

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

out for a walk and deliver an episode you will I stroll around.

I'm Brendan Riley.

[Music]

Good morning, Listener.

It's a lovely day here in suburban Chicago.

It's the same day as the Fantasy Flight Catalog episode.

The sun is peeking behind some clouds right now but we've got partly cloudy...

we've got lovely temperatures in the mid fifties.

Got plenty of birds of chirping and I'm walking home.

So I'm excited to talk to you again and it feels like it's been a little while so maybe

it's time for another board game espresso triple shot.

[Coffee making noises]

Order up!

The board game espresso triple shot is a mini review segment in which I talk about three

games I played for the first time recently as well as one game I dusted off or one new

expansion I tried.

These are not full reviews but rather first impressions meant to give you a sense of what

I thought of the game and how I envision it sitting in my game playing future.

So let's just jump right in.

First game I want to talk about is Clue: the office.

Clue the office is obviously a branded version of the classic game Clue or as it was published

in Britain Cluedo which was designed by Anthony E Pratt in the forties I believe.

I believe it was designed either during the blitz or shortly after the blitz in response

to not having much to do that Pratt made this game to entertain his family, and his friends

really liked it and so he got it published (with Waddington's I believe was the first company

that published it) and then it got picked up in America.

For summary I don't know why it was called Cluedo in Britain but it's called Clue here in

the United States.

The office edition of Clue is themed around the very popular sitcom from the first half

of the 2000 or from the 2000s I think it ran from like I don't know mid 2000s to early

2010s probably I think it did eight seasons and it's themed around a relatively early iteration

of the game.

And it seemed to run the show as set at least season three or so because one of the characters

is Andy Bernard who is from the day from one of the remote offices that ends up coming

and working at the Dunder Mifflin office so it's not first season or second season.

In the game you play as one of several members of the office. Michael has staged a faux murder

of Toby because Toby is gone for the day and he would like to see Toby gone forever.

Each player is working to try to figure out who committed this fake murder and if you win

you get a week's vacation.

Michael is not in the game he is supervising it and all the players represent characters

from The Office.

That theme aside the game works exactly like regular Clue.

The layout is the same although of course the rooms have different names.

The format is the same there are location cards there are people cards and there are

item cards and you mix them together to try and figure out what is missing because that's

how you win.

There's an envelope with Clues in it.

That's how Clue works.

The one nod to this being or there's two nods to this being the office that I think actually

work well for the game.

One of them is each character has a special power.

They are written on their character card it's a one use power and as usually you get to

do something a little bit more than everybody else.

I think I was playing as Andy and I maybe had the ability to use my power to just go to

one room whichever room I wanted without rolling.

So one time I could teleport.

Other players had the ability to make two guesses instead of one or two I don't know there's

a bunch of different things you could do.

Basically think about each different mechanism somebody had a way to break that rule one time.

Otherwise this game like I said functions just like Clue.

Clue is not the worst mystery game it's not the best.

I think that the dice rolling movement thing is bad for the game because it arbitrarily

gives some players benefit in the game over others.

Now there are ways to mitigate the nature of the dice rolling.

If you spend a lot of time guessing the corner locations you can basically not have to worry

about rolling because as soon as you move into another room then you stop and take a guess.

You can just go through the secret passage in order to take a guess no matter how well

or poorly you've rolled.

But sometimes you will need to guess at one of the middle spaces and that's annoying

to have to do.

Now you can wait until someone moves you there to guess there that's one option but generally

you can't guess where you've started so that parts not ideal.

The other innovation in the game that I really liked are these conflict cards or question

cards I remember they're called.

It's another deck of cards and in the deck of cards you have a series of things they're

like two or three minor bonuses like reroll your die or peek at the card that just got

shared as a clue and there's maybe one more benefit and there's a bunch of those, a bunch

of each one in the deck.

And then there are like eight clue power clue cards and what these do is they are a timer.

As these cards come up they go in a line on the deck I can't remember what the name of

the card is but once all eight of them are out the person who drew the eighth one is out

of the game and then you take the eighth one and shuffle it back into the remaining deck.

So the deck becomes a time bomb later in the game and this is a nice way to solve if your

group is not doing a very good job of solving the game quickly this will force the end of

the game eventually which worked out fine.

We had maybe six of those cards out when someone won the game.

So all in all Clue is a not great but fine mystery solving game middle of the pack I would

say I've played plenty that are worse but it is it is decent and Clue: The Office is a

little bit better than regular Clue so there you go.

That's Clue: The Office from 2009 published by the op.

Next up we have Resafa.

Resafa is the newest game from Vladimir Suchy published in 2024 by Delicious Games, published

in the United States by Rio Grande Games.

Suchy is of course one of my favorite, if not my favorite designers. Definitely you know

in the running with Martin Wallace to be my favorite designer.

He has a particular kind of game he tends to make I would say this is his one negative when

compared to Martin Wallace is that Vladimir Suchy has a narrower scope of kinds of games that

he makes but most of them tend to be games where you are collecting a series of different

things and those things then give you some of those things give you benefits and they

are at their heart usually efficiency puzzles.

He's very good at tuning the efficiency to this question of like do I have just enough

which as I've mentioned several times on the podcast is one of my favorite feelings

in board games the fight of wrestling to just have enough to get what you need done

done.

Suchy is a master at that.

Resafa is a really solid middle of the road title.

I don't think it's his best but it's way from the bottom to a couple things I like about

it.

The action selection mechanism is nice and sufficiently tight essentially you have a deck

of six cards.

Everybody has the same six cards.

Each card has two possible actions on it.

This reminds me of the little action tiles from Praga Caput Regni.

On your turn you're going to pick one of those actions to perform and next to those action

is a sort of colored like it's either white or blue or pink or yellow bar and when you

play the card you flick you pick which side is up.

So not only are you picking the action you're going to do you're also picking the color

that you activate and the color you activate lets you do one of the things related to colors.

You could always just get a generic bonus card these they're called sacks.

It's got a picture of a sack on it and that gives you some sort of bonus that you can

use now or save for later or you can take a bonus card related to the color that you just

played.

So if you play a card with a blue border then you could take one of the blue bonus cards

and the blue bonus cards there there are one time benefits that you can either play immediately

to get a benefit or you have to save them and play them alongside a main action or a player

action and card action that's the word card.

If you play it alongside the card action it gives you some sort of bonus or efficiency

maximizer.

So that's what the color things do.

Oh the third thing is there are these there's one track for each color and as you move

up the track you get special cards they're called and the special cards either go into

your tableau where they give you a one time benefit or they give you an ongoing benefit

or they in one case in the yellow the case of the yellow cards they replace the card

in your hand with the yellow card that's a better version of that card and the first level

you replace one of your cards with a better version of that same card.

When you get to the second level the yellow cards you get a card that has two question marks

on it meaning you can pick any action when you play that card and the third level is you

get to do two actions with one play of the card which is really good.

The other special cards give you other kinds of bonuses and the pink ones give you end game

scoring.

Now I haven't I've just explained the action selection mechanism and I'm not going to explain

a lot more here except that the theme is you are merchant in the third century AD in the

city of Resafa and you are working to make money and solve problems and blah blah blah.

This is the place where I think the game suffers.

The theme is as dry as it comes this is oh you're a merchant trading goods in pre modern

times I guess it's not ancient Rome so that's nice but all in all the theme is very unmemorable.

I will say I like Praga Caput Regni there are a bunch of different places where you can

score points and you get more points for doing those more than you would for doing less

so the game does not really reward even handed play of all the pieces but rather rewards

picking a couple and really going for it with those which makes for an interesting balancing

act.

There is a trading component that I think is pretty interesting where you are buying and

selling goods and the different markets will give you different rewards so you're trying

to maximize how and when you get your rewards at those different places so that part is

really interesting and fun and I think worth your time.

All in all I think Resafa is really interesting I'm looking forward to playing it some more like

I said I think it's mid tier for Vladimir Suchy but there aren't very many of games in his

games I don't like.

Even some of the older stuff League of Six I thought was pretty interesting 20th Century

I thought was pretty interesting I mean they feel old by today's standards and Resafa

feels pretty contemporary as a game the theme like I said feels musty dusty for sure and

the cover art it's not great.

I wonder looking at it I wonder if it's the same cover artist who did Messina 1347 the way

that the people are drawn has a pretty good style that I think not great.

I will say I think the iconography in Resafa is pretty solid it's a little confusing at

first but I think you can learn to read it pretty well and then by like halfway through



the game we were able to understand most of it.

The rule book does come with explanations of most or all of the cards although some of

the explanations are a little hard to access it would have been nice to include two more

pages so they had more room to explain all the different cards and I think a player aid

would have been worthwhile to include.

But overall I think Resafa is really great and I'm looking forward to playing it some more.

That's Resafa from Vladimir Suchy published by Delicious Games and Rio Grande with art from

Michal Pichel.

I did get a chance to dust off a game recently this is Cryptid. Cryptid is a sort of abstract

deduction game from Hal Duncan and Ruth Veevers with art by Quanchi Moria published in

2018 by Osprey Games.

Cryptid is a abstract game.

When you get it on the board and you look at it it is very much a matter of trying to

figure out where a thing belongs based on this abstract set of icons.

Thematically you're supposed to be looking for the spot where the cryptid lives and you've

heard different clues from different people who've spotted it and you and the different

people are competing to figure out where the cryptid lives but you only know for sure your

clue and you have to deduce the clues of the other people based on how they place their

pieces on the board.

It's a really fun mind puzzle that I do not think fits the overall scheme of the theme

does not fit the mind puzzle.

It's deceptive if you really like cryptids and you wanted to play a game with cool cryptids

in it and you looked at the cover of this and there's like a weird sea monster with Quanchi

Moria style art which is awesome and then you bought this game and you opened it up and

it's just cubes and discs and you know tool style hex board I would be disappointed if

it were me.

I really like the game.

I played it a few times but it didn't hit with any of my game groups so it went the

way of the trader but it was fun to play when somebody brought it to my game club.

So that's Cryptid from 2018.

Definitely worth a look if you like abstract games but not worth a look if what you want

is a game about cryptids.

Finally, I got a chance to play Galactic Renaissance.

This is a 2024 game from designer Christian Martinez and artist Tano Bonfonte published

by Matagot.

Galactic Renaissance is a flashy medium to large box game where you play a faction of

interstellar beings doing negotiation and ambassadorship politics with the other intergalactic

beings discovering the galaxy.

In the course of the game you are playing a series of cards.

This is a, this part is really interesting.

The game you have a deck of cards.

Everybody's got the same seven cards to start with and then everybody gets a specialist

card that is much more powerful than one of the base cards or at least breaks the

rule in some way does something interesting.

And over the course of the game you spread out your influence, you play cards to do that

work.

You acquire more specialists which are kind of the rule breakers, the interesting exciting

cards and you build up a kind of engine to situate yourself in our score points.

The game comes with a number of scoring cards that reflect different needs or different

qualities that the galaxy admires and over the course of the game you have a card that you

can play that lets you score on the current scoring cards.

At the beginning of the game there's only two scoring cards.

Once someone has gotten a certain number of points, a third scoring card will open up.

Then once someone gets the next barrier, the first scoring card goes away and a new

better one opens up and then same thing with the second one.

The old second card goes away and a new better one appears in the end game phase.

The end of the game is really weird.

Basically the way the game works, the first person to 30 points wins but if you end your

turn above 20 points, your score marker goes back down to 20.

So in order to win you have to get to 30 but you have to score at least 10 points in one

turn because if you're below like it's say you're at 18 and you score 10 you'd be at 28

if that's all you get at the end of your turn your score goes back down to 20 and then

you're next turning you have to get 10 more.

Now in the beginning of our game this seemed dubious because we were scoring 1, 2, 3 points

at a time but as the game went on it became evident that you could with some manipulation

do really well.

I ended up pulling a fast one and sort of winning by getting myself in the position where

I got to 18 points and then I could score 6 points on one of the scoring cards and I

had a specialist who let me score that scoring card a second time so I played the specialist

and the senator at the same time scored it twice got 12 points in one.

Overall I thought it was an interesting game.

The rulebook really needed a lot of work.

We kept having questions that the rulebook did not resolve to our satisfaction.

There's almost no conversation about the rules on board game geek or at least not enough

to help us out when we had those troubles.

So we found ourselves kind of wallowing in trying to find out the answers to some of

these rules when we would have preferred to be playing the game.

That said I thought it was pretty interesting and I looked forward to playing it again.

I like the mix of specialist cards having to figure out tactically how to get more points

and do well based on the specialists you get when you don't really have a lot of control

over which ones you get.

Although if you make an effort to get this one kind of building into your play then it's

easier to get the results that you want because you get to draw.

When you get a specialist card if you have a certain number of these buildings for every

one of these buildings that you are on a planet with you get to draw an extra specialist

card.

You still only get to keep one but you get more to pick from.

So that kind of nuance is interesting.

Like I said it's a pretty fun game.

It took us like two and a half hours but it was all a first play for all of us.

I think if you were playing this with people who'd all played before 90 minutes easy it

seems like it would be a really streamlined game once everyone understands how it works.

But definitely a much faster second play for everybody involved.

Well that brings me to the end of my board game espresso episode.

Have you played Clue the Office, Rassafa, Galactic Renaissance or Dust It Off Crypted?

If so I'd love to hear your experience with those.

Head over to boardgamegeek guild 3269 and let me know what you think.

Otherwise I'm looking forward to talking to you in the future.

Thanks so much.

Take care and here's hoping your next walk is as pleasant as mine was.

Bye bye.

[Music]

Brought to you by Rattlebox Games.

(upbeat music)