

A detailed illustration of a bird's nest filled with several speckled eggs. The nest is constructed from dark, textured twigs and grass. The text 'EGG-EATING' is written in a white, hand-drawn, slightly irregular font across the top half of the nest. The background is a solid light brown color.

EGG-EATING

RABBITS

Players are egg-eating rabbits who compete to collect eggs to eat. Players will move quickly to snatch and grab, they will curse and cajole, they will be on a hair trigger for verbal cues, they will bang into things because they are egg-eating rabbits trying to get eggs to eat.

This game is part Jungle Speed, part John Wick's Blood and Honor, part A Tiny Person, and part a game I used to play as a child involving cinder blocks balanced on a log.

Any number of players may play this game.

Read these rules carefully and consider the challenges that this game will pose to your play group. Explain and adjust accordingly. There is selfishness, ugly insults, fast movements, and shouting at the very least.

Go through some exercises to warm up your bodies and your voices. Practice moving and taking things from one another. Agree on how one might touch or insult another person. Rabbits should not grab or hit each other, but they can grab an egg from another rabbit. Practice this until it feels okay.

To play you will need:

A table or floor

A pillow

Some regular, oval balloons

To play a round of Egg-Eating Rabbits:

Inflate a balloon. Place the balloon on the play surface. Balance the pillow on top of the balloon. Maybe try this with two or three balloons!

The pillow is a bird. The balloon is an egg. The bird wishes to keep the egg, the rabbits wish to take the egg away and eat it.

The rabbits may move about the space freely, but should stay focused on getting the egg. The rabbits will try to get the egg in any way possible, including physically grabbing it.

However, physically snatching the egg should be the last resort. Birds can bite and peck, which hurts, and they are beloved by the god Pan who wreaks terrible vengeance upon any who molest them.

An optional rule:

If you are playing this at a convention or other crowded area, be cautious. Any casual passersby might be the Great God Pan. If Pan sees you harassing a bird you will be punished, so it's best to be cautious and praise and sing along with the bird when a stranger is present--it might be Pan in disguise.

A rabbit might:

Try to persuade the bird to give up the egg
Try to trick the bird into losing the egg
Try to scare the bird into flying away
Try to bribe or trade with the bird to get the egg
Try to beg the bird to give them the egg
Try to shame the bird into sharing the egg
Try to flatter the bird into letting the egg go
Try to make the bird not like the egg
Tell jokes or cut capers to amuse the bird
Sing a sleepy song to put the bird to sleep
Run in circles so the dizzy bird falls from the egg
Or in any other way use their voice to cause the bird to give up their egg.

Wheedling the bird into giving up the egg is the objective of the rabbits, who want to eat the egg.

Rabbits must walk or make large movements when they speak, whether to each other or to the bird.

Taking the egg gently

The bird will react or not as it feels appropriate, based on what the rabbits are saying and doing. The bird's actions will be interpreted by the rabbits individually; if a rabbit thinks the bird wants them to have the egg they may carefully take the egg. They must be slow and artful so as to not touch or upset the bird.

If a rabbit starts to take the egg and any other rabbit thinks they shouldn't have it for any reason, they may shout "STOP RIGHT THERE YOU EGG-EATING RABBIT." The recipient of the injunction must stop trying to take the egg and must walk once around the bird before they attempt it to gently take the egg again. The rabbits must strive to reach consensus about the bird's wishes on who should have the egg.

If two or more rabbits yell the "STOP.." phrase at the same time the bird flies away with the egg because this is what birds do in this situation. No rabbit gets to eat the egg. In this case the rabbit who was trying to get the egg should pick up the bird and egg and fly it out of the room while the other rabbits hop and curse at it. Find a new bird and a new egg and try again.

Taking the egg less gently

A rabbit also might:

Stomp on the floor to unnerve the bird
Bang on the table to intimidate the bird
Shake the table to unsettle the bird
Throw some small thing at the bird
or even
Poke the bird to make it feel bad.

These sorts of actions are uncouth and best reserved for especially recalcitrant birds. Don't make eye contact with another rabbit during these sorts of actions. You should be ashamed.

Taking the egg not at all gently

Some things simply aren't done in good company, and one of these things is growing frustrated and snatching the egg. But some rabbits are so hungry and some birds so selfish that... Well.

At any time an egg-eating rabbit can shout "OH FUCK YOU BIRD" and snatch the egg. The rabbit must complete the phrase before grabbing for the egg. Any other egg-eating rabbits can, at that moment, also make a loud noise (any will do) and try to snatch the egg--even from the very hands of the instigating bunny.

When a rabbit has firm control of the egg it becomes theirs. They may eat it at their leisure, or save it in some safe place where, one hopes, other rabbits won't steal it.

If the egg should break no one gets to eat it.

If an egg-eating rabbit ate the egg

Good for the rabbit. I bet the others are still hungry. Set up a new bird with a new egg or two.

Designer notes:

I'm increasingly interested in character roles that aren't played by people. By offloading a character from human control but keeping them present, we can explore our relationships with that character differently. Pushing unpleasant roles into our shared imagination also protects a player from unpleasantness that might be associated with it.

I'm also curious about more physicality in larp. This game is partially based on an incredibly dangerous game I played as a child. How does rough housing work in a freeform world built around inclusivity?

I mentioned Blood and Honor in the intro to the game. I'm specifically thinking of the "samurai strike" and parry rules. To remind you: At any point, even mid-conversation, a samurai may say "STRIKE" or whatever the word was and they get an instant iaijutsu strike with huge bonuses. If victim can shout "PARRY" quickly enough they might survive.

That razor edge tension tied to language is intense, and something I wanted to borrow.

STOP RIGHT THERE
YOU EGG-EATING
RABBIT!

OH FUCK YOU BIRD!