

Empty Rivalry  
A two player social deduction game

Writer: Ken Davidson

Editor: GC Fournier

Cultural Consultant: James Mendez Hodes

Playtesters: Chris Luong and Martin Cortez

Special Thanks to: Jeeyon Shim, Sean Nittner and A.J. Bennion

Rival: Banana Chan

## Empty Rivalry

In the Chinese epic *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* by Luo Guanzhong, there is a story of the brilliant strategist Zhuge Liang's "Empty Fort Strategy". According to the tale, Zhuge Liang knows that he does not have the resources to defend a city held by his Shu army from an impending attack by Sima Yi and his Wei army. Rather than fending off a siege, Liang orders his soldiers to dress up like commoners, the soldiers clean the streets and open the gates wide. Zhuge Liang ascends a tower above the gates and plays his *guqin*, a 7 stringed Chinese instrument, giving every appearance that he is not worried about the army at his gates. When the Wei army arrives, Sima Yi sees the gates wide open and Zhuge Liang unconcerned. The invader concludes that there must be an ambush in the city and orders a retreat. In this game, you will be playing the role of the attacker or defender in an "empty fort" scenario set in the arena of present-day social interactions.

The players portray two people who have a friendly Twitter rivalry. You both happen to attend the same event and end up sitting across from one another. One player plays the Attacker. The player in this role is in a position of power in this relationship: perhaps they have the best gif game, maybe they have a bit of celebrity in the community, or maybe they just make the better jokes. The other player is the Defender. Perhaps they are an up-and-comer in the community, trying to make a name for themselves with this Twitter beef. Maybe they have an inferior meme game you decide! The Attacker asks the Defender four questions and decides whether or not the Defender is being honest in their replies. After all questions have been answered the Attacker decides whether or not to call the Defender out. Then you switch roles.

Safety: Look at the questions together before you start. Feel free to veto any questions you do not want asked during the game.

Main Phase:

Attacker:

Make a blind roll with a d12 (Make sure you cannot see this roll until the scoring phase).

Ask the Defender four of the following questions:

What is your favorite color?

What is the last movie you saw?

What was the last game you played?

Who would you most like to meet?

What is your favorite book?

Who is your favorite artist?

iOS or Android?

What country would you most like to visit?

What is your favorite band?

What is your favorite food?

Who is your favorite superhero?

What is your favorite sports team?

What museum did you visit last?

Who is your biggest rival?

Listen to the Defender answer the questions. Try to decide whether they are telling the truth or not and secretly record "TRUE" or "FALSE".

Defender:

Make a blind roll with a d4 (Make sure you cannot see this roll until the scoring phase).

The Attacker will ask you four questions. Answer them as yourself, but you do not have to tell the truth. You must, however, answer each question in at least four sentences. After you answer each question, secretly record whether your answer was "TRUE" or "FALSE."

After the four questions have been answered, move on to the scoring phase.

Scoring Phase:

The winner is the player with the higher final score. To determine your score follow these steps.

Attacker: Decide whether to "Call the Defender Out" or "Retreat". If you feel confident that you correctly guessed whether the Defender truthfully answered your questions, and you predict that your blind d12 roll was high, you should Call Them Out (Note: do not reveal die results yet). If, however, you think the Defender's answers fooled you, or you suspect that your blind die roll was low, you should Retreat. Make your decision before moving on.

Both players: Reveal your rolls, and then compare your answers to the questions. If the Attacker **incorrectly** identified that a Defender's answer was "TRUE" or "FALSE, the Defender adds two points to their roll result. If the Attacker was **correct**, the Defender does not get any points. Determine the Defender's modified score.

If the Attacker "Called Them Out" and their score (i.e., the result of their d12 roll) is **higher** than the Defender's modified score, the Attacker adds the difference between the scores to their own score.

If the Attacker decided to "Retreat" and their score is **lower** than the Defender's modified score, the Attacker adds the difference between the scores to their own score.

If the Attacker "Called Them Out", but the Defender has the **higher** modified score, the Defender adds the difference between the scores to their own score.

If the Attacker decided to "Retreat", but they have a higher score than the Defender's modified score, The Defender adds the difference between the scores to their own score.

Play as many rounds as you like, and whoever has the highest overall score has won the Empty Rivalry.