

PENANCE

The Emergent Syndicate - Complete Deck & Equipment System

Absolution Through Steel

Generated deck-equipment-system

The Emergent Syndicate - Complete Deck & Equipment System

Faction Motto: “MULTI SUMUS, UNUM SUMUS” (We Are Many, We Are One)

Playstyle: Hive-mind coordination, metamorphosis transformations, multi-target attacks, swarm tactics

Core Mechanic: Metamorph Tokens - Trigger transformations and coordinate hive actions

Frame Type: Metamorph (5 SP per turn)

Design Philosophy

The Emergent Syndicate embodies chosen evolution. Every card reflects their philosophy:

- **Hive-Mind Coordination:** Actions that benefit multiple Syndicate units simultaneously
- **Metamorphic Adaptation:** Transform mid-battle to gain new capabilities
- **Multi-Limb Advantage:** Extra actions and attacks from additional arthropod limbs
- **Pheromone Communication:** Buff allies and debuff enemies through chemical signals
- **Exoskeleton Defense:** Molt to heal, shed damage, gain armor layers
- **Scientific Evolution:** They chose this transformation (not victims like Blighted or Vestige)

FACTION CARDS (10 Total - Players Choose 6)

1. Hive-Mind Link

- **Type:** Passive
- **Cost:** 0 SP
- **Range:** N/A
- **Effect:** Passive: When an allied Emergent Syndicate Casket within 4 hexes plays a card, you may spend 1 Metamorph token to copy that card's effect (reduced effectiveness: half damage/healing). The hive thinks as one.
- **Keywords:** passive, hive-mind, synergy, metamorph-cost
- **Lore:** "Individual thoughts merge into collective purpose."

2. Metamorphic Adaptation

- **Type:** Utility
- **Cost:** 2 Metamorph tokens
- **Range:** Self
- **Effect:** Transform into one of three forms until end of round. Choose: [1] Assault Form (+2 damage to all attacks, -1 Defense), [2] Tank Form (+3 Defense, -1 movement), [3] Scout Form (+2 movement, ignore terrain). Transformations are cumulative if you have multiple Metamorph tokens.
- **Keywords:** utility, transformation, metamorph-cost, versatile
- **Lore:** "Our bodies are tools. We reshape them as needed."

3. Exoskeleton Molt

- **Type:** Reactive
- **Cost:** 1 Metamorph token
- **Range:** Self

- **Effect:** Play when you take damage. Reduce damage by 3 (minimum 1). Recover 2 cards from discard pile (shedding damaged tissue). Generate 1 Heat. Once per round.
- **Heat:** +1
- **Keywords:** reactive, defense, healing, metamorph-cost, molt
- **Lore:** "Shed the damaged shell. Emerge stronger."

4. Pheromone Command

- **Type:** Buff
- **Cost:** 2 SP
- **Range:** 5 hexes (area)
- **Effect:** Release pheromone cloud (visible colored mist). All allied Emergent Syndicate Caskets within range gain +1 damage and +1 SP this turn. Enemies within range have -1 to hit (confused by pheromones).
- **Keywords:** buff, area-effect, ally, debuff, pheromone
- **Lore:** "Chemical signals guide the swarm."

5. Segmented Strike

- **Type:** Attack
- **Cost:** 3 SP
- **Range:** Melee (1 hex)
- **Damage:** 4
- **Effect:** Deal 4 damage with primary limbs. If you have 2+ Metamorph tokens, make a second attack with additional arthropod limbs for 2 damage. Multi-limb advantage.
- **Keywords:** attack, melee, multi-hit, metamorph-synergy
- **Lore:** "Four arms strike where two would fail."

6. Swarm Intelligence

- **Type:** Passive

- **Cost:** 0 SP
- **Range:** N/A
- **Effect:** Passive: Gain +1 Metamorph token at the start of each round. If 3+ allied Emergent Syndicate Caskets are within 4 hexes, gain +2 tokens instead. The collective grows stronger.
- **Keywords:** passive, resource-generation, metamorph, ally-scaling
- **Lore:** "Proximity breeds power. Unity breeds evolution."

7. Chrysalis Rebirth

- **Type:** Reactive
- **Cost:** 5 Metamorph tokens
- **Range:** Self
- **Effect:** When your deck reaches 5 cards or fewer, spend 5 Metamorph tokens to enter Chrysalis state for 1 turn (cannot act). Next turn, recover 10 cards from discard pile, remove all Heat, gain +2 Defense permanently this mission. Metamorphosis completes. Once per mission.
- **Keywords:** reactive, resurrection, metamorph-cost, limit, healing
- **Lore:** "We do not die. We transform."

8. Compound Vision

- **Type:** Passive
- **Cost:** 0 SP
- **Range:** N/A
- **Effect:** Passive: You can see in 360° (cannot be flanked). Attacks against you from behind do not gain bonuses. Your compound eyes miss nothing.
- **Keywords:** passive, defensive, vision, anti-flank
- **Lore:** "We see all angles. Ambush is impossible."

9. Mandible Rend

- **Type:** Attack

- **Cost:** 2 SP
- **Range:** Melee (1 hex)
- **Damage:** 3
- **Effect:** Deal 3 damage. Target has -1 Defense until end of their next turn (armor shredded by mandibles). If target is adjacent to another ally, deal 4 damage instead.
- **Keywords:** attack, melee, debuff, armor-shred, pack-tactics
- **Lore:** "Our jaws crack steel like chitin."

10. Collective Consciousness

- **Type:** Utility
- **Cost:** 1 SP
- **Range:** 6 hexes
- **Effect:** Choose 1 allied Emergent Syndicate Casket within range. They immediately draw 2 cards and gain 1 Metamorph token. Share knowledge through the hive.
- **Keywords:** utility, ally, card-draw, resource-sharing
- **Lore:** "What one knows, all know."

PRIMARY WEAPON: Chitinous Multi-Limbs (12 cards)

Mantis Strikes (×3)

- **Cost:** 2 SP
- **Range:** Melee (1 hex)
- **Damage:** 3
- **Effect:** Deal 3 damage with blade-like mantis limbs. Basic melee attack.
- **Keywords:** attack, melee, emergent, primary

Chitin Claws (×3)

- **Cost:** 2 SP
- **Range:** Melee (1 hex)
- **Damage:** 4
- **Effect:** Deal 4 damage. If you have Assault Form active (from Metamorphic Adaptation), deal 5 damage instead.
- **Keywords:** attack, melee, transformation-synergy, emergent, primary

Segmented Lash (×2)

- **Cost:** 3 SP
- **Range:** 2 hexes
- **Damage:** 3
- **Effect:** Deal 3 damage at extended range (segmented limb extends). Can hit targets 2 hexes away.
- **Keywords:** attack, melee-extended, reach, emergent, primary

Multi-Limb Barrage (×2)

- **Cost:** 4 SP
- **Range:** Melee (1 hex)
- **Damage:** 6
- **Effect:** Attack three times with different limbs for 2 damage each (total 6). Can split damage among up to 3 adjacent targets. Arthropod advantage.
- **Keywords:** attack, melee, multi-target, split-damage, emergent, primary

Arthropod Fury (×1)

- **Cost:** 3 SP
- **Range:** Melee (1 hex)
- **Damage:** 6

- **Effect:** Deal 6 damage. Spend 1 Metamorph token to deal 8 damage instead. Evolutionary power.
- **Keywords:** attack, melee, metamorph-synergy, high-damage, emergent, primary

Precision Strikes (×1)

- **Cost:** 3 SP
- **Range:** Melee (1 hex)
- **Damage:** 5
- **Effect:** Deal 5 damage to specific component (you choose: Right Arm, Left Arm, Legs, Head, Chassis). Compound eyes guide surgical strikes.
- **Keywords:** attack, melee, component-targeting, surgical, emergent, primary

SECONDARY EQUIPMENT: Bio-Organic Adaptations (6 cards)

Pheromone Glands (×2)

- **Cost:** 1 SP
- **Range:** 3 hexes (cone)
- **Effect:** Release confusion pheromones. All enemies in cone have -1 to their next attack roll. Chemical warfare.
- **Keywords:** utility, debuff, area-effect, pheromone, emergent, secondary

Reactive Carapace (×1)

- **Cost:** 0 SP (Reactive)
- **Range:** Self
- **Effect:** Play when targeted by attack. Reduce damage by 2 (minimum 1). Spend 1 Metamorph token to reduce by 4 instead. Hardened exoskeleton.
- **Keywords:** reactive, defense, metamorph-synergy, emergent, secondary

Antenna Sense (×1)

- **Cost:** 0 SP
- **Range:** Self
- **Effect:** Draw 2 cards. If you have 3+ Metamorph tokens, draw 3 cards instead. Enhanced sensory input.
- **Keywords:** utility, card-draw, metamorph-synergy, emergent, secondary

Metamorph Serum (×1)

- **Cost:** 2 SP
- **Range:** Self or Adjacent
- **Effect:** Target gains 2 Metamorph tokens immediately. Can target self or adjacent Emergent Syndicate ally. Accelerate transformation.
- **Keywords:** utility, resource-generation, metamorph, ally, emergent, secondary

Hivemind Beacon (×1)

- **Cost:** 1 SP
- **Range:** 6 hexes
- **Effect:** Choose 1 allied Emergent Syndicate Casket within range. They immediately move up to 2 hexes toward you. Rally the collective.
- **Keywords:** utility, ally, movement, positioning, emergent, secondary

ADDITIONAL FACTION CARDS (Expansion Options)

Forced Evolution

- **Type:** Gambit
- **Cost:** 3 Metamorph tokens

- **Range:** Self
- **Effect:** Gain all three Metamorphic Adaptation forms simultaneously until end of round: +2 damage, +3 Defense, +2 movement, ignore terrain. Ultimate transformation. Generate 2 Heat.
- **Heat:** +2
- **Keywords:** gambit, transformation, metamorph-cost, all-forms
- **Lore:** “We become perfection. Temporarily.”

Swarm Tactics

- **Type:** Passive
- **Cost:** 0 SP
- **Range:** N/A
- **Effect:** Passive: For each allied Emergent Syndicate Casket within 3 hexes, gain +1 damage to all attacks (max +3 damage). The collective overwhelms.
- **Keywords:** passive, damage-scaling, ally, proximity
- **Lore:** “Alone we adapt. Together we dominate.”

Exoskeleton Plating

- **Type:** Reactive-Defense
- **Cost:** 0 SP
- **Range:** Self
- **Effect:** Play when you take damage. If you have 4+ Metamorph tokens, spend 4 tokens to negate all damage from this attack. Perfect molt timing.
- **Keywords:** reactive, defense, metamorph-cost, negation
- **Lore:** “The shell breaks at precisely the right moment.”

Arthropod Regeneration

- **Type:** Utility
- **Cost:** 2 SP
- **Range:** Self

- **Effect:** Recover 3 cards from discard pile. If you molted this turn (used Exoskeleton Molt), recover 5 cards instead. Tissue regrowth.
- **Keywords:** utility, healing, molt-synergy
- **Lore:** "Lost limbs regrow. Damaged carapace repairs."

Hive-Mind Assault

- **Type:** Attack
- **Cost:** 4 SP
- **Range:** Special
- **Effect:** All allied Emergent Syndicate Caskets within 5 hexes immediately make a 2-damage attack against their nearest enemy (coordinated strike). Synchronized violence.
- **Damage:** 2 per ally
- **Keywords:** attack, ally-triggered, coordination, hive-mind
- **Lore:** "The collective strikes as one organism."

Pheromone Overload

- **Type:** Attack-Debuff
- **Cost:** 3 SP
- **Range:** 4 hexes (area)
- **Damage:** 3
- **Effect:** Deal 3 damage to all enemies in area. All affected enemies have -2 to hit for 1 turn (sensory overload). Spend 2 Metamorph tokens to extend duration to 2 turns.
- **Keywords:** attack, area-effect, debuff, pheromone, metamorph-synergy
- **Lore:** "We drown them in chemical commands."

SAMPLE DECK LOADOUTS

“Hive Coordinator” (Support Leader)

Faction Cards (6): Hive-Mind Link, Pheromone Command, Swarm Intelligence, Collective Consciousness, Compound Vision, Swarm Tactics

Strategy: Support other Emergent Syndicate units, distribute Metamorph tokens, coordinate attacks. Use Pheromone Command to buff entire team. Hive-Mind Link to copy powerful ally abilities. Collective Consciousness to share resources. Swarm Tactics scales damage with allies nearby.

Strengths: - Team force multiplier - Resource distribution - Coordination specialist - Scales with allies

Weaknesses: - Weak solo - Low direct damage - Dependent on allies - No escape tools

“Metamorph Warrior” (Transformation Specialist)

Faction Cards (6): Metamorphic Adaptation, Exoskeleton Molt, Swarm Intelligence, Forced Evolution, Arthropod Regeneration, Compound Vision

Strategy: Constantly transform to adapt to threats, molt to heal damage, stack Metamorph tokens for ultimate transformations. Use Metamorphic Adaptation to switch between Assault/Tank/Scout forms as needed. Forced Evolution for desperate power spikes.

Strengths: - Extreme versatility - High survivability (molting) - Adaptable to any situation - Infinite scaling (token generation)

Weaknesses: - Setup time required - Token-hungry - Moderate damage without forms - Complex resource management

“Swarm Striker” (Multi-Target Aggression)

Faction Cards (6): Segmented Strike, Mandible Rend, Swarm Intelligence, Hive-Mind Assault, Swarm Tactics, Pheromone Overload

Strategy: Maximize multi-target damage, coordinate with allies for swarm attacks, debuff groups of enemies. Use Multi-Limb Barrage to split damage among multiple targets. Hive-Mind Assault triggers coordinated strikes from all allies.

Strengths: - Excellent vs groups - Multi-target specialist - Coordinated damage - Area debuffs

Weaknesses: - Lower single-target damage - Needs allies for max potential - Token-dependent - No defensive tools

“Solo Metamorph” (Independent Operative)

Faction Cards (6): Metamorphic Adaptation, Exoskeleton Molt, Compound Vision, Chrysalis Rebirth, Forced Evolution, Arthropod Regeneration

Strategy: Operate independently, survive through transformations and molting, use Chrysalis Rebirth as emergency resurrection. Focus on 1v1 duels and survival. Don't rely on allies.

Strengths: - Self-sufficient - High survivability - Resurrection mechanic - 360° vision (anti-flank)

Weaknesses: - No ally synergies - Slower damage scaling - Resource management critical - Predictable playstyle

TACTICAL GUIDELINES

Metamorph Token Economy

- **Generation:** Swarm Intelligence (1-2 per round), Metamorph Serum, Collective Consciousness
- **Spending:** Transformations (2-5 tokens), enhanced defense (1-4 tokens), damage boosts (1 token)
- **Optimal banking:** Keep 2-3 tokens in reserve for emergency Exoskeleton Molt or Reactive Carapace
- **Token sharing:** Use Collective Consciousness to distribute tokens to allies who need transformations

Transformation Timing

- **Assault Form:** Use when enemies are grouped, you're healthy, need burst damage
- **Tank Form:** Use when focused by multiple enemies, low HP, need to survive
- **Scout Form:** Use for repositioning, escaping, reaching objectives, ignoring terrain
- **Forced Evolution:** Save for critical moments (boss phase, desperate situation, final push)

Hive-Mind Coordination

- **Position within 4 hexes:** Swarm Intelligence gives +1 token, Hive-Mind Link range, Pheromone Command reaches all
- **Coordinate attacks:** Use Hive-Mind Assault for synchronized strikes
- **Share resources:** Collective Consciousness distributes tokens and cards to whoever needs them
- **Communication:** Pheromone Command debuffs enemies while buffing allies (use every turn if possible)

Molting Strategy

- **Don't molt prematurely:** Wait until you've taken 5+ damage to maximize value

- **Molt before big attacks:** If enemy telegraphs high-damage attack, molt reactively to negate
- **Molt combos:** Exoskeleton Molt → Arthropod Regeneration = 2 + 3-5 cards recovered = massive healing
- **Once per round limit:** Plan carefully, can't spam molts

FACTION RELATIONSHIPS

Faction	Relationship	Why
Church of Absolution	-2 Hostile	Church views Syndicate as “abominations”, Syndicate sees Church as “primitive”
Verdant Covenant (Elves)	-1 Distrustful	Elves oppose Syndicate’s scientific tampering with life
Forge-Guilds (Dwarves)	+1 Friendly	Mutual respect for engineering/evolution as craft
The Exchange	0 Neutral	Exchange deals with anyone who pays
The Ossuarium	-1 Distrustful	Ossuarium sees Syndicate as rivals (both manipulate life/death)
The Wyrd Conclave (Fae)	-2 Hostile	Fae find Syndicate “boring” (no mystery, pure science)
Nomad Collective	+1 Friendly	Nomads respect Syndicate pragmatism and adaptability
Vestige Bloodlines	-2 Hostile	Syndicate views Vestige as “failed prototypes” (random vs controlled evolution)
Crucible Packs	0 Neutral	No significant interaction (different philosophies)

DESIGN NOTES

Balance Considerations

- **Token Economy:** Powerful but requires buildup (weak early, strong mid-late)
- **Ally Dependency:** Many cards scale with allies (stronger in team games, weaker solo)
- **Transformation Versatility:** Three forms cover all situations but require planning
- **Hive-Mind Risk:** Lose one Emergent ally = lose significant synergies

Unique Mechanics

- **Metamorph Tokens:** Separate resource from SP, generated through synergies
- **Multi-Form Transformations:** Can stack forms with enough tokens (unique to Emergent)
- **Hive-Mind Copying:** Hive-Mind Link copies ally abilities (unprecedented mechanic)
- **360° Vision:** Compound Vision anti-flank passive (only faction with this)
- **Molt Healing:** Exoskeleton Molt reactive defense + healing (defensive lifesteal)

Counterplay

- **Against Emergent:** Isolate members, kill token generators first (Swarm Intelligence users), area denial, prevent grouping
- **Emergent Counters:** Church (auto-hit ignores Compound Vision), Dwarves (high Defense counters multi-hit), Elves (Root Bind prevents Scout Form escapes)

CAMPAIGN INTEGRATION

Early Campaign Hooks

- **Quest:** “First Contact” - Investigate strange signals from Sibarian ruins

- **Quest:** “The Offer” - Syndicate offers to “improve” player through metamorphosis
- **Quest:** “Specimen Retrieval” - Syndicate hires players to capture live Abominations

Mid Campaign Conflicts

- **Faction War:** Syndicate vs Church (holy war against “science abominations”)
- **Political Crisis:** Syndicate offers cure to Vestige (at cost of joining collective)
- **Moral Dilemma:** Syndicate experiments on unwilling subjects—stop them or ignore?

Late Campaign Endgame

- **Alliance Option:** Join Syndicate (become part of hive-mind, gain metamorphosis)
- **Destruction Option:** Destroy Sibarian facility (end forced evolution experiments)
- **Synthesis Option:** Negotiate compromise (regulated evolution, ethical guidelines)

[← Back to Factions](#) | [View Metamorph Mechanics →](#)