

# Untitled - August 5, 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 afternoon listeners. It's a lovely day here in suburban Chicago. I'm doing a double length walk so I can record two episodes and get some exercise, because while I did get some exercise in the last week, I didn't get enough and I gained a little bit of weight, so I'm looking to get back on track with my eating plan. It's mostly that I wasn't eating well. That's, uh, that's the way that goes because I was at GenCon. So in the next two episodes, I am going to record my top of the stack for August twenty twenty five. It's a couple of days late. My apologies for the delay. And then I'm going to record my GenCon Round up. You won't actually hear my GenCon round up for a couple episodes though, because I'm going to. Well, I don't know, maybe I'll. I don't know if I'll sneak it in next or if I will put it at the end. I'll leave that as a surprise for you, dear listener. So this is top of the stack. August twenty fifth. August twenty twenty fifth. For those of you new to the podcast, "top of the stack" is a phrase I swiped from the podcast of Nonsensical Gamers, a now defunct audio podcast that I enjoyed for a while. I don't think it ever ran concurrently with my podcast, but I carry on the phrase in their spirit. What they did each episode is they would each designate a game or two that are at the top of the stack, and then on the next episode they would say, did you play those games? There's a metaphorical stack of games waiting to be played, and you decide what's on the top of that stack. So that's what I always start with. The top of the stack episode is not just which games have we played lately, but also what games? All sorts of stuff. It's the gameplay roundup. So let's start with some stats. For July twenty twenty five, I had eighty seven plays of fifty nine different games. That is a robust month and it does reflect the first day of GenCon. My year total five hundred and one plays of two hundred and twenty seven games, so doing really well in getting lots of games played and lots of different games played. My shelf of opportunity. I have not done well the last few months decreasing it. There's a number of factors for that. I did buy a few games on the first day of GenCon, so you'll see those. You'll hear about those in a moment. I also had a couple really good goodwill visits. I love being finding a bargain. I love finding a game that looks interesting for three dollars. That's just it's such a nice opportunity. And I had a couple really good visits in July, so my collection has expanded, but that means the shuffle opportunity is getting bigger. So my shelf of opportunity started at sixty four in July or... no start at seventy six. In at the beginning of July and it was eighty three by the end. My collection size went from six hundred and sixteen to six hundred and thirty two in July. Yikes. My most played game this month was Zoo Year's Eve. I played the five games of Zoo Year's Eve. They were all in one sitting because Zoo Year's Eve takes about five to ten minutes to play. Not surprising, this would be a game that I am able to rack up a lot of plays. We were reviewing it so we could practice talking about it. If you're not familiar, this is a light bluffing game in which you play animals trying to sneak into the Zookeepers New Year's Eve party. The gameplay experience is a lot like Love Letter and Coup. love letter in terms of very light, very quick; coup in terms of the gameplay loop is very similar. Someone makes a claim, you decide to agree or not agree. There are a few special powers that can alter the play. I also my most played online game as the Great Zimbabwe I've played. I played three plays of that in July. I'm still enjoying it. I still haven't won one yet, but it is a very complicated game. The people I'm

playing with are good at it. So there it is. All right, so top of the stack stats. I picked out four games that I wanted to play in July. My rule is if I play three of those it counts as a successful month. That means I had an unsuccessful month. My four games I wanted to play were Wondrous Creatures, Fallen Angel, Kinfire Delve: Callus' Grotto, and Dungeon Petz [Ed: spelling of 'Pets' not corrected in the rest of this transcript] Instead, I played two of them. I played Wondrous Creatures. I played kinfire delve, Callous' grotto. I did not get a chance to play Dungeon Pets. I did not get a chance to play fallen Angel. When I say chance to play, that's not quite true. I did have a chance to play Dungeon Pets. I had an opportunity. I had a moment where I could have brought it, could have played it, but instead of playing it, I brought Ark Nova and played that instead because one of the members of my game club said, I'd really like to play Ark Nova. So yielding to my desire to play Ark Nova all the time. And my friends hope to try it out. I chose that instead and didn't get Dungeon Pets played. Womp womp. So we'll see. Hopefully I can get that done soon. I got to try a bunch of new games this month. Looks like sixteen. Uh, no. Uh, yeah. Sixteen on the list here. So I'm going to buzz through those. As usual, I won't be talking about the games in much depth here. I'm just going to zip through them. Tell you what games I played. And then I will talk about them more in other contexts. Usually in a board game. Espresso. So here they are. The new games I played this month, roughly in the order that I played them. Wondrous creatures. Kinfire. Delve. Calluses. Lab. Unconscious. Mind. Skyway. Robbery. Animal upon animal. Piggy. Piggy. Monstrosity. Conquest of Pangaea. Skip-bo. Tacta. Skull. King. Umbrella. High rise. Reign of Dragoness. The game and Wordle Flex. Let's see those last four high rise reign of dragon nests. The game and flex were all all reflected my early plays at GenCon. Next up we have expansion plays. As you know, I like to track. When did I try a new expansion and what did I get out of it? This month I tried no new expansions. That's right. Bummer. Next up we have out of the dust plays a game, gets dusty when you haven't played it in a year or more. While I do really like trying new games, it's also nice to revisit games that I've played before, reassess what I think of them. And so the out of dust plays give you an opportunity to do that. So this month I played twelve dusty games, bringing my total for the year so far to fifty five. Here they are. Return to Dark Tower, which was one year eighteen days, dusty Magic Rabbit one year, four months and twenty four days. Dusty the City one year, eleven months. Dusty Nusfjord. Four years, three months and seventeen days. Dusty. I really enjoyed Nusfjord. Definitely need to bring that back to the table. More Carcassone. Three years, nine months, eight days. Dusty. Werewords. One year, three months, two days. Dusty. This one I really like. I, I like the innovations on the twenty questions mechanism. I like the game itself. This is a great one I think. Really like Werewords. Hi-Ho Cherry-O. This is a children's game. I know I've played it before. I know we never owned it for my children. That's all I remember. I don't know if I ever played it with my children or I just remember it from my childhood. So I put it's more than twelve years dusty, because if I did play it with my children, it would have been when the youngest was at most four or five. So there it is, the Kingdom's yard game. Two years, eleven months and twenty seven days since last time we played that one interesting fun fact that I don't think I knew before. Board Game Geek does not let you tally yard games. They don't track yard games. You want to play bocce ball. You want to play horseshoes. You want to play cornhole. None of that's on board, game geek. If you can't play it loosely said, on a table, they don't have it on the site. Interesting. So. But I still counted it. Actually, I just logged this other game called kingdoms to keep track of that. I don't

know, uh, but that is, um, let's see, a few acres of snow. It's been one year, four months and twenty three days since I played that. Although I've only played it on the board a couple times, it's usually that I'm playing it online, but I really like it. Ganz Schon clever. Three months, three years, eight months, and twenty six days since the last time I played that. Lost Cities. One year, three months and thirteen days and finally Zoo Year's Eve. It had been three years, eleven months and ten days since the last time I played it, and now I've got five more plays logged. So lots of good dusty games. A couple that really need to stay. Not dusty. Nusfjord in particular I think needs to get more play. We had a good time with it. I would love to keep that one in circulation more and I'm going to try to do so. I hope that you're having fun dusting off games as you're working your way through the year. I'd love to hear what you've been dusting off. If you want to share your thoughts on that category or any of the others. The way to do that is to head over to BoardGameGeek Guild three two six nine and share your thoughts with me there. All right. So to begin with, top fifty on the table. Um, the this is a two year goal that I have for myself, which is to take the top fifty list, which I updated at the beginning of this year. And before I update it next time, which is in two in a year and a half. Now I want to play every game that's on my top fifty list. Seems reasonable if I have fifty games that are my favorite game. If I'm playing eight hundred plays a year, it feels like of those sixteen hundred Hundred plays, fifty of them should be fifty of my top, my favorite games. So I made progress on that. This month I played Rez Arcana. Now for the top fifty plays. This rule I don't count online plays. I have played Res Arcana many times already this year, but this in July was the first time I played it on the table since I did my top fifty list, so I don't count virtual plays for this particular challenge. There's no good reason that I don't, except that it's more fun to challenge myself. Since we're halfway through the year, I thought I would remind you, what are the other top fifty games that I have not yet played? They are, and I'm going to go through this very quickly, so apologies. Brass, Birmingham, Arkham Horror, The Card Game, Legends of Illusion. Terraforming Mars through the ages, innovation. Glory to Rome, vampire, the eternal struggle, Star Wars rebellion, pandemic. Legacy. Everdell Brian Boru. Praga. Caput regni. Underwater cities. Agricola. Matini. Cerebra. Anachrony. Altiplano mosaic a Story of Civilization. The Lost ruins of Arnak. Twilight Imperium. Dungeon. Pets. Last Night on Earth. The Hunger Messina thirteen forty seven, Anno eighteen hundred and evacuation. So lots of fun games there, ready to be played when I take the time. Next up, we have progress on my ten for ten. Now, for most people, a ten for ten is pick ten games. Play them ten times a year. What I've done instead is made ten categories. I've done this the past few years. I find it fulfilling, particularly because I am a guy who'd rather play ten different games than the same game ten times, and so a play the same game ten times challenge just doesn't work as much in what I want to do. Now, I understand the whole point of the ten for ten challenge is to get yourself out of the idea that you play all these different games, but whatever. It's my it's my challenge. Leave me alone. So the ten for ten progress, I'm now up to sixty eight. I believe I've completed sixty eight of my one hundred challenges, so I've got just thirty two left in five months to go. So feeling pretty good about that. The progress that I made. I have rounded out the magic category. These are games that have magic in them or themed around using magic. Uh, Wondrous creatures, kin, fire, delve and return to Dark Tower all have magic stuff. And interestingly, I rack them all right at the beginning of the month. By July fourth, I was done with the magic category. We're up to ten on that. I've only done eight of the. I've done eight of the color ones. I have left to do a

game with a majority red cover box and a game with an indigo cover. Uh, I've only done two of the ten Continent challenge. I played one game that takes place in Australia and one game that takes place in Africa. Uh, but I have a ways to go there. And as a reminder, it's the five continents that are not Europe or North America. I have played seven mystery games. I'm not. This one is the one I'm making the least effort to solve. Because just by through regular gameplay with my wife and sometimes my daughter, we play the kinds of games that will solve this problem. I'm up to seven different games, five played five times each. Now, one of the other rules I've imposed for myself about the. Ten for ten challenges that I can't use a single play for more than one category. So if I play, let's say, a magical game that takes place in Asia, I can't use it for both the continents and magic. I have to pick one or the other. Now. If I play the game twice, it can fulfill two slots, but one play one accounts for one change. The difference here, the one the exception is the five times on the table category. Because of my one hundred challenges in this list, the five x on the table challenge is actually five plays to mark one spot on the list. So instead of that spot being ten, it's fifty. So in reality, I have one hundred and forty plays in order to fill all this if I'm not allowed to repeat. So I do say that a game that I've played five times on the table counts for the Fivex challenge, even if I use some of those plays for other categories in the game. That said, here are my five that I've got. Uh, I played, uh, another couple games of Android Netrunner. I played Free Radicals again, and I played New Year's Eve five times, and I played quicks a couple more times. So I'm now up to seven games that I've played five times or more on the table. No progress on the games from the shelf of opportunity. The old old shelf opportunity. Denizens on the alphabet one I have I and J left to log. I haven't played an I game or a J game yet in a way that I could log it. K through k through T is done already And in the final one where I do you through Z and games starting with one, two, three or four numbers, I logged one game that was New Year's Eve for the Z. So again, I can count the plays of Z or Z because the five x is allowed to overlap with the other. So that is my ten for ten challenge. I did get a little bit of painting done in July. I painted two of the Frosthaven figures that we were using. So now all the figures that we're currently using are painted. I still have some more frosthaven to go and I did not get back to painting yet, but it is a thing. I'd like to do some more of my shelf of opportunity. I was able to click six games off of my shelf of opportunity, but then I also have any game that I bought in July and played in July never gets added to the shelf. The way I think of it is they're not on the shelf until the end of the month. So if I play them in the month that I bought them, they got removed without even being added. That said, in the month I did play Unconscious Mind, Wondrous Creatures, Kin, fire, delve, Takhta, Vegas Dice, monstrosity, and Skulking. So all of those. I added them, removed them right away. Bing bang. I do have a shelf of opportunity for my expansion games as well. Or expansions that I purchased. And there I have Elder Sign, Skull King, the Expansion Pack, and A Touch of Evil dark Gothic colonial horror. Uh, now, if you've been listening, careful carefully to this episode, you probably said to yourself, Brendan, what the heck is a touch of evil? Dark, gothic? You never mentioned that. Well, it hasn't come up yet because I haven't talked about the collection itself. The collection itself did grow quite a bit, and I'm going to buzz through the games that I added to my collection here. You'll hear a couple that I picked up that are also now on the shelf of opportunity. They are. So I acquired Takhta Vegas. Dice drop. Trivia. Ready. Set, bet, monstrosity, zombie. Kidz, evolution. Vantage, beast, Skull King, Indiana Jones, Cryptic Endeavor, Deep Sea, Whale Riders, A Touch of Evil, Dark

Gothic, and A place for All My Books. So lots of new games have come into the collection. I'm going to try really hard in September and October and November not to acquire very many. I have a couple more that are either coming in through Kickstarters or pre-orders or whatever. Uh, and I'm sure if I find some at goodwill, I'll acquire them. But I'm not going to be buying full price games very much in the next few months. So what are we playing next month? I've picked out a couple games that I want to try to get played in August. Here they are, the mirroring of Mary King, Endeavor, Deep Sea, and then I'm leaving fallen Angel and Dungeon Pets on there because I really do want to get those played and get them moving through the collection. So that is my plan for August. I would love to hear from dear friends how your August went. What did you play? What were you hoping to play and didn't get played? What did you play that you didn't realize you were going to play? What was great? What was bad and how was your July? Head over to Board Game Geek Guild three two six nine and share those thoughts. You can send me an email, Brendan at rattlebox. Games. If you want to reach out to me, you can send me a message on BoardGameGeek. Wombat nine two nine is my username there. I would love to hear from you. Okay, have a great day. Thanks for joining me on my walk today. I hope your next walk is as pleasant as mine was. Bye bye. Brought to you by Rattlebox Games.