

# MUNCH-MAUSEN TALES



A Role-Playing diversion of rambunctious rats, rapier wit and romantic entanglement.

*By JJ Prince*

# MUNCH-MAUSEN TALES

DEDICATED TO  
MICHAEL SHEARD

A fine tale-spinner.

Role-playing conventions will never be the same without  
Mr Bronson.

# MUNCH-MAUSEN TALES

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# MUNCH-MAUSEN TALES

## ONCE MORE UNTO THE GAME...

In this endeavour, termed by some a role-playing game, you the merry players take the role of one of those intrepid daredevils the Munch-Mausen. Indeed the Munch-Mausen account for the entire company. There is no need for a shadowy Games-Master, lingering like some po-faced god...

In Munch-Mausen Tales, you play a pack of trans-dimensional swashbuckling were-rats. You're trying to impress this hot demon chick, so she'll go on a date with you. This sort of thing usually ends in a punch up but who knows, maybe it'll be different this time...

## LIMBO'S FINEST ALE HOUSE

You've just returned from a series of fantastical adventures (at least that's what you tell everyone). It's the quasi-dimensional inter-species mixed ball tonight - and none of you have a date. You're nursing your collective sorrows at the local watering hole, The Existentialist's Head, Limbo's finest ale house. Then in walks Siouxsie, the hottest succubus you've ever seen. You're trying to mentally work out the potential level drain when she approaches your table -

"Hey guys - I'm like, really into furrries, so I was wondering if one of you wanted to take me to the ball tonight? Like all the banshees have dates and won't stop wailing, I need a date too. So, who should get me? I mean like, who deserves me as their girlfriend?"

Clearly the devilish wench is interested, now all that remains is to spin a fantastic tale that'll convince her you're the pick of the pack!

# MUNCH-MAUSEN TALES

## MAKING OF A MAUSE

Each Player needs to come up with a name for their rat, this can be anything, but a player cannot add any titles (at this point).

Names should be pronounceable (more or less).

Each rat begins play with 8 coins plus one for every other rat.

Each rat in the pack also begins with 2 *gimmick* points. These are spent straight away on *traits* or *catchphrases*.

## TRAITS

*Traits* represent something your rat is good at or known for, essentially these can be anything but should be what makes your character special (or what they tell people makes them special anyway). No traits will directly help you pull Siouxsie.

Narrow *traits* cost 1 GP, broad *traits* cost 2 GPs.

All players are assumed to have the *trait* "I am a Munch-Mausen."

Munch-Mausen can turn into rats, humans or something in-between. They also heal rapidly and can traverse inter-dimensional portals, allowing them to visit any world or historical period.

## SAMPLE NARROW TRAITS

"I can pick any lock."

"I am a master swordsman."

"I can bound many leagues in a single stride."

"I can speak the language of birds and beasts."

"I have an immense pain threshold."

"I have a magic cape which permits me to fly."

## SAMPLE BROAD TRAITS

"I am a master of all forms of combat."

"I am ninja-trained."

"I am skilled in the dark arts."

"I have this utility belt..."

# MUNCH-MAUSEN TALES

## CATCHPHRASES

Guess what catchphrases are.

A rat can create a catchphrase for 1 GP.

Using your catchphrase in play grants bonus coins.

## SIOUXSIE SUCCUBUS

Man, is she hot. Anyway is Siouxsie looking for a man or a mouse?

Well, as it happens she's looking for a special kind of Munch-Mausen.

There are 4 qualities Siouxsie looks for in a date/mate.

1. Derring-Do
2. Status
3. Wealth
4. Romance

As each Rat spins his tale he is trying to make Siouxsie see that it is he, not the others who exemplifies these qualities, as indicated by his exploits. Siouxsie is mercifully gullible so she won't try to contradict any of the tales. The rat with the highest total of all these qualities will be Siouxsie's first choice for a date.

## OPTIONS FOR SIOUXSIE

The game is designed for all players to portray the rats and Siouxsie is assumed to be a shared non-player character, as such, Siouxsie doesn't directly affect the game, she's more of a goal.

Siouxsie will be controlled by anyone who isn't currently 'in the tale'. However, if you can get a female role-player, or better yet a bored girlfriend, to play the role of Siouxsie, then so much the better. In this case Siouxsie can talk directly to the rats and decide for herself when *Siouxsie Yawns*.

# MUNCH-MAUSEN TALES

## BEGINNING TALE-SPINNING

Each player is dealt a single card, highest card gets to nominate who must tell their tale first.

As a tale is concluded the tale-teller nominates which rat will be the next to tell their tale.

E.g. "...and so endeth my tale of great heroism and simple beauty. A far finer tale then my friend Meekos could possibly muster."

Meekos's player then responds

"On the contrary dear friend. Now, it's time I believe for me to regale you with the tale of how I Meekos..."

Each Tale should last no longer than 5 minutes.

If a tale has gone over this time limit and seems in no danger of ever ending or actually going anywhere then any player may announce "Siouxie yawns". This indicates that Siouxie may be losing interest in the story. The player who announced the yawn stakes a coin and any other players who agree that Siouxie probably would be getting bored also state "Siouxie yawns" and stake a coin. If at least half the players agree that Siouxie yawns, then the current tale is abandoned, the floundering tale-teller is awarded the stake and must nominate the next tale-teller.

If less than half the players agree that Siouxie yawns then the stakes are returned and the tale continues, though hopefully the hint will be taken and the conclusion will not be far behind.





# MUNCH-MAUSEN TALES

## TELLING TALES

When a Rat begins his tale he states what he achieved at the end of the tale - which should relate to one of the 4 qualities Siouxsie is looking for.

E.g. "I shall tell the tale of how I Riki-Tiki ...  
...defeated the dread Sea monster of Thrace". (*Derring Do*)  
...became known as *The Magnificent*". (*Status*)  
...made a fortune in diamonds". (*Wealth*)  
...wooed fair *Desdemona*". (*Romance*)

The rat will gain a \*2 bonus to the appropriate quality if his tale is successfully concluded.

The rat then proceeds to tell his tale, beginning by setting the scene.

E.g. "It was a dark and stormy night south-west of the forbidden mountains, I was drenched, appearing like the proverbial drowned rat, but nevertheless I was resolute".

The rat continues adding to his story - the climax of which will be whatever was announced at the outset.

Into his story the rat can build up to 3 vignettes, each of which can increase a quality.

E.g. "After a long and highly enjoyable gambling session with the Marquis De Roquefort I left his purse a hundred guineas lighter"! (*Wealth*)

After recalling any quality altering aspect of his tale, the rat must give all the others time to interject before increasing the appropriate quality.



# MUNCH-MAUSEN TALES

## INTERJECTIONS

Once a tale has been started, it can be interrupted in a number of ways:

1. Wagers
2. Objections
3. Companionship claims

### WAGERS

Any rat who is not currently *in the tale* can at any time interrupt the story-teller with a wager. This is accomplished by staking one or more of their coins and breaking into the flow of the tale with a wager.

E.g. "I'll wager, friend, that the great brown bear terrified you so, that you fled for your very life."

Or "I'll wager friend, that beyond the bedroom door lay a fell wampyre, ready to pounce on you."

### OBJECTIONS

Objections are similar to wagers, except any rat may object, regardless of whether they are *in the tale* or not. Objections are used to object to some detail of the current tale, whereas wagers are intended to add something to the tale. Objections must be backed up with a stake.

E.g. "But friend, it is well known that Roc Mountain is but a mere foothill, it is no feat of derring do to scale it."

Or "But friend, there is no Marquis De Roquefort, he was revealed as a forger and mere impostor."

### COMPANIONSHIP CLAIMS

These are special kinds of interjection, basically requests to join the tale. If the storyteller concedes to a companionship claim then the rat making the claim is now considered to be *in the tale*.

E.g. "I remember! I was there with you, oh those were the days - the camaraderie, the banter..."

## MUNCH-MAUSEN TALES

Whenever an interjection is proposed, both the tale-teller and the interjecting player are dealt a hand of 2 cards. The tale-teller gets an additional 2 cards if one of his traits can be brought into play, as does an objecting rat who is *in the tale*. If either player backs down and concedes the point then these cards do not come into play.

In response to an interjection, the tale-teller may concede the point, pocket the stake and work his narrative around this twist, or he may disagree with the interruption.

If disagreeing, he may match the stake with his own coins and dismiss the objection. If the interjection is successfully dismissed, at any point, the interjecting player receives the stake.

The interrupting player may counter this first rebuff by raising his stake. The tale-teller can then either accept the interruption or match the stake and dismiss the objection.

The interjecting player can refuse to accept this dismissal and opt to consult the cards.

Also, if a player finds himself with insufficient funds to meet a stake he can opt to consult the cards, but cannot win any stakes he did not match.

### CONSULTING THE CARDS

Before the cards are consulted, either of the involved players may buy additional cards for a coin each. Coins spent in this way are not added to the stake, instead they are given to the rat who currently has the least coin. In the case of several rats being tied for least coin, the rat paying the coin decides to whom it goes. If your rat currently has the least coin (not joint least) then you cannot buy additional cards.

When the cards are revealed, high card wins, except cards of the same value can be added together. If two or more characters are tied for highest card then compare their 2<sup>nd</sup> highest card, then 3<sup>rd</sup> highest...etc to determine who wins. If a character runs out of cards to compare - tough- don't play with the big boys in future. Jokers are wild cards, picture cards count as 10 and aces count as 11.

The winner claims the stakes and also gets the tale to go his way.

# MUNCH-MAUSEN TALES

Interjections cannot alter the levels of existing qualities, but they can stop a rat improving his qualities.

## CATCHPHRASES

If a rat works his catchphrase into a tale he is telling then he can take up to 2 coins from any other rat. If a rat works his catchphrase into a tale which he is in but not telling, then he gets to take 1 coin from the tale-teller. Each catchphrase will only grant coins the first time it's used in a tale.

## IN THE TALE...

Being *in the tale* grants a number of bonuses, a rat can improve his qualities, even in someone else's tale and catchphrases can be used. Also if you're in the tale, you may aid the tale-teller in resisting interjections. Basically, you can draw a hand and contribute coins to dismiss interjections, alongside the tale-teller. If the tale-teller accepts the interjection then you do not get any of the stake. A character in the tale is never obliged to help the tale-teller in this way.

When the tale-teller relates an improvement vignette, they can take individual credit or share the credit with others in the tale. When credit is shared each involved character gains \*1 to the appropriate quality. It should be clear from the narration who stands to gain from each vignette.

E.g. "So it was myself and my good friend Meekos facing off against a bevy of black mages. The poor deluded fools they didn't have a chance. We tore through them in a wave of animalistic ferocity..."  
(Derring Do for Meekos and Tale-teller)

A character in the tale can basically support the tale-teller or object and try to hi-jack the story, stealing the glory (and Siouxsie's admiration). Tale-tellers need to try to pre-empt objections by cutting the character out of the vignette or appeasing them.

# MUNCH-MAUSEN TALES

## FINISHING TALE-SPINNING

After the final rat has told his tale, Siouxsie's got a lot to weigh up. Each rat should add up their quality scores to give them their quality total. If one rat has a higher value than anyone else then he's the one that Siouxsie wants. But it 'aint over yet...

If two or more rats have the same quality total then gee Siouxsie still can't decide. You can do another round of tale-telling, with a maximum of 2 quality vignettes per tale, or you can proceed to *the long big punch up*.

If all rats agree that the one among them with the highest qualities is truly deserving of the date with Siouxsie then all may nod solemnly and allow that rat to proceed with narrating the date.

Alternatively, the first player to shout 'Punch up!' becomes the dealer and play proceeds into *the long big punch up* sequence!

Last rat standing wins.



# MUNCH-MAUSEN TALES

## THE LONG BIG PUNCH UP

It had to come to this, a pack of Munch-Mausen, ignoble in defeat, can't take the fact they've been out-talked by one of their own. So there's only one thing for it - a bar room brawl!

Each Rat nominates what tactics he will fight with - *Daring*, *Majesty*, *Power* or *Emotion*.

Each Rat is dealt a number of cards equal to the appropriate quality, that quality is also at stake for this exchange.

*Daring* stems from the quality of *Derring Do*, the trump suit for *Daring* is spades.

*Majesty* is connected to the quality of *Status*, trump suit clubs.

*Power* is derived from the *Wealth* quality. Trumps are diamonds.

*Emotion* is fuelled by *romance*. Hearts are the trump suit.

Taking it in turn from the dealer's left, each player narrates a short sequence about what his rat is doing in relation to the up coming exchange - this sequence must in some way be indicative of the rat's tactical choice. If a rat works in a trait or a catchphrase then they gain an extra card.

Each player now in turn has the option to fold - be removed from the exchange and reduce whichever quality they were using by 1. This should be accompanied by a short monologue-of-defeat, describing how that quality was slightly diminished.

Returning to the first player who declared himself in, each player can now buy additional cards for 2 coins each. Coins spent in this way are put into a final pot.

# MUNCH-MAUSEN TALES

## WINNING HANDS

When the cards are revealed, high card wins, cards of the same value can be added together. If two or more characters are tied for highest card then compare their 2<sup>nd</sup> highest card, then 3<sup>rd</sup> highest...etc to determine who wins. Jokers are wild cards, picture cards count as 10 and aces count as 11.

## FLUSH DRAW

A Flush Trump Draw will beat any other hand. This is when a rat draws only trump suited cards of their chosen tactic. The hand must be at least two cards strong.

All rats holding a losing hand must reduce whichever quality they were employing by a number equal to the winner's tactic. The winner then gets to narrate a monologue-of-victory, describing himself fighting well employing his chosen tactic and the others taking a battering to their respective qualities.

The deal passes to the next player and another exchange is conducted beginning with tactical declarations.

No rat may use the same tactic twice in a row, unless all other qualities are at zero - if this is the case then the rat may no longer spend coins for cards.

When all of a rat's qualities hit zero then he's out of the fight and Siouxsie's out of his league.

Last rat standing wins - he gets to go on the date (and claim the final pot - gotta buy Siouxsie something nice) .

# MUNCH-MAUSEN TALES

## NARRATING THE DATE

The final act of the game is the brief narration of how the date worked out. Narrating the date shouldn't take longer than 2 minutes. The winner is constrained by the following rules:

If *Derring Do* is your highest *quality* then your date includes some sort of daring exploit.

If *Status* is your highest *quality* then your date at the ball revolves around networking and social climbing.

If *Wealth* is your highest *quality* then your wealth itself comes to be a problem during the date.

If *Romance* is your highest *quality* then your amorous emotions somehow get the better of you.

If you have two or more *qualities* tied for highest then you are not constrained officially but should make reference to those qualities in the account of your date.



What's wrong with my outfit?



## MUNCH-MAUSEN TALES

**NAME:**

**TRAITS:**

**CATCHPHRASE:**

**DERRING DO:**  
*DARING*

**STATUS:**  
*MAJESTY*

**WEALTH:**  
*POWER*

**ROMANCE:**  
*EMOTION*

## MUNCH-MAUSEN TALES

**NAME:**

**TRAITS:**

**CATCHPHRASE:**

**DERRING DO:**  
*DARING*

**STATUS:**  
*MAJESTY*

**WEALTH:**  
*POWER*

**ROMANCE:**  
*EMOTION*

# MUNCH-MAUSEN TALES

## INFLUENCES

The primary influence on this game is *The Baron Munchausen Role-Playing Game* - penned by the Baron himself no less!<sup>1</sup>

Published by Hogshead publishing in 1998. Only a vagabond or Welshman would not own a copy.

The second massive influence on this game is White Wolf's *Ratkin* book, by Brian Campbell. This was a truly impressive text, easily the best WW book I've ever read. Campbell introduced the idea of the munchmausen<sup>2</sup> as mad swashbuckling rat-kin from far off arcadian realms. I was always gutted that I never got to play one, and the WoD being what it is now, I probably never will. So I thought, why not create a game where everyone plays Munch-Mausen!

The combat system in this games owes a fair bit to Matt Snyder's *Dust Devils* - <http://www.chimera.info>

*The Pool* by James O West is another influence, especially the trait mechanics and monologues of victory.

<http://www.randomordercreations.com/thepool.htm>

A lot of the mechanics are derived from my previous 24hr rpg

*PILEDRIVERS & POWER BOMBS*

[http://www.rpgnow.com/product\\_info.php?products\\_id=4459](http://www.rpgnow.com/product_info.php?products_id=4459)

<sup>1</sup> Ably assisted by James Wallis, gentleman.

<sup>2</sup> Once again heavily influenced by the good baron.

# MUNCH-MAUSEN TALES

THANKS TO

NON-ROLE-PLAYING ALPHA PLAYTESTERS

Amy Prince  
Marie Oldfield

Ron Edwards for coming up with the Ronnies, because of them this game was brought to you by the word *girlfriend* and the word *rat*.

Thanks to [www.24hourrpg.com](http://www.24hourrpg.com)

All at The forge [www.indie-rpgs.com](http://www.indie-rpgs.com)

And everyone at [www.1km1kt.net/24hourrpg](http://www.1km1kt.net/24hourrpg)



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