

## Untitled - August 8, 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 morning, listener. It's a lovely day here in suburban Chicago. I am taking a walk to get some cash heading for the ATM, which means it's a little bit longer walk than I usually take. Which might mean this episode is a little bit longer than I usually take to record it. I'm going to divide the walk in half, record two episodes on the walk. We'll see whether this ends up being longer than usual or not. I guess it depends on how much I have to say perhaps. So let's just jump right in. It's been a little bit since I've talked about directly about games I've played. That means it's time for board game. Espresso. Triple shot. Order up! In board game Espresso Triple shot I am talking about three games I've played recently for the first time. Generally a quick summary of the experience more than a strong review. Generally, I haven't reviewed the game. I haven't played the game enough to review it, but I'm happy to share my experience with it. So let's just jump right in. First off, I'm talking about wondrous creatures. This is a twenty twenty four game from CW Yeom, Sophia Kang. Artist Sophia Kang and the publisher is Bad Comet. At first glance, this looks like maybe a game that got a little too much Kickstarter love. It's very pretty. It's got, uh, big silk screen meeples that are fun. It's got a weird theme. The idea is you're in some sort of magical land and you're trying to collect magical creatures. That's a fun theme, I guess. Uh, in gameplay, this game functions similar to. It's in the neighborhood of Everdell and Ark Nova, although I would call both of those games. Actually, I would say in terms of gameplay depth, it's similar to Ark or Everdell. It's not as complex as Ark Nova, but there's a lot going on. It's. At its heart, a worker placement and tableau building game. The worker placements part starts with you have a captain and a couple crewmen or crew creatures. They're called. And these are all weird animals. The captain is a meeple that sits on top of the weird animals. And there's a fun little bit. There's like tiny magnets installed in the creature and in the captain. So when you put the captain on the creature, it snaps into place. There's not a whole lot of gameplay to the captain being on the Meeple. They could have just made one of the meeples bigger, although actually the big the the big replayability element is that the captain that you have is changeable and has a special power, so the captain you take makes a difference in your gameplay. That said, you could always just have skill cards and the captain could just be a bigger meeple and whatever skill card you have, that's what skill your captain has. But I guess there might be a shorthand if you've played this a lot, where if you remember which captain does what, then you can be reminded of who's able to do something by which captain they have on their piece. And frankly, let's not forget the physical joy of playing with a game that looks nice. And this is a little piece that looks nice. So that's fun. The game production is overall very nice. The cards are really nice, the pieces are good, the box is lovely. So as a product, Wondrous Creatures is very delightful. The gameplay. Like I said, it's in the neighborhood of Everdell and Ark Nova. The parts that remind me of Everdell. You're building out a tableau of cards that do different things. A lot of there are some cards that give you end game scoring. There's some cards that give you immediate bonuses, and there are some cards that give you ongoing benefits. Generally, these cards are sort of assigned by animal type. The premise of the game you're trying to find all these lovely animals and the animals have are in five different types, and each type generally deals with a different

kind of bonus, like there's one type of animal that tends to have most of the end game bonuses, for example. The game also rewards you for different combinations of animals that you've recruited. If you've played Ark Nova, they have these goals that are up at the top of the board, and you can use an action to go achieve one of those. The same goes in this game. You can use an action. You don't have the limitation of the action workers, but you can use an action to achieve one of the goals up at the top. There's an interesting mechanism where the game rewards there are. The game rewards you for having these different symbols, and a lot of those goals are have a certain number of these symbols. So if you have an animal with, say, the dragon icon on it, and the game wants you to have the dragon icon that counts as one dragon icon. It's also possible to pick up these eggs, and the eggs will have one of the animal species icons on them, and you put them in your little egg row face up with the icon showing. If you ever use that icon to meet one of these goals, then you flip it face down and you can still see what icon it had on it, but it is now inactive and you no longer can count it when you're counting up those icons. So these are sort of one use. But then there are things in the game that will let you reset them. So they're multi-use. Kind of. It's an interesting mix. The rhythm of the game is a number of rounds. I'm trying to remember. If it's a specific number of rounds, I think it is a specific number of rounds, more than I can't remember what somebody does to end the game. It's been a minute since I played, but in the end you add up your end game scoring and depending how you've approached the scoring, there can be a lot of end game points. So it's not super easy to tell who's winning, but kind of like Ark Nova. You can often kind of see by looking at board state who's probably ahead. All in all, Wondrous Creatures is really fun. I would say if you sit somewhere on the line of between Everdell and Ark Nova and you enjoy those things, Wondrous Creatures is definitely worth trying. I'm not sure I'd give it an instant buy if you have those two. There's a lot of overlap in gameplay. We're really enjoying the variety there, and it is different enough that I don't feel like it's just the same game again than either of those two, but, uh, fun time if you get a chance. That's wondrous creatures from bad Comet games. Next up we have what's apparently a very good solo game, although I've played it as a two player co-op. This is Kinfire Delve Callous's Lab. So Kinfire is a world being created by publisher Incredible Dream Studios and designer Kevin Wilson that involves a fantasy world where things have fallen, and there's one city that's left protected because they have the magical kinfire the people of that city are trying to expand out their domain by bringing that kinfire out into the blighted lands and discovering what's there. In Kinfire Delve you play explorers who get assigned by a mage to go check out, basically a dungeon to do a dungeon crawl. And at the bottom of that dungeon crawl is a big bad. And your goal in this co-op game is to defeat the Big bad without losing any of your players. If any of the players die. I believe the game is over. It's. I'd have to double check that. It's possible. Maybe you can die and keep going, but I think it's: If anybody dies, you lose. Kinfire Delve is released in three different flavors. Each game comes with two different characters, or for two different characters and the big boss. And so but they're all interoperable. So if you have more than one of the Kinfire Delve series, like I said, there are three of them so far. All of the characters can be used in all of the games, so there's some flexibility and variety to be had if you have more than one. I did get my son the second one or a second one for his birthday, so we do now have enough to play a four player game and or dive the four. The bigger the next dungeon. So Kinfire Delve is a game where you are defeating different baddies and trying to keep your fighters alive as

you go through round after round into the dungeon. It's relatively quick playing and it's really there's a lot of choice in a little package here. It's really interesting. I don't have a lot more to say about it, because I don't want to ruin the surprises that are in it. Suffice to say, it is a card, manager, card and hand management game. You have this deck, this hand of cards, and you can spend cards to do things and try to get more cards. The art is beautiful and the cooperative interaction is really solid. There's a lot of thinking about how you can support the other player in the moves that you make, trying to figure out which cards you have and which cards they have. You have your own cards, but really, this is a full on co-op. I think it probably could suffer from if you played with the wrong people. A quarterbacking problem, but the solution to that is don't play with people who are going to quarterback or actively do something other than they tell you. That's a good way to disrupt quarterbacking. Like, you should do that. I'm going to do this instead. Well, that's a bad choice and you shouldn't have told me what to do. It's amusing. The Callous' Lab box has this sort of green cover to it. There's also a red cover, and, I believe a purple one. So there's three different varieties you can get. When I was picking them out, I was told the Callous' lab is the most popular one. And then the next one we got, which is the sort of reddish one I got because it was supposed to be the hardest, but we haven't opened that one up yet. All in all, it's a fun little game. Easy to play, easy to learn, quick to teach, fun to get on the table, fun to work your way through if you get a chance to try. Oh, and of course, designer Kevin Wilson has nobody to sneeze at. Kevin Wilson's been in the industry a long time. He's designed a number of great games. I have Elder Sign, which is one of his, but he also has had his hands or his fingers in many pies, as they say, or his. He's designed quite a few interesting games, so that is Kinfire Delve, another twenty twenty four game. I had a chance to revisit Nusfjord recently. Nusfjord is a twenty seventeen design from Uwe [YOU-ee] Rosenberg or Uwe [OOO-vay] Rosenberg, with art by Patrik Soeder. Although had you told me it was Vincent Dutrait, I never would have doubted you for a second. So I'm not sure if that's because I'm bad at identifying art or because they told Patrick Soeder hey, make this kind of look like Vincent Dutrait worked on it. Or because it's an Uwe Rosenberg Game produced by Lookout games. In which case, yeah, it's going to look like my brain is going to think it's Vincent Dutrait. However we got there, Nusfjord is a game about fishing. You are running a fishing company in a small Norwegian village. It has many of the things that make Rosenberg worker placement games interesting. It's got limited and competitive worker placement slots. It's got variability through decks of cards. This is. This is the game that most feels like you've returning to the Agricola formula and asking himself, how can you make the game work better? But then it's got this really interesting feeding mechanism. So the way the game works, you have a fishing company and you're going fishing. And so you harvest these fish, and every round there are these elders in town. And one of the actions you can take is to feed the elders. And the cost to feed the elders expands by one for each person. So the not quite one, but so the first elder on the list only costs one fish to feed, and I think the second one costs two, and then two, and then three, and then three and then four, then five, and so on. So you end up spending if you want to feed one of those higher level later elders, you're going to spend more fish. But of course the game rewards you for spending fish to feed the elders. Now here's the part that's interesting. The elders represent knowledge that's stored in the town and is available to help you figure things out, to do things in your town. The way that plays out in the game, when you want to use an elder, you have to spend one of the fish off the

fed elders board. So these little plates and when somebody feeds the elders, you put a fish on the plate. If you want to use the knowledge of one of the elders, you have to take a fish off the plate. You always put the fish on from lowest to highest, and you take the fish off from highest to lowest. So if somebody fed the four fish elder, then when you go to use an elder, you take a fish off that. So it gets progressively easier to feed them, the more people use them and why we use them. Well, the elders are like the special cards from various OOB games. They are the places where the weird and interesting powers happen, and you can either use them in their place on the board, or you can recruit them, and then they will help you from your town or from your board, and no one else can use them. Now I am, I may be misremembering that a little, but I think that's how it works. There are also buildings that you can build, and the buildings also give you additional worker spots that allow you to do various things that involve building buildings, processing fish, making points in various ways. The last interesting or unusual thing in this board is the shares. In the game you have five, I think, shares of your company at the beginning of the game, two of them are active and then as the game goes along, you can activate more of them at the end of the game. For each inactive share you still have, you lose a point, so you do want to activate them all. And when you activate them, you then can either keep them or you can put them up for public sale. When you put them up for public sale, you get a burst of money. But of course, when the people buy them, you now owe them fish. So there's an interesting, interesting mechanism where you are trying to get other people's shares because that helps get you more fish, which helps you do other things in the game. The fish are kind of the engine in this game only has two resources fish and money. Now there's also would fish money and would uh, as opposed to something like um, Le Havre, which has a whole bunch of resources and results in a wide variety of different kinds of good manipulations. Like Agricola, Nusfjord is about finding a path through the various choices available in this game and figuring out how to maximize what you get out of them. It works really well. It's pretty interesting. It's a lot of fun and playing it makes me want to play it more. Now. I have not bought any of the expansion decks yet and I may have missed my opportunity. I suppose if I find myself really playing Nusfjord a lot and being like, ah, I need them all. They do have the Nusfjord big box now, which as far as I can tell is just the regular Nusfjord game, plus all the expansion decks. And there are, I think six of them. Now. The game comes with three decks and there are now six expansion decks as well. So the Nusfjord big box gives you nine, which is more than enough unless you're just a nusfjord head and you're playing it all the time. So, uh, according to Chris over on Shuffle Buddies podcast, Nusfjord is also very good solo. I haven't tried it solo yet, but I'm looking forward to doing so. That is Nusfjord from Uwe Rosenberg dusted off and enjoyed. Finally, the last game that I want to talk about here in this board game espresso episode is animal upon animal. This is a two thousand and five release from designer Klaus Miltenberger with artists Michael Bayer, Daniel Dobner, Klaus Miltenberger, who's the designer. It was published by Haba in two thousand and five. I think I said that Animal Upon animal is a classic stacking game. It is for little children. It comes in the classic harbor bright yellow box. If you get a chance to play it, it's well worth it, especially if you have a little one in your life and you'd like to try it with them. The way animal upon animal works, you have. Each person gets a set of animals, and your goal is to get rid of all your animals. The way that you play your animals is you roll a die and the die tells you which animal to play, or maybe it tells you where to play it. Now that I think about it, the big thing is that there

is a way that you could get it so you can play on the end of the boat instead of the middle. So the beginning of the game, there's a boat, and your goal is to stack up all the animals on the boat, sort of Noah's Ark themed, and you have a bunch of different animals. And the trick is all the animals are weirdly shaped, so stacking the animals on the boat is difficult because they all stick up in goofy ways. And so there's a dexterity element. If you roll a certain thing on the die, then instead of putting the animal on the boat itself, you get to put an animal next to the boat. You put it on either end and push it so it's touching the boat and then, or an animal that's already on the ground touching the boat. And that, of course, expands where you can put things. If after you go to put your animal down, things fall over or fall down, or if you knock them down, then you have to take those animals back, I believe, and that means your game is going to go longer because you aren't, uh, because you have all these animals to put on. It's a very simple game, but interesting in its variety. The animal shapes all have different looks to them, and playing them in different spaces can be challenging to get them to play correctly. All in all, animal upon animal is a pretty simple stacking game, good for children, but interesting enough that adults can have fun with it. So definitely worth checking out if you get a chance, especially if you have a little one in your life. Well, that is three games and one dusted off covered for you here today on pickup and deliver. Which leads me to the end of my conversation. So I'm curious, what do you think of these games? Have you played wondrous creatures? Have you played animal upon animal? Have you played Nusfjord? Have you played Kinfire Delve? Let me know what you think of these games by heading over to BoardGameGeek Guild three two, six nine and posting in the Guild forum there. We'd like to have conversations about what we've been playing. If you have direct message for me, you can send me a message on boardgamegeek wombat929 Is my username there or my email address is [brendan@rattleboxgames.com](mailto:brendan@rattleboxgames.com) Any of those places? I'd be happy to hear from you. Well, that's about it for me today. Thanks for joining me on my walk. I hope that your next walk is as pleasant as mine was. Bye bye. Brought to you by Rattlebox Games.