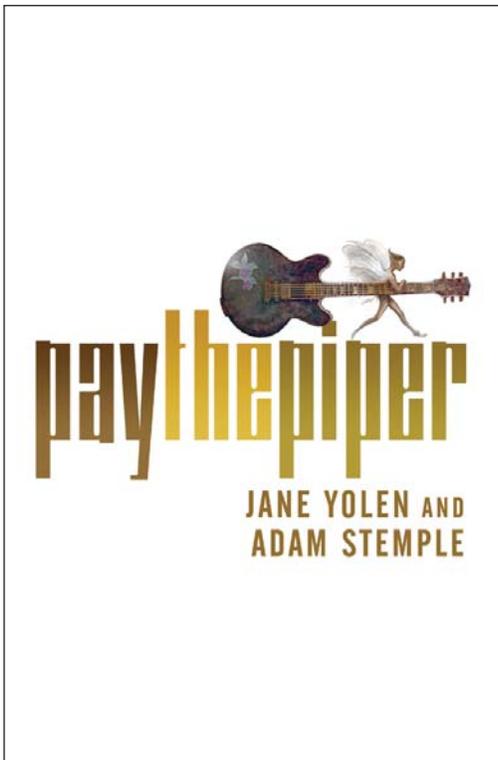




## Jane Yolen and Adam Stemple

### Pay the Piper



176 pages • 0-765-35041-6

“Grim and great,  
this retelling whetted my  
appetite for more.”

—HOLLY BLACK, AUTHOR OF THE *NEW YORK TIMES*  
BESTSELLING *SPIDERWICK CHRONICLES*

### ABOUT THE AUTHORS



PHOTO: JASON STEMPLE

**Jane Yolen** has written more than 270 books, including Caldecott Medal winning *Owl Moon* and Caldecott Honor Book, *The Emperor and the Kite*. A songwriter, folklorist, and storyteller, Ms. Yolen has received two Nebula Awards, two Christopher Medals, and the World Fantasy Award, among others. She lives in Hatfield, Massachusetts and St Andrews, Scotland. Jane’s website is at [www.janeyolen.com](http://www.janeyolen.com).



PHOTO: LISA JASTER

**Adam Stemple** is a professional musician, record producer, and member of several Minneapolis-based bands. An avid writer, *Pay the Piper* is his first book for children—and his first novel collaboration with his mother, Jane Yolen. Adam’s website is at [www.adamstemple.com](http://www.adamstemple.com).

### ABOUT *PAY THE PIPER*

An ancient legend and a modern mystery converge in this rocking retelling of the Pied Piper fairy tale. When aspiring teen journalist Callie McCallan attends a press conference of the legendary band Brass Rat, she senses something unusual. Backstage after the concert, Callie overhears the band members engaged in a bizarre conversation. Silver, gold, human souls, blood guilt, a mysterious “teind”—what can these strange words mean? And what is the true identity of the mesmerizing band leader Peter Gringras? Determined to unravel the truth behind Brass Rat, Callie stays home on Halloween night to write a school newspaper article about the band. Meanwhile, the rest of the town’s children disappear. While her reporter’s pragmatic instincts do internal battle with memories of folktales told by her grandmother, Callie struggles to sort truth from fantasy as she follows a musical trail in search of the vanished children.

This richly layered rendering of the Pied Piper tale cast into modern-day surroundings challenges readers to consider the existence—and, perhaps, importance—of a place where fact and imagination can collide.

## ABOUT THIS GUIDE

The information, activities, and discussion questions which follow are intended to enhance your reading of *Pay the Piper*. Please feel free to adapt these materials to suit your needs and interests.

## WRITING AND RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

### I. THE PIED PIPER

**A.** The Pied Piper legend has been told in many languages and cultures. Go to the library or online to learn more about this famous story, its history, and theories about its meaning. Then create a reading list of Pied Piper-based stories and poems from other lands, from England to China. Or make a listening list of folk songs, rock tunes, and even orchestral pieces inspired by the story.

**B.** After completing section IA above, write a short essay in which you share your thoughts as to why the Pied Piper story has gripped the imaginations of so many people, in so many places, through time.

**C.** Research and plan a trip to Hameln, Germany, to learn more about the Pied Piper. How will you get there? Where will you stay? Where and what might you eat? What places will you visit to continue your exploration of the Pied Piper story? Use a computer to create a brochure detailing your itinerary complete with maps and other illustrations.

**D.** Imagine you are one of the children lured away by Peter Gringras in *Pay the Piper*. Write a paragraph in which you describe the power of the piper and why you followed him.

### II. REALITY AND FANTASY

**A.** Callie struggles with the possibility that her grandmother's folktales may have been more than simple fiction stories. Write a soliloquy (speech for one person) in which you, as Callie, ponder this problem aloud, supporting your thoughts with research if desired. Perform your soliloquy for classmates or friends. If possible, listen to the soliloquies of others, then discuss the points made in the different speeches.

**B.** Using a dictionary, encyclopedia, or online resources, find definitions for the terms: fairy tale, fantasy, folk tale, legend, reality, teind, and additional words of your choice. Write each word and definition on an index card. Spread the cards on the floor or arrange them on a bulletin board. As Callie's journalism teacher suggests, try "noodling" with these concepts, allowing your mind to play with the information you have researched. Write down any thoughts you may have in the form of a report, opinion-based essay, fiction story, poem, or even a drawing.

**C.** The novel *Pay the Piper* contains the narratives of two very different people: Callie McCallan and Peter Gringras. Create a large, two-columned chart headed with the names of these characters. Use the chart to compare and contrast Callie and Gringras in terms of their families, friends, talents and goals, thoughts, feelings, and experiences of the human and Faerie protagonists of the story.

### III. THE LAND OF FAERIE

**A.** Gringras and Alabas hail from the land of Faerie, reached from the human world via a river of blood. Write a short essay in which you explain the land of Faerie as you understand it. What might Faerie represent in terms of the human world?

**B.** Draw two sketches of Faerie: one enchanted and one as Callie sees it at the end of the story. Use pencil, pastels, water colors, or other media of your choice.

**C.** Page back through the story to create a list of the types of magic and enchantments employed by Gringras. Use this list as the basis for a class or group discussion of whether or not you would like to have Gringras's magical powers.

**D.** At the end of the story, some of the children who were abducted to pay Gringras's teind choose to stay in Faerie. Write a paragraph explaining the choice you would have made had you been one of those children.

#### IV. ROCK AND ROLL

A. *Pay the Piper* is a “Rock ‘n’ Roll Fairy Tale.” Make a list of the ways in which rock music and musicians are key elements of the story.

B. Gringras’s songs express his feelings of isolation and observations about magic. Write your own lyrics exploring the way you feel about an aspect of your life. Set your lyrics to original music, or to the tune of a favorite rock or folk song.

C. Select a song that has made a strong impression on you. Write 2-3 paragraphs describing how the song makes you feel, when you first heard it, and other thoughts about the tune, the lyrics, and the musicians performing it.

D. Through his music, Gringras seems to wield the power to lure children away from their communities. With a small group of friends or classmates, create a poster entitled “The Power of Music.” Combine word lists, photographs and/or collages of magazine clippings to depict your understanding of the power of music.

#### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. In Chapter 1, the piper reflects on the word “exile.” From what place is he exiled? What does the term exile mean to you?
2. Who is Callie McCallan? What sets Callie apart from the rest of her family? In what ways, if any, does Callie seem different from her friends?
3. Why do you think the authors chose to intersperse the story of modern-day Callie at a Brass Rat rock concert with the ancient, painful memories of band leader Peter Gringras? How does this style affect your understanding of both narratives?
4. Did you have difficulty understanding the old Scots words used in the story? What old words most intrigued you? Why do you think the authors chose to incorporate this type of language into the novel?
5. What tale about a brass rat does Gringras tell in Chapter 7? Why do you think he tells this story? What is Callie’s reaction to the story?
6. What things does Callie observe and overhear that raise her suspicions about Brass Rat? What is significant about Callie’s thought that what she has overheard is “real life...Not one of Granny Kirkpatrick’s fairy tales which used to scare me out of sleeping”?

7. How does Chapter 10, “Souls,” link the Pied Piper legend to Peter Gringras?

8. When Callie appeals to her friends for help understanding Alabas’s backstage words, Allison mentions the folk song “Tam Lin.” What is important about the linking of this folk tale to Gringras’s story?

9. Why isn’t Callie abducted with the other children? Who helps Callie find the missing kids? Why do you think he offers his help?

10. En route to Faerie, Gringras tells Callie and Scott the story of killing his brother, which has also been woven throughout the novel. Is the piper most jealous of his older brother, his younger brother, or of something else all together?

11. The lyrics of “Glamour” state: “I put the magic on this spot/So what you see and think you’ve got,/And what you fear is what is not,/ When morning finally comes.” Can these lyrics also be understood in terms of the interplay between journalistic, factual understanding and some sort of belief in folktales, legends and lore which have endured centuries of retelling?

12. In Chapter 16, Callie realizes that, as the middle child of three, she often felt, “Not loved, but owned. Not cared about but cared for.” Compare this with Gringras’s sense of being the middle child, and with his observation that medieval children sold into slavery suffered “Death in life” while those he brought Under the Hill to Faerie endured “Life in death.”

13. At several points in the story, Gringras recalls being deemed “talented.” Why does this seem like a bad thing to the piper? Would you be sorry or glad to have Gringras’s musical talents?

14. What is the river of blood across which Callie and Scott follow Gringras and Alabas? What is Callie’s first impression of Gringras’s father?

15. Why do you think Callie is the human that “kens what faeries see”? What do faeries see?

16. How does Callie break the curse?

17. Do the Brass Rat lyrics seem different when read in and then out of the context of the story? Do any songs seem particularly relevant to your own life? Explain your answer.

18. After returning home, Callie realizes that no one would believe an article she wrote about the river of blood and the rest of her night's experience. She decides to call it fiction—or “faction.” What would you call Callie's story and why?

19. At the novel's end, Gringras seems to regret the breaking of the curse. What does this reveal about Faerie? Why does Gringras seem to have lost his talent? What observations might the authors be encouraging readers to make about human life?

20. Do you believe in magic? Do you think the authors believe in magic? Why or why not?

## PRAISE FOR *PAY THE PIPER*

“A smart and stubborn girl reporter unravels an ancient elvish curse and sets a rock and roll Pied Piper to rights in this modern day fantasy wild ride—I roared right through it!”

—TAMORA PIERCE, AUTHOR OF *TRICKSTER'S QUEEN*

“Music, magic, and the middle child of three—these make a gripping combination. I couldn't put this book down.”

—DIANA WYNNE JONES, AUTHOR OF *HOWL'S MOVING CASTLE*

“Music, magic, and mayhem! Jane Yolen's deep knowledge of world myth and Adam Stemple's mastery of world music combine to phantasmagorical effect in this faerie-fueled tale of two worlds.”

—BRUCE COVILLE, AUTHOR OF *MY TEACHER IS AN ALIEN*

“Music, magic, curses, and courage: *Pay the Piper* is my kind of book, and Callie McCallan is my kind of hero!”

—EMMA BULL, AUTHOR OF *WAR FOR THE OAKS*

“Jane Yolen, a mistress of fantasy, has teamed up with her rock-and-roll musician son to develop a series crossing classic tales with contemporary music. This debut effort is a thriller.” —*THE WASHINGTON POST*

“Veteran storyteller Yolen works with her musician son on this new interpretation of the Pied Piper of Hamelin story that will intrigue those...who enjoy retellings of familiar stories or are lured by tales of the Faerie realm.”

—VOYA

“A rollicking good riff on the Pied Piper.... An entertaining as well as meaty read.” —*BOOKLIST*

“This swift and entertaining read...skillfully blends ancient magic with music and contemporary teen life.”

—*KLIATT*