

How to Murder Friends and Betray People: Playing with Betrayal in SSO

Victory in SSO is based on individual success rather than that of a group, since survival is based on limited oxygen supplies it therefore provides betrayal of fellow players as a potential route to victory. However, openly setting out to murder your fellow crew members can prove difficult, so this guide explains the tactics and the nature of betrayal in SSO.

Betrayal or Sacrifice

Firstly it is worth noting that although the betrayal aspect of semi-co-operation attracts player focus it is the other side of the same coin as sacrifice. By detaching each player's victory conditions from each other the game allows both since the only true sacrifice a game can demand is that of a player's chance to win. Even though not forced to co-operate, players need to work together to have a realistic chance of success, betrayal will usually need to be applied in direct response to a crew member saving your life.

Taking Your Chances

Setting out to murder fellow crew from the start of the game is both difficult and foolish. In many games of SSO oxygen will never actually become your biggest problem, either due to Challenge cards killing crew or good use of Pods, Activation cards and abilities. The killing of crew in a game when oxygen was plentiful is a significant detriment. Betrayal therefore makes much more sense once you know that it will be the oxygen levels that finish you off. Also, in the early game killing off fellow crew requires openly using the Computer Module for murder, later on all that is needed is often not moving to provide company to a crew member with 0 Morale. The best moment to betray someone is at the point where they don't know your betraying them. In fact if you intend to play repeated games with the same players it is wise to ensure that they never know.

Betrayal and Trust

There is a significant issue in betrayal without trust, unless playing with only two or three players such that each player has a second crew member to buddy their own murderous crew you will almost certainly need another player to trust you enough to help you out after you have done your dirty deed, or else open betrayal can be highly self-destructive. Furthermore, murdering a crew member belonging to a player who started the game with only one crew will give less than zero advantage, since they will simply unfreeze their

reserve crew. Meanwhile, murdering crew when a player has two or more available will both give an instant reward in oxygen and not knock a player out of the game. In short, betrayal as a tactic is a valid option, betrayal for the sake of cruelty is best avoided.

A Matter of Attitude

It is possible to be eliminated from a game of SSO, however only if all other players agree to let you be eliminated, at which point the game assumes that your group is playing with a spirit and attitude that not only welcomes but demands possible elimination. Remember that even if one player is against elimination it will never happen.

Difficulty and Narrative

While the Challenge Deck can be written to provide a strong narrative and balanced difficulty a living thinking player opponent represents a huge jump in challenge and focus for other players, as such balance dictates that murdering crew in an advantageous manner be just as difficult as avoiding being murdered. On a narrative front if a movie featured a malicious computer and one or more randomly psychotic murderous crew members the film would be as much about the killer crew as the computer.

Nothing Personal

Knocking out another player from turn one of the game so that you have slightly more oxygen available is, frankly, quite a cruel and vicious way to play the game. On the other hand bumping them off three turns before the game ends, so that you make it, with one simple move is understandable. It can be tough for the loser, but watching a couple of turns pass to the ending of a game you helped shape is different from being knocked out from one you just sat down to. The game makes murder most tempting and beneficial when it's at a point that you could honestly say it was nothing personal.

Remember, SSO is not a game of betrayal and murder. It is a game where betrayal and murder are possible and sometimes tactically advantageous. The game never forces nor encourages you to kill your friends, it is still a nasty thing to do and one that you'll need to justify to both yourself and everyone else. If you find that killing your friends is making the game harder to win, stop killing them. Sometimes it will make your life easier and when it does choosing to do it or not, particularly after a game spent relying on and trusting each other, is a personal and telling moment. If you keep killing everyone even when it's a really bad idea and leads to your own death and failure, because you just can't stop killing, then the questions you need to ask yourself cannot be answered in a boardgame FAQ guide.