



COMPROMISE//EMPIRE

A 2-3 PLAYER GAME ABOUT RESISTING EMPIRE

BY @SWAMP_HEN
SWAMPHEN.ITCH.IO

COMPROMISE // EMPIRE



The forces of the Empire, the forces of totalitarianism and exploitation, are invading. They have secured a foothold, and want complete control. Their soldiers trample the land, their spies and diplomats are in your places of power, time is limited.

You represent a faction. One of the factions who are working to resist the Empire. As a representative you must extend a hand and form whatever alliances you can with the other factions at play. Resisting the Empire will cost you, and your faction. Compromises must be made.

What cost will you pay to resist the Empire?

MATERIALS

You will need:

- Several D6 dice
- Paper to write on, ideally index cards



GAME STRUCTURE

The game is played as a series of scenes. Each scene revolves around tackling a crisis caused by the invasion of the Empire.

As representatives of the resistance factions, it is your job to work out how to stop each crisis and fight back. As a representative of your faction, it is your job to make sure your goals succeed.

If the resistance factions act together, they will be unstoppable. But working together is hard, and it will take luck and compromise for you to convince your faction to work with the others.

STEPS OF PLAY

- 1. SKETCHING THE WORLD**
- 2. PICKING A RESISTANCE FACTION**
- 3. THE MAIN GAME**
 - A. Picking a crisis
 - B. Negotiation
 - C. Resolving the crisis
- 4. CONCLUDING THE GAME**



THE ROLE OF PLAYERS

In *Compromise//Empire* the role of players is to play a representative of your resistance faction. As far as possible you should aim to fulfill the agenda of your faction

.To succeed against the empire you will have to make compromises, and those compromises will involve you giving up things your faction holds dear. This will affect the conclusion of the game

.While this game has good and bad endings, it is not about winning or losing. Your job as a player is to represent your faction, and explore the difficulties of achieving your goals while staying true to what you believe in.

SAFETY MECHANICS AND CULTURAL SENSITIVITY

This game deals with some heavy topics around violence, land, culture, invasion, and colonisation. Have a frank discussion at your table about your understanding of these topics, and whether you want to aim for realism or for something more sci-fi or cartoonish. It's up to your group at the table to work out what you are comfortable with, but be aware of stepping out of your lane and tackling topics you don't have the cultural knowledge to deal with

.During play I recommend implementing a safety mechanism such as X-cards or veils to give players chances to raise concerns or stop play. Be kind to each other and keep an eye out.



PLAYING THE GAME

1. *Sketching the setting*

Start the game by deciding on the setting and tone of your setting.

Have a short discussion (less than five minutes) on:

- Where is the game taking place?
 - A real historical place and time
 - An alien space station
 - A medieval village
 - A forest inhabited by talking animals
- What tone will the game take?
 - Will you attempt to tackle the real effects of violence and colonialism, or is this a story of heroes trying their best?
 - How does this interact with your setting?

For example, are your talking animals in a Disney movie, or Watership down?

2. *Picking a faction*

Once you have sketched out a setting each player picks a faction to represent from the list on the next page, and then answer questions about them.

The same faction cannot be picked more than once, each player must necessarily take up a position in opposition to the others.



RESISTANCE FACTIONS



1. TRADITIONALISTS

This is your home, and it is important. The Empire must be stopped, but your land, your culture, and your people must be protected.

Agenda

- Protect your people
- Protect your land
- Protect your culture and traditions

Compromises

- Compromise your land
- Compromise a long held tradition
- Compromise your people's health

1. REVOLUTIONARIES

This is your home, but it doesn't serve all people well. Of course your home must be protected, but this conflict is an opportunity for things to change.

Agenda

- Fight for change
- Fight for a better world
- Fight for your people

Compromise

- Compromise the people under your command
- Compromise the goals of your struggle
- Compromise your power and influence

1. OPPORTUNISTS

This isn't your home, but it's rich with opportunity. If your benefactors are to gain from it, the Empire must be stopped.

Agenda

- Ensure you can benefit later
- Ensure the land is intact
- Ensure the people are open to influence

Compromises

- Compromise your relationship with your benefactor
- Compromise your relationship with the people
- Compromise the resources of the land

2. *Picking a faction (cont)*

Once you have picked a faction, briefly describe them to the other players,

Some questions to think about and answer:

- Who is your faction? What role do they play in your setting society? What is your faction called?
- What do they believe in?
- What are they working towards?
- Do they have a look or set of customs that makes them stand out in your setting?
- As their representative, who are you?

You don't have to answer every question, but for those you do write down a quick summary on an index card or piece of paper in front of you.

3.

Crises

Dealing with crises is the meat of the game. Each crisis represents an action the Empire takes to try and gain control. To deal with a crisis, the players at the table must negotiate to find a way to handle it. This will mean coming together to find a solution that suits both of you. Be aware, your chances of success will be higher if you compromise.

Once all the crises have been handled, move on to concluding the game.

3.

Picking a crisis

Taking turns around the table, each player picks a crisis from the crisis list and selects another player whose faction will help them address the crisis. The player who selects a crisis will brief the other players on what the crisis is by answering the questions in the crisis list, setting the scene for the negotiation to come.



THE CRISIS LIST

- 1. The Empire wants to control a key route into the land.**

Where is it and why is it important?

- 2. A key figure in your land has been corrupted by the Empire.**

What is their role in society, and why must the corruption be dealt with?

- 3. The Empire has placed a spy amongst the factions.**

What information is at risk, and why does the Empire want it?

- 4. The Empire's troops are making an assault.**

What are they trying to achieve, and who will it hurt?

- 5. The Empire wants to gain control over a resource the land has in abundance.**

What is the resource, why is it important to the people?

- 6. The Empire wants control over someone important in the land.**

Who are they and why are they so important?

Briefing other players on a crisis is your chance to build out the world and set the stakes.

Here are some additional prompts to help you brief other players.

Prompts

- In your setting, what specifically is this crisis about?
- Who will this crisis affect the most?
- What is the Empire hoping to achieve here? For example, what resource do they want?



Dice mechanics

Once negotiations have concluded, the two players involved in the crisis will roll.

Each player starts with 1d6, and adds 1d6 if they made a compromise during the negotiation.

The players both roll the dice. Success and failure is determined but how close the numbers rolled are.

If the closest numbers match, the roll is a complete success.

- This represents your factions working together flawlessly, bridging your gaps in goals and opinions. The Empire is pushed back.

If the closest numbers are one number apart, the roll is a mixed success.

- This represents your factions struggling to work together or one group taking on a higher share of the burden, but still managing to scrape through. You hold your ground.

If the closest numbers are more than one number apart, the roll is a failure.

This represents a failure of your alliance. Maybe one faction doesn't show up, maybe the disagreements on the plan were too large. The Empire succeeds.

Example rolls

- Player one rolls a 4, and player two rolls a 3. This is a mixed success.
- Both players roll a 6. This is a complete success.
- Player one rolls a 5, player two rolls a 2. This is a failure.



8.

Concluding the game

Win or lose, you've done your best to fight off the Empire. All the crises have been addressed. It's time to tally up the results of your plans, and the compromises you made.

Go through the game outcome table and faction representative outcome table.

All players are affected by the game outcome.

9.

Narrating the games outcome

Based on the outcomes you got, take turns narrating to the group what happens to your faction from here, and what happens to you as its representative.

GAME OUTCOME TABLE

The game outcome is the total measure of your success in resisting the Empire.

- Each complete success is worth one point.
- Each mixed success is worth half a point.
- Each failure is worth no points.

POINTS	OUTCOME
Five points or more	You have pushed back the Empire. Who knows if they'll try again, but at least for the moment, you've succeeded.
Four points	You're holding your ground. The Empire has felt your opposition, but it will take more to fight them off.
Three points	You're holding your ground, but the Empire smells blood in the water. It won't be long before they try for the kill.
Two points or less	The Empire is winning, victory is within their grasp. There may still be hope for the future, but it is remote.



FACTION REPRESENTATIVE OUTCOME TABLE

The faction representative outcome table measures each player's success in the eyes of their faction.

COMPROMISES	TRADITIONALISTS	REVOLUTIONARIES	OPPORTUNISTS
More than four compromises	Regardless of the outcome of the conflict, you are no longer welcome here.	Win or lose, when this is all over it might be you up against the wall.	Your benefactor is patient, but they are worried you might have become too involved here. Watch out for unfortunate accidents.
One to three compromises	Regardless of the outcome of the conflict, the liberties you took were worth the risk.	Win or lose, you will be appreciated for the chances you took to advance the cause.	Your benefactor is patient, stay in the field and keep trying. Don't push it.
No compromises	Regardless of the outcome of the conflict, we know you stayed true to your home.	Win or lose, you will be remembered as a true believer.	Your benefactor is patient, maybe they'll give you another chance in the future.

Writing, design and layout by Cameron Burke. Created on the lands of the Wurundjeri, Woi Wurrung and Bunurong people. Indigenous sovereignty was never ceded.

swamphen.itch.io

@swamp_hen

