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READ ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

Baron Munchausen

Rudolf Erich Raspe

In a certain happy company there was the world famous Baron Munchausen. When people started pushing him to tell about his adventures, he started: 'When I was travelling through Russia in the middle of winter I found myself on a horse on a huge prairie. Everything was covered in snow and there was nothing in sight, no tree, no bush, no houses and it started getting dark.'

'I made a decision, jumped off my horse, tied the animal to a tree and laid down next to my horse after which I soon fell asleep. When I woke up the next day, to my great surprise I was lying in a cemetery. I had tied my horse to the top of a church tower that just towered above the snow. The village was covered in snow. At night it started to thaw and I sank down with the melting snow.'

'Another time, while I was hunting, I saw a flock of wild ducks, and I wanted to have them all. In my bag I had a piece of bacon, I tied it to a rope and used it as bait. The first duck swallowed the bacon, but because it was so greasy, it slid right out.'

'Then the second duck ate the bacon and so it continued until all the ducks were strung to the rope. I hauled them in, wrapped the rope around my body and went home. Then something strange happened. The ducks started to fly away and I went into the sky with them. I kept my cool and guided the ducks with my arms and legs to my house and flew through the chimney into the living room.'

'Another time I had used all my gunpowder, when I saw a deer in front of me. So I took a handful of cherry pits, loaded my gun and shot the deer. I wounded it badly, but it got away. When I returned to the same forest a couple of years later, I was surprised by a huge deer that had a giant cherry tree on its head.'



'To finalize my stories for the evening, I will tell you this one. I was on duty. We conquered a city and the general said that we had to get hold of the castle too. I offered to arrange that, so I sat down on a cannonball and flew into the castle. But sadly, I was taken prisoner and had to work on the land.'

'On a certain evening I saw that two bears had attacked a bee to get its honey. I took my silver axe and threw it at the bears to chase them away. And it worked.'

But I threw so hard that my axe ended up on the moon. To get my axe back, I planted a bean and the plant grew so fast and strong that I could climb to the moon.'

'The axe was not easy to find, because on the moon everything shines as though its silver. After searching for a long time, I found my axe. But to my horror the plant had withered and I couldn't return back! Then I had to do something difficult. Out of hay I braided a rope as long as I could, tied it to the point of the moon and lowered myself down.'

'The rope was still too short, so I hacked the top of the rope off with my axe and tied that again to the rope below. The rope had gotten weak because of this and when I reached the clouds, the rope broke, which made me fall down and make a crater ten metres deep in the ground.'

'But since I'm very strong, it wasn't so bad. I grabbed myself by my hair and pulled myself out. Then I continued travelling and returned home without trouble.'

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