SPYCON

RULEBOOK

A Team-Based Detective Party Game Unlike Any Other!

*Welcome to **Spycon**, the largest super-spy convention in the world! The best super agents are here gossiping, sharing their experiences, signing autographs, and having a great time.*

You are here to get a precious piece of secret information, but there's a problem: Everyone is wearing a costume, and you don't know who your source is. Find your Spy by listening and talking to attendees, but you have to remember that rival agents are there trying to intercept the information by identifying your Spy before you do!

Spycon is an exhilarating detective party game in which players split into 2 teams and take turns being the Spy. The goal of the Spy is to have their own team guess who they're dressed as – a memorable historical or fictional character – before the opposing team. In order to do this, the Spy and their team will use a special Keyword as well as their quick-wittedness, imagination, subtlety, and impressive talent for mingling.

*In **Spycon**, the most creative and ingenious team wins, so stay on your toes!*

CONTENTS

- 28 Non-Fictional Character cards 🖋
- 28 Fictional Character cards 🐎
- 2 blank Character cards
- 24 Keyword cards
- 14 Action cards
- 16 Red Carpet cards
- 2 Spy standees
- 2 standee bases
- 2 dry-erase markers
- 2 double-sided Character sheets
- 2 double-sided Keyword sheets
- This Rulebook

You might also need a timer — you'll find one on any smartphone.

All of the time limits listed in the rules are subject to the group's approval. Setting a timer will help to settle any disputes and will also intensify your rivalry.

GAME OVERVIEW

Players split up into 2 teams. The game is played over a series of rounds, during which 1 player becomes the Spy and receives a Character card. The Spy's goal is to describe their Character in such a way that their team guesses who they are and the intercepting team cannot. Each team's goal is to be the first to guess the Character the Spy is talking about. The intercepting team always gives the first answer when the game is stopped, but the Spy's team has a significant advantage: They know a Keyword.

The Keyword is a special item referenced by the Spy while they describe their character. The intercepting team has the full lists of Characters and Keywords. The sooner the Spy's Character is guessed, the more points the corresponding team scores and the further their standee is moved along the Red Carpet made up of cards.

Whichever team makes it to the last card of the Red Carpet first wins.

Keyword sheet   Character sheet   Action cards

Spy standees

Red Carpet

Action cards   Character sheet   Keyword sheet

Keyword cards

Character cards

Set aside the 2 Red Carpet cards with "Start" and "Victory!" Shuffle all other Red Carpet cards and place them in a row face up so they form a Red Carpet. Place the "Start" card at the beginning of the Red Carpet and the "Victory" card at its end. Place 2 Spy standees on the "Start" card (1 for each team).

Players split up into 2 teams of similar size and skill. Each team receives a Character sheet, Keyword sheet, marker, and Action deck with either of 2 backs. Each team places their Action cards in front of them, face up.

Decide together which type of Characters you want to use — either Fictional (🐴) or non-Fictional (🐎). Place both Character sheets with the corresponding side up. Sort Character cards by symbols 🐴 and 🐎 on their faces into 2 piles. Take the corresponding Character deck, shuffle it thoroughly, and place it in the middle of the table, face down.

Decide which Keywords you want to use: **A** or **B**. Place both Keyword sheets with the corresponding side up. Sort Keyword cards by letters **A** and **B** on their faces into 2 piles. Take the corresponding Keyword deck, shuffle it thoroughly, and place it next to the Character deck, face down. Put all unused Character

cards back in the box and set aside all unused Keyword cards, away from the play area.

Study the list of Characters and make sure each player knows them. If any of the Characters seem unfamiliar to you, read their short overview at the end of this Rulebook or search for additional information on the Internet.

The team with fewer players goes first. If the number of players is equal, the first is the team which has more electronic gadgets on the table. If there is still a tie, the first is the team with the lowest total battery level on their devices. Put all gadgets away except the one that will be used as a timer.

RED CARPET

- You may shorten the playing time by placing less Red Carpet cards.

- If the Red Carpet cards don't fit on your table, place them in 2 rows so they form a U-turn.


GAMEPLAY

At the start of the round, the team whose turn it is chooses 1 player to be their Spy.

The Spy looks at the Red Carpet card with their team's standee on it and reads its effect out loud. The effect is resolved either immediately or during the round depending on the card's text. Then, the Spy draws the topmost cards of the Character and Keyword decks without showing them to the others. The Spy looks at both cards and passes the Keyword card to their team, face down.

The Spy starts talking about themselves as the Character. The other players don't know which Character the Spy is, but they have the full Character list on their sheets and they try to figure it out.

While describing themself, the Spy somehow tries to refer to the Keyword known by their teammates but not known by the intercepting team.
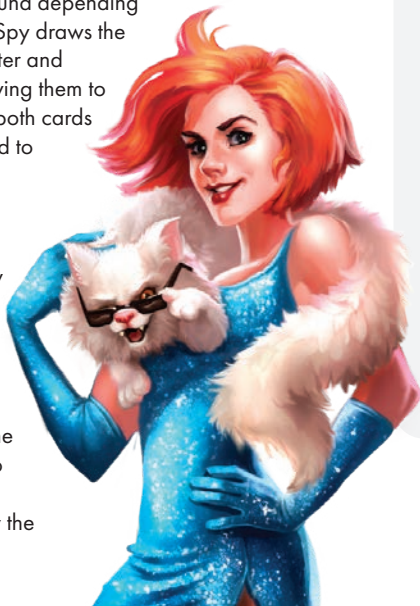
RESTRICTIONS FOR THE SPY

The Spy should describe the Character in the first person to avoid giving away the Character's gender.

The Spy may not:

- Refer to letters in the Keyword.
  Example: "My name starts with the third letter of the Keyword."
- Refer to details in the picture.
  Example: "My hand is raised."
- Refer to the Character or Keyword sheets.
  Example: "The Keyword listed below mine would help me during my work."
- Use personal information that some players are not aware of.
  Example: "I starred in that movie we watched yesterday."
- Whisper or speak quietly so the other team can't hear them.

The Spy may:

- Mention Keyword's shape, material, or parts.
- *Example: "From the material of our Keyword, you can guess what I do for a living." (Keyword: Candle, Character: Michelangelo.)*
- Connect the Keyword with Character's relatives, friends, or enemies.
- *Example: "I don't use the Keyword, but one of my friends could." (Keyword: Swimsuit, Character: Tin Man.)*
- Use public information.
- *Example: "Last year, they released a movie about me."*
- Refer to other Characters with similar names.
  Example: Homer is an ancient Greek poet and a character on The Simpsons.

◼ QUESTIONING THE SPY ◼

Any player may ask the Spy a question, as long as they don't interrupt the Spy. The Spy may answer the question, but they also may refuse to answer it.

When the game is stopped for an attempt to reveal the Spy (see below), questions may not be asked anymore.

Exception for both cases: When the "Ask the Spy a question" Action card is used, the Spy must answer honestly, "Yes" or "No." See *Action Cards* on page 5.

NOTES ON THE SHEETS

All players within 1 team (except the Spy) may covertly discuss the Spy's possible identity and take notes on their sheets (e.g., write a question mark next to the Character that seems to fit the description and show the sheet to their teammates). **You may not show your notes to the Spy** because they will start playing along.

◼ GUESSING THE SPY'S IDENTITY ◼

Both teams have 3 shared attempts to reveal the Spy's identity. Each attempt consists of 1 guess by each team. At any point during the game, any player (except the Spy) may stop the game to try and guess which Character the Spy is. Regardless of who stopped the game, both teams make 1 guess each. **The intercepting team is always the first to make their guess**, and the Spy's team is the second.

The intercepting team has 30 seconds to discuss and make their guess.

Then, if the guess is not correct, it's the Spy team's turn to discuss the Spy's identity for 30 seconds and make their guess. If both teams don't guess the Character correctly, the game continues and the Spy may keep going with their description.

Note:

- You may mark incorrectly named Characters with minuses on your sheets to remember which Characters are not taking part in this round.

- When the game is stopped, both teams must make their guesses. If any of the teams don't make their guesses, the attempt is spent anyway.
- If there are several answers given accidentally, only the first one is taken into account.
- When the game is stopped, the Spy may not continue talking about their Character or answer questions (except when the "Ask the Spy a question" Action card is played, see page 5.)

If the Character is named correctly, the Spy reveals their Character card. Then, both teams cross that Character out on their sheets and the team that got the Character right scores victory points (VPs) and moves their standee along the Red Carpet as follows:

- The Spy is revealed on the first attempt: 3 VPs, the team moves 3 cards forward.
- The Spy is revealed on the second attempt: 2 VPs, the team moves 2 cards forward.
- The Spy is revealed on the third attempt: 1 VP, the team moves 1 card forward.

◼ ROUND END ◼

The round can end in 3 ways:

1. The Spy's identity is guessed correctly by a team.

2. Both teams fail to guess the Spy's identity after 3 attempts.

3. The Spy completes their description of themselves and hasn't added any new info for 1 minute.

At the end of the round, the Spy discards their Character card so everyone can see it. Both teams cross that Character from their sheets since that card is out of the game now. The Keyword card is shuffled back into the Keyword deck and might be drawn later in the game.

It's the other team's turn to pick a player to be a Spy, and a new round begins.

Victory!

END OF GAME

Whichever team's standee is the first to get to the "Victory!" card on the Red Carpet wins the game.

RED CARPET EFFECTS

While advancing along the Red Carpet, both teams will apply additional effects from the cards. Some of the effects are resolved at the beginning of the round, some of them at the end. The "Start" and "Victory!" cards don't have any additional effects.

IMPORTANT: You must resolve ONLY the effect of the card that the Spy team's standee is on.

Both teams flip their Keyword sheets and replace the Keyword deck: At the beginning of the round, both teams flip their Keyword sheets, take the unused Keyword deck, shuffle it, and replace the current Keyword deck with it.

VPs are scored in reverse: The first attempt scores 1 VP, the third attempt scores 3 VPs: During this round, the first attempt scores only 1 VP, the second attempt scores 2 VPs, and the third scores 3 VPs. On one hand, it's better to wait until the third attempt to score more VPs. On the other hand, someone else might prefer not to wait and guess the Spy's identity earlier.

The teams have a maximum of 2 attempts to reveal the Spy: The round is over after 2 failed attempts instead of 3.

The teams have a fourth attempt to reveal the Spy. It scores 1 VP: The round is not over after the third failed attempt. Both teams may make a fourth attempt according to the usual rules.

The Spy draws 2 Characters instead of 1 and keeps 1 of them: At the beginning of the round, the Spy draws 2 Character cards instead of 1, picks 1 of them, and shuffles the other 1 back into the Character deck.

The Spy draws another Keyword: At the beginning of the round, the Spy draws an additional card from the Keyword deck, looks at it, and gives it to their team, saying "This is the second Keyword." Now, the Spy may use both Keywords during their description.

The Spy reveals 3 Keywords from the deck: At the beginning of the round, the Spy draws the 3 topmost cards from the Keyword deck and lines them up, face up, next to the Red Carpet. The intercepting team now knows that those Keywords are out of the current round. At the end of the round, the Keywords are shuffled back into the deck.

The Spy must describe the Keyword based on the Character: This round is played in the opposite way: The Spy draws a Character card and a Keyword card, but they keep the Keyword card to themself and they pass the Character card to their team. Now, their goal is to describe the Keyword based on the Character, while both teams try to guess the Keyword. All other rules stay the same.

ACTION CARDS

Each team has a set of 7 Action cards. They provide a significant advantage, but each of them can only be **used once**. Action cards belong to the whole team, and any player of the team may resolve an Action card if their teammates agree. Once an Action card is used, discard it into the box.

Ask the Spy a question. They must answer honestly: "Yes" or "No": At any point during the game, discard this card to ask the Spy a question. They must answer your question honestly, but the only thing they may say is either "Yes" or "No." This card can be used even when the game is stopped and the Spy can't answer questions; the Action card takes precedence over this rule. This card can be used before your attempt to reveal the Spy or after the other team's attempt. In addition to the usual restrictions, you may not ask if it's a certain Character or a Keyword. For instance, you may not ask: "Is it Cleopatra?" or "Is it an umbrella?"

Make 2 guesses per attempt: During your attempt to reveal the Spy, before naming a Character, discard this card in the box and name 2 Characters. If 1 of them turns out to be correct, you score VPs. The 2 guesses are considered a single attempt by the team to reveal the Spy.

The Spy crosses out a quarter of the Characters: At any point during the game, discard this card to make the Spy cross out a whole quarter of Characters (1 of the 4 parts of the list) on both teams' Character sheets (it must be the same quarter for both teams). The Spy's Character must not be among the ones crossed out. Thus, the list of Characters shortens significantly. This card can be resolved after the intercepting team's guess.
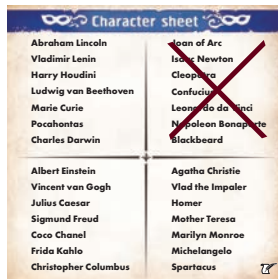
The Spy draws 2 Characters instead of 1 and keeps 1 of them: At the beginning of the round, discard this card to make the Spy draw 2 Character cards, pick 1 of them, and shuffle the other back into the Character deck.

The Spy draws another Keyword: At any point during the game, discard this card to make the Spy draw an additional card from the Keyword deck, look at it, and give it to their team, saying "This is the second Keyword." Now, the Spy may use both Keywords during their description. If there are several cards of the same kind played, their effects stack ("This is the third Keyword," "This is the fourth Keyword," and so on).

If you want to make it harder, don't use Action cards at all or reduce the number of cards.

TIPS

Tips for the Spy:

- It's important not to give away either the Character or the Keyword to the intercepting team. If they get the Keyword, your team loses its advantage.

- Try to utilize the Keyword during your description as much as you can, since most other descriptions will be too obvious for the intercepting team.

- Don't try to be too obscure while describing your Character, since there is a chance that your team will be just as confused as the intercepting team.

Tips for all players:

- Don't try to save your Action cards for later. Otherwise, your opponents may get ahead.

- Don't forget to erase all temporary notes from your sheets between the rounds and leave all played or removed Characters crossed out during the game.

GAME VARIANTS

If you want to use any of the variants listed below, decide together which ones you want to use before starting the game.

- Instead of using first person, utilize the words "My Character." However, you should stick to a single gender for all your descriptions.

- You may allow everyone to search for info about the Characters on the internet during the game.

- You may cross some of the Characters out on your sheets and remove their cards from the deck if they seem too difficult or unfamiliar. We advise not to remove more than 3 Characters.

- If you don't have the ability to place the Red Carpet (for instance, while traveling), you may play without it and score your points in the corner of your Keyword sheets. The first team that scores 15 VPs wins.

- You will find 2 blank Character cards in the box. You may write the names of your own Characters and add them to the game. In order to do that, shuffle your Character into the deck of either Fictional or Non-Fictional Characters depending on where they fit and add the Character's name to the same quarter of both sheets. You may either add your Character to the existing ones or replace any of them with yours (don't forget to remove the cards of any excluded Characters and cross their names out on both Character sheets.)

TIMER USE

- When the game is stopped to reveal the Spy, each team has 30 seconds to discuss and make their guesses.

- When the Spy doesn't know what to add to their description, you may set a timer for 1 minute, and if they don't say anything else and the game doesn't get stopped by any of the teams, the round is over.

- Optional: You may limit the Spy's description to 2-3 minutes (decide together whether you want to use this variant before starting the game).

ROUND EXAMPLE

George is the Spy. He looks at the Red Carpet: His team's standee is on the card that says, "The teams have a maximum of 2 attempts to reveal the Spy." He understands that this round will be shorter than usual and he should describe his Character in a simpler way.

George draws a Character card and a Keyword card: "Joan of Arc" and "Spacesuit." He shows the card with "Spacesuit" to his team. At first glance, the Keyword and the Character have nothing in common, so George starts with the following:

"I don't need this Keyword at all, but I definitely used something similar in terms of shape and function. Let's just say, I was famous for it."

George is referring to Joan's armor, which she wears in most depictions. Ann, George's team member, thinks that she has figured it out and stops the game. According to the rules, the other team is the first to make their guess, so Ann waits for her turn. Even though the second team has little information, they must try to guess the Character. Steve, a member of the intercepting team, names Michelangelo, thinking that the Keyword is a Screwdriver, which looks like a trowel. His guess is wrong, so George's team can now make their guess. Ann names Julius Caesar. She understood the hint about the armor, but she didn't get the details about the Character. Both answers are wrong, so the players mark both Characters as incorrect and George proceeds with his description, trying to lead his team to the correct guess.

NON-FICTIONAL CHARACTERS

Abraham Lincoln — The 16th president of the United States, national hero, and abolisher of slavery.

Agatha Christie — An English writer known for her detective novels revolving around her fictional characters Hercule Poirot and Miss Marple. She also wrote the murder mystery *The Mousetrap* and the novel *And Then There Were None.*

Albert Einstein — A German-born theoretical physicist who developed the theory of relativity and influenced the philosophy of science.

Blackbeard — Edward Teach, a notorious English pirate who operated in the Caribbean. The captain of a vessel known as *Queen Anne's Revenge.*

Charles Darwin — An English naturalist and traveler best known for his contributions to the theory of evolution, natural selection, and the origin of species.
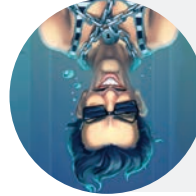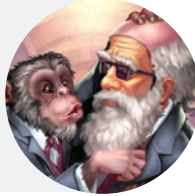
Harry Houdini — An American illusionist and stunt performer, renowned for his sensational escape acts.

Christopher Columbus — An Italian explorer who discovered a route to the New World (The Americas).

Homer — An ancient Greek poet and the legendary author of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.

Cleopatra — An Egyptian ruler who fell in love with the Roman general Mark Antony.
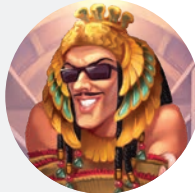
Isaac Newton — An English mathematician and physicist who formulated the laws of motion and universal gravitation.

Coco Chanel — A French fashion designer known for her iconic little black dress, Chanel bag, and the Chanel No. 5 perfume.
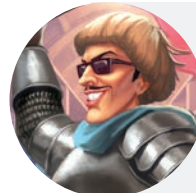
Joan of Arc — A national heroine of France from the Hundred Years' War period. Nicknamed "The Maid of Orléans" for leading the French army to victory at Orléans.

Confucius — A Chinese philosopher and the recognized founder of Confucianism, a system of social and ethical philosophy.

Julius Caesar — A Roman politician and military general who conquered enormous territories and won the Great Roman Civil War.

Frida Kahlo — An extravagant Mexican painter, feminist, and communist known for self-portraits.
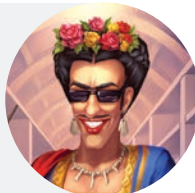
Leonardo da Vinci — An Italian artist and scientist of the Renaissance. *Mona Lisa* is one of his most well-known pieces of art.

Ludwig van Beethoven — A German composer and pianist. He started developing deafness at the age of 26.

Pocahontas — The daughter of a Native America tribal chief, she married a British tobacco planter, traveled to England, and was celebrated by English society.

Marie Curie — A Polish and naturalized-French scientist who conducted pioneering research on radioactivity. She was awarded the Nobel Prize in physics and chemistry.

Sigmund Freud — An Austrian neurologist and the founder of psychoanalysis.

Marilyn Monroe — An American actress, model, and singer who became the most popular sex symbol of the 1950s.

Spartacus — A Roman gladiator and the leader of a major slave uprising against the Roman Republic.

Michelangelo — An Italian painter, architect, and sculptor of the High Renaissance known for his sculpture of David, and for painting the Sistine Chapel's ceiling.
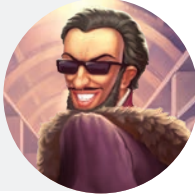
Vincent van Gogh — A Dutch post-impressionist painter. His most notable works are *The Starry Night* and the *Self-Portrait with Bandaged Ear and Pipe.*

Mother Teresa — An Albanian-Indian nun and missionary known for her charity work for the poor and dying. She won the Nobel Peace Prize and was elevated to sainthood by the Roman Catholic Church after her death.
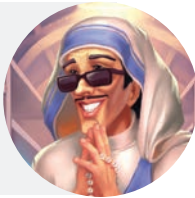
Vlad the Impaler — A Romanian prince, politician, and general, the prototype of Bram Stoker's fictional Dracula.

Napoleon Bonaparte — A French statesman and military leader who became Emperor, led France during the Napoleonic Wars, and brought modern ideas and reforms to many parts of the world.

Vladimir Lenin — A Russian revolutionary and founder of the USSR.

FICTIONAL CHARACTERS

Alice — The protagonist of Lewis Carroll's novels, a girl who falls down the rabbit hole into the fantasy world of Wonderland.
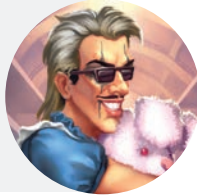
Baba Yaga — A Slavic folklore character who appears as a ferocious-looking old woman dwelling deep in the forest in a hut usually described as standing on chicken legs.

Cinderella — The title character of a European fairy tale, a young girl who is mistreated by her stepmother and step-sisters.

Cthulhu — A character created by H.P. Lovecraft, a chthonic cosmic entity sleeping at the bottom of the ocean and driving people insane.
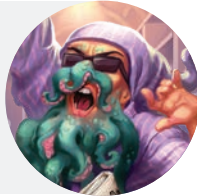
Don Quixote — The protagonist of Miguel de Cervantes' novel *The Ingenious Gentleman Don Quixote of La Mancha*, an impoverished noble who reads so many chilvaric romances that he decides to become a knight-errant and fight windmills.

Ebenezer Scrooge — The protagonist of Charles Dickens' novella *A Christmas Story*, a cold-hearted old man who despises Christmas and other people but is transformed by ghosts into a better person.

Frankenstein's Monster — A character from Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein; or the Modern Prometheus*, a creature built out of dead material and revived by Victor Frankenstein in his laboratory.

Helen of Troy — An ancient Greek mythological character, renowned as the most beautiful woman in the world. Married to King Menelaus of Sparta, she is abducted by Prince Paris of Troy, resulting in the Trojan War.

Hercules — An ancient Greek mythological divine hero, demi-god, and son of Zeus known for his twelve labors and enormous power.
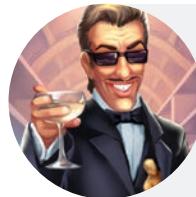
Jay Gatsby — The title character of the F. Scott Fitzgerald novel *The Great Gatsby*, a millionaire with a mysterious past and a questionable source of wealth.
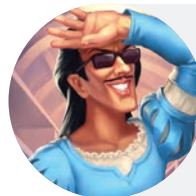
Juliet — The female protagonist in William Shakespeare's tragedy *Romeo and Juliet*, a young woman who falls in love with a man from an opposing family.

King Arthur — Legendary British leader from folklore, books, and films who defends against invaders in the late 5th and early 6th centuries. He is renowned for Camelot, the Knights of the Round Table, and Excalibur.

Pinocchio — The protagonist of the children's novel by Carlo Collodi, a wooden puppet dreaming of becoming a real boy.

Little Red Riding Hood — The title character of a European fairy tale, a young girl who walks through the woods to deliver food to her sickly grandmother, but is eaten by the Big Bad Wolf.
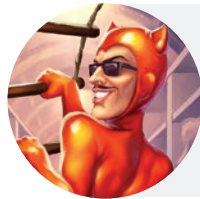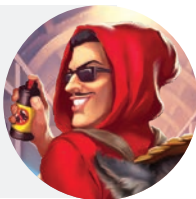
Puss in Boots — A character from Charles Parrault's fairy tale, a talking cat who uses trickery and deceit to gain power, wealth, and the hand of a princess for his penniless and low-born master.

Medusa — An ancient Greek mythological character, a cursed woman with a stone gaze and living venomous snakes in place of hair.
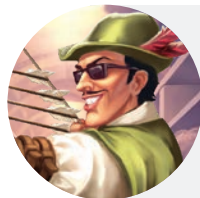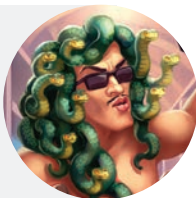
Robin Hood — A legendary heroic outlaw depicted in English folklore who robs from the rich and gives to the poor.

Minotaur — An ancient Greek mythological character, the son of a mortal woman and a bull, who is locked at the center of the Labyrinth, a maze-like prison on the island of Crete.
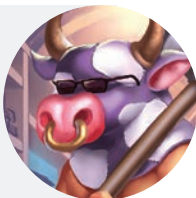
Santa Claus — A jolly old man with a white beard who brings gifts to the homes of well-behaved children on the night of Christmas Eve.

Mowgli — The protagonist of Rudyard Kipling's *The Jungle Book* stories, a boy raised by a bear, a panther, and a pack of wolves.
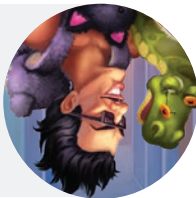
Sherlock Holmes — A character created by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, a consulting detective known for his proficiency with observation, forensic science, and logical reasoning. He is Dr. Watson's friend and Mrs. Hudson's tenant.

Mulan — The protagonist of the *Ballad of Mulan*, a legendary female warrior who disguises herself as a man and takes her aged father's place in the army.
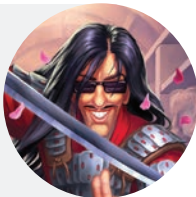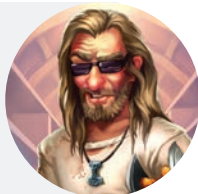
The Invisible Man — The protagonist of H.G. Wells' novel of the same name, a scientist who becomes invisible.
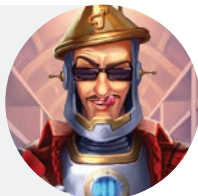
The Little Mermaid — The protagonist of the fairy tale by Hans Christian Andersen, a mermaid who falls in love with a human and is willing to give up her voice and tail to gain human legs.

Tom Sawyer — A character who appears in several of Mark Twain's novels, a light-hearted and merry boy who loves books and adventures.
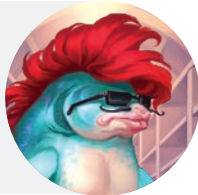
Thor — The Norse god of thunder, lightning, and storms and protector of mankind.

Zorro — Swashbuckling masked vigilante who defends commoners in Spanish California in numerous books and films. Using his sword, he frequently carves the initial "Z" to leave his mark.

Tin Man — A character in the fictional Land of Oz created by L. Frank Baum, an ordinary man trapped in a mechanical body and dreaming of a real heart.

CREDITS