



RULEBOOK

# TOUGH CALLS

— DYSTOPIA —



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12+



3-5



45m

# TOUGH CALLS

## — DYSTOPIA —

The world as we know it has come to an end and today, everything built over thousands of years by civilization lies in ruins. We require someone to lead those of us who survived the catastrophe, to help us survive and rebuild our communities. Are you able to take up this challenge?

***Tough Calls: Dystopia*** is a world-building game, set on a series of post-apocalyptic scenarios. In each game you will attempt to become the leader of the survivors' colony, by offering solutions to different events and dilemmas in a world where nothing is as it used to be. Round after round, you will cocreate and inhabit this fascinating world full of characters and situations that respond solely to your decisions as a group.

What would you do if one of your loved ones got the zombie virus? How would you hide from the alien spacecraft hovering over the city? Or, in case you are approached by someone needing help, could you tell whether it is a human or an android?

### ***What is a Dystopia?***

*It is an imaginary universe where catastrophe, invasion or authoritarian control over society has led inhabitants to live in dehumanized conditions.*



## COMPONENTS



## GAME SETUP

1. Each player chooses a faction and takes the two corresponding Faction Tokens **1**.
2. Shuffle the 30 Question Cards and pile them up at the center of the table **2**.
3. Place the Voting Tokens **3** and the Hourglass **4** in the table where everyone can reach them.
4. As a group, pick one Scenario Card. You can either choose one arbitrarily, or pick one randomly **5**. Afterward, find the three Event Cards corresponding to the chosen scenario **6** (they have the same image at the back), place them faced down next to the Question Cards pile, and place the

remaining Scenario and Event Cards back in the box. They will not be used in this game.

5. Assemble the Ballot Box using the Lid and the box of the game **7**. The Lid must fit with the box insert such that five compartments are left, one for each Faction.

6. Handle the Bottle Opener **8** to the person who suggested playing *Tough Calls: Dystopia*. This person will be the starting player.



## COURSE OF PLAY

The aim is to earn the highest number of votes by the end of the game. Each round the group will be faced with different questions and dilemmas. To earn votes, you need to convince other players that from all the given answers, yours is the most coherent and the best to ensure the group's survival.

From the second phase onward, voting will take place by the end of each round. During voting, each player must put a Vote Token secretly in the player's Faction compartment he or she thinks gave the best answer, following the same order as they play.

It is not permitted for players to vote for their own Faction.

*Tip 1: There are no rules when choosing the best answer. Some criteria could be: creativeness, coherence, humor, or who created the most interesting character. It is up to whoever is voting. This is a fiction creation game. The ideas or speeches you present do not have to represent what you really believe.*

### I. First Phase: scenario question

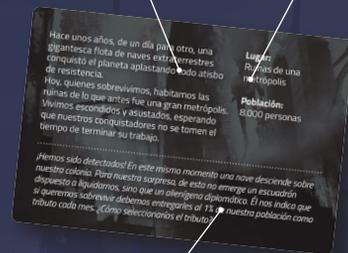
To start the game, the person with the Bottle Opener must read out loud the chosen scenario's description, including the location and population of the colony. Then, he/she must read the scenario's initial question and answer it. His/her response immediately transforms the world that is being collectively created. Afterwards the player to his/her left, will answer.

This repeats until everyone has provided an answer. Then, the player to the starting player's left takes the Bottle Opener, and the game moves to the second phase. There's no voting in the First Phase.

*Tip 2: Foundations of the collective story are built during this phase. Try to differentiate your answer from others so that you can use this information to build your character and his or her context.*

Description of the scenario

Place and population



Scenario question

\* Structure of the Scenario Card

### II. Second phase: questions round

This phase is carried out through a series of voting rounds, one for each player, in which everyone must give an answer to the same question and vote for the best answer.

Whoever has the Bottle Opener, draws three cards from the Question Cards pile, reads them in silence, selects one of them, reads it out loud, and answers the question within it immediately, followed by the person to his/her left, until everyone has provided an answer. After which, each player votes secretly for his/her favorite answer, beginning with whoever has the Bottle Opener. The two cards not selected are placed aside facing down.

Once everyone votes, the Bottle Opener is passed to the person to the left, who selects three cards from the Question Cards pile, selects one, and initiates a new round of answering and voting as just explained above. Phase two is completed when everyone has had a chance to select a Question Card.

*Tip 3: While you can borrow ideas from other players' answers, it is recommended to refrain from replying, copying, or contradicting answers provided by your opponents, in order to keep the game flowing.*

*Tip 4: During this phase, each player is expected to be coherent in his/her answers, including those provided during the first phase. Very quickly, the most obvious answers to the Question Cards will be given by other players, and you will be forced to be creative. Don't be afraid to suggest interesting or even strange ways for your colony's adaptation and survival!*

### III. Third phase: the final event

Once the second phase is over, the Bottle Opener must be passed one last time to the person to the left. This player must take one of the three Event Cards randomly, read it out loud, and answer it immediately, followed by the person to his/her left, until everyone has given an answer.

Once this is completed, we have a voting round. However, this time each player votes for the person he/she considers as the best candidate throughout the entire game (including his or her last intervention in the Third Phase). using one of his/her Faction Tokens. Note that this Token counts twice compared to regular Voting Tokens (see page 6, "vote counting and end of the game").



*Tip 5: Think about this phase as a closure to your story. While Event Cards can place your colony in difficult or strange situations, your answer in this phase must integrate your current and previous answers into a coherent narrative.*

## COUNTING VOTES AND GAME ENDING

Once all votes are casted, the Ballot Box is opened, and votes are counted, including the Tokens inside each Factions' compartment. The winner is the player with the greatest votes count (remember that Faction Tokens count as two Vote Tokens). To break a tie, the player with more Faction Tokens is the winner; otherwise, tied players share the first place.

## MORE TIPS AND NOTES

*Note 1: The hourglass is optional, it can be used at any given time when a person is taking too long to answer. Once the hourglass is used, the player must give an answer or finish his or her storyline before time runs out.*

*Note 2: If you still have doubts about how to play **Tough Calls: Dystopia**, We recommend reading the example before starting.*

*Tip 6: If you find it difficult to play this game, we recommend you to think about a character that you could imagine in the scenario chosen by the group. There is a whole universe of dystopias of science fiction as reference. You could be a temperamental person who would give anything for his or her family, a grandiloquent priest who thinks God sent a catastrophe or even an evil dictator who just wants a direct ticket to this dark new world. You can also see the Game Example included in the game.*

*Tip 7: "Tough Calls: Dystopia" is best enjoyed as an environment for creating fantastic worlds full of life rather than as a purely competitive game. It is recommended a mindset where players take risks at creating an interesting and captivating story instead of aiming to win at all costs.*

## EXAMPLE OF A 3 PLAYERS GAMEPLAY

### First Phase

We invite you to read this example illustrating the beginning of the gameplay **Tough Calls: Dystopia** with 3 players. The stories here are meant simply as a reference. The best way to experience this game is via the stories that you and your group will create.

After choosing the scenario and their factions, Elena, Úrsula, and Isaac will start the game. Elena reads to the rest of the players the description text from the "alien invasion" scenario, and then its initial question:

*"We have been detected! At this very moment, a ship descends on our colony. To our surprise, they are not coming to attack, but to talk. They tell us that if we want to survive we must deliver 1% of our population as tribute every month. How would you select the tribute?"*

As Elena received the Bottle Opener, she must answers first:

*"As you well know, I have dedicated my entire life to the work of Dr. McPherson, may he rest in peace, regarding a new university selection test capable of measuring the potential capabilities, not yet manifest in people. Although it hasn't been tested yet, this may be the perfect moment... I propose that we all take this test once per*

*month, and whoever gets the worst results should be the tribute. Dr. McPherson would be proud that his beloved method was used for such a noble purpose..."*

Once Elena has finished her answer, Úrsula must continue with her answer because she is the next player to the left:

*"I'm not surprised to hear you talk about such an obsolete and an unfair method... you forgot that since the aliens arrival many things have changed. For example, many jobs that previously enriched some, they now have lost their sense and value. While contrarily, other jobs have changed from poorly paid and unrecognized activities, to vital endeavour in our community. Rich people, accustomed to their privileges of the past, have become leeches, of our colony. We cannot not sacrifice those providing public health, those working the land to generate food, or educating our children, for individuals whose only value is the money they amassed in the past. I propose we review what are the contributions the richest people make to the colony, and sacrifice those who were not able to the new conditions."*

Finally, Isaac answers:

*"We are only 8,000 survivors! If we sacrifice 1% of our population monthly our colony will disappear in a few years. Don't you see that? The desire of these cruel aliens is to eliminate us and watch us suffering in slow agony. As if we were ants crushed one by one, locked inside our anthill. We can't allow that! We must fight, steal their diplomatic ship, and travel to Tunguska, the secret human fortress. The apocalypse may have come to our colony, but it is not our end. So, I propose we should give as tribute those who are not willing to battle or those who show any sympathy for the aliens."*

When Isaac finishes his answer, all players have answered the initial question, so the First

phase ends. Elena passes the Bottle Opener to her left, so Úrsula will be the initial player in the first round of the Second Phase.

## **Second Phase**

Úrsula begins the round by drawing 3 cards from the Question Card Deck and selecting one of them. She discards the other two facing down, and then reads the chosen card aloud:

*"How do you plan to produce food for your colony?"*

She answers:

*"The alien attack has left our city ruined. Animals are not enough and canned food is almost exhausted. But there is a light of hope: our farmers. In the past, they were exploited by the wealthy, but today they are vital for our survival. I propose that we form schools where they can teach us agriculture techniques for apocalyptic times. Only through self-sustainability and empowerment of the working class, we will be able to strengthen and free ourselves from any kind of oppression, be it alien or human."*

Then it's Isaac's turn to answer:

*"I'm serious. This is our opportunity to regain control and leave this ruined city. Let's eliminate all aliens that we can, and use their cryogenics to preserve their bodies. Then, we load the ship with any food we can find and leave! If along the way we run out of provisions... Well, let's eat those aliens! Trust me, simply suspend your disgust for their slimy texture, we can easily survive feeding on them. I am sure they would taste great in a baked pie. When we arrive in Tunguska we can again enjoy the best banquets."*

Next is the turn of Helena, who answers:

*"Food is not the real conflict here... The problem is our knowledge about what we understand*

by “food” until now. Our digestive system can perfectly process food with new tastes and smells... but can we say the same about our conscience?

*Let's stop thinking of eating as a pleasurable experience, and instead, start thinking about it simply as something we need in order to survive. As Dr. McPherson said, "If we are out of apples, we look for worms." I think we should explore new ways to feed ourselves, like incorporating insects and their delicious crunchy organic matter into our diet."*

Once all players have completed answering the question, it's time for voting. Beginning with the initial player, players take turns at voting using the Voting Token and the Ballot

Box. Players must put the Voting Token in the faction compartment that represents the player they deemed gave the best answer during this round, without revealing their preference to anyone.

Once everyone has voted, the Bottle Opener is passed to the player on the left, in this case to Isaac, who will become the initial player. Then is his turn to take 3 cards from the question card deck, select one, read it aloud, and answer it immediately. The entire process should be repeated until all the players have started one round.

At that time, the Second phase ends, and the third phase begins with the final event.

## SUMMARY OF THE GAME

### I. First Phase: scenario question.

Whoever suggested playing the game takes the Bottle Opener and reads the Scenario Card fully, answers, Followed by the player to his/her left, until everyone has answered. There is no voting in the first phase.

### II. Second Phase: question rounds.

The Bottle Opener is passed to whoever is to the current owner's left and draws three Question Cards, selects one of them, and proposes an answer to it. After which, each player answers the same question, and in the end, they vote for their favorite answer. After voting, the Bottle Opener is passed to the next person to the left, repeating the very same process of selecting, answering

and voting, until everyone has taken the chance to select a question.

### III. Third Phase: Final event.

The Bottle Opener is returned to the second phase's starting player. This person draws one Event Card randomly, reads it for everyone to hear, and provides an answer to its question. One after the other, each player answers the same question, after which once players vote for his/her favorite candidate using a Faction Token.

Votes are counted and the player with the highest voting counts is the winner (Faction Tokens count as two regular Vote Tokens).



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