



## “Before I Kill You, Mister Spy...”

...I will explain the rules of this card game, because I believe that you are the only one alive who would understand.”

The super-villain’s greatest weakness is his temptation to taunt the master spy before putting a bullet in his head. Why is it so compelling? If you’re a real super-villain, you know why. But in this game, it’s simply worth more points.

## Setting Up:

Shuffle the deck and deal a starting hand to each player. The number of cards varies with the number of players:

### Starting Hands:

Players:	2	3	4	5	6
Cards:	7	6	5	4	3

The dealer goes first, and turns proceed to the left. If you play again, pass the deal to the winner of the last game.

## Turns:

At the start of your turn, **draw a card**. If the deck is already empty, the game is over and you don’t get a turn.

Next, you must perform **one** of these actions, or pass:

- Play a Lair** card,
- Play a Spy** into your own Lair,
- Steal a Lair** card from another player,
- Steal a Spy** from anywhere, and play it if you wish.

The details of all these actions are explained below.

Throughout the game you will be building up your *Lair*, capturing *Spies*, and *killing* them. Sometimes you will also *taunt* the Spies you capture. Taunting doubles a Spy’s point value, but also gives him a chance to escape.

As you collect Spies, track your score by keeping the Spies face up on the table, in a *score pile*. If you use taunt

## The Contents of the Deck:

The deck contains the following 54 cards:

**15 Lair** cards, valued 2 through 4 (5 of each). These cards grow your lair and make it more capable of capturing Spies.



**18 Taunt** cards, lettered A through I (2 of each). These cards give you the chance to share something personal with the Spies you capture, immediately prior to shooting them in the head. They can also be played to cancel the taunts of other players.



**21 Spy** cards, valued 2 through 8 (5x2p, 5x3p, 4x4p, 3x5p, 2x6p, 1x7p, 1x8p). These cards represent your well-meaning but predictable adversaries, who wander through the world like targets in a shooting gallery.



You’ll note that the *Spy* cards have a different back. This is not a mistake. It makes the Spies easier to find. Spies are notoriously bad at hiding. This means that you should cut the deck with your eyes closed before you deal.

cards, keep those cards *face down* on the Spy. This makes it easy for everyone to determine your score, without seeing exactly which taunt cards have been played.

## Winning:

The object is to be the first player with 33 points, or to have the high score when the deck runs out.

33 might sound like a weird score, but with all the point-doubling in this game 33 is a *lot* harder than 32.

## Turn Type Details:

Here are the detailed descriptions of the four turn types, or “actions,” listed above. You may perform only one action each turn, though some do lead to additional steps.

### Play a Lair Card:

You may play one Lair card from your hand, face down on the table. For as long as it remains face down, it is a “Secret Lair” and has a value of 1.

**Deathtraps:** You may play a taunt card as a Secret Lair. This is called a “Deathtrap” and is explained later.



A Secret Lair



### Play a Spy:

There are many ways for a Spy to stumble into a Lair, but the simplest way is when you play a Spy from your own hand into your own Lair.

You may do this only if your Lair is strong enough to capture the Spy. Adding all the Lair cards together, the value of your Lair must be *at least as large* as the value of the Spy. You may turn over your Secret Lair cards if you need to make your Lair large enough.

In the example above, the size-4 Lair, plus the size-1 Secret Lair, is just big enough to contain the size-5 Jillian Styles.

*Note: You can't turn over your own Deathtraps. The card in the example above might in fact be a Deathtrap. No one knows but you.*

### Killing and Taunting:

*From time to time, you will face the hard decision between terminating a captive immediately, and ending his life after a bout of gloating. Both paths have their merits.*

When you have captured a Spy, you have the option to *taunt* or to *kill* the Spy. If you kill the Spy, she's worth only her printed point value. But each time you taunt her, that point value **doubles**.

To taunt a Spy, choose a taunt card from your hand, and read it aloud in a stout voice, remembering to replace "Mister Spy" with the Spy's actual name.

There's a catch, of course. When you play a taunt card, your opponents get one chance to *foil* you, by discarding the other card of the same letter. If someone does this, your taunt fails, and the Spy escapes to the discard pile!

If your first taunt succeeds, you may taunt again, and repeat as long as you want, doubling each time. And your opponents can only cancel your *most recent taunt*.

You can't play two *matching* taunt cards on the same Spy. Or perhaps you can, but the second one doesn't work. Whatever. Don't do it.



**A Note about Foiling:** *If you hold the card that can stop another player's taunt, you also have a tough decision to make. You can prevent them from scoring now, or you can hold on to a taunt card that you know is unstoppable!*

### Steal a Lair:

You may play a Spy from your hand as a "Double Agent" and steal a *single Lair card* from another player.

You can steal face-up Lairs, in which case you know what will happen, or face-down Lairs, in which case you must take your chances. The result depends on the values of the Spy and the Lair card:

**If the Spy Matches the Lair:** *Perfect!* You steal the Lair card, adding it to your own, and you keep the Spy for points. You can't taunt this Spy, because you get no joy from taunting a Double Agent. Instead, you will add that Spy's name to the "henchman of the month" list, where he is worth the same number of points as if you shot him.

**If the Spy is Larger:** *Not so perfect!* You do steal the Lair card. However, the Spy feels that the assignment was beneath his dignity, so he escapes to the discard pile.

**If the Spy is Smaller:** *Oops!* You do not steal the Lair. Instead, the *owner of the Lair* captures the Spy, and that player may decide to taunt or kill him *right now*.

**If You Find a Deathtrap:** *Dangit!* If a Secret Lair turns out to be a taunt card, this is a **Deathtrap**. No matter how strong she is, your Spy is killed and collected by the owner of the Deathtrap (*without* a taunt). The Deathtrap card is discarded. (*Note: You can't play Spies into your own Deathtraps, because you are not sufficiently evil.*)

### Steal a Spy:

You will notice that Spy cards have a different card back, because Spies are notoriously lax about hiding. This allows you to steal a Spy from anywhere, including an opponent's hand, or the top of the deck.

You can keep the Spy in your hand, or you may choose to play it right away.

You can capture it in your own Lair, or you can play it as a Double Agent and steal a Lair, but with one exception: You can't steal a Lair from the player from whom you just stole the Spy. That's not cool, even for a super-villain.

**History:** *This game was introduced in 1997 with a name we can't repeat for copyright reasons. It was revived as "James Ernest's Totally Renamed Spy Game" before sinking below the waves and resurfacing in its current form. This is a significant overhaul and a massive improvement over all previous versions.*

#### "Before I Kill You, Mister Spy..."

Designed by **James Ernest**, with art by **Cheyenne Wright**. Edited by Carol Monahan, Mike Selinker, and Cathy Saxton. Playtesters included Mark Bogdanoff, Shawn Carnes, Bob De Dea, Rael Dornfest, Glenn Elliott, Rick Fish, Kaja Foglio, Phil Foglio, Anthony Gallela, Kris Gould, Beth Fournier, Rachael Kauffung, Ryan Macklin, Colleen McGaughey, Nora Miller, Carol Monahan, Ian Noble, Miles Nye, Paul Peterson, Toivo Rovainen, Bill Runkle, Cathy Saxton, Tom Saxton, Daniel Sroka, Lauren Tozer-Kilts, Shel Tozer-Kilts, Mark Valenti, Doug Walker, Mimi Walker, Tyler Wandschneider, and Cassidy Werner.

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