

SPY TACTICS

A Micro Game by Iffix Y Santaph

TOP SECRET

RULES

WELCOME AGENTS!

Spy Tactics is a short (10-15 minutes) microgame for 4-9 players who will represent secret agents on two to three teams: Chimera, Tachyon, and Vex.

Along with this simple rulebook, you may find quick start rules on an accompanying card.

The objective of this game is for the different agents in a team to score the most collective victory points. They might do so by activating their cards at the best times, leading to greater victory points, and endeavoring to eliminate their opponents.

Each agent receives a private identity card which shows their agency alignment.

SETTING UP ALIGNMENTS:

4-6 players: Take 2 copies of each alignment: Chimera, Tachyon, and Vex, and distribute these at random. Discard any left-overs without revealing these.

7 players: Take 2 copies of each alignment, and 1 additional alignment card chosen at random. Distribute these randomly. Don't reveal left-over alignment cards.

8-9 players: Distribute 1 copy at random to each player. Discard the last alignment without looking at it.

These are kept secret (Top Secret side up), though you may use cards to examine alignments of other agents. You will also score points individually on a score card (you will want to provide a marker or pawn of some sort), and add these to the scores of surviving agents of your team. (When an agent is eliminated, he scores 0 points, but he may still win if his team is victorious.) Note that each agent starts with 3 Victory Points (this should offset initial steals from activating an Electrum). You will then receive 8 cards. You will want to examine these

carefully and strategize for a few moments before play begins. Primarily, before beginning the game, you will want to decide which of your 8 cards will be discarded. Choose well, for based on this discard, you might later be eliminated by your opponents (or perhaps even unsuspecting allies). From this point, over the next 6 rounds, you will simultaneously choose a card to activate (placing this card face down in front of you), and you will reveal these at the same time as other agents. In earlier games, you may wish to resolve the cards one at a time, until you get a better grasp of the impacts of certain cards. What does each of the eight cards do? They will vary based on which round you are in. Usually, this means you may not gain the earlier – or later – benefits of a card you activate now.

Round 1:

- **DarkWind** – Gain 2 Victory Points. The advantage of this payout is that it cannot be contested. You might gain greater victory points from other cards, but there is a larger risk of activating these.
- **Dreamfall** – Examine the Identity Card of an agent of your choice. This means you will be able to determine whether your fellow agent is a friend or a foe. However, this agent will not know your alignment. So an ally may still try to eliminate you. Or you may secretly set up an enemy for his downfall.
- **Electrum** – Steal 1 Victory Point from each agent who activated HydroCluster this round. Of course, if no other agent activates HydroCluster, you score 0 points. This card also negates any agent activating HydroCluster during the same round from scoring their points.
- **Hydrocluster** – Provided no agent has activated Electrum, you will score 4 Victory Points. But beware. If any agent activates Hydrocluster, rather than gaining 4 Victory Points, you will lose 1 to each agent who activates the ability.

- JackKnife – Swap a card from your hand with another agent who played JackKnife during Round 1. Otherwise, gain 5 Victory Points. Essentially, you may lose a card here. Or you may gain the ability to use a card twice. This may well work to your advantage either way. It also helps to mask your discard when you swap cards with others. Note, though, that each agent should only swap 1 card from his hand. If more than 1 agent activates JackKnife, it may be easiest to have each agent pass a card to the agent on his left who activated JackKnife.

- StormSabre – Gain 1 Victory Point per different code activate this round. (Each unique card, for example, StormSabre. So you're assured of at least 1 point.)

- ThornLily – Gain 2 Victory Points, plus 1 for each other agent who activate ThornLily. This card works particularly well when many decide to activate it simultaneously. But you can never be too sure.

Rounds 1-5:

- StarFrost – Name a card. No other agent may activate that card during the next round. This may give you the opening to execute a StormSabre or JackKnife and ensure its success. However, note that if two agents activate StarFrost and choose the same card, no agent may activate the ability next round.

Rounds 2 – Beyond:

- DarkWind – Return a previously activated card to your hand. Generally, a card activated must remain face up on the table. By returning the card to your hand, you allow yourself to activate it again. You also may limit the knowledge other agents have about the cards you are holding.

- DreamFall – If any other agent activates DreamFall, you receive 3 Victory Points. Of course if you activate this card at the wrong time, you will not score any points.

- Electrum – Gain 6 Victory Points divided evenly between agents activating electrum. However, victory points must be divided evenly. Here's the mark-up: 1 Agent: 6 Points. 2 Agents: 3 points each. 3 Agents: 2 points each. 4-6 Agents: 1 point each. 7-9 Agents: 0 points.

- Hydrocluster – Choose an agent and guess his discard. If you guess correctly, he is eliminated. If you guess incorrectly, he remains active, and you've made a new enemy.

- JackKnife – Gain victory points equal to the current round number, but negate this ability if another agent played JackKnife. Strategically, you may not want to wait too long to cash in on this ability.

- StormSabre – If an odd number of agents activate StormSabre simultaneously (for example, if you're the only one), these agents score 10 points each. But if an even number of agents activate StormSabre simultaneously (for example, activating StormSabre with just your team mate sitting across the table), these agents are eliminated. Be careful with this card. It's a good way to wipe yourself out. But the payout is tremendous if you can find a way to pull it off.

Rounds 2 -5:

- ThornLily – Examine the identity card of one agent of your choice. Essentially, this is the counterpart to DreamFall. (See its description in the Round 1 section above.) You might activate both, and determine who multiple agents are. This will ensure that if you activate HydroCluster later in the game, you aren't unintentionally gunning down an ally. (Unless that's your strategy. Best of luck.)

Round 6:

- StarFrost – Gain 6 Victory Points. (In theory. Of course, you'll want to be wary of a ThornLily card played this round.)

- ThornLily – Gain 2 Victory Points. No other agent may score points this round. If these are stacked, agents can negate everyone's ability to score points in the final round. Note, because each agent may change up the strategy, every time you play is most likely to be a little different.

Scoring:

4 or 5 players: In addition to adding scores of aligned players, any agents who did not have partners when the game began will double their victory points.

6 or 9 players: Add victory points of aligned players. Do not add points of eliminated players, though these may still win if their aligned team wins.

7 or 8 players: In addition to adding victory points of aligned players, teams of 2 will divide their combined score by two to create an average, which is added to their score.

In this way, smaller teams are not penalized.

May the best agent team win!

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