

Pick Up & Deliver 859:

Fit to Print; Destinies; Hex Effects; TTR Europe (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.

[Intro music]

Well, greetings listeners. It's the second half of my stroll around my neighborhood on the hottest day of September, likely. I just finished the Top of the Stack episode, and I'm bringing another one straight to you from the hot sidewalks of suburban Chicago. I was looking through the record of the podcast, and it turns out it's been three episodes since last time I reflected on some games I tried recently. That means it's time for a Board Game Espresso Triple Shot.

[coffee noises]. Order up!

Board Game Espresso Triple Shot is an episode in which I talk about three games I tried for the first time recently and one game I dusted off. Welcome. As a reminder, these are not full reviews. These are light first impression conversations.

So to start with I got a chance to try **Fit to Print**. I've played this game almost enough that it shouldn't count as a board game. Espresso first. First impressions. I've played it four times now, which is maybe too many. Usually I say once or twice, but I'm gonna jump in anyway. So Fit to Print is a game for one to six players. It takes fifteen to thirty minutes. Designed by Peter McPherson, whose name you might recognize from Tiny Towns, a game I really enjoyed but ultimately got rid of because no one in my family did. Ian O'Toole is the artist and the publisher is flatout games now. When Flat out games puts out a game, you should always take a look because invariably there are at least decent. There are some games I've played from flat out that I think are fine, or even not great, or not to my taste, but they're all well designed. They're all thoughtful. They're all interesting.

Fit to Print is a real time tile placement game in which you are trying to lay out a newspaper. You play the editor of a small town newspaper, and what you're trying to do is gather up stuff for the day's paper, lay it out, print it, and do so while being the fastest or faster than your opponents, getting the most newsworthy newspaper you can and avoiding going bankrupt. There's a lot to do.

The drafting style, the real time drafting style works very much like **Galaxy Trucker**. If you haven't played that in the game, you have a bunch of all the tiles for the newspapers face down in the middle of the table. When we say go, you're allowed to use one hand to pick up and look at the tiles that are in the table, and you can decide, do you want to keep that tile or do you want to return it? If you keep it, you have to put it on this little card, uh, cardboard desk that you have. It's a little desk. It's a 3D cardboard thing. If you don't want to keep the paper, you put it back face up. So now other people have a better sense of what it is. When you put it on your desk, it has to stay on your desk. The game refers to things on your desk or not. In fact, it has rules about if stuff doesn't land on your desk. So I think that you have to actually pile it on your desk. It can't fall off.

But anyway, so you are putting things on your desk in real time. When you think and you have a grid to lay the paper out on when you think you've gathered enough stuff, then you shout layout. And when you say layout, you now are no longer allowed to collect more tiles from the middle. So there's a game of sort of chicken where you are estimating how many tiles you've taken how much room on the page you're going to. Those tiles are going to take up. And whether or not you've got enough. Once you say layout, then you can start putting the tiles into the middle and.

There are four types of tiles. There's the centerpiece, which is like a big picture, which has a scoring condition. There are articles of three types. There's red, green and blue or pink, green and blue articles, and each article has a smiley face or a sad face indicating whether it's a positive article or a negative one. And then there's photographs and advertisements. The articles just get you points. The photographs get points for what kinds of articles they're next to. The advertisements get you money, and your centerpiece gets you points if you

meet the condition. The trick is, you can almost put. You can't put anything next to similar things. So articles can go to next to other articles, but not of the same color. Advertisements can't go next to other ads. Photos can't go next to other photos.

So there's a problem, a thing where you're trying at speed to arrange your article, your articles as you're arranging them in your map. You have a limited amount of space. You're allowed to do that when you think you have it the way you want it. You then say print and you grab the turn order marker, which gives you a first priority in choosing the next centerpiece, which can be a big deal. Then everybody scores their paper. You lose one point for every tile you took but didn't use. Although you get to keep that tile and use it in the next round. Then everyone returns all the stuff they took. Oh, you also have to try to keep a balance of positive and negative articles. If you have more of one than the other, you lose a point for everything different. So if you have an even number, it's zero. If you have like five negative and no positive ones, it's negative five points. It's a pretty significant gap. So the effect of the game is you have just all these different things to keep in mind while you're drafting tiles at speed.

The game recommends a three minute timer for a hectic game, a four minute timer for a normal one, and a five minute timer for a leisurely game. We've been playing with four minute timers, and it's generally high enough pressure, but not outrageous, so it's been working pretty well. Then you come to the next day of the game, you get a slightly bigger grid to work on, and then the next day of the grid, you get the biggest grid to work on. After three days of the game, the person who has the most points wins. Oh, but also remember I said advertisements get you money. The person who has the fewest advertisement dollars loses the game. So even if you have the most points, you lose. And I've seen that happen twice in the four times I've played where the person had the most points, didn't have the most, didn't had the least dollars, and they lost. So pretty interesting.

All in all, I think Fit to Print is pretty fun. I think it is more accessible than Galaxy Trucker and easier to teach. I think Galaxy Trucker is a better game if you like real time tile laying, and you've got the cognitive capacity and wherewithal to play Galaxy Trucker, I think that game is more fun, but Fit to Print is really good for what it is. It only takes like a half an hour to play, even with the teach, so it's very accessible.

It's cute anthropomorphic animals. It's like they're writing newspapers in **Everdell**, like they live in Everdell and they're publishing newspapers. So very cute. All in all, Fit to Print is well worth trying if you get a chance and maybe worth buying. If this sounds interesting to you, I'm definitely hanging on to it for a while. And as much as I say Galaxy Trucker is a better game, I can't. Literally can't remember the last time I played Galaxy Trucker versus Fit to Print. I've played four times last month, so I guess put that in your pipe and smoke it. Anyway, that's Fit to Print from Peter McPherson and flat out games.

Next up, we have **Destinies**. This is a twenty twenty one game characters explore in medieval fantasy land as they race to fulfill their destiny. You can play one to three players. It takes ninety to one hundred and fifty minutes. I think our play was just under two hours. There's two designers, Michael Gulab Golubovsky and Phillip Malinowski. I'm sure I pronounce those names wrong. They are Polish, I believe. Artist Karolina Jedrzejczak, methyl Katarzyna Kobro Suska and Maddalena Gawronska. I apologize for the pronunciation. The publisher is Lucky Duck Games.

Destinies is a adventure game where you are in a sort of semi-open world. You are one of several characters. I think there are three player characters in the base game. I think this is one of those games where when they published it, there was a bunch of add on material that you could buy in crowdfunding. And so some people have a game that is robust with tons of player characters and all sorts of stuff, and other people have a game that has three player characters and four adventures, which is what we have. It's fun for what it is. The miniatures are shockingly tiny, which works because they have to go on the cards, but they also would be very, very hard to paint, so just keep that in mind in the game.

You play one of three different adventurers going through a scenario, trying to figure out how to fulfill your destiny. You draw a Destiny card, which tells you what you're trying to do. It gives you some goals, and then it's an open world exploration game. You. There are cards on the table that have different points of interest, sort of like Arkham Horror, Mansions of Madness. You go to the point of interest. There's an app that you interact with that tells you it gives you a little bit of a story and some choices.

I'm trying to remember if there's some dice rolling. I don't think there's dice rolling, if I recall, maybe there is dice rolling. But if you have objects that helps dramatically in terms of solving the problems. And what you're trying to do is collect different items, which will then contribute to you fulfilling your destiny. Now there's an interesting there's an interesting design choice where many of the players destinies overlap in what items they can have. Like let's say you need items with one of two different icons on it, and each item has two different icons. One of the icons on this item will be yours, and one of the icons will match another player's, so you both could use that item. But there are enough items that if someone else grabs that item you wanted, there's still enough for you to fulfill your destiny. It's just going to go slower.

The game is a race. You're trying to fulfill your destiny before the other players do, which is the least satisfying part of it. I think the game would be more fun if everybody were to do that. A storytelling game where you're racing to finish just I it feels like you're at cross purposes racing, racing to finish telling your story before someone else gets to tell theirs. It's not super satisfying to me. That said, I did have fun with this. I thought it was a cute game. It was an interesting story with twists and turns and unexpected little events.

It reminded me in terms of the writing, the style of events that reminded me a little of **Time Stories**. Like you would see this thing. You don't really know what you're going to get from going to it. You can have an idea, but sometimes when you act, it's something when you interact with something wildly different than what you thought it would be.

Overall, this was pretty interesting. I liked the art. I liked the miniature design. Despite the fact that they were very small. I had a good time playing this. I will say the other two people I played with, it both kind of said like, I don't need to play that again. Um, or at least one of them said, no, I don't want to play that again. The other said, yeah, maybe. So I'm not sure if I'll finish this one on my own or if I will not finish it at all. It depends that there's a lot to do, a lot of games to play. And this game certainly isn't like in my top fifty or anything, but I thought it was fun. If you get a chance to play it, I definitely recommend giving it a try.

And uh, yeah, that is. Destiny's just the base game. That is the commercially available base game. So I don't know. I don't know how it compares. If you buy all the if you have all the whiz bang add ons, I assume there are many. And that's from Lucky Duck Games and designers Michael Golob Golebiewski and Philip Malinowski.

Well, I got a chance to dust off an old favorite. This is **Ticket to Ride Europe**, the 2005 game from Alan Moon with art from Cyrille Tajuddin and Julian Delgado published, of course, by Days of Wonder. This is a two to five player game that says thirty to sixty minutes on the box. I think that's about right, although probably a little bit longer if you're playing a large player account game like we were. Ticket to Ride Europe is the second in the Ticket to ride series after **Ticket to Ride** base game, which takes place in North America.

Ticket to Ride Europe adds some a little complexity and a little easing of challenge. The complexity part. There are mountain passes where you have to spend extra cards or potentially spend extra cards because you are digging tunnels. That's an interesting quirk. And there are ferries where you have to spend locomotive cards to cover part of the route because part of the route has a ferry. Those are really interesting. And then in addition, they have a tension reliever, which are the stations. Each player gets three stations. The stations are worth one or two points at the end of the game if you don't use them. But more importantly, you can use them to give yourself one free pass along a line of tracks. So the main pressure in Ticket to Ride is when someone else takes the line that you needed, and now you have to go all the way around. Or sometimes you literally just can't get to where you need to go. The stations alleviate that problem.

The way the stations work, you have to connect your train line to one of the satellite locations near the where you want to go. So let's say you want to go to Cairo or that's not Cairo. Let's say you want to go to Paris. You could connect to Geneva, Switzerland. Let's say Geneva and Paris have a connection. But the line from Geneva to Paris is connected. You could put your station on either Geneva or Paris as your turn. And then when you do that at the end of the game, when you're counting your route, you can use that train line in between the where you put the station and one other city that's connected to you can only do that once with each station, and only one station can be in each city. So there is some limiting factor to it, but it really alleviates a lot of the brutal, uh, crush of not enough lines.

I will say the ticket to ride Europe maps a little tighter as well, though. So Alan Moon giveth and taketh away. It had been a long time since I played this. Six years and change. I don't know how it went so long, but mostly

just that. Like my mom knows base ticket to ride and she tends to be the one who says, hey, let's play ticket to ride. Or like I've been playing **Ticket to Ride legends of the West** lately, for example. Right? There's a bunch of different things that come up instead of Ticket to Ride Europe. But boy, I think this is great. In fact, I definitely like it better than base Ticket to Ride. That's Ticket to Ride Europe from Alan Moon.

The last game I talked about today is the 2025 game called **Hex Effects**. It says you must treat four hexes. But their remedies make you vulnerable to more hexes. This is a game for two to eight players. It plays in ten to thirty minutes. That is aggressive. The designers are Ben Bronstein, Jade Shane and Cat tech with art from Ben Bronstein. Design published by Pillbox Games.

First off, this is a beautiful looking game. It's from the same publishers as Side Effects, which is a similar game and similarly beautiful. Hex effects has like a gold foil box. It's got really cool line art. It's got great sort of snake oil, advertisement style advertisements featuring plague doctor characters or characters in Plague Doctor masks, experiencing all sorts of weird ladies that are or maladies that are caused by these hexes. So the hex is a spell that's been cast upon you, and you need to get rid of that hex. The trick is, whenever once you have applied a cure, that cure now now makes you vulnerable to more hexes. So someone could give you another hex. If you are. If you have played a certain cure and the goal of the game, I believe I thought I remember, I didn't think it was cure for hexes. I hexes. I thought it was cure all your hexes. But I think you start with four and then you can get rid of some of them. You can cure them. You can get more.

It is a pretty simple take that card game, very reminiscent in style to something like **Unstable Unicorns** or **Doomlings**, games where you have like a stable of cards in front of you, and then you have cards you can play on other people. I think it's not quite as refined as the one about mantis shrimp [Ed note – **Mantis**], which I think is the best of these, although it's almost more of a push your luck game. So I don't know if it is fitting.

I thought this was fine. It's not it's not as good as Unstable Unicorns either, in part because of the variety. Like in Unstable Unicorns. There are literally dozens of different unicorns in the deck. And so part of the delight of playing, at least if you don't play too often, is pulling out a unicorn that you haven't seen before and being amused by its art and amused by what it does in hex effects. There are, I think, eight different hexes and eight different cures, and once you've seen the eight different hexes and eight different cures, it's all the same. It is extremely. Take that game with an extremely light rule set like we taught it. We learned the game from the rulebook in about five minutes.

We started playing and after one or two rounds around the table, everybody understood it enough that we could play while we had a conversation about other things, which is my guess, the goal for a game like this. But for me, when I play a game, I don't want it to be the side the side distraction while we chat. I want it to be the thing I'm focused on. So from that perspective, I did not find hex effects worth the time. I think it's a beautiful game and as a work of art it's really interesting. I probably would play it again if somebody was sitting down and said, hey, this is what we're playing. I'm like, yeah, okay. I mean, it's fine, but it isn't actively good. And I want a game to be actively good, enjoyable, fun rather than fine, which is what I thought it was. I thought it was fine. So that's hex effects from designers Ben Bronstein, Jade Shames. It's S-H-A-M-E-S and cat tech.

So what games have you been playing, dear listener? What are some new games you've tried out? What are some games you've dusted off? I would love to hear from you. The best way to share that info with me and with the other listeners of the Pickup and Delivery Guild, is to head to boardgamegeek.com/guild/3269/ and share your thoughts there. You could also reach out to me directly at brendan@rattleboxgames.com, or you could send me a message on BoardGameGeek. Wombat929 is my username there. Honestly, the boardgamegeek will be more efficient. I see that more often than my Rattlebox games email, although I do check that occasionally. You could also join me for an asynchronous game; I like to play on both Board game arena and yukata dot de, so head over to either of those and send me an invite. Either just reach out and make a friend request or send me an invite. I'll play a game with you. Sure, if I haven't played it before, I'll be bad at it. And if I have played it before, I still might be bad at it. It's a part of my nature.

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

[exit music]

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