

Untitled - July 14, 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 listeners. It's a lovely, if noisy day here in suburban Chicago. The groundskeepers are out and busy, so I'm walking toward a big group of lawnmowers, so I'll have to pause for a moment while I go buy those. You won't hear them, though, because I generally cut the lawn mower noise. If it's gotten to the point where I'm going to stop talking. Oh, there's some arborists collecting and chopping up wood too. That's what's making it take so long. I see, I see, he says. So I was looking through my back episodes, and I realized it had been a while since I talked about the dustbin. So today is an Emptying the dustbin episode as a reminder, emptying the dustbin is when I go back and I look at games that I dusted off in the last few months that I never got a chance to talk about in my board game. Espresso episodes. Because the board game espresso episodes generally have a 3 to 1 ratio of new games to dust it off games. There's often a lot of dust off games I don't get a chance to comment on, so I thought I would do that today. Today I'm going to be talking about games that I played in March and April dusted off. I'll talk a little bit about each game, uh, how long it had been dusty. And I think today my approach will be one thing I liked about the play that reminded me, or one thing I really liked about it, and one thing I don't like about it or didn't like about it. All right, I'm just going to go and order also of the list. So to start off Elder Sign, this was one year, four months and 17 days. Dusty I believe we have since then played it again uh, sometime in May. We played it a second time and it did remind me how much I like this game. Elder sign, I believe. Designed by Kevin Wilson, is a dice rolling game where you roll dice in sort of Yahtzee style and your goal is to complete challenges. The game has a wide variety of challenges on the table, and essentially it's sort of playing the odds of the different kinds of dice. You can get this special equipment that helps you make the dice stronger and or make your rolls stronger, and make it more likely that you'll succeed. But of course, the equal challenge or the equivalent challenge is that you might run out of dice ahead of time. It's got a pretty brutal dice odds system. Generally, if you need a symbol, the the symbol is on one side of the dice. You're rolling the dice generally just once, and then you can sometimes spend things to reroll. And then you you have things you can spend to reroll. And then you're allowed to reroll the whole group. But you have to discard a die every time you reroll. And you can save one result. But unlike Yahtzee or other games where you can reroll and keep some, you can only keep one unless you have equipment for it. So it gets very quickly difficult to achieve the different goals. One of the things I. The thing I like about Elder Sign, which we did this last time we played The Gates of Arkham. They've released several different expansions for it, which each one sort of like welcome to the moon. It provides a whole different context in which to play the game, which makes it fun and different way. So the change in context at the heart of Elder Sign is the thing I really like about it. The thing I don't like about it is that the the game has a pretty steep acceleration curve if you're doing badly, that it's really hard if you're doing badly to recover and do better. So it can be very easy to find yourself behind the eight ball. That said, most of the time when we play, we win. So I don't know if we've just gotten good enough at it that we do pretty well. Or if I'm not sure where the disconnect is, but we tend to do pretty well. We did pretty well this time. We also tried the Grave Consequences expansion, which just adds

basically more challenges to it. So Elder Sign is a winner and I'm glad to play it. In fact, I enjoyed it so much I went and ordered another of the expansions, The Omens of the Pharaoh expansion. So as far as I know now, there's only one I don't have, which is omens of the deep, and I'm going to keep my eye out for that if I find it used or I find it somewhere, I'll probably snatch that up so that I have the whole set. Because at this point, I'm only one expansion away from having the whole thing. So that is Elder Sign from Kevin Wilson and Fantasy Flight Games. All right. Next up we've got patchwork. Patchwork is from designer Yvette Rosenberg. Always a winner. And this one, it's been one year, seven months and 12 days since I played this. Patchwork is an exclusively two player Tetromino game and or polyomino game. And it is one of the first polyomino games that you've. Rosenberg did. He released a whole bunch of those. It has a really great mechanism where there's this big loop of tiles and you're picking out which tile you want to play, and when you play it, you are spending buttons to buy that tile, and then you earn buttons with the tiles that you've played. So there's this nice back and forth mechanism where you are trying to find different tiles that are going to fit into your board well, that are going to give you the right amount of buttons that will accelerate you far enough up the time track, so you can get these little patches to fill in your space. Because the goal is to fill in your quilt with a full pattern that the closer you get to a complete board, the better you're going to do. The fewer empty spots you have are going to do. There's a race to get the eight. I think the board is ten by ten maybe, but the first person to get a full eight by eight square completed gets a bonus. So there's a lot of sort of nuance like that. It works really well. I like patchwork a lot. There's a reason it is very well regarded, so things I like about it. I love the balance of the buttons, that there are some tiles that cost a lot of buttons, but they fill up a lot of space. There are other ones that don't cost that much, but they give you a lot of income. Managing your income is really important in the game. It's very easy to sort of lose track of how many buttons you have, and then you find yourself kind of stuck without anywhere to go. So having that balance works really nicely and is something that I enjoy every time I play the game. Uh, downside it's only two player and the theme is kind of blah. It's basically non-theme. You could just have it be you're filling up a square and it would work just fine. So that's for me. That's the downside of patchwork is the theme. Next up is Chocolate Factory. This is one year, eight months and six days. Dusty, designed by Matt Dunstan and Brett Gilbert. So the closest thing I can think of is an engine builder. And you're in fact, building out your chocolate factory. So you have a factory that you use to make chocolates and there's like an assembly line. And so each round, every you pick a new machine to add to your assembly line and you pick a person to collaborate with. It could be. And there's a bunch of different people. Some of them are. Well, they're all employees I guess is what the game calls them. Some of them allow you to sell goods faster. Some of them allow you to gather coal faster. Coal is the main energy creation ingredient in the chocolate factory. Uh, some of them, uh, allow you to sell goods more easily. And it's a combination of these things that, uh, pushes the game. So having a mix of these different people lets you do. Then the game has this interesting assembly line where everybody, you draft the employees and the machines, and then you run your assembly line and you get to run it three times in a day, and you're trying to make these different chocolates, which you're then selling to different shopkeepers and so on. It's an interesting game. I think it's great to play once a year. It's very seamy. There's not a lot of difference from game to game, except in the tactics of which person are you going to draft and which resources are you

going to sell when that that part is sort of the the most interesting and flexible in terms of setup, but also means the game is basically the same every time you play it. Uh, I really like Chocolate Factory, but as I said, it's very seamy, so I don't mind just playing it about once a year. That's chocolate factory. Next up is Barron Park. Barron Park is one year and 13 days dusty, meaning it's a game that I play pretty regularly, and I really enjoy what Barron Park has to offer. It's got a lot of tight Decisions in a pretty short time span, it's usually about 45 minutes to play. The Polyamino pieces are of a nice variety and interesting challenge in terms of getting them to fit into your board, and I really I think it's great with the expansion, both the Grizzlies module, which adds just one more, uh, you would get one more player board and you add one more, uh, and you can get grizzly tiles by, by forfeiting other tiles. So you get these bigger, higher scoring tiles. And then I also really like the monorails expansion, which are module which we only played once because my wife really didn't like it, but I thought it was delightfully intense. Uh, basically, you build these little monorail towers that go on top of the other things that you have in your display, and that overlap is where or you have to build them in a very specific way. And I think it it works really well and it's fun and, uh, interesting. So for the likes, I think Barron Park really knocks it out of the park with the knocks out of the park. I think Barron Park works very, very well as a filler game, and you can make you have a sliding scale of how challenging you want to make it, depending who you're playing with the easiest way. There are no you don't use any of the bonus tiles, so it ends up being very smooth. The most complex way you end up, you use a bunch of bonus tiles and it becomes really intense. So both ends of that are great and a lot of fun. So well worth playing if you get a chance. That's Barron Park from designer Phil Walker Harding, whom you know, I enjoy. Not as much as Raul Gaviola. What does he say? All hail Pooh-bah. I, uh, but I do like his games a lot. He is in my five games club, which is a list of games where I own at least five of the games from that designer. He's in that list, but, uh, yeah, so that's Barron Park. Next up, uh, those are the four games I played in March that I dusted off. Now we've got April. I have four games as well. Uh, the first of these is escape. Curse of the temple. This is from Christian Almond Ostby, uh, published by Queen games. And I think this is great. Escape. Curse of the temple is a real time dice rolling game. It's frantic. You're rolling dice as fast as you can. You're moving as quickly as you can. You're trying to gain achievements by going from room to room. And you find these treasures. And you're supposed to roll dice to get sort of the highest value treasure you can with the idea of accumulating enough treasure that you can get out of the temple. It's kind of confusing, but if you saw it on the board, you would work the thing that makes it interesting and it makes it fun is the frantic, real time nature of it, where you are trying to get from room to room and you're helping each other, and the soundtrack is playing, and when it hits, it goes bong. And then, uh, very quickly the game goes into overdrive. It's really fun. The thing I don't like about it is that it's really hard to keep track of what other people are doing, so if you're playing with new people, it's really easy for people to screw up. Now it's the kind of light game that who cares if you screw up? In some sense it doesn't really matter. But at the same time, it's nice to play correctly. And so having a game where it's really easy to just play it wrong, that's not my favorite, but I really do like escape. Curse of the temple. I think it's a fantastic game and one I'm happy to play whenever I get a chance, which was two years 11 days previous. So that's escape. Curse of the temple. Next up we have Port Royal. Port Royal is a push your luck game from designer Alexander Pfister. I've only played this at my game club, and only with this

one guy who? That's his favorite game. He brings it to play every time. And I will say for me, the downside of it is, or the thing I dislike about it is the way he teaches the game. Now. It had been two years, two months and 29 days since I played it, so I needed a refresher from him, which was okay because I remembered how to play. But we also had a new player there, and I basically had I mean, I couldn't I did it subtly, but, uh, I kind of had to teach the game. Also, even once I remembered how just because his method of teaching it is so abrupt and limited in explanation, like he kind of explains what you're doing, but he'll he'll like he'll talk really fast. And he uses his kind of own terms for things. So like, there's a thing you can do where you can blow up a ship to send it away instead of letting it come into the harbor. Or you can menace a ship to have it go away. But he doesn't really explain that that's what you're doing. He just I don't know, it's hard to explain. Actually. I don't think the game is hard to explain, but it's hard to explain what this person does. That makes it hard to learn from him. That's the thing I don't like is it goes in the category of not a great teach. But I think Port-Royal itself is a pretty interesting game, and I really enjoyed playing it again. Uh, definitely one I would pick up if I found it cheap somewhere. I don't know if I would, um, go out of my way to buy it new, but, uh, it certainly is the kind of game that would be fun. That is fun. Used. So that is Port Royal. Next up we have globetrotting. It had been two years, ten months and 11 days since I played this really interesting game. Uh, if ever there was a game that had interesting table presence, it's globetrotting. This is a game from R to.I publishing. They are best known for canvas, but they also did fromage recently, which I haven't had a chance to play yet, but I hear is great in globetrotting. You are planning three. You are going to take a year off and travel the world. You are planning three trips around the world. And essentially what you're doing is you're taking 12 turns to plan three trips. Your trips do not have to be equal length, so you could have one trip be really short and one trip be really long. Uh, you kind of have an unlimited budget, but the more money you spend the. I don't know if it's the fewer points you get or if the money is the thing that is the tiebreaker. There is an element where if you spend the least money, you get a bonus. The way the game works, it is paired drafting game or um, it's a drafting game where there are three choices on the table, sort of like cartographers where you have in cartographers, there's two choices, and in globetrotting it's three. So you have three choices of destinations you can go to on the table. You can either add a trip to your summer, you can add a trip to your spring or to your autumn trip and the place you go you add on to the current end of your run. The way that that balance works is that, uh, and then the gimmick of the game is that you have a little globe with all these different cities marked on it in front of you, and you have a whiteboard pen and this little drawing thing. And basically you use the pen to plan your route, and you draw a little symbol on the city to indicate whether you're going there in the spring, the fall, or the or the spring, the summer or the fall. And then at the end of the game, you're going to score points for your three different routes and you have a goal. You have a couple different goals that you're trying to achieve. And there's shared goals that everybody's trying to achieve. And then there's individual goals that you're trying to achieve while you're planning your routes. So there's a bunch of different stuff you're trying to do and a bunch of different sort of points you're trying to achieve. So it works really well. It's pretty fun. It's a it's a very light game. So this isn't a deep this isn't a deep well of complexity. It's a fun filler game for me. The advantage is it's a nice little filler game. It's an interesting thing to do because it's got the Globes and it's it's sort of amusing and it's fun to think about going to all these places. And

the art on the cards is just beautiful for me. The downside of the game is that it is, uh, a little too light for the size of the game, like it's a huge box. And I am glad I don't own this. I think if I found it cheap I might buy it, but I don't know because it's big. Like it takes up a lot of space and I think it's fine. It's the kind of game I would play if somebody says, hey, do you want to play this? But I'm probably never going to suggest it myself. So that's globetrotting from Tui games. And finally, the last game I dusted off was Quacks of Quedlinburg. It had been two years, seven months and three days since I played that one. Quacks is a top notch. It's a really good game. In it, you are pushing your luck assembling components into a bag with the idea of brewing potions, the components that you put in your bag, then come out and push your luck draw style so you're drawing tokens out of your bag with the goal of drawing as many tokens as you can without busting the way that you bust is. There's these five tokens in your bag when you start. So six. There's three ones two twos and a 3 or 4, seven, four ones, two twos and a three. And as the game goes along, You are trying not to bust because you're drawing these other tokens out, and if you don't bust, then you get both points and new tokens each round. But if you bust, you get either the points you earned or the tokens, not both. So there's an interesting push your luck element in. Like how? How far am I going to risk busting? And if you draw more than seven points of the white tokens, then you bust. It's a great mechanism. And then the additional tokens you're buying give you point scoring in other ways. Often they feed off each other. So if you have a bunch of the same kind of token, you get a bunch of points. And what you're doing is choosing a mix of these tokens to purchase so that your set has an interesting collection. So that's Quacks of Quedlinburg from designer Wolfgang Warsh. They just released a new version of it, and I hate the cover art. I like the old one much better, but but I guess marketing is what it is, I think. I don't know if it's still North Star games. They may have given up the license and it may be a different publisher now, so that is. Quacks of Quedlinburg. So I'm curious, what games did you dust off in April and May? I'd love to hear from you. Head over to BoardGameGeek Guild 3269 and share your dusty. Games there. As usual, I'll keep sharing the games I dust off along with my board game espresso episodes. But when I run into in a couple months, when I've got a few games in the dustbin that haven't been cleared out yet, I will return with another of these episodes. Well, thanks for joining me on my walk today. I hope that your next walk is as pleasant as mine was. Bye bye. Brought to you by Rattlebox Games.