARTA

Since the day that she was lost...

WENDE

Lost, searching on the mountain...

GERDA

Since that time, she will be saying naught...

HILDA

She stares and smiles...

MARTA

And reaches out her arms—poor soul!

ALL

POOR SOUL!

(Murmur in the distance. They do not hear it.)

AXEL

That was no foolish thought of thine—yon candle—I do remember now as I look back...they always loved the lights.

MY RUDI THERE WOULD AYE BE
 MEDDLING WITH MY TINDERBOX—
 TO SEE THE SPARK!
 AND ONCE—I—OH! *(Choking.)*

HILDA

NOW, NOW! YOU DID NOT HURT HIM!
 TWAS I! OH, ONCE—I SHUT HIM IN
 THE DARK!

AXEL

COME HOME...AND LIGHT THE CANDLES

ANSELM

IN THE DAY LIGHT?

TOWNSPEOPLE

(Individual lines:) LORD KNOWS, WHO MADE BOTH NIGHT

AND DAY, ONE OF 'EM NEEDS TO SHINE
 BUT NOTHING DOES!
 NOTHING IS DAYLIGHT NOW...
 DON'T BOLT THE DOOR...
 LEAVE THE KEY IN THE LATCH...
 IS THERE NOTHING MORE
 THAN FETCH THE TAPER?
 STRIKE THE MATCH...
 THEY NO LONGER CAPER...
 LISTEN CLOSELY...
 THERE MAY BE THE ECHO OF GHOSTLY LAUGHTER
 THAT WE CAN STILL HEAR
 IN AFTERYEAR...

(Together:) COME, WIFE (MAN), WE'LL LIGHT THE CANDLES!

ANSELM

WOE BETIDE!
 WITH JESUS NOW THEY BIDE!

FRITZ

(Referring to Anselm:) HE'S AN ALTERED MAN!
 GOD, HELP US—WHAT'S TO DO?

(There is a tumult off UCR. Shouts of "Jacobus!" and "Barbara!")
 HARK! *(He starts ringing the bell, again.)*

IRMA

NEIGHBORS!

HANS

HARK! HARK!

GERDA

OH, I HEAR SOMETHING—CAN IT BE?

FRANZ

THEY'RE SHOUTING

HANS

MY LAMBS—MY LAMBS!

AXEL

(Re-enters, crestfallen.) Tis naught—but Barbara ! His—his! *(Shaking his fist at the house of Jacobus:)* Jacobus!

(The others are stricken with disappointment.)

MARTA

TIS NONE OF OURS!

MARTIN

LET HIM SNORE ON—THE ONLY MAN WOULD
 RATHER SLEEP LATE THAN MEET HIS ONLY
 CHILD AGAIN!

ANSELM

No man may parley with the gifts of God! *(Knocking on his door,)* Jacobus!
(Barbara and Michael enter UC, radiant and resolute, followed by a straggling crowd. She wears the Piper's cloak over her wedding dress. Jacobus appears in his doorway, wearing his nightgown, a fur-trimmed robe and nightcap, shrinking from the hostile crowd. Cheat-the-Devil, in peasant clothes, darts about, listening. The people murmur.)

CROWD

Barbara—she that was bewitched! And who's the man? Is that the Piper? No! No! No! Some stranger! Barbara! Barbara's home—he never gave her up! Who is the man?

JACOBUS

My daughter! Tis my daughter—found—restored—oh! Heaven is with us!

ALL

(Sullenly,) Ah!

JACOBUS

Child, where have you been?

ALL

Aye, Jacobus, where?

JACOBUS

(He is dismayed.) Who is this man? Come hither!

BARBARA

(Lifting her head proudly, without approaching him:) Good morning to you, Father! We are wed—*(Aside, to him:)* Michael—shall I go thither?

(The Townsfolk are amazed.)

JACOBUS

She is mad! She is quite mad—my treasure... who is this man?

ANSELM

Let her speak. Maids sometimes marry—even in Hamlin.

ALL

Aye, tell us! Who is he? Barbara, are you mad? How came you hither?

JACOBUS

Who is he, pray?

BARBARA

My own true love.

JACOBUS

Now, is that all his name?

BARBARA

It is enough.

JACOBUS

She's mad. Shall these things be? Who is he?

BARBARA

Michael—

(Michael and Barbara try to duck into the crowd and escape.)

ALL

The sword-eater! A friend of the Piper's—hearken! Don't let them go! We have them! Aye, there he is! We have him! We have him! help—help! Hold fast! Ah! How now! What all—take him! 'Ware! Save us! They have him! Help! Mark ye! I caught him—help—and hold him! Fast!

BARBARA

Mercy! Let him go! Oh, let him go—let be—his heart is pure as water from the well—

ALL

She talks in her sleep! The maid's bewitched! Now, will ye hear? Kurt! Kurt! *(He enters.)*

KURT

This is the girl that was vowed to Holy Church, for us and for our children that are lost!

BARBARA

Aye! And did any of you have a mind to me when I was lost? Left dancing and distraught?

ALL

We could not. We were spellbound. Nay, we could not.

JACOBUS

(Sagely, after the others:) We could not! (Cheat-the-Devil makes good his escape.)

BARBARA

So! But there was one who could. There was one man—and this is he! And I—I am no you're your Barbara! I am his—and I will go with him—all over the world! I came to say farewell!

JACOBUS

He has bewitched her!

BARBARA

Why did we ever come? Poor darling one! My too-much duty has us in a trap—

ALL

No, no! Fair play! Don't let them go! We have them!

KURT

Hold what you have! Be it children, rats, mice, or money! Hie him to the jail—Jacobus, put her under lock and key until we have tracked and trapped the Piper—

ALL

PIPER! PIPER! PIPER! HE PIPED AND MADE
US DANCE! TWAS HE BEWITCHED US!
HE PIPED AWAY OUR CHILDREN AND OUR
LIVES! I TOLD YOU SO—AYE! AYE! I TOLD
SO! PIPER! PIPER! PIPER!

(They exit as the scene changes.)

Scene 4: The Crossroads. *(Immediately following. Cheat-the-Devil communicates to the Piper what has just transpired. He exits and the Piper comes down center, doggedly. He pauses. With a sudden sharp effort he turns, and crosses with passionate appeal to the shrine, his arms uplifted towards the figure of Christ, as if warding off some accusation. His speech comes in a torrent.)*

PIPER

I WILL NOT, NO, I WILL NOT, LONELY MAN!
I HAVE THEM IN MY HAND. I HAVE THEM ALL—
ALL—ALL! AND I HAVE LIVED UNTO THIS DAY
YOU UNDERSTAND.....

(He waits, as if for some reply.)

YOU KNOW WHAT MEN THEY ARE
WHAT HAVE THEY TO DO WITH
SUCH AS THESE?
THINK OF THOSE OLD AS DEATH
IN BODY AND HEART
HUGGING THEIR WRETCHED
HOARDINGS, IN COLD FEAR

OF MOTH AND RUST!
 WHILE THESE MIRACULOUS ONES
 LIKE GOLDEN CREATURES MADE
 OF SUNSET CLOUD
 GO OUT FOREVER—EVERY DAY
 FADE BY
 WITH MUSIC AND WILD STARS
 AH, BUT YOU KNOW
 THE HERMIT TOLD ME ONCE
 YOU LOVED THEM, TOO
 BUT I KNOW MORE THAN HE
 HOW YOU MUST LOVE THEM
 THEIR LAUGHTER AND THEIR
 BUBBLING, SKY LARK WORDS
 TO COOL YOUR HEART
 OH, LISTEN, LONELY MAN!

(We hear the sound of the Children, singing, behind the scrim, which becomes transparent. They are seen dancing inside the Hollow Hill—all of them—even Jan, without his crutch, dancing with Cheat-the-Devil.)

OH, LET ME KEEP THEM!
 I WILL BRING THEM TO YOU
 STILL NIGHTS, AND BREATHLESS MORNINGS
 THEY SHALL TOUCH YOUR HANDS AND FEET
 WITH ALL THEIR SWARMING HANDS
 LIKE SHOWERING PETALS WARM ON
 FURROWED GROUND—
 ALL SWEETNESS!
 THEY WILL MAKE THEE WHOLE AGAIN
 WITH LOVE
 YOU WILL LOOK UP AND SMILE ON US!

(In his mind, the Piper equates Jan with Christ—and with himself. We see another section of the dance behind the scrim; this time, in Hamlin, Jan and Veronika are featured, with the Players. We may also see Barbara in the custody of the Nuns, who are scourging her; Michael has been turned over to the gentle care of the Priests, who have suspended him in chains from a section of wall—upside down—and nude. The three Strollers enter, striking down the townspeople, with the assistance of the Tarts, who wear grave-clothes and masks—one shows a pock-marked face, the second shows streaks of blood; the third is skull-faced—their victims are Kurt, Jacobus & Anselm.)

WHY NOT? I KNOW—THE HALF—YOU WILL
 BE SAYING
 YOU WILL BE THINKING OF YOUR MOTHER—
 AH! BUT SHE WAS DIFFERENT—SHE WAS NOT
 AS THEY
 SHE WAS MORE LIKE...THIS ONE, THE WIFE OF
 KURT!
 OF KURT! NO, NO; ASK ME NOT THIS, NOT THIS!
 HERE IS SOME DAWN OF DAY FOR HAMLIN—
 NOW!
 TIS HEARTS OF MEN YOU WANT
 NOT GREED, AND CARVEN TOMBS, NOT MISERS'
 CANDLES

NO OFFERINGS, MORE, FROM MEN WHO FEED ON
 MEN
 ETERNAL PSALMS AND ENDLESS CRUELTIES!
 EVEN FROM NOW, THERE MAY BE HEARTS IN
 HAMLIN
 ONCE STABBED AWAKE!

(He pleads, defends, excuses passionately, before his will gives way, as the arrow flies from the bowstring.)

I WILL NOT GIVE THEM BACK!
 AND JAN—FOR JAN, THAT LITTLE ONE, THAT
 DEAREST TO THEE AND ME, HARK!
 HE IS WONDERFUL!
 ASK IT NOT OF ME
 THOU DOST KNOW I CANNOT!

(There is another dance section here, which takes place in Barbara's Garden, featuring her and Michael—they are carried off—by the Strollers, and the Tarts, respectively.)

LOOK, LONELY MAN! YOU SHALL HAVE ALL
 OF US
 TO WANDER THE WORLD OVER, WHERE YOU
 STAND
 AT ALL THE CROSSWAYS, AND ON LONELY
 HILLS—
 OUTSIDE THE CHURCHES, WHERE THE LOST
 ONES GO!
 AND THE WAYFARING MEN, AND THIEVES,
 AND WOLVES
 AND LONELY CREATURES, AND THE ONES
 THAT SING!
 WE WILL SHOW ALL MEN WHAT WE HEAR
 AND SEE
 AND WE WILL MAKE THE LIFT THY HEAD
 AND SMILE...

(Once more, behind the scrim, we see the Townspeople in the Market Square, as they were at the beginning of the preceding scene, dejected and depressed. The vision fades.)

NO, NO, I CANNOT GIVE THEM ALL! NO, NO—
 WHY WILT THOU ASK IT?
 LET ME KEEP BUT ONE
 NO, NO, I WILL NOT...*(The music builds.)*
 HAVE THY WAY—I WILL!

(The Three Strollers enter, and this time, finally, the Piper joins them in their dance. They exit and the scrim flies out.)

Scene 5: Market Square at Hamlin. *(That Same Morning. The Townspeople are posed exactly as they were before. There are hubbub and shouts. Some of the men rush out and drag the struggling Piper onstage.)*

ALL

Aye, there he is! We have him! We have him! Help—help! Hold fast!

AH! PIPER! PIPER! PIPER!

How now? What's all—

MICHAEL

(From the window of his jail cell in the Rathaus,) Save us! They have him!

ALL

Mark ye! I caught him! Help—and hold him fast!

PIPER

I came here—frog!

ALL

Aye, he were coming on! And after him a squirrel hopping close! And no man ever saw a squirrel hop—near any man from Hamlin! And I looked and it was he! And we all rushed upon him—and take him!

PIPER

Loose your claws, I tell thee!

ALL

THE CHILDREN! THE CHILDREN!
WHERE ARE THE CHILDREN?
PIPER! PIPER! PIPER!

PIPER

QUIET YOU. AND HEAR ME
I CAME TO BRING GOOD
TIDINGS—CHIDINGS
IN GOOD FAITH
OF MINE OWN WILL I CAME
AND LIKE A THIEF
YOU HAVE HAILED ME
HITHER—
YOUR CHILDREN—LIVE!

ALL

THANK GOD! I KNEW, I KNEW!
WE COULD NOT THINK THEM
LOST! WE COULD NOT COUNT
THE COST! BEWITCHED!
OH, BUT THEY LIVE!
PIPER! O PIPER!

KURT

They are spellbound! Mark me!

PIPER

AYE, THEY ARE—SPELLBOUND:
FAST BOUND BY ALL THE HARDNESS
OF YOUR HEARTS; CAGED—IN THE
IRON OF YOUR MONEY-LUST—

ALL

NO, NO, NOT ALL! NOT MINE, NOT MINE!
NO, NO—IT IS NOT TRUE

PIPER

YOUR BLASPHEMIES—YOUR CUNNING
AND YOUR FEAR

ALL

NO, NO—WHAT CAN WE DO?
NEWS, PIPER, NEWS!
THE CHILDREN!

PIPER

NOW HEAR ME. YOU DID MAKE JACOBUS
SWEAR TO GIVE HIS CHILD—WHAT RECKS
IT, HOW HE LOSE HER—EITHER TO HOLY
CHURCH—AGAINST HER WILL—OR TO
THIS MAN—SO THAT HE GIVE HER UP!
HE SWORE TO YOU
AND SHE HAS PLEDGED HER FAITH
SHE IS FAST WED—JACOBUS SHALL NOT
HAVE HER
HE BREAKS ALL BARGAINS; AND FOR

SUCH AS HE, YOU SUFFER
WILL YOU BEAR IT?

ALL

NO, NO, NO!

PIPER

THEN SHE WHO WAS "PROUD BARBARA"
DOES WED MICHAEL-THE-SWORD-EATER
THE PLEDGE SHALL STAND
SHALL IT? YOUR WORD!

ALL

IT STANDS! AYE, AYE!
WE SWEAR. WE ANSWER FOR HIM—
SO MUCH FOR JACOBUS!

AXEL

AND IF YON FELLOW LIKE AN HONEST
TRADE, I'LL TAKE HIM—I'LL MAKE SWORDS!

(Cheers.)

ALL

QUICK, QUICK! OUR CHILDREN! PIPER! TELL
US ALL!

PIPER

TIS WELL BEGUN—NOW I HAVE COME TO SAY
THERE IS ONE CHILD I MAY BRING BACK TO
YOU—THE FIRST—

ALL

MINE—MINE! LET IT BE MINE! OURS! ALL OF
THEM! NOW! MINE—MINE—MINE—MINE!

PIPER

OH, HAMLIN TO THE END! WHICH OF YOU
LONGED THE MOST, AND DARED THE MOST?
WHICH OF YOU—*(He scans the crowd.)*

ALL

I! I! I!
WE SEARCHED THE HILLS!
WE PRAYED FOR DAYS!
WE FASTED TWENTY HOURS—
MINE! MINE!
MINE—MINE—MINE—MINE!

PIPER

NOT YET—THEY ALL DO LIVE UNDER A SPELL
DEEP IN A HOLLOW HILL THEY SLEEP—
AND WAKE; AND LEAD A CHARM-ED LIFE!
AWAY FROM THE STORM AND STRIFE
BUT FIRST OF ALL—ONE CHILD SHALL COME
AGAIN. *(He scans the crowd, again.)*

Where is the wife—Veronika—of Kurt the Councilor?

ALL

NO, MINE, MINE, MINE!

GERDA

What, that lame boy of hers?

PIPER

Where is the wife of Kurt?

HILDA & OTHERS

Veronika? The foreign woman? She is lying ill; sore-stricken yonder. (*Pointing to Kurt's house.*)

PIPER

Bid her come out, look you!

(The Crowd moves confusedly toward Kurt's house. The Piper approaches, calling.)

Ho—ho, within there!

KURT

(Appearing in the doorway with uplifted hand, commanding silence. He is pale and stern.)

Silence here! Good people—what means this?

PIPER

I have tidings for Veronika—the wife of Kurt—the Syndic.

KURT

You are too late!

PIPER

Bid her—look out!

KURT

Her soul is passing now—

(The Piper falls back, stricken and speechless. The Crowd, seeing him humanly overwhelmed, grows brave.) Tis he has done it!

ANSELM

Nay, it is God's will—poor soul!

ALL

Don't anger him! Twas Kurt the Syndic with his bad bargain! Do not cross the Piper! Nay, but he's spent. He's nought to fear! Look there. Mark how he breathes! Upon him! Help, help, ho—You piping knave! Tie—chain him! Kill him! Kill him! *(They surround him. He pushes them away.)*

KURT

Bind him, but do not kill him! *(The PIPER begins to mumble. They back away.)*

JACOBUS

Oh, beware! What is he saying? Peace!

PIPER

(Brokenly,)

THE WIFE OF KURT! OFF! WHAT CAN
YOU DO? OH, I CAME, I CAME HERE
FULL OF PEACE, AND WITH A HEART
OF LOVE—TO GIVE—BUT NOW THAT
ONE LIVE SOUL OF ALL IS GONE—
NO, NO!
I SAY SHE SHALL NOT DIE!

ANSELM

Hush! She is in the hands of God. She is at peace.

PIPER

NO, NEVER! LET ME BY!

(Anselm and Kurt bar the way, preventing him entering the house.)

KURT

You forward fool! *(Goes back inside his house.)*

ANSELM

WOULD YOU REND WITH TEARS AGAIN
HER SHRIVEN BREATH? AND DRAG HER
BACK TO SORROW?
IT IS THE WILL OF GOD!

PIPER

AND I SAY NO!

ANSELM

Who dares dispute—

PIPER

I dare!

ANSELM

With death? With God?

PIPER

I KNOW HIS WILL FOR ONCE

SHE SHALL NOT DIE.

SHE MUST COME BACK AND LIVE!

VERONIKA! *(He calls up to the lighted window. The Crowd is aghast.)*

I COME, I COME! I BRING YOUR OWN TO YOU!

LISTEN VERONIKA!

(He feels for his pipe. It is gone—his face shows dismay for a moment.)

WHERE? WHERE?

PEOPLE

HE'S LOST THE PIPE—HE'S HIDING IT!

HE CANNOT PIPE THEM BACK! TIS GONE—

TIS GONE—NO, TIS TO SAVE HIS LIFE—

IT IS FOR TIME—

PIPER

TIS BUT A VOICE. WHAT MATTER?

PEOPLE

SEIZE HIM! BIND HIM!

PIPER

HUSH! *(Passionately, he stretches his arms towards the window.)*

ANSELM

PEACE, FOR THIS DEPARTING SOUL!

PIPER

SHE SHALL NOT GO! VERONIKA—

AH, LISTEN! WIFE OF KURT—

HE COMES—HE COMES!

OPEN YOUR EYES A MOMENT—

BLOW THE FAINT

FIRE WITHIN YOUR HEART!

HE COMES! YOUR

LONGING BRINGS HIM—

AYE, AND MINE—AND

MINE! OH, DO YOU LISTEN?

DO NOT TRY TO

ANSWER—

LIVE, LIVE—AND LAUGH ONCE MORE!

SING TO THEM WITH YOUR HEART

VERONIKA!

AS I GO PIPING—FAR AWAY—LIVE!

ANSELM

Tis not seemly to bargain with Providence!

(A faint sound of piping comes from the distance—the PIPER is at first watchful—then radiant—the CROWD are awe-struck, as it comes nearer.)

VERONIKA

(Weakly, from offstage:) I HEAR! I HEAR!

BARBARA

Listen! His very tune!

(The Piper faces front, with fixed, triumphant eyes above the crowd.)

CROWD

Oh, Lord have mercy! The pipe is coming to him through the air! Tis coming to the Piper—we are lost—the pipe is coming

COMING—COMING THROUGH THE AIR!

(The Piper, with a sudden gesture, commands silence. He bounds away, UC, through the Crowd, and disappears. The people, spellbound with terror, murmur and pray.)

ANSELM

Retro me, Sathanas! Get thee behind me, Satan!

(Kurt appears on the threshold behind Anselm), whose arm he touches, whispering with him and Jacobus, who has joined them. Their faces are wonderstruck with hope and awe.)

CROWD

Kurt the Syndic! Tis Veronika! Then she lives! Look there! Look! Look! The casement!

(The casement of the lighted window opens wide and slowly. The Piper re-enters with Jan in his arms. The little boy, dressed in motley like the Piper, holds the pipe in his hands, smiling at everyone with tranquil happiness. The Piper, radiant with joy, lifts him high, looking at Veronika's window. The awe-struck people point to the open casement. Jan hands the pipe back to its rightful owner. Veronika's white hands reach out; then she appears, pale, but shining with ecstasy.)

JAN

Tis Mother!

(The Piper steps up on a bench outside the door and lifts Jan into the arms of Veronika. Kurt, Anselm and Jacobus bow their heads. There is a hush—then Jan looks down from the window-seat.)

PIPER

And all the others?

JAN

They were all asleep!

PIPER

I'll waken them!

(He takes his pipe—there is a roar of joy among the people.)

ALL

BRING LIGHTS—BRING LIGHTS!

OH, PIPER! OH, MY LAMBS!

THE CHILDREN! THE CHILDREN!

(Some rush out madly; others go into their houses for lights; some are left on their knees, weeping for joy. MICHAEL is released from jail.

The Piper sounds a few notes; then lifts up his hand and listens, smiling—Uproar in the distance—dogs barking—shouts and cheering; the high, sweet voices of the Children. The piping is drowned out in cries of joy.

The Children pour in. Some are carried; some run hand-in-hand. The sun comes out, rosy, in a flood of light. Kurt, Jacobus & Anselm—hugging each other—laugh, and cry. Everywhere, women embrace their own—Kurt embraces his sons—Cheat-the-Devil comes on, with a daisy chain around his neck, all smiles.)

KURT

The treasure for the Piper!

ALL

AYE, AYE, THE PIPER!

(*Produces the purse.*)

JACOBUS
THE THOUSAND GUILDERS!

PIPER
GIVE THEM MICHAEL THERE
FOR ALL US THREE—I HATE
TO CARRY THINGS—SAVING
OUT ONE! (*He holds up the pipe.*)

(*Jan leans out the window and points to something on the ground.*)

HEYAH! WHAT NOW? (*Picks up one of Jan's winged shoes.*)

CROWD
LOOK! LOOK—AND WINGS UPON IT
MERCY WHAT A SHOE—
DON'T GIVE IT BACK—
THE CHILD WILL FLY AWAY!

PIPER

No, No! (*Looks up at Veronika (wife of Kurt (councilor)) in the window.*) He only wanted one to show—

JAN

To Mother! See—(*Showing her his no-longer lame foot, joyously.*)

PIPER

(*Holding up the shoe,*) And this—we'll leave it here? Here—with—

JAN

The lonely man—

VERONIKA

That will make him smile!
(*The Piper crosses up to the shrine by the church door and hangs the shoe there, then turns back to Jan and waves. He starts to exit. The Children run and cling to him. He shoos them away.*)

MICHAEL

Where are you going?

BABARA

Ah, the high-road now!

CHEAT-THE-DEVIL

Oh! Why? Can't we stay?

PIPER
I HAVE TO FIND SOMEBODY THERE
YES, NOW AND EVERY DAY
AND EVERYWHERE
THE WIDE WORLD OVER
SO; GOOD NIGHT—GOOD MORNING—
GOODBYE!
THERE'S SO MUCH PIPING LEFT
TO DO
I MUST BE OFF AND PIPE...

MICHAEL

All this, your work!

PIPER
NOT MINE! THIS IS NO CHARM
IT IS ALL YOUTH—NO GRIEF
NO WEARINESS—THO BRIEF
ITS CHEERINESS—THERE'S
RELIEF

SHE SHALL FOLLOW YOU
 AND BE YOUR BRIDE
 BOTH OF YOU SHALL BIDE
 AND I MUST GO TO FOLLOW
VERONIKA & JAN

Oh, Why? What?

PIPER

(Spoken) I promised—Look you!

MICHAEL, BARBARA & CHEAT-THE-DEVIL

Who is it? What is it?

PIPER

Why—the lonely man—and the rainbow!

(He waves farewell and goes. The Children dance and laugh, as the rest of the Cast join in. Suddenly, they all freeze at the sound of the pipe in the distance. The Market Square disappears and the scene changes.)

Epilogue: Elsewhere in the Holy Roman Empire. *(We are in the same limbo we saw at the beginning of the show. The Three Strollers enter, then the rest of the Players, with their pageant wagons—all in the direction opposite from which they originally entered. They pass thru the trees, past the castle, etc. At last, the Piper is seen following them. He pauses as Jan and Veronika, who are both dressed in motley, enter. The three of them exit together. We may hear the Plain Chant again, in counterpoint with the Piper's theme, and the curtain falls. It rises again, quickly, for the Bows, which are all danced.)*

FULL COMPANY

WE'LL CROSS THE RAINBOW BRIDGE BY DAY
 AND BORROW A SHEPHERD-CROOK!
 AT NIGHT WE TAKE TO THE MILKY WAY
 AND THEN WE FOLLOW THE BROOK
 WE'LL FOLLOW THE BROOK WHEREVER WE MAY
 THE BROOK SHALL SING OR THE SUN SHALL SAY
 OR THE MOTHERING WOOD DOVE COOS
 AND WHAT DO I CARE, WHAT ELSE I WEAR
 WHAT OTHER LIFE WOULD I EVER CHOOSE
 IF I CAN KEEP MY RAINBOW SHOES!

(They freeze. The curtain comes down for the last time.)

