

Untitled - July 28, 2025

Speaker Welcome to Pickup 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 afternoon, listeners or good morning listeners. It's a lovely, if humid day here in suburban Chicago, and I'm out enjoying a walk, spreading the fun of advanced reader copies in the little local libraries in my area. Well, I haven't talked to you about games in a little while, and so it's time for board game. Espresso triple shot. Order up. For those of you new to the podcast, the board game Espresso Triple Shot is a show where I talk about three games I've tried recently for the first time, and usually one that I've revisited. These aren't full on reviews. Usually I've played this game maybe one time, so these are sort of first impressions. What did I think of the game? Do I think I'll play it again? What are some highlights? What are some things to be cautious about for the revisited one? I will let you know how long it's been since I played it and what I thought of it on this play. Okay, let's jump into it. So let's start with I got to try Feed the Kraken. Feed the Kraken is a social deduction game with a board component, sort of in the neighborhood of the resistance or Secret Hitler. In the game, you are pirates on a ship, and each person is secretly either a pirate or a cultist, or the third one is the narcissist or something like that. Like the pirate wants the ship to sail to the land of treasure and piracy and get points. That way. The cultist wants to raise up and feed people to the Kraken. Uh, there's a head cultist called the priest. They want to be fed to the Kraken. And then I feel like there was one other group. But I could be wrong about that. Feed the Kraken is a 2022 game designed by Michael Chen, Doctor Hans Joachim Ho and Tobias Emich. The artists are James Churchill and Hendrik Nowak, and it's published by Fun Tales. Like I said, this is a social deduction game. You're playing in a big circle. We played in a huge group. I think the game maxes out at 10 or 11 players, and that's how many we had in the game. You have different roles on the ship which allow you to manipulate the votes that people are going to do or participate in the votes or not participate in the votes, that sort of thing. They allow, uh, one of the things the game has is this sort of mutiny power where there are each player gets a certain number of these gun tokens, and you can spend gun tokens to try to mutiny against the captain. And if enough people use their gun tokens, I don't remember what the number is, but if enough gun tokens are used, then you can cause a mutiny and take captainship for yourself, which is important because the captain gets to help steer the ship. The ship is steered in the same way that laws are put out in secret Hitler. There are tiles that get added in and then the captain decides which tile to play. Either ship steering the ship away or toward the possible doom of the Kraken. And a lot of the spaces give you give the captain a bonus as well. This game is definitely inspired by, or uses a lot of the mechanisms that we saw in In Secret Hitler. I thought Feed the Kraken was fun. I like it better than Secret Hitler because I don't really like that theme. Whereas secret uh, feed the Kraken. It's fun to be a pirate. It is a bit more involved. It's one of the more complicated social deduction games I have. And I would say compared to, say, the Resistance, it's not as good as the resistance. I think the purity of the resistance works really well, and if you want a little bit of extra stuff, you can mix in the cards, which give you some of those extra powers that you get in Feed the Kraken, but not as complex. I also like just the core mechanism of voting rather than putting in tiles, and sometimes there's just random tiles and you're like, well, I wanted to vote in the direction I wanted to for this one, but I

couldn't because the tiles didn't go that way. That one, I think, is less fun. That said, Feed the Kraken was a good time and I would certainly enjoy playing it again if I had the opportunity. If you have the opportunity, I do recommend giving it a try if you like social deduction games. I will say I don't think I would buy this at the price point that I've seen it. It's pretty expensive online. It's a very deluxe, lush game, which is fun, but I don't really need a deluxe lush game for a social deduction experience that is. Feed the Kraken. Next up we have fresco. Fresco is a 2010 design from Wolfgang Panning, Marco Rosco, Ruskowski and Marcel. Beck. The art is by Oliver Schlemmer and the publisher is Queen games. This is one of those games that's been around well, obviously 15 years now, and it is a pretty simple resource gathering, contract fulfillment kind of game. You are gaining. You are managing your paint supply and then using those paints to put to work on the fresco in the ceiling of this cathedral. You're repairing it. And part of the idea is that as time goes on, you are gaining notoriety for the different kinds of repairs that you're doing. Big part of the game is about managing, like I said, managing your paint supply. So you're gathering paints, you are mixing paints because if you have a red and a yellow, you can mix them to make orange. And then spending those paints to complete pieces of the fresco. The turn order is perhaps the most interesting part of the game. This is managed through a kind of auction, and remind a little bit of the turn order auction in last will and not quite the same, but the turn order auction in Five Tribes last will in particular has this thing where like you're getting up early and then you get to do more stuff, and that's what's happening in fresco. In fresco, you decide when you're getting up and you get to do things based on when you get up and the prices of the paint you buy change based on when you get up. But also there's less paint available. But there's also like an element of like tiredness. There's a tiredness meter. And if you're getting up early all the time, you're getting more and more tired and then you're cranky and your assistants don't want to work for you. Whereas if you're getting up later, then you're not as tired and your assistants like working for you. But then you can also give the assistants the night out on the town. You can pay for them to go to the theater. If you do that, then they get in a good mood again. It's funny, we played with the module. The game comes. The game I have comes with two modules that add complexity to the game we played with one of them. I think we could have played with both without much trouble. This is a very simple game for anybody who's got experience with economic management, worker placement games. So we do have another module that came in the game that we'll definitely use next time. And then there is a third module, which is actually module seven that the person who owned the game had as an expansion. So I do have modules one, two and seven to use in our game. And I suspect next time we'll definitely use one and two. Maybe we'll add seven in as well. Just because this game is not that complicated and having more stuff would make it more fun. That said, I did like it. It is. Like I said, it's really simple, straightforward, but an interesting puzzle and an interesting aspect of like reading your opponent, trying to figure out what they have, using your knowledge of what they have to shape your own choices so that you can fix the spot that they wanted to fix, or go to the market and take the paint that they needed, or just make sure that they don't take the paint you needed so that you can do the work that you need as well. There's a race element to it. So figuring out how much energy to put into making your workers happy. If you're very happy, you get an extra worker. So there's an element of like, you can do more stuff, but you don't get to do it as early. This is also true in last Will. So yeah, an interesting game. Well worth

looking at if you get a chance. I don't know that I'd run out and buy it. I know they I think Queens still sells the fresco big box and I imagine it's pretty expensive. I wouldn't probably pay a ton for this. Definitely worth getting if you find it at a thrift store. Probably worth getting if you find it used. I traded a game for it and I'm happy with what I got. So that is fresco from 2010 designers Wolfgang Penning, Marco Ruszkowski and Marcel Sülbeck. Next up is a game I got to revisit. Sort of. This is Cloud City. Cloud city is a game. Another game along with fresco that I got in my big math trade in May. Really fun to get to try out these different games. Um, Cloud city is a Phil Walker Harding design, good old Phil Walker Harding, and it seems to be or it feels a little bit like a game focused entirely on the monorail system, from the Bad News Bears expansion to Barren Park. So I was a little complicated. So let me reiterate. So this game is about building bridges between buildings. You have three different colors of buildings that you're building in a little city that is 4x4. It's a 16 square grid. Each turn, you're going to place one of your squares in the city, and you're going to put the buildings on it. Each square has, I think, two squares on it. I don't think they all have or two buildings on it. Some of them may have one, I don't think any have three. The buildings come in three colors blue, green and brown. And those colors correspond to their heights. So all the blue buildings are the same height, all the green buildings are the same height, etc.. When you place your building, you are trying to set it up so that it connects with other buildings. When it connects with other buildings. You get to add a bridge in between the two buildings, and that bridge is worth a certain number of points based on how big the bridge is. There are a limited number of each kind of bridge, so if somebody if the group uses them all, then you don't have access to ones of a particular length and each bridge has points that are set into it as well as there's end game scoring based on like the longest run of buildings of the same height. One of the tricky things or interesting things about the system, is that each building can only have two bridges attached to it, so you can never make a T junction in your bridge network. It always has to be an L or a straight line I, or you can just have like two buildings connected and have them not connected to anything else. In fact, that's kind of inevitable because the whole trick of the game is drafting the tiles and figuring out where you're going to place them so that you can maximize your points and build as many bridges as you can. But there's also elements where, like two bridges of the same height can't cross because they would run into each other. Um, so there's an element of managing the flow of the buildings through your city, which I think is really interesting and works well. I had played Cloud City several times on BGA when it first came out, which it's a fine place to play that game. It's a it's just a very light taste of a game. I mean, put next to patchwork. Patchwork is heavier than Cloud City. I think Cloud City is very much a filler game, something you'd play when you have time between a couple other games. You just want to do this little thing. Like I said, I like I really like the puzzle of figuring out how to get the buildings to talk to each other and get the most points you can from those buildings going together. I will say also one thing that I underestimated in the in exploring the game on the BGA was the idea that it would have a really neat table presence I did not anticipate. This game is just really fun to play with. It's got these big chunky buildings or big, tall, thin buildings that you get to play, and it's fun to set up your city and build little bridges between the different spaces and try to maximize your points. It's cute. I wouldn't probably urge anybody to go buy this. I mean, if you found it at a thrift store or you got it cheap, it worked for me. Like, you know, I got it in trade. That was a great price for it, but I probably wouldn't suggest you go out of your

way to buy it because it's so light. And if you're going to get a light Phil Walker Harding game, I think gingerbread house is better. I think llama land is better. I think Barron Park is much better, although Barron Park is a notch heavier for sure. All of those games are, um. Cloud city is just the lightest of light games, but it's fun and I think it's worth playing if you get a chance. So that is Cloud City from Phil Walker Harding. Um, published in, I think 2022. Oh 2020 excuse me with artist Art from Fabrice Ross and it was published in by Blue Orange, which that should tell you the depth of the game there. Blue orange publishes very light, very playable games. Check that out. Obviously I mentioned this is a dusty game. It's a game I have dusted off. Um, and I want you to know that as well. It had been four years, one month and 14 days since I played Cloud City when I got a chance to play it again. So that's Cloud City from Phil Walker Harding. The last game I want to talk about today is one I've only played online. I played it on Board Game Arena, but I played it twice, which I feel like gave me a taste. Enough of a taste of the game that I probably don't need to play it again. This is Sir Ocelot's cave. Now, sir, Ocelot's cave has the look of a game that would be a delight to encounter. The art is cool. It's this sort of Victorian styled anthropomorphic owl and a Victorian style anthropomorphic other animal. I want to say like a bear or something. I don't recall an ocelot. Probably all they think about it. And in the game you play one of these two explorers who are exploring this ice cave along with one of your assistants, and trying to find gems and other valuable stones in the ice cave. The way you play is the game is built. It's an abstract. So there's this grid of spaces with a bunch of tiles on them, and you add your helper to the board, and then you will place around the edge of the board tiles of three different types. There's lanterns, pickaxes, and a third type I'm not thinking of right now, but when you place these tiles around the board, they create lines of sight. And the idea is whenever you place a tile, you then evaluate all the lines of sight on the board and any gems in the middle of the board that can be seen by two different types of tiles, or, sorry, three different types of tiles and or two different types of tiles. And your assistant you get to collect so your opponent's assistant does not score for you and does take up a space. So essentially what you're doing is you're working. You're taking turns putting stuff out on this board, trying to score as many of these tiles as you can. Each turn, you may move your assistant, but you can never move, only ever move them further into the cave. So you don't want to do that. While there's still lots of stuff to get in the main section of the cave, the game is over when all the tiles are placed around the edge and you get points based on which gems from the middle you're able to grab. There might be a couple other nuances of the game that I'm missing, but that's the general feel. The general idea of it, and gives you most of what you would need to really understand what's going on. Sir, ocelots cave falls into this category of interesting abstract. But interesting. Abstract is not generally a kind of game that's going to grab my attention. I could point to just a few that I've thought were pretty interesting enough to play a bunch of times. I liked Cairne quite a bit. I only played that one online. We played it 3 or 4 times. Gabriel and I did. Hi Gabriel, and I liked that one. I thought that one was interesting and I would enjoy playing it more. It reminded me a lot of Onitama, which is another game that I have enjoyed in the past. I really like that time you killed me and I really like Tosh. Tosh killer is probably the best example of an abstract I find really interesting. Sir, ocelots cave, on the other hand, is the kind of game where I could play it twice and be like, okay, I kind of see what's going on here. Not really my bag. It's interesting enough, but I don't I don't think there's enough going on there for my enjoyment. And the theme is so non important that I, I'm not

even really interested in trying it. Like this literally could be one of the gimf games or whatever. So neat art. I probably wouldn't spend a lot of time on it, but if you're somebody who likes abstracts and would like to tussle with them, definitely worth looking at there. That is Sir Ocelot's cave. So that is it for me today. I have talked about three games. I have talked about one game I revisited, and I've gotten to talk to you a bit about playing games. Hopefully this has been an enjoyable conversation for you and you find yourself saying, hey, I'd like to talk with Brendan more about that. Well, there's a way you can do that. You can head over to BoardGameGeek Guild 3269, which you can find either by going to the BoardGameGeek website and typing in guilds Yields 3269. At the top. Or you can go to our show page where I have a link to the forum where you can post about games you've been playing recently, what you think of these games, how I'm right or how I'm wrong. And let me know your experience with the episode. If you'd like to get in contact with me with me directly, the easiest way is on BoardGameGeek. My username is wombat 929. There. You could also send me an email Brendan at chessgames.com, which I might see eventually. And with that, all that's left is for me to say 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.