

# Untitled - June 30, 2025

**Speaker** 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 to you while I stroll around. I'm Brendan Riley. Well, good morning listener. It's a humid day here in suburban Chicago in late June. I am happy to be out for a stroll and looking forward to chatting with you about some games over the course of the next few minutes. We'll talk about board games and have a good time. Oh, weather wise I will give you a weather report. It's like partly cloudy. Looks like it'll probably will rain today at some point. Uh, but thus far it hasn't, so it's very warm. Looks like a nice day. Looking forward to it. Well, I was looking back through the different episodes that I've run in the past six months or so trying to figure out what I am going to show to you. So I've looked back at the last few months of episodes trying to figure out what I have done well and what needs doing more. and I realized that it's been about 20 episodes or so since I did a astrology files, so it's time for one of those. if this is the first time you've heard one, astrology files is a segment in which I look at the current astrological sign for the moment that I'm doing the episode, and I talk a little bit about game stuff related to it. Now, I myself am not an adherent to the idea that astrology governs our lives, but I know there are a lot of people who are. So I get my information from a very authoritative source, the Vogue.com. "What your sign says about you" article. I just found one that lists brief summaries of all 12 signs, and I'm using that as an inspiration for game talk. So, uh, here is the description of cancer that Vogue provides, represented by the crab. Cancer seamlessly weaves between the sea and the shore, representing cancer's ability to exist in both emotional and material realms. Cancers are highly intuitive, and their psychic abilities manifest in tangible spaces. But just like the hard shelled crustacean, this water sign is willing to do whatever it takes to protect itself emotionally. In order to get to know this sign, you're going to need to establish trust. So I picked out five things from that to talk about that I'll talk about here while I walk around. First one is the sea and the shore. It says cancers navigate between the sea and the shore. So I was thinking about what kinds of games involve moving between the sea and the shore. The obvious answer is fishing games. Now I know I did Pisces not that long ago, and I did fishing games, so there's going to be some overlap here. Maybe that tells us that Pisces and Cancer get along well, or maybe they don't get along well because they both have to do with the sea and the shore. I don't know, how does it work better if you're similar or different? Whatever. Nevermind to see you in the shore. So games I was thinking about with sea and shore. First off, you've Rosenberg enjoys a game about fishing. So I have three Rosenberg fishing games that I would point to. First off, the least sea and shore one maybe would be Le Havre. In Le Havre. You are running a port and there's a whole big thing about this these boats, these fishing boats and what you get from them. So you're getting harvest from the fishing boats, and you use that to do different things in a slightly, slightly more advanced version of that is in A feast for Odin. You can go whaling on the Viking ships. That is one of the things you can do. And whaling is interesting because it's the most random. Like you roll a die to see whether or not you succeed at the whaling journey. There are things you can do to mitigate the rules, but generally it's there is some luck involved there and then, which makes sense, because whaling would be a any kind of fishing is some on some level, a luck based endeavor. And then the one that I think is most deeply connected to that would be Nusfjord, which is about managing a small Norwegian village and trying to, I don't know, get

better at fishing. So those are the Rosenberg fishing games. The other one that I have played a fair amount is Fleet the Dice Game. This is a game built on the card game fleet, which is a deck builder which I've only played a couple times online, never in person, but fleet the dice game is an interesting sort of meaty rolling, right? It provided the sort of starting point for the loaded roll and writes that Ben, Ben Pinchbeck and Matt Riddle have been creating, along with the third guy, Adam somebody over at Motor City GameWorks. And they had, of course, uh, Three Sisters and I think they did Motor City, and then they did French Quarter, which are three different, uh, loaded rolling rights. I've only played three sisters there, I think between Three Sisters and Fleet, the Dice Game and the Kristian A Ostby Game Riverside. Between those three, I have enough meaty rolling rights that I don't need. And then, of course, I have Hadrian's Wall, and I also have Rome and Roll, which I haven't even tried yet. So lots, lots of meaty Roll-and-writes there if I want them. So that is sea and shore. I feel like there must be games about people going back and forth between the sea and shore, but I don't have any more there. There are a number of other Viking games... Knarr, maybe. Or I think Champions of Midgard has some water borne elements as well, but I don't know the specific answers there. All right. The next one up, it says they navigate between the emotional and material realms. It actually uses the sea and shore metaphor to talk about emotional and material realms. I made that explicit. There are games where that's what you're doing from. the new one that I just got is unconscious mind where you are a burgeoning psychologist trying to help people understand their dreams and the unconscious mind, literally the emotional realm. But then we also have more manifested versions of that. There's comanauts where you are going into people's dreams and trying to help them navigate that. And then of course, one of my favorites, Cerebra, where you are literally emotions battling for control of a mind. All three of those games involve different ways of thinking about emotion as a place, though very few of them involve going to both. I think unconscious mind is probably the best. I'm not sure I haven't played comanauts, so I'm not sure how that one plays. On the idea of the unconscious mind and the conscious mind, the interaction between the two, but I think unconscious mind is probably the closest place there. And then cerebra is just takes place in the emotional realm. The human, the human whose mind you're in doesn't matter at all. So? So there are games that do that. But again, these games are not focused on the sort of more literal suggestion there that we see in the description. Ooh, there's a house wren somewhere nearby, really chirping up a storm. Loving it. Next up, we have psychic abilities. Remember, it says highly intuitive in their psychic. Psychic abilities manifest intangible spaces. So I was thinking about what games do I know of, where psychic abilities are part of the game. The first one I thought of, of course, is Arkham Horror or Arkham Horror The Card Game, particularly because the card game has a lot of spells and magic that have to do with the mind. It specifically has this idea of your mind getting damaged by the arcane forces that you're dealing with, and so thinking about the nuances of that, I think, works really well. So Arkham Horror, The Card Game would be one suggestion I have for a game with psychic abilities. The other one I was thinking about was MGMT or Mind Management or mind MGMT, which is based on a comic book that is about agents and secret government facilities that are working to disrupt society or control society. And the whole thing is some of them have psychic powers that allow them to control other people. So the that game is literally about psychic powers that manifest themselves in the world. The comic book is wild. The game I thought was pretty good. We only

played it like once or twice though, so I haven't really gotten into the depth of it, but it is a game I would enjoy exploring more. Those are the two main games I can think of that have psychic abilities. I suppose my guess is somewhere in, Cthulhu Death may die. There's some psychic abilities with those probably manifest as like wizard spells. Kind of. I don't know of any other games that have psychic abilities. This is probably the weakest category for me. I'd love to hear your thoughts on other games that use this as a thematic crutch. The idea that you have superpowers or mental abilities that allow you to interact with others. Oh, I thought of another one. What about Mysterium and Mysterium Park and that one? The characters are mediums. There's also the game medium where they are trying to interpret information being given to them by a ghost. So that's a different kind of psychic ability rather than a, um, it's more of a psychic receptiveness, which I'm not sure whether that would count as manifesting intangible spaces or not, but, um, yeah, that seems to me like another way that psychic abilities emerge in board games. Something like Mysterium, where you play a medium listening to ghosts. So those are games of psychic abilities. Uh, next up, we have games where you establish trust because this says in order to get to know a cancer, you're going to need to establish trust. So of course, establishing trust is a key part of a variety of different games. The games that have this sort of most strongly are social deduction games, which inherently make it difficult to establish trust because there are people in the game who the game has set up as liars. Sometimes they can play without lying. They just play badly. Or they never actually say anything one way or another. In a big group, it's really possible for 1 or 2 of the traders to just never say anything and kind of get away with influencing stuff without really lying. But most of these games that have a hidden trader, they build in the idea of deceiving the other players as part of it, which means that a key part of playing the game well is trying to build up trust between you and the other players, because you want to have them understand what you're trying to get done building trust. But then there is another category of game that involves building trust. And this would be something like a Game of Thrones or diplomacy, uh, games where you are fighting for various kinds of area control, and the person who the people you're interacting with, you can't really afford to be at war with all of them all the time. You need to make some alliances, but the game doesn't really enforce those alliances in any serious way. And so what happens is you need to establish trust between players. And of course, it's always kind of a wary trust because at some point only one person gets to win. So the game doesn't really create a situation in which you can really trust somebody. Instead, you have this sort of mix of which kind of trust people are going to be able to do, and how much people are going to be able to trust one another. So it's a really interesting problem to tackle in the arc of playing one of these games is how long do you trust somebody? I've told this story before, I think, but last time I played Game of Thrones, I was in an alliance with somebody and we got to say turn six of seven, maybe turn five of seven. And when I think it was turn six and when we revealed our orders, it revealed that I was marching on him. And boy, he looked he looked really hurt when I revealed that, like, authentically hurt, like I think he was tilted by that. And I was sort of like, I mean, I felt bad that he felt that way. But at the same time, like, this is a game where that is literally what you're supposed to do. And so I honestly was shocked he wasn't moving on me in that turn. So the game was set up in a way that stabbing somebody in the back is how you play the game, and diplomacy is often works that way as well. The idea is to get your hit country ahead at the cost of others. Now there is another kind of game in which trust is, I

mentioned Molly House as a game where you're trying to establish trust, you're trying to work together. The game forces sometimes force people to play badly, and the game does reward traitors for their bad behavior. Or it can. And the players, of course, have a way out. Dead of Winter also takes this role. You're working collaboratively to try to solve something that's actually very difficult, and sometimes there will be traitors. This combination of the two things together does make it really hard to figure out who's on your side or not. Now, there is a last part of that in which players games that ask you to establish trust but don't. I mean, they don't prohibit it, but they don't expand on it either. So the sort of combination of things that ask that establish trust is really interesting. These would be games like economic route building games. You're kind of like, well, I'm I won't go there if you don't go there or I won't take this if you don't take that. You can kind of make these deals. Catan sort of has that as well. But part of what I don't like about Catan is it really motivates everybody to dogpile the leader. And I don't think that's super fun. So all in all, not a I'm not a huge fan of games that require you to establish trust because I'm bad at it and I guess games where you're supposed to lie and, you know, everybody might be lying is one thing, but it's a it's an interesting nuance that some people find fun, and I find less and less fun as I play more games. And the last thing that I pulled out of the description of the Cancer Star sign is crabs themselves. So I was trying to think about games that have crabs in them. And I was thinking that there must be crabs somewhere in the Arkham universe. Crabs are creepy enough. They're sort of. They're arthropods, right? Or sort of arachnid like. So they are gross looking and scary. They got those big claws. So of course, somewhere in H.P. Lovecraft stuff there are crabs scuttling around, but I don't recall any specifically, so I'm not going to use that one. I'll put that as an honorable mention, but I was thinking about other games that have crabs and I couldn't think of any. So I searched crab on board Game Geek, and I found three that I want to mention one. One that I'd heard of, one that I had sort of heard of and I'll explain, and one that I'd never heard of. So the one I'd heard of is crabs adjust humidity. This is essentially other people making Cards Against Humanity. I think they have cards that are funny, but not quite as offensive as the general idea, but they make the cards in a way that you could mix them, I think, with the other, and it would still be fun. There's one crap game. The second one is really interesting. So I teach a game design class where students play a bunch of games and then they make a game, and one student made a really interesting abstract game last year or two years ago called Crab Crab Bucket, which is about the fact that if you put a crab in a bucket, it can climb out. But if you put several crabs in a bucket, they can't climb out, because as soon as one of them starts to climb out, the other ones grab on to it to try to use it to climb out, and they pull each other down so crabs will keep each other in a bucket, even though they could work together to get everybody out. So I think that's interesting. And it's a it was a sort of abstract game, really interesting, kind of fun. When I looked on Board Game Geek, I saw there was a game called crabs in a bucket, and I was like, oh man, I wonder if my student went ahead and made the game. Posted on BoardGameGeek. No, this is a trick taking game called crabs in a bucket. It's built around the same idea, the same observation of the world, but nothing like the game. My student made just the same title, actually different title. My student made a game called Crab Bucket. This is called crabs in a bucket. Different game. But anyway, I thought that was interesting and I looked at the game. It's a trick taker, which I'm not super keen on, just because very few people in my circle know trick takers or seem to want to play them. Uh, people play them at my game club sometimes,

but it's almost always when I'm not kind of ready to play a game, so I don't get to play them very often. But I do like a trick taker. Uh, and that's crabs in a bucket. And finally there's a game called crab. That's a 2025 game. It's coming out this year, and it looks like it's about a bunch of crabs escaping from a chef. So sort of think about the scene in, uh, Little Mermaid where the crab is running away from the chef. I think that's kind of the premise, except you're out on a beach somehow, instead of instead of being directly in the kitchen. So those are some crab games. So the two places where I feel like I didn't really do that well are games about the sea and the shore and going back and forth between them and games about crabs. I would love to hear your. Thoughts about any of these categories. Are you a is cancer your sign? What do you have to say about any of these qualities? Does this fit you? I feel like in order to get to know this person, you have to establish trust. That feels like good advice for anybody, but whatever. So head over to Board Game Geek Guild 3269 and pose there. If you have thoughts about the star sign cancer and crabs. Uh, if you have other thoughts for me, generally you can post a message on board game Geek wombat 99 is my username there. My email address is Brendan at Chessgames.com. You can send me a message there as well. I'd love to hear from you. Or I guess I haven't asked for the smile. You could post a review of this podcast. We do have quite a few listeners, not an enormous amount, but a hearty and daring few. I love you all. Thanks for for listening. But we could always welcome more into the fold. So the best way to do that, I'm told, is to post reviews of the podcast, preferably good reviews. I guess bad reviews aren't really that helpful, but yeah, posting a review of the podcast in the place that you get it from would be very helpful. So. Well, that's it for this episode of Pickup and Delivery and this segment of Astrology Files. Thanks for joining me on my walk today. I hope that your next walk is as pleasant as mine was. Bye bye. Good morning. You got a cardinal on your roof. That's a lucky charm. Yeah. Good luck. Brought to you by Rattlebox Games.