

GROUCHO PLAYS SCRABBLE

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It was in the summer of 1952 that Hollywood discovered Scrabble.

Groucho Marx was relaxing at home with a cigar and a crossword when he got a call from his agent. "Grouch, there's a big promotion of a new word game down at the Coconut Grove. Macy's is holding a celebrity tournament to launch their product and they want you to be the director of play."

"What's my commission?"

"A Scrabble game, a T-shirt and a list of four-letter words."

"Include me out."

"And you get to spend a night on the tiles with Mae West."

"I'll do it. I've always admired her deluxe set."

That night Groucho was met by Jack Strauss, the Chairman of Macy's, at the Coconut Grove and taken to the Games Room where one hundred Hollywood celebrities were sporting T-shirts with "I'd rather be playing Scrabble" captions on the front. Groucho jumped up on the dais and addressed the players. "Okay, folks. This is a three-round contest. I want to see good clean Scrabble. No peeking in the bag, no phoney blanks, no coffeehousing, and no palming the Q. Say, is this a knockout?"

"No, we'd like you to do a Swiss draw."

"Humphrey Bogart plays James Cagney on Table One, yo-da-lay-ee-dee. Clark Gable plays Betty Grable on Table Two, yo-da-lay-ee-dee..."

"It's all right, we've posted the pairings for the first round."

The contestants go to their tables and the tiles start to clatter on the racks. Groucho finds himself up against Mae West.

Groucho: "Let's lock lexemes." (On her first move she drops LINCTUS.)

Mae: "Seventy points."

Groucho: "I make it twenty."

Mae: "Don't I get a fifty-point bonus?"

Groucho: "I don't know, Lady. The way the Dow Jones is going down you may even lose a hundred points." (He places his F next to her U.)

Mae: "F-U?"

Groucho: "Sure, as in KUNG FU, FU MAN CHOO, and FU JI YAMA."

Mae: "I'm challenging."

Groucho: "You certainly are. Excuse me while I check my Funk and Wagnalls. Nope, ain't there."

Mae: "Look at my rack. O-G-U-R-A-Q-T."

Groucho: "Thanks, honey bunch."

Mae: "I'm going to change."

Groucho: "Okay, you slip into something comfortable and I'll take off my fricative." (He removes his F and then plans CUNNI on top of her LINCTUS.)

Mae: "Well, you ain't going to lick me, you cunning linguist." (She plays her PUDENDUM through his CUNNILINCTUS.)

Mae: "It means somebody great and important. Sam Goldwyn once told me that Louis Mayer was the biggest pudendum in Hollywood."

Round one draws to a close. In the coffee break, Jack Strauss introduces Groucho to the inventor of the game.

Strauss: "Alfred Butts."

Groucho: "Thanks for warning me."

Strauss: "Alfred invented Scrabble."

Groucho: "Well, I hope the game's a success for you. Then they can call you Alfred Cheque Butts."

Strauss: "How's the tournament going? Everything under control?"

Groucho: "A few hiccups. Maurice Chevalier wants to use French letters, Dorothy Parker can't mind her P's and Q's, and Zsa Zsa Gabor keeps dumping her X."

Play gets underway again. Mae starts off with PISS and Groucho turns it into INSPISSATED. She plays POX, he wraps EPOXY around it. She makes PRO and he converts it to COPROLALIA.

Mae: "Stop trying to clean up my act."

Groucho: "Sorry, but this is a family game."

She continues with LAY, he makes FOREPLAY. She plays FELLA and he stretches it into FELLATION. She has ZING and he tries SODOMIZING. Finally she plays ITCH and he goes out with SONOFA-BITCH.

Mae: "Some people have all the luck."

Groucho: "What do you mean, luck? I had PHALLUS in my hand but I couldn't get it down."

Mae: "I could have had ORGASMS but you blocked my G spot."

Groucho: "I would have had SYPHILIS if you'd given me an I."

Mae: "I nearly made PISSPOTS but I needed a P."

Groucho: "I hate playing with a tight board."

The final round begins. The tournament has come down to the wire. Oliver Hardy is leading the field thanks to his bigger spread. Groucho and Mae are neck and neck as it comes to the final move. He has A-A-A-B-C-M-N on his rack and there are no tiles left. Needing a big out play, he takes a deep puff on his cigar and surveys the board. He picks up his seven tiles and juggles them in the air - then suddenly he spies an opening and squeezes in a twenty-seven timer, winning him the game and the tournament.

B O O Z I E S T
 A O B
 C O T O V U L V A
 C R A P P I N G R J
 H E I F I
 A M O T H E R F U ? ? I N G
 N L N
 A S E X U A L I T Y G U Y
 L O T E O
 I W W E E N
 A G A T E D I L D O
 N N
 I R K
 S E
 M A R S E

Groucho: "BACCHANALIANISM for nine hundred and ninety-five."

Mae: "And you've stuck me with the Q!"

It was a fitting climax. Jack Strauss was impressed.

Strauss: "Let me congratulate you on your prodigious prestidigit-
tation at cruciverbal logodaedaly."

Groucho: "And let me congratulate you on pronouncing that pro-
perly."

Strauss: "The winning game will be published on the front page
of the Christian Science Monitor."

And as the applause faded, Groucho turned to discover Mae West
had gone. In front of him, in Scrabble tiles, she had left a part-
ing quip:

GRR U MACHO OX