

# Pick Up & Deliver 825: Gnome Hollow; Horrified: Greek Monsters; Awkward Guests 2; Seasons (revisited)

## Transcript

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.

[opening music]

Greetings, listeners. It's a lovely, cool day here in suburban Chicago. This is probably the last episode I'm recording in April, so enjoy it while you can. Uh, the next episode, I guess will be released on May first. So that's going to have to be a board game espresso episode, I guess. That'll be fun. Well, I am interested in talking to you a little bit about games today. How does that sound? Sounds good, I thought so. Well, it's been a couple episodes since I talked about games I've played recently, so it's time for another Board Game Espresso Triple Shot.

[coffee shop noises] Order up!

That's right, A Board Game Espresso Triple Shot is where I prepare a tasty flight of board game beverages for you. Caffeinated with a little bit of Brendan sass. I don't know. I don't know what that means. Essentially, I pick out three games I've played for the first time recently and I tell you about them. I also usually talk about one game that I've dusted off and talk about that, or a new expansion. I've tried something else. So let's jump into it.

The first game I want to talk about is **Gnome Hollow**. Gnome hollow was released in 2024 to much adulation and praise or much fanfare at GenCon, and it did get a lot of buzz at GenCon. I saw a lot of people playing it and buying it. They had the op game op. The op games had a huge gnome hollow spread. They really put their all into this game and I don't think it went over that well. I mean, I guess I saw a few people mention it, But I don't think it's become an evergreen evergreen. I haven't heard people talk about it, and frankly, it's fine. Uh, gnome hollow was designed by Armin Andersen with art from Ammann Andersen and Patrick Spaz Spaziante in Gnome Hollow.

You play a pair of gnomes trying to make a business out of being gnomes. I guess you are planting flowers and harvesting mushrooms that grow on those flower paths. You are selling those mushrooms for treasure and you are growing flowers. So those three things are kind of what you're doing in the game. The way the game actually plays is that you are placing tiles. It's got a board or it's got a market where you're getting tiles from. There are maybe, uh, eight tiles on display that you can get from the market. On your turn, you're going to take and place two of them. It's also possible to get extra tiles in a couple different ways, and if you have an extra tile or two, you can't have more than two. Then you may also place that. So you could, on some terms, place up to four tiles. After you've placed your tiles, if you completed any rings, they make these sort of paths of flowers. Then you get to collect mushrooms from those rings. If one of your gnomes is on the mushroom or on the path, and then you get to move, one of you must move one of your gnomes to one of the action areas on the board and do the action that's there.

The actions are collecting mushrooms, like if there's a path that got completed that no one was on, the mushrooms are just sitting there waiting. If you can sell mushrooms and there's a little market where you sell a certain number of matching mushrooms, and you get points based on how many you sell at once, each value of mushroom can only be sold once. So if you sell four blue mushrooms, you put a little tile on there and you can't sell four blue. No one else can sell for blue mushrooms. You can sell three or five, etc. there are these bonuses you get when you complete a ring. The bigger the ring is, the better the bonus you get. And there are these flower pots that you get with some of the ring completions and in a couple other ways. When you get a flower pot, you add it to your collection. At the end of the game, you score points for the number of rings you completed, the number of flower, different flower pots you collected, and the amount of treasure you got from selling mushrooms.

Like I said, it's fine, but it's very samey. Every time you play it, it's going to be the exact same game. There's not a lot of depth and while there is competition, there's not much competition. So I don't know. It's cute. It's

the sort of game that would be fun to play a couple times a year, but I don't think it would be the kind of game that would reward excessive repeat play. I don't know. It's fine. It'll probably stay in our collection for a while because my wife really likes gnomes. It's kind of one of the things we have around our house. And so from that perspective, it's a good fit. But honestly, it's just fine. I would definitely try before you buy, or you could just play it a couple times and probably don't need to buy it at all. That's Gnome Hollow.

Next up, we have **Horrified: Greek Monsters**. This is came out in 2023 from designers Peter Lee and Michael Mulvihill with art from George Duke, and Victor Mehrestan, Tom Moore, and Anne Sophie Stewart, published by Ravensburger. Horrified is a series of games about their cooperative games in the pandemic style, meaning there is ongoing problems and there's crises that are breaking out, and you have to keep the problems at bay while also solving the big issue. The original horrified you are fighting the universal monsters. It's full of theme and engaging gameplay. They have since released, I think, three other horrified games. There's Horrified: American Monsters, which is like American Cryptids, and then there's horrified Greek monsters, and then there's I think they did one more might be kaiju or something. Um, but I think or horrified World of Monsters. And that one has a system by which you can take any of the monsters from any of the horrified games and mix them all together.

Horrified is one of those series where I think if you have one of them, that's probably enough. Unless you're super, super into it. Just pick the one where the theme interests you the most. I can't say I probably would have picked this up, except it was available in a trade. And I do like to try different cooperative games. So I thought giving horrified Greek monsters a try would be fun. And it is. We played a round of it. Uh, what did we fight? We fought the the basilisk. We fought the basilisk, and I can't remember who the other monster we fought was, but there's a bunch of them. There's six different monsters you could fight. Oh, Cerberus was the other. We fought the Basilisk and Cerberus, and it was the traditional Greek basilisk with, like, a chicken head rather than the basically giant snake that we see in the Harry Potter movie.

It was fun. I had a good time sort of exploring the edges of the map, figuring out what the different player characters can do, trying to figure out how to manage the game while we also fought the monster. It was pretty easy. I mean, we were two experienced cooperative game players and we were playing against just two monsters. I would have done three, but the other player I was with hadn't played any horrified before and wanted to just do two. So it was fine. I'll keep it around for a while and give it a couple more plays. At least try each monster once. I do have Horrified (Universal Monsters) as well, but that's at school because I use it in my board game literature class. It's fine. Once again, I think if you pick the one that has the theme you want, you'll probably be happy. And if you get a chance to try this, it's a good time. If you like a sort of entry rate co-op game, this one will do you fine. Beautiful art, good production. I like the board. It looks really cool. Good minis for a commercial level game. All in all, it's good. That is horrified Greek monsters.

Next up, I dusted off a game. Sort of. This was **Seasons** from 2012. This is another one I got in the board game trade. This is three games I got in the board game trade. The seasons is a game I've heard about a lot. I've played a few times, but I didn't really understand it. As is often the case for a game I play online, I read the rules. They didn't really click more and more. I think I got to play a game in person to really have it click before I can really get it online. Like I'm only starting to get Azure now. And Gabriel and I have played a dozen games of it or more and I, I still am not. It's still very hard to make it click for me.

Seasons was the same way. I played a bunch of games of it back in twenty nineteen. People invited me to it and I had a good time with it, but I, I had trouble kind of conceiving of, of the broad strokes of how it worked. I played it once on the table and I got it right away. It's also been six years, so maybe I've grown as a gamer. The closest thing I could point to is Res Arcana. Seasons is a game of building terrific engines that will churn lots of points for you, and you do that with a very limited set of cards. In the game, you're going to draft nine cards and divide them into three groups. You get the first group in your hand to begin the game, and you set the other two groups aside.

Once the game has gone through one year's worth of turns, which is going to be anywhere from like at the minimum it's going to be five turns, I think. Four turns? Yeah. The minimum it's going to be four turns. It could be up to like nine depending. It just depends how the game rolls. Then you'll have passed the first year and you get the next three cards in the hand. Same thing again at the end or after the second year, you get three more cards at the end of the game. If you have any cards left in hand, you lose five points for each card in hand. There are also a number of ways to draw cards, which you're going to want to do, because if you're

playing it all efficiently, you're going to get the cards in your hand played. And that's what happens now. We were playing with the easiest set. The game comes with some recommended starter decks for people who haven't played before, and so we played with those. We had a good time, and I could definitely see where this game would grow. As a game you could play. It feels like Res Arcana or some of those games where you come to learn what the game can do, and it can be really, really good.

Here's the challenge that I think about this game. I don't know how I'm going to get good at it because my guess is anyone I'm going to play with on on board game arena who's played this, has played it many, many, many times. So I really liked playing it. I'm going to hold on to it. If nothing else, because it's very hard to get a hold of. It also takes place in the world of Lords of Xidit, which is another game I really like. And so having two games that are kind of in the same world is kind of fun. Uh, it's got big chunky dice and cool cards. I think there's a lot of game to explore here. I may have missed the boat on my opportunity to do so, though. So that'd be a bummer if that's true.

Oh, a little cardinal just popped out in front of me. Flew up into the tree. Very cute.

The way the game plays. You roll these dice and then you draft the dice. And the dice give you resources. You spend the resources to put the cards into play, and then the cards give you more stuff. There are some of the cards that give you things every time you do stuff. And so if you can get some of those, it can be really powerful as you truck along earning points. I can see why you would want to draft cards in this game because some of the cards are just really powerful, I think. And I bet it's a lot more fun. If you once you've played a few times, then you can introduce the advanced cards. There's. The game comes with two copies each of thirty sort of starter normal cards. And then there's like another twenty advanced cards. So I bet the advanced cards get pretty interesting and a little wild. So that is seasons from twenty twelve. Designer Régis Bonnessée, who also did some of the art along with Xavier Gueniffey Durin, Stéphane Gantiez and published by the same company that published Lords of Xidit, Libellud.

Finally, I got an opportunity to play **Awkward Guests 2: The Berwick Cases** from 2023. So Awkward Guests if you've never played, it is one of my favorite, if not my favorite, deduction game. It is a ramp up of clue, in which you are one of six detectives in a house where someone has been murdered. There are six suspects as well, and your goal is to figure out which of the suspects killed the person who was murdered. To do that, you have to figure out what room the suspect was in, because the path from the room they were in to the spot where the murder was, you have to be able to show that they could get access to the murder weapon. Uh, yeah. So who who did it, what weapon they used, and why? And you do this through a series of asking questions of other players and exchanging information you get from these cards. That's the original awkward guests. It's pretty fun. I like it anytime someone's going to say, hey, let's play Clue, I would say let's play awkward guests instead. It's a little bit longer, but a much better game.

Awkward Guests 2 is from the same company. It has the same art style. It's sort of pink instead of beige, and it is a two player game. One of the villainous suspects in awkward guests is a pair of women called the Berwick Sisters. So Awkward guests two is about the Berwick sisters in awkward. Guests two. It's called the Berwick Cases because what you're trying to do is find out who murdered the Berwick sisters. The way the game works is that each Berwick sister has been murdered and you are investigating. You are the murderer. You are the person who figured out the arranged the murder in one of them, and you are trying to solve the murder in the other, the Berwick. The Berwick. Uh. Awkward. Guest two the Berwick cases was designed by Ron Gonzalo García and Paz Navarro Moreno, with art from Samuel Gonzalo García and Laura Medina Solera, and published by Megacorp Games.

So the way the game works is, uh. On one side of your player sheet is the Bernice Berwick's mansion and the on the other side of the player sheet is Beatrice Berwick's mansion. And on one. So on one side of this, it's always a two player game. One player has the murder on their sheet and the other player is asking them questions. And then you flip the sheets over and you switch roles. And the goal is after each person has that a round of questions, then you both have the opportunity to try to solve. If you solve your murder correctly, you win. Uh, unless the other person solves it in the same round. And then there's a couple tiebreakers. If you make three guesses and are incorrect three times, the other player wins. Uh, it's an interesting game. There's you roll dice to determine what kind of clues you can get, which can be really frustrating, but they do have a mitigation option where so it's Yahtzee style. Roll three dice. If you don't like the results you got, you can give up one of the dice to adjust one of the other dice to whatever result you wanted. So you can work your way

toward the results you want, but then you don't get as much information. But sometimes you need to do that. I don't think this one was as fun as regular awkward guests. I think regular awkward guests is a better game, but this is pretty interesting and I'm looking forward to playing it again, maybe a few more times. So it does fulfill that role, and I think it's better at two player than awkward guests would be.

Well, that's about it for me today. I want to say thanks for joining me on my walk. I hope your next walk is as pleasant as mine was. Bye bye.

[closing music]

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