

Welcome to Pick Up and Deliver, the podcast where I pick up my audio recorder as

I step off the train, and deliver an episode to you while I walk home.

I'm Brendan Riley.

Well, good afternoon listeners.

It's a lovely day here in suburban Chicago.

It's still a little chilly, but unlike this morning when it was downright cold, it's now

just a little chilly.

The sun is out, the sky is blue, there are tiny whips of cloud drifting across the

firmament and I'm ready to talk about some games with you.

I can't remember what I recorded last, but I am a little bit ahead, so I'm putting

games into the hopper that come out a little later.

So I lose track a little bit of what I've talked about or not, but I do have some games

to talk about.

So it's time for a board game espresso triple shot.

Pshhhhhh.

Order up.

For those of you new to the podcast, board game espresso triple shot is a short review

segment in which I talk about three games I've tried recently for the first time and then

one game I've revisited or that I've played an expansion for or something like that.

So we are going to jump right in with three games I tried for the first time.

The first one is Kemet.

Kemet is an area-control people-on-a-map game with an intense amount of player versus player

combat.

So not really my usual wheelhouse, but a game, a kind of game I can enjoy if I know what it

is going in.

I played this with two of my neighbors, the neighbor to the north of me and the neighbor

to my south of me.

We both, we all had an evening and we got together and played this war game.

None of us had played before.

I think I did a pretty good job explaining the rules.

I missed one rule for a couple rounds, but it didn't really affect the game much and I

forgot one rule at the end, which changed the score a little, but not enough to affect

the outcome of the game.

So Kemet.

Also we played with the 1.5 rules.

If you know the history of Kemet, it was published in 2012 from designers Jacques Bariot

Guillaume Montiage with art from Dimitri Bielak, Émile Denis, and Nicolas Fructus, published by Matagot.

They did a Kickstarter for a new edition in like 2022 or 2023 called Kemet: Blood and Sand.

But in between, around about 2019, Matagot released the official 1.5 variant rules.

So basically it took the base game of Kemet along with the expansions and they released

new rules for that game.

No new components, just a new rule set, which is apparently easier to understand, but also

balanced out some things.

Having never played the game before, part of me was inclined to just use the rules that came

in the box, but everything I read said the 1.5 rules were much better, so I printed those

out and we did everything with the 1.5 rules.

It was a relatively easy game to understand once we got our hands around it.

Basically, the idea is you are one of several factions of soldiers in a Egyptian sort of

faux-Egyptian place and you are battling for control of the board.

You can win victory points in a couple different ways and there are victory points that you

get for holding things and victory points that you get for achieving things.

The achievement victory points are permanent.

The holding victory points you have as long as you meet the condition that rewards them,

but then if you lose that condition you lose the reward.

The way the game works is if during somebody's turn in the main phase of the game they have

9 points, then the end of the game is triggered, you finish the day you play the night and then

the game ends.

So there is a lot of maneuvering that can be done after the end-game has been triggered and

in our game for instance, I got some points during the night that pushed me over the

night but because I was going third the other two players had chances to take points away

from me before we got to the game and triggering thing if they wanted another round to try to

catch up.

So that is an example.

Oh no, I thought it was pretty fun.

It is a fairly complicated game but once you get the rhythm of it it makes sense.

I think if we played two or three games of it we would all be really smooth and we would

understand what is going on in terms of the different pieces.

A big portion of the game is the upgrade tree.

There are a number of different tiles that you can buy that upgrade your forces and there

is a limited number of them for many of them.

It is just one for some of them.

There is two copies and so once you have that upgrade nobody else can get that one.

So it is a manner of kind of racing to get the upgrades.

Meanwhile you are also trying to accumulate points and manage your troops and anticipate

what your opponents are going to do and think about how the battles are going to play out.

Yeah, it is pretty great.

I can see why it is well received.

I really did like it.

It is certainly going to stay in my collection for a while.

I don't know how often I will play it but I certainly would play it again if people wanted.

I am interested in trying Kemet Blood and Sand because it is apparently very similar

but there is a few differences.

I am a little worried that if I played it then I would want the new version rather than

the old version but I got the old version that a good discount used.

And so I am happy with it as is.

So that was Kemet from Matagot.

Pretty fun.

Worth a try if you get chance.

Except I got to play two games of Hunted Wode Ridge.

This is published in 2023 by Gabe Barrett from Barrett Publishing with Art by Jorge M.

Velez.

Hunted is a series of solo or two player games created by Gabe Barrett that are designed

to explore different interactions using a variety of symbols and the ideas you accumulate

the symbols by accomplishing things and then you spend the symbols to accomplish more things.

You have some sort of goal that you are trying to achieve.

All 300 games that I have played, Hunted Kobayashi Tower, Hunted Mining Colony 421 and Hunted

Wode Ridge are all sort of serial numbers filed off versions of popular cinema or television

franchises and particular Kobayashi Tower is die hard.

Mining Colony 421 is Aliens and Wode Ridge is Stranger Things.

In the Stranger Things version or the Wode Ridge game that we played, you play a group of

teens exploring the town, trying to figure out you have discovered a friendly alien and

you are trying to find out what is causing the bad stuff to happen around town.

You are trying to accumulate clues and the clues will lead you toward fighting the big bad

at the end.

This is a resource management game.

You are trying to manage the cards that are coming out such that you get in as little

trouble as possible while accumulating the symbols that you need in order to find the clues

which lead you like I said to the big bad.

Now there is a significant amount of luck to this game.

The main game you play about revealing cards out of the deck and so you can just have a string

of bad luck where you reveal a trouble card and then you reveal some cards that cause

the trouble to hard to trigger and then the trouble card happens and something bad happens

to you and you can kind of get screwed that way.

It is definitely one of the mechanisms the game operates on is this idea of random outcomes

that may or may not give you significant challenge.

That said these are the game is pretty well developed I think and pretty good.

We played two rounds of it the first round we got pretty far and then we ran out of health

on the second round we were doing better I think we were really doing a good job we had

made me half the clues achieved and then basically just one of our players we were playing

a two player game.

One of our players got two bad trouble cards right in a row, right in a row both of which

did two health damage.

We didn't have any way to ameliorate them and before you know what we were done.

I do like I said I do like it I'm going to hold on to it for a while see if I can give it

a few more plays and try to get it played.

I will say the rule book is pretty rough there are parts of it that work well but there

are parts of it that are a little confusing.

There are some inconsistencies like the game comes with 12 dice but it tells you to use

10 it's unclear what the other two are for.

There's a number of things sort of like that or things where some particular rule is

a little confusing about where it is or how it functions.

There's a few times I had to kind of guess at how something works.

But overall I'm pleased with the gameplay of the game and I am looking forward to trying

it more.

I did read somebody was saying that they put the other hunted games inside their

copy of hunted wode ridge which does seem to have a little extra room.

I think I'm going to try that although I have the version that has the solid board rather

than the play mat and I'm not sure that I have room for the games.

So we'll see how that goes.

But overall it's a pretty fun game and worth trying if you get a chance.

That's hunted wode ridge from Gabe Barrett.

I did have a chance to bust out an older game.

We played Elder Sign.

Elder Sign is a game from 2011 that I have played many many times.

I played a few times digitally.

I have the app for my phone and that's a pretty fun way to play.

But I've played many times on the table.

Now this is one of those games where if I got in the right mood I could absolutely go

by the couple expansions that I don't have in order to fill out the game and have everything

for it.

Right now I have a lot of stuff for it.

I have the gates of Arkham expansion.

I have the grave consequences expansion.

I have the unseen forces expansion and I have the omens of ice expansion.

I do not have the water one.

There's one about in depth or something that's a water focused adventure and I do not

have the desert one.

So there are two more kind of scenario ones that I don't have.

And part of me is interested in picking those up because I would have the full collection

then and this turns out to be a game that I can play every now and again and I really do

enjoy.

So it's fun to have more content available.

It said even though I have the gates of Arkham expansion and I have the omens of ice expansion

almost every time we play we just play the museum again.

We always use the unseen forces addons which change the museum based interactions on the

museum for the better but generally I'm happy with those additional cards.

So if you haven't played the Elder sign it is a dice game in which you are sort of pushing

your luck to try to match a set of requirements on cards.

So you'll have dice and they have symbols on them and you're trying to match a certain set

of symbols on cards.

There is a heavy amount of luck because you could just roll badly which we did have happen

several times but if you are managing your resources properly and you have a little bit of luck

often what you'll do is you'll get an acceleration of luck.



So you'll get you'll complete a card which gives you bonuses and you use those bonuses

to then leverage yourself toward completing another card and so on and so on and with a little

bit of luck and judicious use of those resources you can develop toward a win condition.

The way the game ends, each game you set up you are one of the Arkham files investigators

investigating one the possible emergence of one of the Elder Gods and you have to accumulate

a certain number of Elder signs before the Elder Goddess accumulates a certain number of

doom tokens.

If the Doom tokens reach their maximum at any point the Elder God awakens and then all

heck breaks loose you have to try to fight the Elder God which is generally a losing proposition.

I don't think we've ever won once we activated the Elder God.

That said it is possible depending on the God and so there is a kind of last minute, last

ditch effort thing.

On the other hand the better way to do it is to get enough Elder signs to banish the

God or block it from entering the game to begin with.

But we were doing it was interesting we were doing pretty poorly we were up against Nyarlathotep

and we had a run of bad results such that we were at five Elder signs out of the

eleven we needed and we were at seven of the nine doom tokens we needed or that the Elder

God needed.

And then over the course of four turns we managed to get the other six Elder signs we needed

and only accumulate one more doom token.

So we got we had a string of good luck and good choices that ended up allowing us to

win the game.

It was really fun.

What a delight and it just reminded me that even though the dice can feel cruel Elder

sign is a pretty fun game.

We'll say the one downside we played with five players that's kind of too many I think

the game works best with three.

It's fine with two it's fine with four I think five is too many.

The game box does say up to eight although that sounds like really a nightmare to me.

But you know everybody's got their own thing they enjoy.

So Elder Sign is worth playing if you get chance. 2011 that's from Richard Launius and

Kevin Wilson art by Dallas Meloff or Melhoff published by Fantasy Flight Games.

That was a dusty game I hadn't played that since October 2023 so I haven't done the math

exactly but it's roughly sixteen months or so.

I mean seventeen months give or take a few days since last time I played that.

Alright so the last game I got to try this is called Apothecary Plague Doctors.

This is published in 2023 from one first games designed by Nicholas Sparkman with art

by Priscilla Benitez.

Apothecary Plague Doctors is a set collection and order fulfillment game with a fair amount

of take that and a fair amount of randomness in the event cards.

Now this is a fun little game.

We had a good time with it.

On your turn you are collecting resources and you're spending those resources to complete

orders.

You're in Apothecary building things for people during the black plague.

There's a neat mechanism where you can take a little risk and build poisoned things but

then you have to have a distraction card on hand so that if the guards show up you can

stop them from finding you or resting you for building poison or for making poison formulas.

The part of the game that didn't work so well for us was there is a fair amount of take

that in the game which isn't really our style but the game is balanced for you to be doing

that so if you're not doing that it makes it harder to win the way the game is and then

there was a trade trade your cards give your cards to the neighbor and get your cards

from another neighbor card that came out at a really bad time for me.

I was just about to complete a very large order so I had a big handful of cards and then

I had to give all the cards to my neighbor and my other neighbor gave me two cards in exchange.

So that kind of wild randomness didn't really fit for us with the rest of what that game

was doing the game allowed for you to take things and plan and then it also included these

big swinging cards which felt antithetical to the careful planning part so that kind of

thing in that kind of game is generally not my favorite and did not get down a bit in

our estimation.

There are also a few other things that you know reflected a relatively new publishing house

in the in the offing for example the cards were divided up by the color on their back which

if you have trouble distinguishing the color makes the hard to tell and they could also

just be labeled there's no reason the item cards couldn't say item on the back there's

no secret to be decided there but it's much easier to sort there were a few things like

that and the rule book was a little unclear at places but all of these things were to be

expected for a new publisher and could generally be forgiven all in all of how the carry plagued

doctors was fine we had a good time with it the the art was amusing I like the little plagued

doctors imagery on the front with the bird beak nose mask and the ingredients were delightfully

medieval so a fun little game probably not one I'm gonna play a bunch more I don't know

how long it'll stay in my collection but amusing definitely worth trying if you get a chance

or if the theme really intrigues you definitely worth giving a look so that's apothecary

plagued doctors from one first games well that's about it for me today I have arrived home

so I'm gonna call it a day I hope that you have played some of these games or if you haven't

tell me what games you have been playing over on board game you can kill three two six

nine I would love to know well thanks for joining me on the walk today I hope you're next

walk is as pleasant as mine was bye bye

bye

bye

bye

(gentle music)

