Pick Up & Deliver 865:
Emptying the Dust Bin – June – August 2026
Transcript

Welcome to Pick Up 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.

[intro music]

Greetings, listeners. It's a roasty, toasty day here in suburban Chicago. It's mid September, but it feels like late August. It's very warm. Uh, no, that's not true. It's not as warm as it was in late August, but it is warmer than I would like. Nonetheless, I'm walking home and I'm talking to you about board games.

I told you a couple months ago I was going to be a little bit more deliberate in my approaching the games from my dustbin list, the dusty games, the list of dusty games that I try to talk about while I am doing my board game espresso. I often miss a few. And then after some months I have a big pile up that I haven't talked about yet And so I was thinking, I have a few to talk about now and I thought I would group them into categories and give you a broad sense of what I've been playing that was dusty and how I dusted it off. So that's what I'm going to do today.

So these games are all games that I dusted off in June, July or August of 2026 and that I haven't talked about yet on the board game espresso episodes.

So to start with, I had three games that I dusted off because I played them as part of their games in my top fifty. These are games I hadn't played in a while, but I wanted to play them and they're games I really like, so there's not a lot to say about why they're great because they're in my top fifty, but I will share the experiences anyway.

The first is **Trickerion**. I got a chance to play this in June and this game always is a winner for me. It's really tense. There's a lot going on. It takes a lot to think about. And when we played it, we played it with all the expansions thrown in there. Actually, not all of them. All of them? Yes, all of them. And it was a really it's really a good reminder of just how complicated this game is. I really like the Dahlgaard's Academy, which gives you extra bonuses for teaching other people to do some of your spells. We had special powers, we had different spells, but this is definitely a game where success over time depends at some level on a long standing set of abilities, which I don't think I generally have. I'm not nearly as good at this game as a lot of people are, and it shows in my scores. I did make it to the red zone. The board has yellow, orange and red scores, so it's not a good game if you don't make it to the red zone. But still, the red zone starts at like sixty five or seventy points and goes up to two hundred. And I don't I don't remember if I cracked one hundred or not, but it wasn't a ton.

What makes this game really interesting is how incredibly tight it is, but also how much skill allows you to expand what you're scoring and how well you do that. There are just so many different ways to tweak the nuances of what's happening that let you amplify your score, let you build things that are going to pay off with each other. There is a path you have to take to develop your spells. That is something I think the game itself doesn't tell you very much about, but it's a delight nonetheless. That's Trickerion.

The next of my top fifty games that I dusted off was **Glory to Rome**. This is a game I have played since last time I made my top fifty list, but the game's dusty. If you go for more than a year and it had been more than a year, Glory to Rome is an excellent game that I think really would benefit from consistent play with the same people. So really, my smart move, my smart play, would be to play some more rounds of Glory to Rome with the people I know, in particular the people that I have played with or that I tried, that I played with at the Toggle Game Club. I should try to play with them again.

What is it that I liked about Glory to Rome this time? I really like the follow mechanism, which is part of the game and the dynamic of trying to get yourself an edge that gets out of control, which you can then leverage into points in some way. But kind of like Dominion, it also has this element where if somebody just kind of quietly is getting points, the sort of boring way I guess would be putting scoring things in your vault, then they at the end, it just turns out they have a lot of points. This happens in **Mottainai** too a little bit that there are

flashy ways to win, and then there are kind of boring ways to win. But either way, it's difficult. So Glory to Rome. I really do like it.

The copy that I have, I printed myself and there are some mismatched card backs which I need to fix. I need to reprint some cards so that the setup is correct. That is glory to Rome.

Next up we have **Carcassonne**. Carcassonne is a game I play very rarely, but I really like. It's a pretty simple tile laying game with a relatively complex scoring scheme, and an interesting element of how vicious you want to be to the other players. Really, if you're going to play well, you have to be pretty opportunistic, which kind of goes against the feel of the game. I think the game feels like you want to make a nice, coherent countryside, and what you actually want to do is make a countryside full of traps and complications that make it hard for your opponents to score points.

This is very much a game where you're preventing other people from scoring points as much as you're scoring points yourself, because half the time you're drawing tiles that you just can't score with. So what you need to do is place them in a way that makes it hard for other people to score. I think I won because people weren't doing that. That's Carcassonne.

Orleans. I haven't played in a little while. And then I played it online, which I think Orleans is a great turn by turn. Online game works really well, although the challenge of it for me is that you, it's really easy to lose track of how well people are doing because in the online space you don't see them taking their turns. So seeing somebody take their turn and watch them move their little cube up on the thing makes it easier to keep track of how other people are doing. Even if you acknowledge that, you can always look at how they're doing, the board is always displayed in a way that you can look. But in my experience, it's harder to keep track of. That's carcass, that's Orleans.

So those are four games that were in my top fifty that I dusted off that yeah, they're all still great. I don't think any of them. Well, I'm sorry. That's three games that are in my top fifty and one I just think is really good. Carcassonne I think is really good. It's not in my top fifty so that one does not fit that category.

I got a chance to play a couple other classics that I hadn't played in a while, so I dusted those off. I played a game of **Root**. Now root isn't my favorite, but I had a good time with it. We played four players. I was the Marquis de chat. We were just playing base game root. We didn't have all the expansions and stuff. It was a good time. I was one turn away from winning when someone else turned, when someone else won, and another person in between, the person who won and the next and me would have won also. So there were three of us set up for winning turns, and I just was the third in line. So no win for me.

I got to play **Splendor**, which that's one of those games where it's always a good time because I don't play it that often. I think if I played it a lot, it would get stale because it is so pure in what it is. It's just an engine building game tied to a scoring matrix. So very much like **Dominion** is about building your card deck and then running it and get points. Splendor is about building your engine and then getting points.

The game we played of it took a little longer than usual. I think none of us had the killer's instinct that I've seen when I've played this game with people who know what they're doing. So that actually made it more fun, but it made it take longer. So splendor is great, but it's one of those games. I think it's great if I play it once a year.

I also had a chance to play **High Society**. This is a game I'm not good at. This is one of those ones where I can really recognize why it is well known and popular, why it stays in print, or they keep bringing it back in print, but I don't. I'm not driven to own a copy, and I don't really need to play it that often. If somebody says, hey, we're playing high society, you want to play, I will play. But ultimately, I think there are limits to what I like about action games or action games. And high society falls on the outside of what I like about action games.

I'm not sure why though, because it does have the kind of end condition that I find really appealing, which you'll remember in high society. The person who wins is the person who has the most points, except the person who has the least amount of money left at the end cannot win. So first you figure out who has the least money and they're out. Then of the remaining players, the person who has the most points wins. So that's an interesting dynamic. It's also the bidding is also really interesting because everybody's got you have these solid bidding cards instead of just money.

So you can't always bid in increments. It makes it really pretty interesting. All right. You have to bid in increments. You can't just bid one dollar because you only have one one dollar card. So after you've used your one dollar card, then you can never just bid one dollar again. So it works pretty well.

And then I have a bunch of games that I played again and a lot of them I enjoy. But these are games that I don't play very often. I wouldn't put them in my top fifty. They're just sort of generally games I've played. Uh, antiquity quest is sort of like gin rummy, but gussied up, which is sort of the modus operandi of most of the Grandpa Becks games. A lot of Grandpa Becks games start with a classic game of some sort, and they gussy it up a little bit. They add some good art, they put a few rules twists in that usually make it delightful. But, uh, yeah, so like **Skull King** is just, uh, Egyptian rat screw. I'm not sure. **Reign of Dragoness** is a ladder climbing game. Not sure which card game that emulates, but antiquity.

Antiquity quest is basically gin rummy or rummy. Anyway, I'm not sure I. I'm not sure what the difference is. I think gin rummy. You know, in gin you have all of the cards in hand and you just lay it down when you get it. Gin rummy. I think you're playing the cards to the table. Which is what? Antiquity Quest. How Antiquity Quest works. I also got a chance to play a few classic card games, like we played cribbage and we played gin rummy.

Uh, we also played **skull**, which I haven't played skull in a while, but that's a nice little bluffing game. I like the nuances of it. It's a pure bluffing game, and I think more accessible than something like **Perudo**, although I like Perudo because there's a little more going on, which I guess is closer to **cockroach poker**, which I don't like is, I don't know, I don't know how I decide which, which, uh, bluffing games I like and don't like. Skull is pretty good. It's really simple. And there's an interesting element of like, “I have to take this bid because if you take it and you make it, you win. Whereas if I take it and miss it, I don't lose.” So there's because you can either win the game or lose the game and be out. And there's, you're kind of climbing up both scales. Uh, you win the game by. Making your bid twice. You lose the game in or out by losing your bid four times. So there's an interesting back and forth where you can be on the way to winning and on the way to losing at the same time. I like that it's effective.

And then I had two more games that I got to try again that I thought were pretty entertaining. Uh, one of them is **chicken**. This is a dice rolling game in the neighborhood of something like **zombie dice**. Very simple. Push your luck dice game where you're rolling, and then you decide whether to roll again or not. The. There's a variety of different dice, and if you have the expansion, which is called the eggspansion, you have more types of dice. And basically you're just, you're rolling dice and deciding whether to push or stop, and you score points if you stop, and if you push, you get to roll more dice and then maybe score points. But of course you could bust and then you score nothing. It's pretty simple. It's more fun than zombie dice or **Cthulhu dice**, but it's a little more complex as well. So that's chicken worth looking at if you get a chance.

And then I did get a chance to play **Bunny bunny Moose Moose**. This is a this is a singular game unlike almost anything else I've played. It is a game of pattern matching where you are trying to. There are cards on the table that show different kinds of bunnies and mooses, and the bunnies and Mooses have different kinds of ears and or antlers, antlers, and the ears and antlers are in different arrangements. They're either tall or short or sort of bent down or sticking up. The combination of those things is what you're trying to emulate. The whole thing is, is a speed game, and you're trying to emulate it by holding your arms up and making like antlers or ears or that sort of thing. It's a silly, funny game that I do like to play occasionally. It’s a Vlaada Chvaatil game from back before he was just going to sleep on piles of code names, money. He was designing other games so well. That brings me to the end of my emptying the dustbin.

I have now talked about all the games that I dusted off in June, July, and August that I hadn't yet talked about. So from now on, we'll be caught up. I want to say thanks for joining me on my walk today. I hope that your next walk is as pleasant as mine wasless. Bye bye.

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