The Rules of the Game

- Goal of the Game -

You live in Hamelin, a town infested by rats. The easiest way to get the rats out of your house is to send them to your neighbors. Whenever too many rats are jammed into a house, its occupants get desperate and move out! The player who can best keep the rats out of his house wins!

- Contents -

- 5 House miniboards, each with 7 floors.
- 5 Rat trackers.
- 6 wooden rat figurines (each rat has a different tail color, corresponding to the colors of the Character cards).
- 1 Pied Piper figurine, and its plastic base.
- 21 Character cards.
- 50 Action cards.

- Setup -

Look at the diagram inside the box cover for 4-player setup:

1. Place a House board and a Rat tracker in front of each player. The Rat tracker starts off the House.
2. Choose a start player (whoever last saw rats in a bathtub... or, the youngest player).
3. Place a rat figurine between each house. Then, to the left of the start player, add a second rat figurine and the Pied Piper figurine. Point the figurines to the right, as shown in the diagram. Remove unused houses and figurines from the game, as well as their corresponding Character cards (the color of a rat’s tail corresponds to the color of its Character card).
4. Shuffle the remaining Character cards to form a face-down deck. Flip the first four cards of the deck face-up to form a line in the center of the table.

If you revealed more than one Pied Piper card, discard all but one, and replace them with new cards from the deck. Continue until you have four cards, with only one Pied Piper card. Shuffle any Pied Piper cards you discarded back into the deck.
5. Shuffle the *Action* cards to form a face-down deck. Then deal four *Action* cards to each player.

**Setup for 2 Players**

This is similar to 4-player setup, with the following differences:
- The two players and their houses sit opposite each other. The other two houses between them (one on each side) are neutral, and belong to nobody.
- Each player receives a *Rat* tracker that goes on his house. The neutral houses between the players do not get a *Rat* tracker.

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**Playing the Game**

**Game Concept**

The *Action* cards allow you to move figurines: either rats or the Pied Piper. Whenever a rat figurine passes a house, that house’s *Rat* tracker moves up 1. When the Pied Piper passes a house, he lures rats out of the house. That house’s *Rat* tracker moves down 1. Whoever has the fewest rats in his house at the end of the game is the winner.

**Game Turn**

To start the game, the start player places an *Action* card from his hand face-up on a *Character* card. Then draw an *Action* card to refill your hand to four cards.

From then on, everyone plays in counterclockwise order (in the direction of the green arrows on the houses’ weather-vanes).

On your turn, do the following phases in this order:

1. Place an *Action* card face-up on a *Character* card.
2. Place a second *Action* card face-up **on a different *Character* card.**
3. After placing your Action cards, check to see if a Character card is activated. If a Character card has two Action cards, this character activates! Move that character’s figurine as the Action cards on it direct. Move in the order the cards were played (top card, then bottom card). If two Character cards activate, you decide which character goes first. Once you resolve the Action cards, discard them face-up. Also discard any Character cards face-up that activated this turn (to a different discard pile), and replace them with new cards from the Character deck. If the Character card deck is empty, shuffle the discarded Character cards to form a new deck.

See the end of the rulebook for descriptions of the card effects.

4. Finally, draw two Action cards to refill your hand to four cards. If the Action card deck is empty, shuffle the discarded Action cards to form a new deck.

Then play passes to the right (in the direction of the green arrow ➔).

Rules of Being a Good Neighbor:

Rule #1
You cannot place two Action cards on the same Character card in a single turn. (You can add a second Action card to one placed on a previous turn.)

Rule #2
Rat and Pied Piper figurines obey the same movement rules. The only difference is what happens when they pass through a house (➡ or ⬅):
- A rat raises the house’s Rat tracker 1 floor.
- The Pied Piper lowers the house’s Rat tracker 1 floor.
**Example of a turn:**

It’s Maya’s turn, and she plays the following cards: \[\text{and} \]

The yellow rat walks through the house in front of it, which raises that house’s Rat tracker 1 floor. Then it walks back through the same house, again raising the house’s Rat tracker 1 floor.

The Character card showing the yellow rat is discarded, then replaced with a new card from the Character deck. The two Action cards that moved the yellow rat are also discarded. Finally, Maya draws two new Action cards to refill her hand. Now it is her right neighbor’s turn to play.

**Player Elimination**

If your Rat tracker reaches the roof of your house after an Action card resolves, you immediately flee your rat-infested house, and are out of the game.
Remove your house from the game. The player whose turn it is claims your *Rat* tracker (and any *Rat* trackers you collected from other eliminated players).

In addition, any figurines that were on either side of your removed house now gather together in the gap. Your two next-door neighbors are now neighbors with each other.

If you were eliminated by a character’s first action, the second action takes effect right after your elimination finishes. It happens in the new neighborhood, without your house.

*Reminder for 2 Players*

The neutral houses that sit between the two players do not have *Rat* trackers. They can never be eliminated from the game. You still count them just like a player’s houses when moving figurines, though.

*~ END OF THE GAME ~*

The game ends as soon as only 2 players are left in the game. Even if a character’s first action reduces the player count to 2, the game ends immediately, with no second action.

The winner is the remaining player with the lower *Rat* tracker. If there is a tie, whichever player claimed more *Rat* trackers wins. If a tie still remains, play a rematch!

*End of the Game for 2 Players*

The game ends as soon as one player’s *Rat* tracker reaches the roof of his house. His opponent immediately wins the game.
There can never be more than two Action cards on the same Character card. Two Action cards will activate a Character card after the card-placing phase.

You cannot place two Action cards on the same Character card in a single turn. You can add a second Action card to one placed on a previous turn.

The Rat and Pied Piper figurines obey the same movement rules. The only difference is what happens when they pass through a house ( → or ←): A rat raises the house’s Rat tracker 1 floor. The Pied Piper lowers the house’s Rat tracker 1 floor.

"Rugrats" Variant
During setup, remove the special Action cards +1 and Melody. They are not used in this variant. During the game, when you place an Action card on a character, apply its effect immediately (do not wait until two Action cards are on it). Leave the first Action card on the Character card after resolving it.
You discard the Character card and the two Action cards only after resolving the character’s second Action card. Then replace the Character card as usual.

"A Happy Life is a Secret Life" Variant
On your turn, you can place one of your two Action cards face-down (either your first or your second card can be face-down). Face-down cards are revealed when the Character card activates (when two Action cards are on it after the card-placing phase).
In the same way, on the first turn, the first player can play his one and only card face-down.
The 4 Basic Action Cards

The figurine moves through the house in front of it, following the green arrow.
- If it was a rat, raise the house’s Rat tracker 1 floor.
- If it was the Pied Piper, lower the house’s Rat tracker 1 floor.
The figurine ends its movement to the right of the house it passed through.

The figurine moves through the two houses in front of it, following the green arrows.
- If it was a rat, raise each of the two houses’ Rat trackers 1 floor.
- If it was the Pied Piper, lower each of the two houses’ Rat trackers 1 floor.
The figurine ends its movement to the right of the second house it passed through.

The figurine moves through the house behind it, following the red arrow.
- If it was a rat, raise the house’s Rat tracker 1 floor.
- If it was the Pied Piper, lower the house’s Rat tracker 1 floor.
The figurine ends its movement to the left of the house it passed through.

The figurine slips through the sewer past the house in front of it, following the green arrow.
Regardless of whether it was a rat or the Pied Piper, the house’s Rat tracker doesn’t change.
The figurine ends its movement to the right of the house it passed through.
The **+1** card **adds 1 to a figurine’s move**. This card has no effect unless it is combined with a basic *Action* card, whether above or below it.

In this example, the red rat activates, and walks through the 3 houses in front of it, following the green arrows (2 houses because of the *Action* card, + 1 because of the **+1** card).

The **Melody** card has no effect unless it is combined with a basic *Action* card, whether above or below it. This card causes the basic *Action* card on the character to apply **to all figurines in the same location** as the activated character. Move the whole group of figurines simultaneously.

In this example, the blue rat has activated. Thanks to the **Melody** card, the Pied Piper and the red rat go along with him.

In total, the owner of this house will raise her Rat tracker 1 floor (**+1** for the blue rat, **+1** for the red rat, **-1** for the Pied Piper = +1 floor). The yellow rat does not join the group when the group goes by it.

**Note**: A Character card may receive two special Action cards. When this happens, the figurine does not move. Discard the Character and Action cards as if you had resolved actions.