

Pick Up & Deliver 790: Top of the Stack, November 2025

November 6, 2025

Welcome to Pickup and Deliver, the podcast where I pick up my audio recorder as I step off the train and deliver an episode to you while I walk home. I'm Brendan Riley.

Greetings, listeners. It's a lovely day here in suburban Chicago. I am walking home on November third, and I'm happy to record an episode of Pickup and Deliver for you to enjoy. This week I am or this is the beginning of month eleven out of twelve, in December 2025, so I have a fair amount of work to do to make my yearly goals. I'll be reporting on that today and we'll see how it goes.

So start with Shelf of Opportunity. At the beginning of the month, my shelf of opportunity was seventy six games. By the end of the month, I had reduced it by a stunning one down to seventy five. So not making much progress in the shelving, the shelf of opportunity, which is the goal of the year. I wonder if I were to also include into the shelf of opportunity all of the new games I acquired. It's like every new game I acquire goes into the shelf. And then so I set that as my total. So I started with seventy five, but I've acquired a certain number that goes onto the shelf. And then I look at what is the total. No, that's not how it works because the whole point is to how many games do I have left to play that I haven't played yet? So right now I'm at seventy five.

Collection size reduced. I started the year at six hundred and nineteen. I'm down to six hundred ten, so I have been whittling away at the collection.

This month my most played game was The Gang at three plays in real life and Res Arcana online. At two asynchronous plays.

The top of the stack went well for the first time in a couple months. I got three of the four games played, which is what I consider a success. I played Beast, the Mirroring of Mary King and the Hunger. I did not play Panic Station; did not achieve that goal, but I did achieve the goal of getting these other games played. So that brings me up to twenty two out of thirty games, potentially for the year. So I've missed eight out of the thirty. That's not terrible. Not great, but not terrible.

I did manage to play a whole bunch of new games this month. I started with Tinderbox. I played Cthulhu Realms, Beast, Klondike, Boxtop Pinball: Haunted House, Cat Fluxx, the Mirroring of Mary King, Madame Ching, Cthulhu Wars, and Glasgow. That brings me up to one hundred and sixteen "new to me" games tried this year. Almost all of those were games I did not own. There are a couple that I got to take off the shelf of opportunity, but for the most part I got to try them. If I were going to put them all in order of how much I liked them, I think Cthulhu Wars goes at the top, followed by Beast and Madame King in close proximity and the Mirroring of Mary King slightly after that. I didn't have any games that I absolutely hated this month, but lots of fine ones. As far as I can tell. I did not try any expansions. I think if I were to look closely, I maybe played a new Terraforming Mars map that I haven't played before on Board Game Arena, but I'm always a little wobbly about whether I should count a new expansion on board game Arena as a game. I've tried because I generally have to play a game several times. Uh, on Board Game Arena before I will count it as a new game I've played, just because I don't feel like I get the same experience with it.

I'm making good progress dusting off games. I, as you remember, a "dusty game" is one that I have not played for a year or more. The idea is that sat on the shelf and got dusty. I really enjoy dusting off games. It's a nice way to keep my hobby fresh without constantly have to entirely relearn a game. Generally, if I've played the game before, it's a much simpler process to relearn it, unless it's one of the really complicated ones. So I did dust off seven games: That's Not a Hat was one year, three months and seven days dusty. Last Night on Earth was one year, nine months and two days dusty. Usually I play that when I have my zombie class, but I haven't gotten to teach that. I didn't get to teach that last January. So it's been like, you know, an extra year since I played last night on Earth. Schotten Totten was one year, four months and fourteen days dusty. Played a couple games of that on board game arena. That was a hoot. Jenga was ten years, more than ten years, dusty. And I say that because I certainly have played Jenga before. I don't know when I last played it. I have no memory of when I last played it before my recent play, but I had never logged a game of Jenga, which

means that barring just some wackiness where I didn't log the game, I haven't logged it since twenty sixteen or so when I started logging games, so it's at least ten years I played horrified. It'd been two years, two months, and one day since I played that game. Now that game feels less dusty to me, because I do use it in my literature and gaming class to talk about how we tell stories about scary things, but we do use it. But I don't play it usually, so I haven't played it in a while.

The other big, very dusty game was Fortune and Glory. It was nine years, three months and twenty days. Dusty. I really liked it this time. I think last time we played I thought it was okay, but it was a little slow. This time it felt just right. We played with four instead of six. I think that made a difference and we all were experienced Fantasy or Flying Frog Productions gamers, so I think we kept it moving at a pretty good clip. This was a really good time and I hope to play it again sometime soon. Perhaps with the same group of people or a similar group. That's Fortune and Glory from Flying Frog. Delight. I also got to play The Thing: the board game. That's two years, four months and fifteen days dusty. This is distinct from the thing incident at outpost thirty one. Both of these are games themed around the movie. The thing there is and I haven't played it. Another game called Who Goes There, which is themed around the John Campbell story upon which the movie The Thing From Outer Space was filmed was based, and the movie The Thing from Outer Space was the inspiration or source material for the thing. So that brings me up to eighty games dusted off this year.

So far, I did not mark any games as notable plays that weren't in some other category, so no notable plays this time. I did.

Two of the games I've mentioned so far were games that were on are on my top fifty. That's last night on Earth, the zombie game number thirty nine, and The Hunger number forty one. Both of these are games that I've now checked off my top fifty list. I've now played twenty five out of the fifty games on my top fifty list. My goal, of course, is to play all fifty before I do my next top fifty list, which is going to be at the end of twenty twenty six. So getting to twenty five at this point is great, but that means it's the games that were easier to get to the table. The, you know, the harder games, it's harder to get to the table because they're longer, they're more complicated or whatever. And so generally, I need to get more than twenty five in the first year if I want to accomplish that goal.

My ten for ten progress, I'm making good progress. I got three more plays this month, bringing me up to eighty. As a reminder, my ten for ten is not an authentic ten for ten. I didn't pick ten games to play ten times. Instead, I picked ten categories and want to play ten games in each of those categories. So the three games I added the thing. The board game is my second Antarctica game, so I've now completed two games from Antarctica. Uh, that leaves uh, four games left to play related to continents. I think it's one Africa, one Oceania and two South America. Uh, I played Mysterium, which I think of as a mystery game. You're solving a murder. So that brings me up to eight mystery games out of the ten this year. Of the categories I have left to finish, that one feels like it's the easiest to do because my wife and I enjoy playing mystery games, the two of us. So some evenings when we have time or energy, we can play a mystery game and solve that. And then finally letters A through J. I had not played a J game yet and I mentioned I played Jenga. So now that is ten J games that I've played. I've completed or ten A through J letter games. I've completed that category as well. So that leaves exactly twenty games out of my ten for ten left to play.

This is a complicated set of games. It's going to be difficult to complete. There's a variety of different things to do. The most difficult will be playing six games. I have six games left to play that were on my shelf of opportunity before 2021. That's going to be a rough go, but I'm excited to try it.

I did not get any painting done in October, so my goal to paint all the cerebria minis and then paint the unlocked Frosthaven minis and then paint the rest of my Hellboy just it still stands and just keep it there as a reminder.

So my shelf of opportunity did not change much. I got rid of I took four games off my shelf. One of them I took off by selling the game Call to Adventure. I had, uh, but I have since sold along so I don't have that one. I played Glasgow, I played beast, and I played the mirroring of Mary King. Um, so that is four games removed from my shelf of opportunity. I added three, I acquired awkward guests two ethnos, second edition and Deception Murder in Hong Kong. So those three games need playing and they have now been added to my shelf of opportunity. I'm hoping to get ethnos played sometime this month. Uh, it looks exciting and should be fun on my expansion shelf. I have two games that I added there and one I removed. I sold my copy of canvas.

I like it very much, but I don't play it very often and I also sold with it the reflections expansion. So that's gone. And I hadn't played it yet, so gone without playing it. I do feel a little bad about that, but, you know, choices are made.

I did acquire, however micro Macro, crime city full House and micro macro Crime City all in. So it's fun to have those available. I really like micro macro Crime City. I may just play those on my own. We'll see whether other family members want to play them with me or not. My collection size I told you it's down ten. It was a roller coaster ride this month, so I acquired awkward. Guest two Ethnos and Deception Murder in Hong Kong, bringing me up to six hundred and twenty two games in my collection. And then although I told you micro, macro, Crime city all in and micro macro, Crime City, full House are expansions, I think of them as expansions and I handle them in my opportunity list as expansions. They are, in fact standalone games as far as Board Game Geek is concerned. So they do add two more to my collection total, bringing me up to six hundred and twenty four.

Hold on Brendan, you say I thought you said six ten was your total collection size. Right you are. The Fair game Downers Grove branch had a board game sale and I took fourteen games over to the sale. Those were aquatica. Animals of Baker Street, call to adventure. Canvas, Cloud City, Everdell, Far Shore, fiction, Hadrian's Wall, Harry Potter, Hogwarts Cup, Isle of Cats, explorer, Andhra Royals, Savernake Forest, Three Sisters and Ticket to Ride New York. Getting rid of those fourteen games brings my collection size down to six ten.

Now, I tend to think of six hundred as a nice round number that seems like a huge but not outrageous collection. When I'm over six hundred, I feel like I may be exceeding reasonableness. So getting rid of ten more to bring me down to six hundred and then trying to maintain it six hundred would be nice. I don't know if I'll manage it, because the next round of opportunity to get rid of stuff easily doesn't happen until the spring. On the other hand, I do have a bunch of games that I put in the Chicago math trade, which happened in November that did not go, so I may try to unload those with a quick sale and thus pull my collection size down below six hundred.

Well, the last thing to talk about is what I'm going to play next month. As I was looking forward to next month, I was really thinking about the collection size, the games that I've had since, who knows when, and so on. So I picked Nocturne, which is a new game I acquired in November, but I got it before I did this list. So I'm like, oh yeah, I'll put that on there. Uh, and Ethnos: 2nd edition, which I mentioned picking up last month. And then the two shelf clearing games I have are Infamy and Great Western Trail Infamy is a Travis Chance game from 2017, I think, and Great Western Trail is a game I've played a number of times, but I've only played once or twice on the board and never since I got my copy. I've got a copy as a gift and I do like that game. I feel like I haven't cracked it myself, but if I were to play it on the table, I bet it would. So Great Western Trail is on my list for this month and that is everything I played in October so far. It's been a very good year.

From a gameplay perspective, I am feeling a little nervous about finishing my ten for ten with twenty games to go. It does feel like it's a real challenge to do that, but my wife has said, you know, if I ask her to play a weird game, she'll say, okay, she might, you know, she'll be willing to do that a little bit. Um, and then, uh, my buddy Paul said, when his quarter is over, he and I can have a game day and I'll bring a bunch of weird old games and we can knock them off the list. So maybe that will be my opportunity to finally play the cattlemen, uh, and learn just how dumb it is. Um, or, you know, there's a number of other games I have on there. I have five points, which I believe is about the five points gangs. That might be interesting to try. I've got a number of other games sort of in that realm.

Well, I'm keen to hear what you've been playing, dear listener. Uh, we have games over on. We have a gameplay discussion over on Board Game Geek in Guild 3269, and I'd love to hear your thoughts, your reports.

There's also the question of what do I do about the season? Because at the pace I'm at now, I'm going to hit episode eight hundred in very early December. Uh, maybe, maybe even November. It's not uncommon for me to do twelve, ten, ten episodes in a month or twelve episodes in a month. And this is, I believe, episode seven hundred and ninety. So it really begs the question, do I am I going, what am I going to do about it? Really begs the question, what am I going to do about getting ready for December? Am I going to go over go past episode eight hundred? Do I just go past eight hundred and call the next season episode eight hundred and

five or eight, ten or whatever? That's one option. Do I start releasing longer episodes like I record two walks and put them in one episode so that I can keep the numbers Normal or the numbers in line with what I want. Or do I end the season early?

The other option is I could consider the season ended. Start the next season with episode eight hundred. But then, you know, do a couple episodes of the season and then take a break. But I do like to take a break between mid December and early January because I'm traveling and, you know, it's Christmas time. It's hard to get it recorded and published in any kind of reasonable way. So I'd love to hear, maybe as you're going over and talking about top of the stack for November, what do you think I should do about the end of the season? So the choices are just keep on rolling. Start the new season at episode eight hundred. Record a few and then go on hiatus. Do I stop early like I just when I hit episode eight hundred, I stop and I'll I'll take my hiatus early and longer. Do I release longer episodes but maintain the the numbers. So like either I just I record two episodes and release them as one and there are forty minutes or like thirty minutes and I do it that way. Or do I go past eight hundred but still call this season seven? And then like episode eight, six or whatever will be the beginning of season eight or season nine. I mean, this is season eight right now. So these are the options. Those are the four, the four options for how I might resolve this question.

I'd love to hear your thoughts on that. You can share those thoughts over on BoardGameGeek in Guild three two six nine. And I hope you will. You will do so. Thanks for joining me on my walk today. I hope that your next walk is as pleasant as mine was.

Bye bye.

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