



If there's one thing we supervillains can learn from the movies, it is this: When you've trapped the secret agent in your lair, don't drag things out. Don't tell him your life story. Don't challenge him to a final game of "Pong." Don't torture him with a devious Rube Goldberg machine while you step out of the room for a snack. Just kill him. Kill him, kill him, kill him.

Unfortunately, there's no fun in that. And he's not worth nearly as many points.

This is **James Ernest's Totally Renamed Spy Game**, a light-hearted romp through the world of B-movie supervillains and the spies they long to kill. You will take the role of an evil mastermind, setting traps for these would-be heroes and, you hope, taunting and killing them before they escape.

How to Begin:

Choose someone to shuffle and deal, like maybe the winner of the last game. Then choose someone else to keep score.

The deck is made up of four different kinds of cards (**Spies, Doublers, Lair Cards**, and **Bombs**) with two different backs (purple for the Spies and Bombs, dark blue for everything else). Shuffle all these cards into one deck, and cut it without looking so you can't see the backs.

Deal 5 cards to every player. If only 2 or 3 people are playing, deal hands of 6 cards instead.

Put the deck in the middle of the table, with space beside it for a discard pile. Play begins on the dealer's left and proceeds to the left around the table.

The Cards:

There are 112 cards in the deck, including 36 **Lair Cards** with values from 1 to 4, which represent improvements to your Lair; 36 **Spies** with values from 2 to 9, 36 **Doubler** cards in sets of 4 (each set has a unique letter), and 4 **Bombs**.

As mentioned before, Spy cards have distinctive backs. This makes them easy to find, just like in the movies. "Hi! I'm Ferguson Lee! Any messages for me? Say, did I mention? I'm a Spy!" Unfortunately for us villains, the Bombs have the same backs as the Spies.

On Every Turn:

First, draw two cards from the deck. If the deck is empty, you skip the draw. The game is nearly over at this point, because you won't recycle the discards.

Second, you may play one Lair card on the table in front of you, **face down**. You have only one Lair, the size of which is equal to the total value of the Lair cards you have put down. So, if your Lair consists of a 3-point and a 2-point card, you have a 5-point Lair. If you have no Lair cards, you have no Lair. (This just means that no one can play Spies into it.)

Third, you may play one Spy or Bomb card from **anywhere** into **anyone's** Lair, including your own. This means you can play such a card from your own hand, or from someone else's hand, or **even from the top of the deck**.

Obviously, if you don't play your own card, you will have no idea what it is until you play it, and a card that looks like a Spy just might turn out to be a Bomb. When playing a card you can't see, you must declare where the card is going before you look at it!

Teaming up: If you wish, you may play a **team** of Spies from **your hand** into **another player's** Lair. If you do this, treat the team as a single Spy with the combined value of the entire team. A team like this can only come from your own hand, can only be played into another player's Lair, and is only allowed when the group is large enough to blow up the Lair. If a Lair card is facedown, assume it is a 4 for the purposes of this restriction.

When you play a Spy into a Lair, turn up all the cards in the Lair. They will remain face up, although subsequent Lair cards can still be played face down.

If the value of the Spy is **equal to or less** than the value of the Lair, the Spy is **captured**. If the Spy is **larger** than the Lair, the Spy **escapes** and blows up the Lair on the way out. A team of Spies is only legal if it's big enough to escape and destroy the Lair. A Bomb acts sort of like a gigantic spy, blowing up any Lair it hits.

When a Spy is Captured:

No matter whose turn it is, when a player captures a Spy, that player must deal with that spy right away; then, the game continues where it left off. You have two options when you capture a Spy: you may **kill** the Spy or you may **taunt** him.

To Kill the Spy. Just say "bang," discard the Spy card, and score its point value. Congratulations, you have points. This is the safe, but low-scoring option.

To Taunt the Spy. Play one Doubler card from your hand and read it aloud, inserting the name of the spy: **"Before I Kill you, Mister Hyrax,... Is my hair too yellow?"** If the taunt is successful, you will double the points you earn if and when you eventually kill the Spy. However, your taunt has a chance of backfiring.

Foiling a Taunt: Each Doubler has a letter, from A to I. There are a total of four cards with each letter. If another player holds a card with the matching letter, she can play that card after yours, and this will make your taunt fail. In this event, the Spy escapes and blows up your Lair.

Because several people may hold the foil to your taunt, and because they may not all wish to stop you, players must pass in turn. If the pass goes all the way around the table, you're safe.

If your taunt succeeds, you may now kill the Spy for his doubled point value, or you may taunt him **again**. You can taunt a spy as many times as you want, assuming you have the cards, but subsequent taunts have a couple of additional rules:

Rule One: You can't play a match of a Doubler you've played on this turn. Save that Doubler for the next Spy you catch.

Rule Two: Your opponents can't cancel your older Doublers. Once they have passed on a particular letter, they can't play it later.

For example, suppose you succeed with an "A." One player held another "A" but chose not to play it. Then you taunt again, with a "C." The "A" can no longer be foiled. If you succeed with the C, and the Spy has a value of 3, you can now kill him for 12 points. Or, you could risk playing that "D" for a total of 24....

When A Spy Escapes:

If a Spy escapes, either because he is bigger than a Lair, or because a taunt has backfired, put the Spy card in the discard pile. In addition, discard **every card in the Lair**. All Spies are thoroughly trained in the art of blowing up Lairs on the way out. Plus, self-destroying Lairs are all the rage these days.

Winning:

The object is to be the first player to score at least **33 points**, or to be the player with the highest score when the game runs out.

The game "runs out" when the last Spy in the game is in the discard pile, or when no more plays are legal.

Strategy:

Count the doublers, so you know which ones are safe. Remember that you can play Spies from anywhere, and so can your opponents. Deception, about your Lair and the cards in your hand, is critical.



James Ernest's Totally Renamed Spy Game

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