

THE ESOTERIC ORDER OF GAMERS

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ello! I'm Peter ('Universal Head'), and for more than 10 years I've been creating these famous rules and references, and bringing you hundreds of entertaining, informative videos about tabletop gaming.

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SETUP

Before your first game, place all clear job cards in sleeves matching their color.

Place the game board in the center of the table and place all money near it to form the bank.

Separate the **trait** and **job cards** by color (type) and shuffle each pile separately. Then create 1 **trait deck** and 1 **job deck**. Set up these decks as follows for a 3 day game (return unused cards to the box without looking at them).

2 players

Traits: 20 blue I (on top); all red II.

Jobs: 6 green (on top); 10 purple (); all black ().

3 players

Traits: 30 blue I (on top); all red II.

Jobs: 8 green (on top); 14 purple (r); all black r.

4 players

Traits: All blue I (on top); all red II.

Jobs: 12 green (on top); 18 purple (n); all black (r).

Create 3 scoundrels and place them in the Saloon. To create a scoundrel, combine the top card of the trait deck with the top card of the job deck (already in a sleeve). Slide the trait card into the sleeve behind the job card.

Sort the **safe cards** by color into 3 decks and shuffle each deck. Then deal 1 card facedown to each safe space on the board, matching the site's color (*Depot, Estate,* and *Laboratory*). You will have 1 unused safe for each site. Set these cards aside near the board without looking at them (some abilities may affect these unused safes).

Each player chooses a **leader sheet** and takes the 7 marks, 3 henchmen tokens, 1 reputation token, and 7 poker cards (0, A, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6) matching the leader's suit.

Place 1 of your henchmen in jail, your reputation token on the **OT** space of the reputation track, and a **reference card** near your sheet. Take \$4 from the bank.

Shuffle your poker deck, then draw 4 cards into your hand, keeping them secret.

If you are using the optional **strategy cards** rules hand these out as per those rules. Otherwise return them to the box.

Randomly choose a player to take the first turn of the game.

GAMEPLAY

The standard game consists of 3 days. During each day, players take turns in clockwise order. On your turn, follow these 3 steps:

1: PLAN

Choose 1 **poker card** from your hand, place it facedown in any open slot below your leader sheet, and say aloud the slot number. You can **bluff** by placing a card in a slot not matching its number.

Each slot can have only 1 card. If a card in your hand matches an occupied slot, you must bluff and play it in a different slot.

The number 0 card does not match any slot on your sheet. To play it, you must bluff, playing it in any slot.

Unlike A-5, the number 6 card does not have a leader sheet ability. You can always play a card in the 6 slot, even if you don't have a 6 ability.

SUSPICION

You have 3 henchmen tokens. At any time during an opponent's turn, you can place 1 of your henchmen on their poker card, but only during the same turn that card was played.

At the end of the day, each card with 1 or more henchmen is automatically revealed. If you catch an opponent's bluff, you gain a reward and get your henchman back.

Each player can have a maximum of 1 henchman on each card, and you cannot place henchmen on your own cards. You cannot use henchmen that are in jail or on cards. They remain on cards until they are called at the end of the day.

2: USE ABILITIES

Use any of your scoundrel and leader abilities that match the slot you just played a poker card into (even if you were bluffing).

When you have multiple abilities matching the slot number, choose the order in which they are used.

Each ability can be used only once each turn.

If a scoundrel has multiple poker card icons, it can be used each time you play a card in any matching slot.

Using abilities is optional, but if you choose to use an ability, you must use as much of it as possible. Abilities with the word *may* indicate that part of the ability is optional.

Scoundrels cannot interrupt an ability being used. Always fully resolve 1 scoundrel before using the next. If 2 scoundrels could be used at the same time, choose the order and resolve them one at a time.

3: HIRE A SCOUNDREL OR USE SHERIFF'S OFFICE

HIRING A SCOUNDREL

Choose one of the 3 scoundrels in the Saloon, spend money equal to its cost (the green dollar icons), and place it in one of the 5 spaces on your leader sheet. Icons covered by bullet holes do not count towards the cost.

Then immediately refill the *Saloon*: first shift all scoundrels 1 space to the right to fill empty spaces, then create a new scoundrel and place it in the leftmost space of the *Saloon*.

Each time you hire a scoundrel, you can reorganize the scoundrels on your sheet (this is the only time you can do so).

If you hire a scoundrel and have no open spaces on your sheet, discard 1 scoundrel from your sheet to make room (or discard the scoundrel you just hired). This is the only time you can voluntarily discard a scoundrel.

SHERIFF'S OFFICE

If you choose not to hire a scoundrel (or you don't have enough money to hire one), you *must* use the *Sheriff's Office*.

First discard the scoundrel in the rightmost space of the Saloon, placing it in a faceup discard pile to the right of the Saloon. Then refill the Saloon.

Finally, choose 1 option:

- . Sell Information: Gain \$2.
- Post Bail: Spend \$2 to free a henchman, or spend \$4 to free 2 henchmen. You can free henchmen belonging to any player.

 Bribe Sheriff: If it is the final day of the game, spend \$12 to steal any safe from any site.

When an ability frees one of your henchmen, retrieve one from jail and place it in your supply (next to your leader sheet). This henchman can then be used as normal.

END OF DAY

After each player has taken 4 turns, resolve the end of day step.

Some scoundrel abilities are used during the end of day. This is not part of any player's turn, and they can be used only once during the end of day. They cannot affect played poker cards or henchmen on cards.

If multiple players wish to use abilities at the same time, the player who most recently took a turn decides the order.

1. CALL BLUFFS

Each player, one at a time in turn order, reveals their poker cards that have 1 or more henchmen on them. Each henchman on a card that is not a bluff is sent to jail.

Each revealed card not matching its slot is a caught bluff and has these effects:

- Each player gains 1 reputation for each bluff they have a henchman on. Then return these henchmen to their owners.
- Each player loses 1 reputation for each of their bluffs that was caught.

After calling all bluffs during the final day, the game ends and players determine a winner. Otherwise, proceed to step 2.

If more than 1 of your bluffs are called, you lose 1 reputation for each caught bluff (regardless of how many henchmen were placed on each card).

Cards that do not have a henchman token are not revealed during the end of day. Keep them facedown and do not show them to opponents.

The only penalty for placing a henchman on a card that is not a bluff is that your henchman is sent to jail. Players do not gain or lose reputation.

2. SHUFFLE PLAYED POKER CARDS

Players shuffle the poker cards they played this day and place them on the bottom of their decks.

Do not shuffle your played cards into your deck. Shuffle them and place them on the bottom of the deck (so the other cards in the deck are drawn first).

3. FILL HANDS

Players draw cards until they have 4 cards in hand (though they may draw fewer if they have cards in their hand due to an ability).

Then begin a new day, starting with step 1.

The player with the highest reputation chooses who takes the first turn of the day.

On a tie do not change the turn order; follow the same order as today (start with the player to the left of the player who took the last turn).

REPUTATION

If an effect causes you to gain or lose **reputation**, move your token the number of spaces specified. Any number of tokens can occupy the same space.

Each space of the reputation track has a positive or negative **tech value**. At the end of the game, add the tech value shown in your space to your score.

SAFES

Safes start the game facedown on the board, and you will not know their tech values until you scout or steal them. To win the game, you need to find high value safes and steal them.

Each site shows the possible tech values for safes found there.



If an ability allows you to **scout a safe**, choose a safe card and secretly look at its face. Then place one of your **marks** on it with the desired number faceup.

If you place a mark with a number matching the safe's value, it will be worth 1 extra tech to anyone who steals it. Alternatively, you can place a false number to mislead your opponents.

You can look at safes you have a mark on at any time (even if they have been stolen by an opponent). You cannot look at safes you haven't marked or stolen.

There is no limit to the number of marks each player can have on a safe, and you can scout and mark a safe you have already marked.

If an ability allows you to **steal a safe**, take that card from the board and place it facedown at the top of your leader sheet. Keep all tokens on it (regardless of owner). You can steal any safe from any site, unless specified otherwise.

You can look at your stolen safes at any time.

You cannot have more safes than the current day. If you steal a safe that puts you over this limit, secretly look at that safe and then choose which safes to keep (you may abandon the safe you just stole).

The safe you do not keep is abandoned; place it facedown at its matching site, keeping all tokens on it. Players can scout and steal this safe as normal.

SCOUNDRELS

Each scoundrel consists of 3 parts: a clear plastic job card, a trait card, and a card sleeve.

Modifier icons on traits have special effects when used by a poker card:



Bonus money: Gain \$1 before using this scoundrel's ability.



Use twice: When you use this scoundrel, use its ability twice.

White arrows: These scoundrels are used immediately after you use an adjacent scoundrel on your sheet connected to this arrow (ie, at the blunt end of the arrow).

Text: If there is text instead of a poker card icon, the text tells you when to use the scoundrel. These cards can be used during any player's turn when applicable (even outside of step 2). You can only use each ability once during each player's turn and once during each end of day.

Start of your turn: Their abilities are used immediately before you play a card on your turn (you can choose not to use them).

When hired: Their abilities are used as soon as you hire the scoundrel. These scoundrels are never placed on your sheet and are always discarded after hiring them (even if you choose not to use the ability).

Use another scoundrel: Some scoundrels allow you to use another scoundrel on your sheet, in the Saloon, or on top of the discard pile. To use another scoundrel, ignore all parts of the card that tell you when to use the scoundrel and resolve all other text (not modifier icons).

Scouting other cards: Secretly look at the card without showing your opponents. Then return it facedown to its original location, unless specified otherwise. Do not place a mark on the card.

WINNING THE GAME

During the final night, determine the winner as follows:

- 1. Reveal safes: Reveal your safes and add up their tech values.
- Mark bonus: For each mark (including opponents' marks) on your safes that matches the safe's value, add 1 tech to your score. There is no limit to how much you can gain from this honus
- Reputation bonus: Based on your current space on the reputation track, add or subtract tech from your score.
- 4. Scoundrels: For each tech icon in on your scoundrels, add 1 tech to your score.

The player with the highest tech score wins. On a tie, the tied player with the most money wins. On a further tie, the tied player who took the most recent turn wins.

After the game, remove all trait cards from the card sleeves (leaving the job cards), so that you are ready to play next time.

COMPONENT LIMITATIONS

Money is unlimited. If you run out, use a suitable substitute such as a coin

If all of your 3 henchmen are on cards or in jail, you cannot use henchmen for any reason until you free one.

Each player has 7 marks. If you do not have any marks of the number you wish to use when marking a safe, you must use a different number. If all of your marks are on safes, either do not mark the safe, or move one of your marks from a different safe. You cannot move a mark from an opponent's safe.

If the **trait or job deck** runs out, no more scoundrels will be created for the rest of the game.

If your **poker deck** runs out, you cannot draw any more cards. A new deck will be created at the end of the day.

If there are no **safes** at a site, safes cannot be stolen, scouted, or marked at that site.

PLAYER COMMUNICATION

You are free to share or lie about any information that you've seen. You cannot show hidden information to prove that you were telling the truth.

Players are allowed to make deals with each other, but future promises are non-binding and can be broken. You cannot trade physical components with opponents (such as money or cards).

You can always look at the cards in your hand and any cards you have played. You cannot look at cards in decks, those in an opponent's hand, or an opponent's facedown cards.

OPTIONAL RULES

SHORTER GAME

This option is for your first game, and shorter games, and consists of 2 days. Set up the decks as follows:

2 players

Traits: 14 blue I (on top); all red II.

Jobs: 4 green 6 (on top); 6 purple 7; all black 7.

3 player

Traits: 20 blue I (on top); all red II.

Jobs: 6 green (on top); 8 purple (n); all black (r).

4 players

Traits: 26 blue I (on top); all red II.

Jobs: 8 green (on top): 10 purple (1: all black (1: all bla

STRATEGY CARDS

With this option, each leader has 2 unique **strategy cards** to choose from. During setup, each player secretly chooses 1 of their strategy cards and places it facedown on their leader sheat

Once all players have chosen, flip all strategy cards faceup and return the unchosen cards to the box.

Players can use their strategy card as explained on the card.
Using these abilities is optional, and they cannot interrupt other abilities

Each strategy card can only be used once during each player's turn.

Strategy cards are not scoundrels and are immune to abilities and cards that refer to scoundrels. Other abilities may be used after using the ability where applicable.

STARTING 0

To add more intrigue, each player starts with their 0 poker card in their hand (plus 3 random cards). This option forces each player to bluff during the first day of the game, and creates a more level playing field at the start of the game.

EXTRA SCOUNDREL

To allow more scoundrel combinations, each player can now have up to 6 scoundrels on their leader sheet. This sixth scoundrel is placed over the artwork in the top left of the leader sheet (where the strategy card is normally placed), and can trigger response abilities and all other effects as normal.

If you are also using the *Strategy Cards* optional rule, place the strategy card to the left of your leader sheet.

WILD SALOON

This optional rule adds more variety to the types of scoundrels seen in the early game. During setup, create 2 job decks instead of one. One deck contains all purple jobs, and the other includes all black jobs with a number of green jobs on top depending upon the number of players:

2 players

Traits: 14 blue I (on top); all red II.

Jobs: 7 green (on top); all black (r.)

players

Traits: 30 blue I (on top); all red II.

Jobs: 9 green (on top); all black (v.)

4 players

Traits: 40 blue I (on top); all red II.

Jobs: 12 green (on top); all black (v.)

To setup the *Saloon*, create 2 green scoundrels in the rightmost spaces, then 1 purple scoundrel in the leftmost space.

During the game, there should always be a purple scoundrel in the Saloon and 2 cards from the other deck. Each time you need to create a scoundrel, check the colors of the scoundrels in the Saloon. If there are 0 purple scoundrels, create a purple scoundrel. Otherwise, create a scoundrel from the top of the green/black iob deck.

If a rare effect adds a second purple scoundrel to the Saloon, do not add any more purple scoundrels to the Saloon until there are 0.

Safe limit: Instead of being limited to having 1 safe per day, players are now limited to 3 safes on their leader sheet at any time, regardless of the day. A player who exceeds this must abandon a safe as normal.

Running out of jobs: In the unlikely situation that a job deck runs out of cards, all new scoundrels are created from the other job deck.



GAMEPLAY

The game consists of 3 days. During each day, players take turns in clockwise order. On your turn, follow these 3 steps:

1: PLAN

Play 1 **poker card** from your hand facedown in any open slot below your leader sheet, and say aloud the slot number. You can **bluff** by placing a card in a slot not matching its number.

The number 0 card does not match any slot on your sheet. To play it, you must bluff, playing it in any slot.

The number 6 card does not have a leader sheet ability. You can always play a card in the 6 slot, even if you don't have a 6 ability.

SUSPICION

At any time during an opponent's turn, you can place one of your **henchmen tokens** on their poker card, but only during the same turn that card was played.

Each player can have a maximum of 1 henchman on each card, and you cannot place henchmen on your own cards. You cannot use henchmen that are in jail or on cards.

When an ability frees one of your henchmen, retrieve one from jail and place it in your supply (next to your leader sheet).

2: USE ABILITIES

Use any of your scoundrel and leader abilities that match the slot you just played a poker card into (even if you were bluffing).

Each ability can be used only once each turn.

If a scoundrel has multiple poker card icons, it can be used each time you play a card in any matching slot.

3: HIRE A SCOUNDREL OR USE SHERIFF'S OFFICE

HIRING A SCOUNDREL

Choose one of the 3 scoundrels in the Saloon, spend money equal to its **cost**, and place it in one of the 5 spaces on your leader sheet.

Then immediately refill the Saloon: first shift all scoundrels 1 space to the right to fill empty spaces, then create a new scoundrel and place it in the leftmost space of the Saloon.

Each time you hire a scoundrel, you can reorganize the scoundrels on your sheet (this is the only time you can do so).

SHERIFF'S OFFICE

If you choose not to hire a scoundrel (or you don't have enough money to hire one), you *must* use the *Sheriff's Office*.

First discard the scoundrel in the rightmost space of the *Saloon*, then refill the *Saloon*. Finally, choose 1 option:

- . Sell Information: Gain \$2.
- Post Bail: Spend \$2 to free a henchman, or spend \$4 to free 2 henchmen. You can free henchmen belonging to any player.
- Bribe Sheriff: If it is the final day of the game, spend \$12 to steal any safe from any site.

END OF DAY

After each player has taken 4 turns, resolve the end of day step.

1. CALL BLUFFS

Each player, one at a time in turn order, reveals their poker cards that have one or more henchmen on them. Each henchman on a card that is not a bluff is sent to jail.

Each revealed card not matching its slot is a caught bluff:

- Each player gains 1 reputation for each bluff they have a henchman on. Then return these henchmen to their owners.
- Each player loses 1 reputation for each of their bluffs that was caught.

After calling all bluffs during the final day, the game ends and players determine a winner. Otherwise, proceed to step 2.

If more than one of your bluffs are called, you lose 1 reputation for each caught bluff (regardless of how many henchmen were placed on each card).

Cards that do not have a henchman token are not revealed during the end of day.

2. SHUFFLE PLAYED POKER CARDS

Players shuffle the poker cards they played this day and place them on the bottom of their decks.

3. FILL HANDS

Players draw cards until they have 4 cards in hand.

Then begin a new day, starting with step 1. The player with the highest reputation chooses who takes the first turn of the day. On a tie do not change the turn order.

SAFES

If an ability allows you to **scout a safe**, choose a safe card and secretly look at its face. Then place one of your **marks** on it with the desired number faceup. If you place a mark with a number matching the safe's value, it will be worth 1 extra tech to anyone who steals it. Alternatively, you can place a false number to mislead your opponents.

There is no limit to the number of marks each player can have on a safe. You can scout and mark a safe that you have already marked.

If an ability allows you to **steal a safe**, take that card from the board and place it facedown at the top of your leader sheet. Keep all tokens on it (regardless of owner). You can steal any safe from any site, unless specified otherwise.

You can look at your stolen or marked safes at any time.

You cannot have more safes than the current day.

WINNING THE GAME

During the final night, determine the winner as follows:

- 1. Reveal safes: Reveal your safes and add up their tech values.
- 2. Mark bonus: For each mark (including opponents' marks) on your safes that matches the safe's value, add 1 tech to your score.
- Reputation bonus: Based on your current space on the reputation track, add or subtract tech from your score.
- 4. Scoundrels: For each tech icon on your scoundrels, add 1 tech to your score.

The player with the highest tech score wins.

On a tie, the tied player with the most money wins. On a further, the tied player who took the most recent turn wins.