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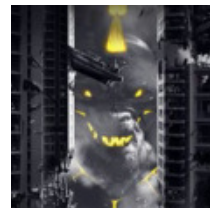
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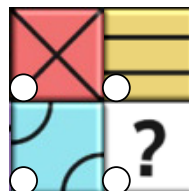
22



50



29



58



60



- 6 Cover Story: *Kids' Chronicles: The Quest for the Moon Stones*
- 8 Outside the Box: Where Board Gaming Meets Creative Media
- 16 COVID & Conventions: The Return of UK Games Expo 2021
- 22 Keeping it Casual: Light Alternatives to Popular Games
- 29 Free Game! *Sack Stackers*
- 34 Rolling With the Punches: *King of Tokyo Dark Edition* Overview & Strategy Tips
- 42 Breaking the Mold: How Breaking Games Does Things Differently
- 50 Game Reviews
- 58 Major Fun Award: *Flapjack Flipout*
- 60 Your Turn! A Spotlight on the Gaming Community



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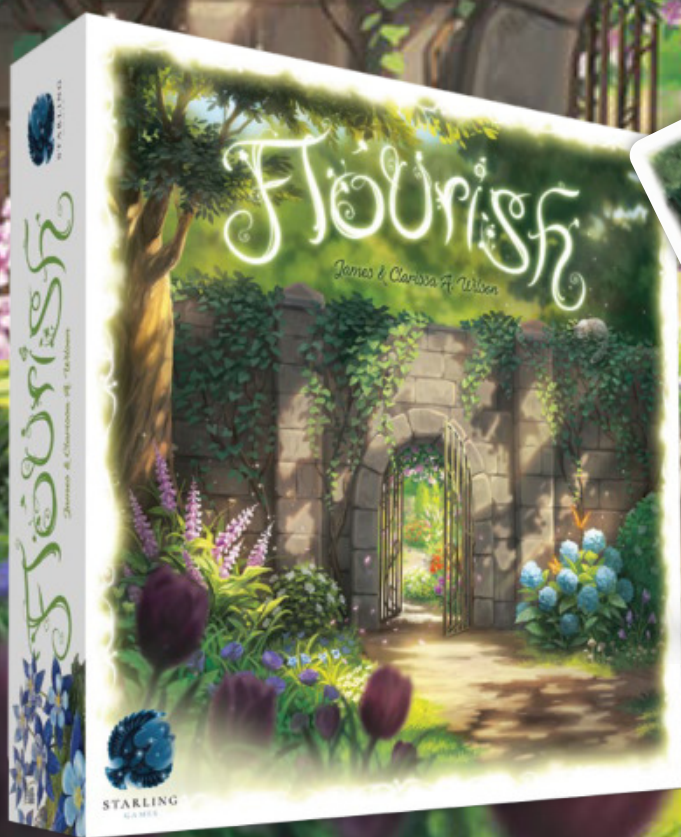
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LooneyLabs.com



The promise of *Kids Chronicles* is simple: to experience fairy tale stories together in the form of a beautiful and engaging tabletop game for the entire family. *Kids Chronicles* will let kids, big and small (ages 7 and up), discover fairy tales where you will make choices about how the story unravels and learn how to solve mysteries.

Kids Chronicles: Quest for the Moon Stones is a cooperative family game of adventure, mystery, and investigation. It is also a “hybrid” game, as it includes a sophisticated digital app.

As magicians’ apprentices, players dive into the fairy tale lands of the Kingdom of Summer and the Winter Empire. Accompanied by the faithful familiar, Nills The Moon Cat, they embark on a quest to find four magical Moon Stones. To achieve their goal, young magicians will have to solve mysteries and help the inhabitants of both kingdoms overcome their problems.

In each of the five stories, players are presented with a mystery to solve. They start in one of the locations presented on beautifully illustrated maps of two kingdoms. Each location visited presents a stunning 3D scene on a tablet or phone. One player will describe to other players what characters and items they can see there.





Kids collect the matching character and item cards from the deck and then start their journey! Using the Scan & Play technology, components such as locations, characters, and items can be scanned and—depending on the story selected—activated to trigger different clues and stories.

So if players spotted a fairy, magic wand, and a red hood on a 3D scene, they would search for this character card and two presented items. They would scan the fairy card to start a conversation with them. The app presents narrative and dialogues so players can ask the fairy about the items found, objects, and characters.

Everyone gets to experience the story together by making choices about which locations to visit, who to talk with, and what to do. All of that is enhanced by the beautiful 3D scenes and dynamic events.

When players manage to solve the mystery, they will trigger the conclusion of the story. They are asked a few questions and give their answers by scanning characters and items. The app presents the solution of the story and players can dive into the next story of the game.

The first game from the line, *Quest for the Moon Stones* comes with one tutorial and five unique stories. Each game session lasts around 30 to 45 minutes.



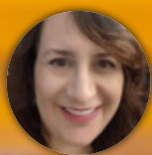
The game is based on the same system as the critically acclaimed hit *Chronicles of Crime* that won numerous awards as best story-driven and most innovative game. Now, with *Kids Chronicles*, Lucky Duck Games invites everyone to dive into this immersive game system with their families and enjoy amazing stories together! 🎲



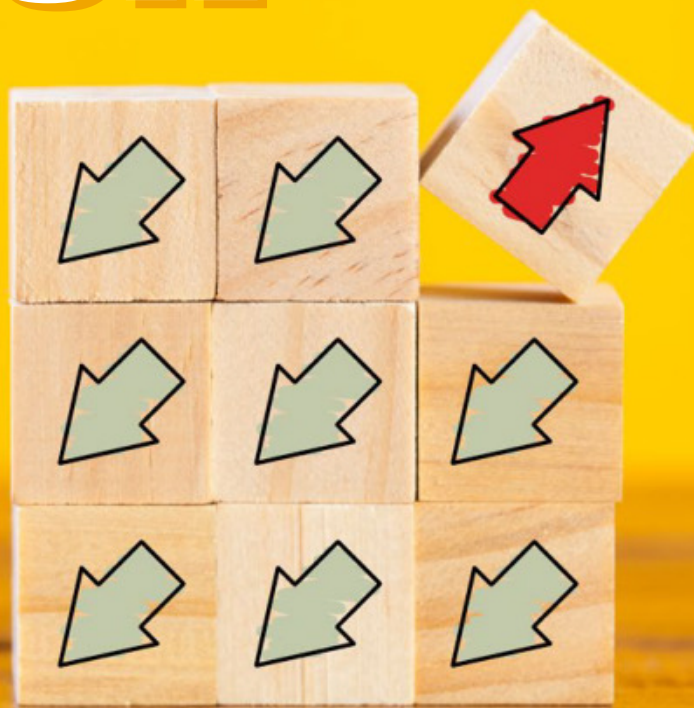


OUTSIDE THE BOX

Where Board Gaming Meets Creative Media



AnnaMaria Jackson-Phelps
Game Designer



As our hobby expands, so too does the number of people creating media around gaming. Whether it is a blog, podcast, or video, the content creator helps bridge the gap between the publisher and an audience, introducing new products and celebrating older ones. Over the last few years, new content creators have been flexing their creativity, bringing their passions and talents from other areas of the art world into the tabletop gaming space. Here are but a few of the wonderful content creators who are bringing their passions and talents from other hobbies and pursuits into board game content creation. From baking to comedy, these artful creatives are changing the face of game media.



Saturday Game Night Live

The hysterical sketch comedy videos from **Things Get Dicey** receive thousands of posts and shares through tabletop social media spaces. Creator Paula Deming started the channel to combine her love of acting and games, as well as to increase visibility for women in tabletop gaming. “I realized one day that I wanted to see more women in the content we were watching and that I could marry my own interests (games and acting/filmmaking) to be one of those more visible women,” describes Deming. “I knew that women played games (our gaming group is about 50 percent women/femme), they just weren’t present in a lot of the content about games. I thought, ‘Why not make the thing I want to see? Maybe other people want to see it as well.’”

Creating media for games is second nature for Paula. “It truly feels very natural to me. Board games are, in and of themselves, forms of entertainment. It isn’t that much of a stretch then, in my opinion, to make entertainment about them. Comedians are just nerds. And we are used to getting completely nerdy about the things we love by cracking jokes about them. So it was incredibly natural to nerd out over games and crack jokes about them in videos. Something funny or strange or odd happens every game night, in my experience. I just take those seeds and use them to extrapolate out a heightened joke that hopefully tells some truth about the hobby and helps others who love the hobby feel more of a sense of community.”



She also feels like new forms of media are encouraging more and more people to join the hobby. “I think creative approaches to creating media means you’re going to appeal to a broader range of people, and that can only help the industry. The more people loving and playing games, the more the industry will thrive. Variety gives more opportunities for different sets of people to find things they like or that speak to them, and therefore open a door into gaming that might have previously felt closed to them.”

Hip-Hop Hooray

Designer Omari Akil of the Tik Tok channel **Akilaverse** brought his artistic roots and hip hop to tabletop. “I specifically set out to make board game rap videos because hip hop is easy to use as a gimmick, and while that can be fun too, I think we deserve more than just that. I wanted to show off the versatility of hip hop in the tabletop game space and help people see new possibilities in the content we can produce.”

His poetic, lyrical media is part of what he sees as the evolution of content. “I think I took a different approach for my content,” Akil explains, “because that’s eventually the direction every community and industry goes. There are so many different stories to tell and so many ways to tell them, and that’s where industry growth happens. Board game content shouldn’t be limited to





its humble beginnings, and I'm just thrilled to be a part of its expansion." He was drawn to create content as an extension of his design work. "It's really something that just felt natural when I found myself deeply ingrained in the tabletop community. All the wonderful people and games are exactly what gets my creative juices flowing, so when I can make the time outside of game design and publishing, I take those opportunities to make content that feels exciting to me."



The Kitchen Table

For Daniel Wynter of **Board Game Feast**, creating his inventive bakes was an opportunity that came up to replace social gatherings. "I actually started to combine cooking and board games with no interest in content creation. I just wanted to cook for my friends on game days and have fun celebrating the rich themes they present," Wynter begins. "As lockdown hit, I redirected that energy to focus on presentation and tried sharing my creations online, developing many new friendships in the process. I'm still zeroing in on the right format for my content and figuring out what demand there is for this niche within a niche. But in the meantime, I just love sharing the joy that games and food bring."

He believes that game content doesn't have to be purely informative or review-centric. "I've never been particularly good at verbalizing why I do or don't like a particular game, and I love that there's a growing consensus that board game coverage doesn't need to involve an explicit review in order to be worthwhile."

There are so many ways of celebrating the joy of gaming and bringing people together in the process, doubly so when sharing their joy of pie or dumplings. I hope to inspire people to try something new, whether at the gaming table or in the kitchen. To have the confidence to experiment with a different technique or flavor. To bring their friends together and share a meal and a game."

BoardGameFeast.com

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Name That Tune

Board Game Blitz's Ambie Valdes has been creating song parodies for years now on her **Ambierona** YouTube channel — from Disney themes like "Let it Grow" (about a game collection) to pop favorites like "Filler" (a parody of Michael Jackson's hit song, "Thriller"). How did this all begin? "I loved making song parodies for fun in high school and college," begins Valdes. "I've dabbled in a bunch of various instruments throughout my childhood, as well, and taught myself guitar in high school. I didn't know much about audio or video editing, so I learned that all by doing it for my board game content."

While her songs are wildly entertaining, she also finds they help folks discover something new about games. "I make my song parodies purely for fun and entertainment. I also like highlighting my favorite games in many of my parodies, so a bonus is that people can discover those games. I've actually gotten a few comments from people where they learned some rules from some of my parodies!" Valdes is also starting to branch out with her musical talents. "With my original songs, I'm doing how-to-play videos in song form, which are also mostly for entertainment, but also hopefully informative about specific games. But mostly I want to brighten up someone's day when they watch/listen to one of my songs."

As the industry has grown, Ambie has noticed what so many of her fellow content creators have identified. "In the past couple of years, I've noticed the industry growing and a lot more creative media showing up, and I love it all! For me, creative media is more fun to

watch since I don't necessarily have to be interested in a specific game to enjoy it. It also helps remind people of the fun of board games. And for other people who aren't necessarily interested in board games at all, they can still enjoy creative media and that might spur an interest in board games."





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Getting Stop-Motional

Luna from **Aspie Gamer Girl** initially dove into game media to interact with people. “There has been a lot of development from when I started Aspie Gamer Girl (a year ago) and now. In the beginning, [it] started as a Spanish channel where I shared 5-minute tutorials,” explains Luna. “In the process, I realized bilingual content could be a better approach, so I intended to do different content as 1-minute unboxings and reviews. The problem was that even if it was a completely different game, the process was the same...everything became too monotonous for me, plus it was taking a lot of my time, but I still wanted to do a version of Aspie Gamer Girl.”

She discovered that her crafting background was a better way to communicate her love of games, particularly through her inventive, sculptural stop-motion pieces. “Words and communication have always been a struggle for me. Since I was a child I found that crafting was the best way to express myself, my beliefs, my needs, my likes, and my dislikes, and a way to show others how I felt. So I decided to focus more on photography and experiment with stop-motion. I think this is a better match for me. I am doing it at my pace, every new game or story is completely different,

and it becomes experimental and more engaging. It is okay if it takes me weeks to produce content because I am doing it for my joy.”

Whether it's created as a more interesting way to convey information or purely for entertainment, as game media continues to expand into more creative forms it helps us welcome new faces to our game tables and spaces. And that's a win for everyone. 🎮



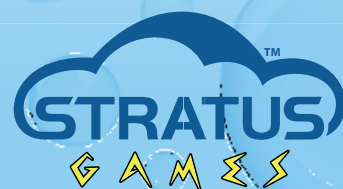


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COVID & Conventions:

The Return of UK Games Expo 2021



Gerald Brook

Co-host of Back of the Shelf Podcast



Now in its 15th year, the UK Games Expo (UKGE) has firmly established itself as the largest tabletop games show in the United Kingdom and third largest in the world. In typical years, UKGE provides a veritable smorgasbord of entertainment to please the most discerning of board gamers.

In 2020, the pandemic forced the show to move online from its usual home in Birmingham's National Exhibition Centre (NEC). Even though the virtual convention saw significant success, the team behind the UKGE was determined to move back to a physical show as soon as possible. The decision was made to revise the date of the convention to later in the Summer, hoping that the ever-changing guidance and constraints would roll in their favour. On the 30th of July 2021, UKGE reopened its doors to the public.

Sniffer Dogs and Wristbands

Whether by text, email, app, or paper, visitors to this year's expo were required to prove that they were COVID free as well as undertake the usual security checks synonymous with larger public events. Those that successfully passed the inspections were adorned with a blue wristband. While security services were

doing their best to verify the evidence being presented, it did seem that efficiency of entry was encouraged over comprehensiveness. Nevertheless, having gained my blue wristband and the endorsement of a spaniel, I readjusted my face mask (another prerequisite) and made my way into the convention.



Constrictions at the Con

In usual years, UKGE is a sprawling behemoth demanding the real estate provided by the three main halls and a sizeable portion of the adjacent Hilton Hotel. Due to social distancing measures, this year's gathering would be a smaller affair with only two halls for the convention proper and a couple of the smaller suites to host the seminars.

Ambling into the main hall, a space more akin to an aircraft hangar, I was immediately struck by an atmosphere I had never previously experienced during my forays into conventions: unnerving calm.

Instead of the anticipated hustle and bustle of visitors vying to be the first to see, hear, or play something,

many attendees were markedly taking their time. Maybe this was because the expo was the first public event several of us would be attending in well over a year. Perhaps the sense of tranquillity was a result of the implemented social distancing measures. At one point, while navigating an aisle, I was able to comfortably pass by two advancing Daleks with space to spare!

This unexpected sense of serenity did have its drawbacks. There was a perceptible lack of buzz, a feeling possibly exacerbated by the larger tournaments not being present this year. Nevertheless, with unforeseen calmness, I navigated my way around the life-sized *Catan* sheep and undertook my examination of the hall.

Making Room

Dominating the perimeter of the space were trade stands. With flags and banners soaring above their territories, the stands invited consumers to comb through myriad shelves to find and purchase games both old and new (markedly more new than old). There was a distinct scarcity of smaller retailers, with much of the room being taken up by the online retail giants.

Roleplaying books and their accompanying resources, as well as a variety of tabletop affiliated knickknacks, were also available to the discerning shopper. It was splendid to see miniatures and wargames holding their own. As well as offering a vast range of modeling and painting supplies, these exhibitors were running demos

of their latest or lesser-known games. I thoroughly enjoyed a shortened skirmish of Warlord Games' sublime *Judge Dredd* miniatures game.

A few stalls had dedicated their shelf space to board game literature. Aconyte, the novels division of Asmodee, had their full range on offer and provided an opportunity to meet and chat with some of the authors. A genuine surprise was spotting Sir Ian Livingstone (co-creator of the *Fighting Fantasy* game books and co-founder of Games Workshop) at the Fighting Fantasy Books stall. Willing to take a moment to chat with convention-goers, Sir Livingstone would later be hosting one of the many seminars being held over the weekend.



Can I get a demo, please?

Towards the center and rear of the hall, areas had been set up to allow patrons to try their hand at a selection of board games. For those on the lookout for something new, a surfeit of smaller publishers and designers had their wares on offer. The Family Zone offered a range of titles for a younger audience. I managed to sneak in games of *Dragomino* and *Quacks of Quedlinburg*, both of which I found to be thoroughly entertaining. However, barring the offerings of the Family Zone, I found the

overall options for demos from the larger publishers to be somewhat lackluster in range and quantity. In providing only one copy of a handful of games, visitors had to be extremely patient for a seat at a table. Yet, one demo I found to be worth the wait was *Dune: Imperium*. A slick blend of deck-building and worker placement, it is deserving of the current hype. The flip side of this was that it was then seemingly impossible to find a copy to purchase!

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The Beating Heart

With the overall disappointment of the demos on offer, I wandered into the adjoining hall in the hopes of finding a coffee to despondently stare into. But it was within these walls that my optimism was reignited! With the exclusion of certain events, the UKGE had decided to dedicate the extra space to open gaming. With hundreds of gaming tables (festooned with gorgeous UKGE neoprene mats), a food court, a bar, and a well-stocked board game library, the expo had created a veritable Shangri-La for board gamers; and it was here that I felt the heart of this year's convention lay. After months of restrictions and lockdowns, an opportunity was provided for the board game community to, once again, feel that sense of community. Gaming groups, social media connections, total strangers, and friends were able to congregate and undertake the one thing we all love: playing games.

Of course, the convention had more to offer than I was able to explore, including a selection of live shows and a playtest area. But due to limitations outside of the expo's control, much of what I had previously enjoyed about the UKGE was not present. Even in its streamlined form, however, the UK Games Expo was able to provide tabletop gamers with not only a weekend of tabletop merriment but also a much-needed feeling of respite and promise following the gloom of the past two years.

Expo Picks

It would be remiss of me not to mention some of the board games that grabbed my attention at this year's expo. Here are three of the most noteworthy games:

Deckchairs on the Titanic

Silver Birch Games

2-4 players | 15-30 mins

A succinct, abstract puzzler, *Deckchairs on the Titanic* sees players jockeying for position on the decks of the doomed liner with the intention of gaining the most tips. With only three actions to choose from (move a deckchair, push the ice block, or place their deckchair attendant), *Deckchairs on the Titanic* provides a quick, enjoyable and thinky low ceiling/high threshold experience. That is, if you can get past the arguably macabre theme.



Above: UKGE open gaming area; Below: children's roleplaying games (photos by UK Games Expo)



Rocketmen

Phalanx


1-4 players | 30-90 mins

Thematically, one of my favorites from the con. What looks to be another win from Martin Wallace, *Rocketmen* mimics the current tech giant space race. Players take on the role of Elon Musk-type entrepreneurs who are vying to be the first to establish their corporations in space. The game predominantly uses a deck-building mechanism to simulate the advancement of the technologies that will allow players to undertake missions from launching satellites to establishing a Mars base. *Rocketmen*'s tastiest element comes in the form of a bag build/push-your-luck system which does extremely well to simulate the precariousness of space exploration.



Carrooka

2 players | 15-45 mins

The creation of carpenter Jack Furnival, *Carrooka* (a mash-up of snooker and carrom) is a disk-flicking dexterity game that I found to be equally as enjoyable, challenging, and satisfying as the likes of *Crokinole*. Using the rules of snooker as a basis and played on a board similar to *Crokinole*, *Carrooka* takes seconds to learn and — like any game worth its salt — an ostensible lifetime to master. As enjoyable as the game is, the real wonder comes from the board itself. Handmade in Staffordshire, England, each board (more akin to a family heirloom, such is the level of craftsmanship) is manufactured using carefully sourced, sustainable materials. Currently only available in the UK, Jack and his wife George intend to begin shipping to the States early next year. 





Keeping It Casual:

Light Alternatives to Popular Games



Dann Albright

Freelance Journalist and
Lifelong Board Gamer

The board game world continues to expand, not only in the types of games but also in length. Some can be played in 10 minutes, while others take hours to learn and play.

It's often the heavier, lengthier games getting more coverage and hype (except here at *Casual Game Insider*, of course). Expansive games like *Scythe* and *Nemesis* are in the top 10 lists of many board game reviewers. But not everyone wants that kind of board game experience.

For players out there who are interested in these games but don't have the time or willpower to learn them, here is a list of five alternatives that channel some of what makes their heavier equivalents so popular.



The Exploration of Gloomhaven

Gloomhaven made a splash with its massive set of components and cards, endless hours of dungeon-crawling, and clever hand management mechanics. It gives players a sense of endless exploration and adventure, as well as the satisfaction of slaying countless monsters. The decisions made by players affect the course of the game, letting a group tell a new story every time they play through a scenario (though the extremely high number of scenarios means that won't happen anytime soon).

It's hard to get this many different factors into a casual game. But if *Gloomhaven's* sense of adventure is appealing, *PARKS* might be the casual game for you. Like *Gloomhaven*, you'll seek out adventure. Instead of trekking through dungeons, you'll be hiking trails to get to national parks. You'll explore new terrain, find and collect resources, and manage the cards in your hand to do it.

PARKS also has a huge collection of gorgeous cards and components, which helps make it an immersive experience. It doesn't grab you in the same way *Gloomhaven* does, but it's a great experience that will draw you in with its own eye-catching art and strategy.

PARKS has been nominated for a wide variety of awards, from Board Game Geek's (BGG) Best Family Board Game to the South by Southwest (SXSW) Tabletop Game of the Year. It has far fewer swords, shields, and treasure than *Gloomhaven*, but you'll find treasures of a different kind along the way.



The Bluffing of Secret Hitler

Secret Hitler might not be quite as popular as it once was, yet it is still a widely loved game of social deduction and bluffing. Are you a Liberal, trying to pass legislation that will help the citizens of your country? Or are you a Fascist, trying to sneak through laws that will benefit your cause?

Secret Hitler is a lot of fun, especially if you're a fan of bluffing. But it's also a rather complex game that can

take a long time. And the subject matter, while deftly handled, isn't for everyone.

On the other hand, everyone can enjoy *Skull*. It's a very simple game of bidding and bluffing. You won't get the same level of tension as *Secret Hitler* because *Skull* is a quick and very simple game — you just aren't quite as invested in it. Don't let that fact fool you, though.

When asking people to flip over their tiles and desperately hoping to get a flower instead of a skull, your heart rate will definitely rise. If you've bid three flowers, you'll need to ask opponents to flip over three tiles. And believe me: when you're hoping that the last one is a flower and not a skull, the suspense goes up.

Skull isn't nearly as complicated or long as *Secret Hitler*. Even without the deduction element, it still can channel a lot of the stress. Most games of *Skull* are 30 minutes or less, so you can play as many times as you want in a regular game night.



The Deckbuilding of Dune: Imperium

Deckbuilding games will always be popular, so there are lots of great options to choose from. *Dune: Imperium* is one of the hot deckbuilding titles in 2021. While it's not especially heavy, it does require some time spent learning the rules and the board. This new *Dune* title does a great job of providing many options for play, with different strategies being viable and different approaches rewarded.

The Quest for El Dorado doesn't have the trendy theme of *Dune* (a new film adaptation is on the horizon), but it channels the race for treasure quite nicely. Its drafting and deckbuilding mechanics are similar to those of *Dune: Imperium*, but it does away with the complicated board and numerous strategies.

This game has a simple premise: whoever is first to get to El Dorado wins. You'll do this by building up a deck

of cards and using them to get across the map. Hiring helpers, choosing your path wisely, and making well-timed stops along the way will also help.

The Quest for El Dorado isn't the most casual game out there, but once you've learned it, you can often play a game in less than 45 minutes. It moves quickly, is fairly straightforward to explain, and rewards flexible thinking.





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The Route-building of Brass

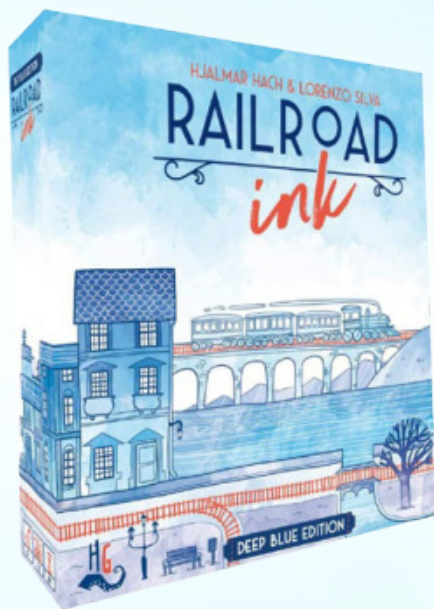
While *Brass* might not be on the radar of most board gamers, it's one of the most popular among people who like heavy, brain-burning economic games. Players need to create routes for boats and trains that carry goods to ports, then sell those goods for the best price before demand stagnates.

If it sounds complicated, that's because it is. But the route-building aspect is one of the big draws to the game. By strategically planning where you'll route your goods, you'll spend the least money and make the most. It's a tough, subtle interplay between players that's very addictive.

Not everyone wants to spend hours learning and playing a game like *Brass*. If you want to build

routes to maximize your gain, *Railroad Ink* is a great choice. You'll roll dice to see which kinds of roads or rails are available, then draw them on your erasable board. The more exits you connect, the more points you earn.

While you won't be competing over the same spaces as you would in *Brass*, *Railroad Ink* does give you the satisfaction of working with limited resources as efficiently as possible. There's something inherently satisfying about route-building. This game has reduced it to its essence, then thrown in some randomness with dice. It's all very well done and a thoroughly enjoyable experience.



The Auctioneering of Power Grid

Another game that's very popular in the heavy gaming community, *Power Grid* is all about bidding for power plants to power cities across a map. The more value you get for your bids, the more power you'll deliver and the more money you'll make. There are other elements at play, but the auction element is the core of *Power Grid*.

For a lighter bidding game, we're going back to a classic: *For Sale*. Auctions are not only the main mechanism of *For Sale*, but they are also largely the only thing that happens in the game. First, you bid money for houses of different values. Then, you use those houses to bid on money (it sounds weird when you say it like that, but the game is very easy to learn and intuitive to play).



www.GamelynGames.com





For Sale is quick, light, and easy to teach. It also hides some very interesting strategic decisions that reward repeat plays. It's hard to explain why *For Sale* is so much fun when it basically consists of two related auctions. There's just something about rolling a complicated mechanism back to its most basic form.



Finding the Right Fit for Your Game Group

Some game groups enjoy reading 30 pages of rules before game night, others prefer games they can learn in five minutes (with many somewhere in between). Not wanting to spend hours preparing for and playing a single game doesn't mean you can't get some of the best parts of those popular games.

Start with the games above and use tools such as BGG, Casual Game Revolution, and Reddit to find lighter versions of games that sound interesting, but may be too heavy, for your group. 🎲



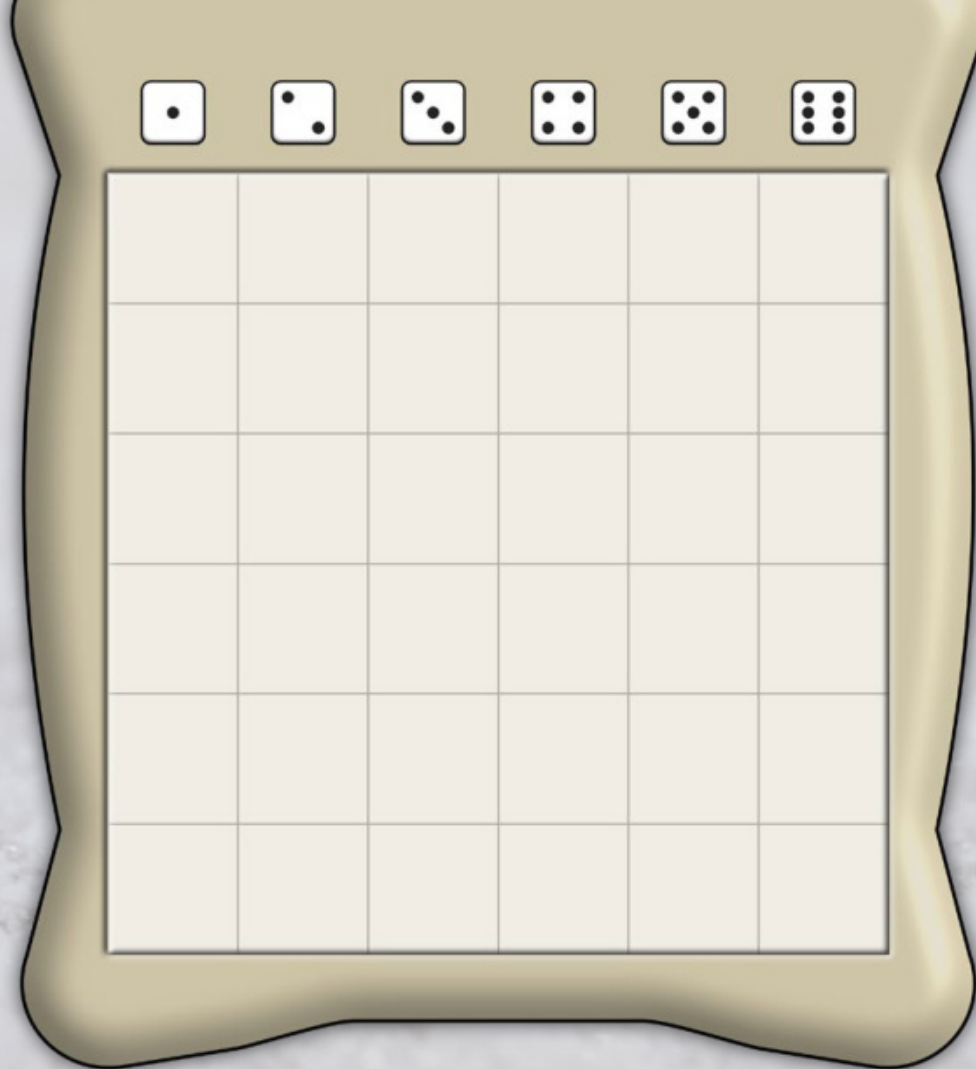
A COMPLETE GAME FOR YOU TO PLAY & ENJOY!
COURTESY OF: CHRIS KINGSNORTH

CGI
+PNP

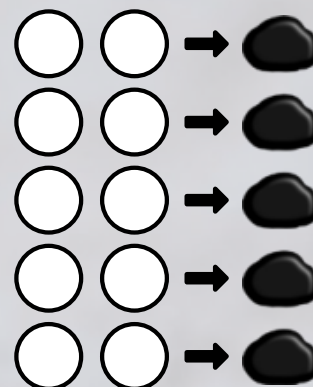
Sack Stackers

Art & Design by Chris Kingsnorth
Instagram: [tabletopapprentice](https://www.instagram.com/tabletopapprentice)
[Bit.ly/sack-stackers-cgi](https://bit.ly/sack-stackers-cgi)



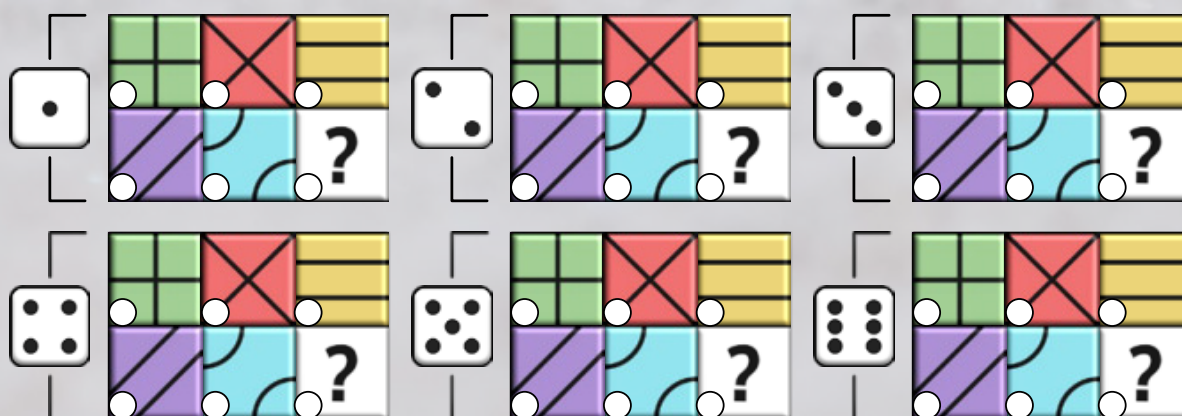


X +1 / -1

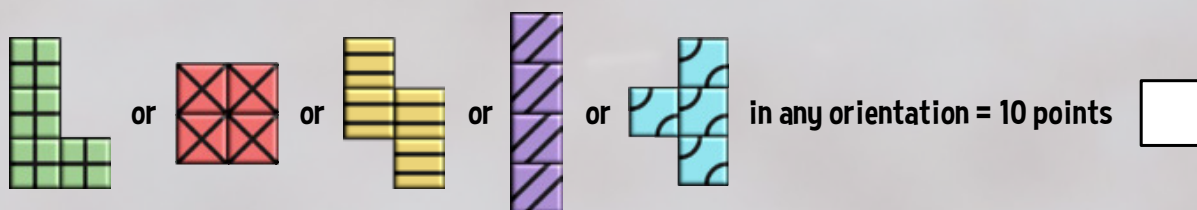


For every 2 circles used,
you must drop a
● into any column of
your choice.

Unused circles
(not marked off)
are worth 1 point each at the
end of the game.



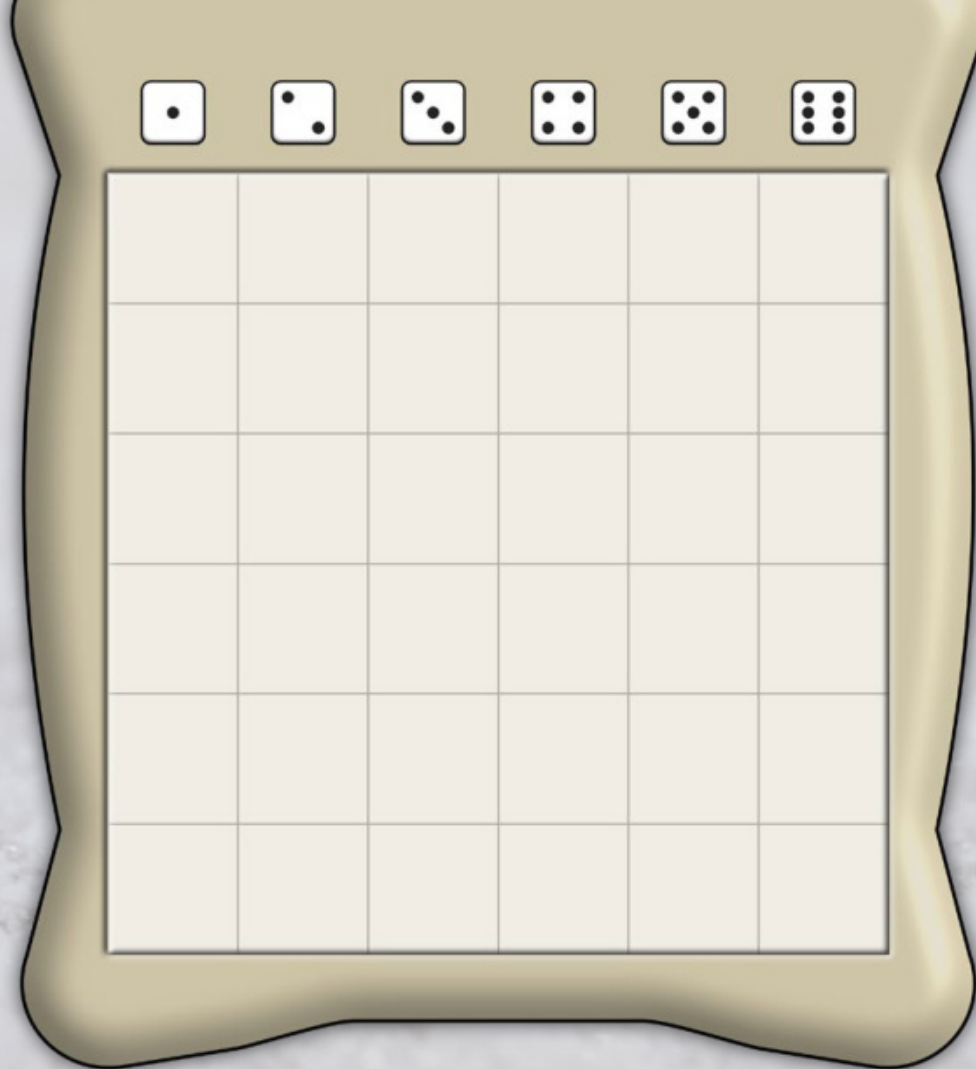
If you are unable to place a gift, you must drop a ● into any column of your choice



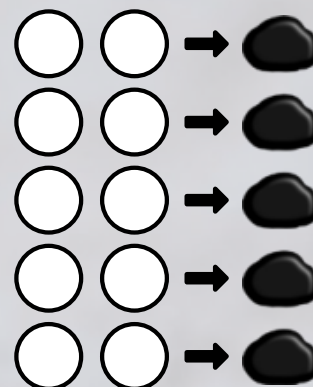
Each ● not orthogonally adjacent to another ● = 2 points

Each **X** +1 / -1 circle not marked off at the end of the game = 1 point

TOTAL

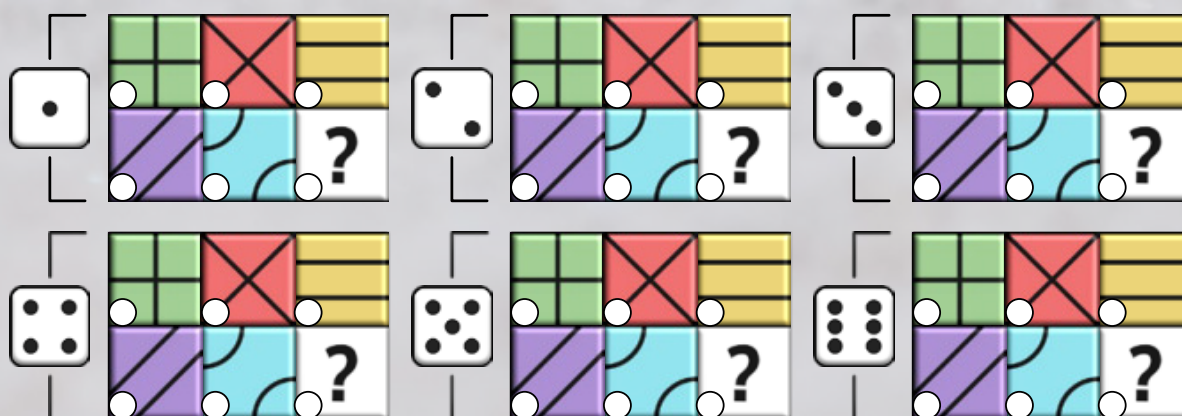


X +1 / -1

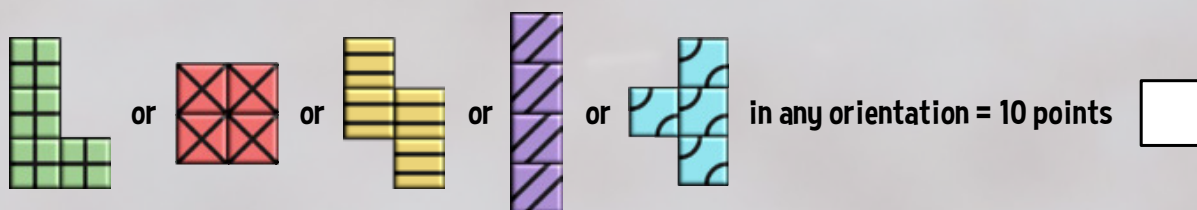


For every 2 circles used,
you must drop a
● into any column of
your choice.

Unused circles
(not marked off) are
worth 1 point each at the
end of the game.



If you are unable to place a gift, you must drop a ● into any column of your choice



in any orientation = 10 points

Each ● not orthogonally adjacent to another ● = 2 points

Each **X** +1 / -1 circle not marked off at the end of the game = 1 point

TOTAL

A FESTIVE ROLL-AND-WRITE GAME BY CHRIS KINGSNORTH

It's Christmas Eve, and every gift in Santa's workshop has been carefully wrapped ready for delivery. You and your fellow Elves have been trusted to load up the sleigh, but the *Sack Stacker 5000* is misbehaving! All of the presents are coming out in the wrong order and getting mixed up with lumps of coal... Can you sort out the gifts and make sure everyone gets what they hoped for on Christmas morning?

AIM OF THE GAME

Collect gifts, drop them into Santa's sack and create patterns to earn points, but watch out for lumps of coal that might interfere with your plans... Earn the most points (see 'Scoring' below) to be crowned *Head Elf*!

SETTING UP

Each player will need a printed player sheet and a pen or pencil. You will also need 2 six-sided dice that can be seen by all of the players (if you are playing via video call, you can share your screen and use a pair of virtual dice like [these](#))

PLAYING THE GAME

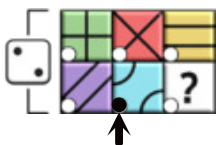
In *Sack Stackers*, all players take their turns at the same time. On every turn, one player rolls both of the dice once (any player can do this) and then every player must:

1. Use one dice result to **collect a gift**, and
2. Use the other dice result to **select a sack column** to drop the gift into

In addition, players can **alter dice results** and might be forced to drop **coal** into the sack.

Collecting Gifts: There are 5 gift types in the game (📦📦📦📦📦), each with distinctive wrapping. By arranging these gifts in specific patterns inside Santa's sack, players will earn points. To collect a gift, players choose one dice result and mark off a gift of their choice from the matching section on the player sheet. Once a gift is marked off, it cannot be collected again. When a player marks off the [?] gift, they may collect a gift of any other type.

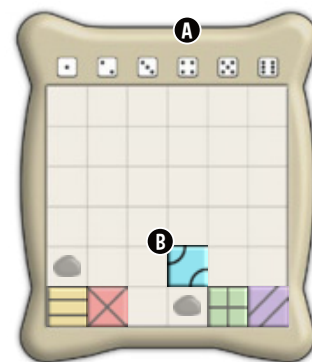
For example, 🎲 and 🎲 are rolled. A player uses the 🎲 result to collect 📦 from the 🎲 section by marking off the corresponding gift.



Selecting a Sack Column and Dropping a Gift: Players use the remaining dice result to determine the sack column into which their collected gift will be dropped. Gifts drop to the bottom-most unoccupied square of the

column, and this is where the player draws the gift.

For example, the player uses the remaining 🎲 result to drop the 📦 collected earlier into the 📦 sack column (A), drawing the corresponding symbol into the bottom-most unoccupied square of that column (B).



Altering Dice Results: Players may alter dice results by marking off circles in the 'X +1/-1' section of the player sheet. These alterations only affect them. For each circle marked off, they may add or subtract 1 from a dice result. They may mark off multiple circles in the same turn and may alter the result of both dice so long as they mark off a circle for each individual alteration made. A maximum of 10 alterations can be made per game. For every 2 circles marked off on their sheet, a player must add a lump of **coal** to the sack (see below). The player can decide whether to add the coal *before* or *after* adding their gift to the sack.

For example, the player above could have chosen to mark off one circle to alter a 🎲 result to a 🎲 (+1) or 🎲 (-1).

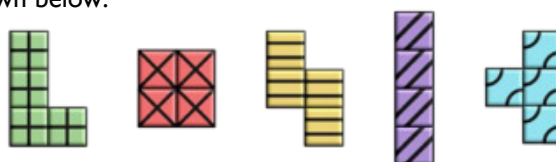
Coal (⬛): Coal must be added to a player's sack every time (1) that they mark off two 'X +1/-1' circles (see above) or (2) that they are unable to place a gift into the sack. The player may add the ⬛ to any column with an empty square; it drops to the bottom-most unoccupied square of the chosen column and this is where it is drawn.

END OF THE GAME

The game ends when any player fills the final empty square in their sack. All other players finish their turn and then scoring takes place (see below).

SCORING

Players earn **10 points** for every **completed group of gifts** matching the gift type and pattern (in any orientation) shown below:



They also earn **2 points** for every ⬛ **not orthogonally adjacent to another** ⬛ + **1 point** for every **unmarked** 'X +1/-1' circle. The player with the highest score is crowned *Head Elf*! If there is a tie, the youngest player wins.



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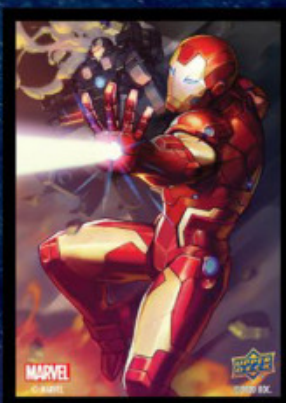
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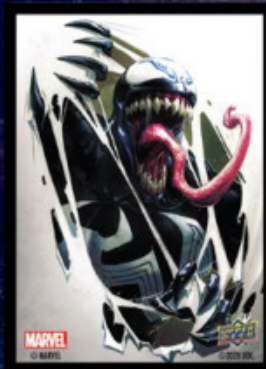
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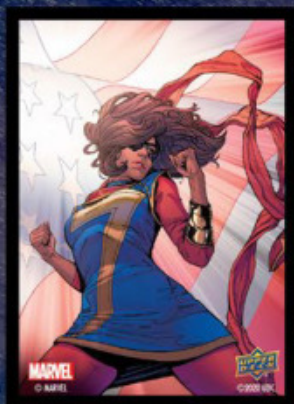
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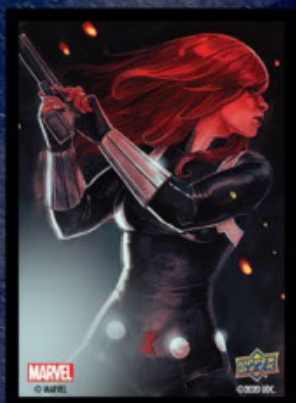
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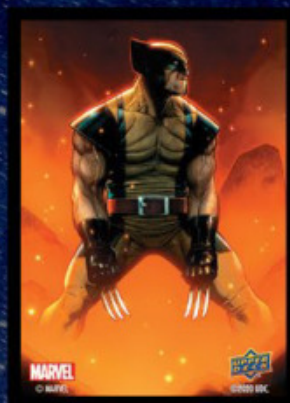
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**Rolling With
the Punches:**

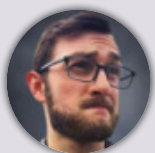
KING OF TOKYO

Dark Edition

OVERVIEW & STRATEGY TIPS

If you've been following the board game market for any amount of time, you probably noticed the wonderful explosion of new titles hitting the shelves. Every year harkens a fresh batch of releases that approach familiar mechanics in unique, exciting ways that can reinvigorate the old tried-and-true forebears.

Despite this veritable board game renaissance, it's difficult not to return to Tokyo as a giant monster to wreck up the joint.



Eric Huemmer

Co-op Connoisseur
and Wordsmith

As we celebrate 10 years since the original release of IELLO's *King of Tokyo*, it remains one of CGI's favorite and most played games. Despite a decade of progress in game design, *King of Tokyo* continues to garner a spot on the game shelf.

With *King of Tokyo: Dark Edition* crashing onto the scene, there's even more of an incentive to revisit this beloved kaiju playground. So whether you're new to the brawl or a returning champion, we've got you covered — we'll go over what the *Dark Edition* is all about, explain what the difference is between this game and the original release, and give you a crash course on how to come out on top.

BACK IN BLACK

Originally designed by Richard Garfield (*Magic: The Gathering*, *Bunny Kingdom*) and released in 2011, *King of Tokyo* has been a smash hit for the publisher and garnered awards and praise for its approachability. Recently, IELLO celebrated the success of the *King of Tokyo* line with the release of *King of Tokyo: Dark Edition*. This collector's edition has a limited run of 100,000 copies in 12 different languages.

The *Dark Edition* is stunning, with a sleek, updated design that leans into the dark theme. Everything from the monster standouts, the power cards, and even the box itself feature a predominately black and gray color palette with a shock of neon colors for a distinctive look. Component quality is top-notch,

right down to the Energy Charges being little green lightning bolts instead of cubes.

The *Dark Edition* also introduces the Wickedness mechanism, which adds an entirely new approach to your city stomping. This element is seamlessly integrated with the existing gameplay.

Below: Richard Garfield, designer of King of Tokyo and King of Tokyo: Dark Edition





READY TO RUMBLE



Before we dive into how these changes will have you rethinking your strategy, let's review the basic gameplay of *King of Tokyo*. The premise is simple: conquer Tokyo by earning 20 Victory Points or be the last monster standing by reducing your opponents' Life Points to zero. Everyone starts by selecting one of the six monster standouts included in the box and setting up their corresponding Monster Board, starting off with 10 Life Points and 0 Victory Points. During your turn, you roll six monster dice. Each die has six symbols that represent the different actions you can take on your turn:



1, 2, or 3:

When you roll at least three of the same number, you'll receive that many Victory Points (VP). For each additional die showing that number, you'll receive an additional VP. For instance, if you rolled three 2's, you'll receive 2 VP; if four of the dice results are 2, then you'll receive 3 VP.



Energy:

Each die that shows a lightning bolt grants the player one Energy Charge. Energy is used to purchase Power Cards.



Smash:

For each result that shows a monster's claw, monsters that are not at the same location will lose that many Life Points. If a monster's Life Points are reduced to zero, they're out of the game!



Heal:

If your monster is below 10 Life Points, you can heal them back up for each result featuring the heart symbol. You cannot go beyond 10 Life Points unless a Power Card or Wickedness Tile says otherwise. You are unable to heal while in Tokyo.

You'll roll these six dice three separate times before determining your final results, setting aside any number of dice to save the result (like *Yahtzee*). You can decide to add those dice back to your pool later that turn. At the end of the third roll, tally up the totals and determine how many VP, Life Points, and/or Energy you receive, and dish out the total number of smashes.

Once results have been resolved, you can spend any Energy you have to purchase Power Cards from the three face-up options. These cards will either provide a powerful one-time effect ("Gain 3 VP") or an ongoing benefit that you keep ("Roll an Extra Die each turn"). You can continue to purchase Power Cards as long as you have the energy to buy them.

THE SPILL™

Designed by ANDY KIM

1-4 Players, Ages 14+
50 minutes

/// incident alert ///

Offshore rig, DeepWell-4, has ruptured and is spilling crude oil into the ocean at an alarming rate! Your joint task force must work together as a team to avert an ecological disaster... one which threatens to contaminate marine life and devastate the ecosystem. Contain the oil flowing from the rig, remove what oil you can from the waters and save the marine animals.

The world is watching. The fate of the coast is in your hands!



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The final thing to remember is how to interact with Tokyo City & Tokyo Harbor. As a quasi-king of the hill, you can smash your way into Tokyo, where you'll earn 1 VP for entering Tokyo and another 2 VP for staying there for an entire round. While you're in Tokyo, the rest of the monsters can attack your monster by rolling Smashes, and all your smashes hit everyone that is not at your location. The risk factor here is that you are unable to heal while in either Tokyo location. Whenever you receive damage, you can choose either to stay in Tokyo and risk being eliminated or leave the city to fight another day.

The first player to achieve 20 VP, or the last remaining monster, wins the game.



SOMETHING WICKED THIS WAY COMES



New with the *Dark Edition* are Wickedness Points, which are tracked on the side of the board. As you become more and more wicked, you'll be able to choose powerful abilities for your monster, similar to Power Cards. These tiles can be selected from the stack on the side of the board when you reach three, six, and ten Wickedness.

The ingenious part of the *Dark Edition* is how you earn Wickedness. When you roll at least three 1's, not only do you gain 1 VP, but you also gain two Wickedness Points. Conversely, by rolling three 2's, you gain one Wickedness Point. Now, your rolls of 1's and 2's aren't simply discarded for the big 3 payout.

While some of the options are similar to Power Cards, they can have major implications on the game, such as refilling your Life to a new max of 12 or allowing you to roll your dice four times instead of three.





ROLL TIME STRATEGY



Let's get to the meat-and-bones of this monstrous article: the strategy. While these are more subjective, they are general tips to keep in mind that can help you come out on top.



Roll Playing

How you handle your rolls differs from player to player. You can make your first roll and work off of those results, or have a set outcome in mind and spend your rolls looking for those results.

The latter can be tricky, as poor rolling can put you in a tight spot. But there are times (when you have one Life Point left, for instance) when you're needing to spend rolls looking for hearts.

Super Smash Party

Your approach will change based on the number of players. With 5-6 players, Tokyo Harbor opens up, which is treated just like Tokyo City. So if you're not in either slot, your smashes will hit both monsters in Tokyo. And just as King Kong and Godzilla have teamed up time and again to take down a larger monster, don't be surprised if table talk and temporary alliances begin to form.

Stock (the) Market

Sometimes the available Power Cards just aren't that good. If you're sitting on five or more energy, one thing to consider is clearing the Market (available Power Cards) by paying two Energy. There are plenty of cards that cost three Energy, and making your way through the Power Deck means a better shot at the choice cards.





Totally Wicked

Rolling 1's and 2's is no longer useless, and each tier of Wickedness Tiles becomes more and more powerful. Even the first-tier tiles can be game-changers. Eternal grants the player one Life Point at the start of each of their turns, which is crucial as it allows you to heal while you're in Tokyo. Devious grants one extra die roll per turn, meaning you can now roll four times searching for the results you want!

Quality Control

Power Cards can also alter rolls. They could grant extra dice each turn or add a Smash to every roll. In a game where the rolls are random, being able to control the results (or keeping your opponents from doing the same) can lead to a quick win. Power Cards like Plot Twist and Herd Culler allow you to change the results on your own dice, while Psychic Probe forces an opponent to reroll one die after they've settled on their final results. Keeping your opponent from getting three 1's and jumping up in the Wickedness track, or changing one of the three 3's they rolled so they no longer get any VP, completely shuts down your opponents' plans.





If You Can't Stand the Heat...

Finally, don't forget to Smash. You may have plans for racing up the Wickedness tracker or collecting Energy for the choice Power Cards, but keep an eye on your opponents' Life totals. You will be rolling at least six dice each turn. If an opponent risks staying in Tokyo with four or five life, it's entirely possible to roll that before any Power Cards or Wickedness Tiles are factored in.

With the addition of the double-sided Wickedness Tiles and the plethora of Power Cards, your strategy can change from game-to-game, or even from roll-to-roll. And the dynamic constantly shifts depending on the number of players who are at the table, with special rules for two-player games and games that include four or five of your friends.

King of Tokyo: Dark Edition is gorgeous and wicked-good fun. While it has the same old feel as the original for returning players, the new Wickedness mechanism adds another layer of replayability and gameplay diversity that really brings the original game to the next level. Now you will no longer be in the dark about this latest release from IELLO! 🎲

BAMBOO BASH

Strip bark and leaves from the bamboo for points!



Be careful not to pull down the whole thing or you'll have to find a new one!



The panda cub is eating too, don't knock him down or it will eat your leaves!



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15 Min



2-8 Players



Age 7+



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BREAKING THE MOLD

HOW BREAKING GAMES DOES THINGS DIFFERENTLY



Justin Spicer

Music Journalist and
Board Game Experimenter

The most prominent face of Breaking Games is the publisher's founder, Shari Spiro. As the industry surrounding this company continues to grow, so does the influence of creative thinkers and innovators within the hobby. Shari has long been influencing and evolving in the board gaming space, even before Breaking Games became the breakout publisher it is today.

"I was printing games for Kickstarter via [my other company] AdMagic and noticed an interesting trend," Spiro begins. "At the end of a campaign, the designers did not really know what to do with their additional [copies of] games and how to effectively get them into the mass market."



AN ADMAGIC COMPANY



As CEO of AdMagic, Spiro was working closely with the explosion of the board game space via crowdfunding. Not only was she providing printing services, but AdMagic also served as a promotional advertising and design firm. “I had years of experience in printing and manufacturing promotional items, in addition to printing some of today’s most ubiquitous games. I knew I could start my own publishing company, and that is how Breaking Games was born.”



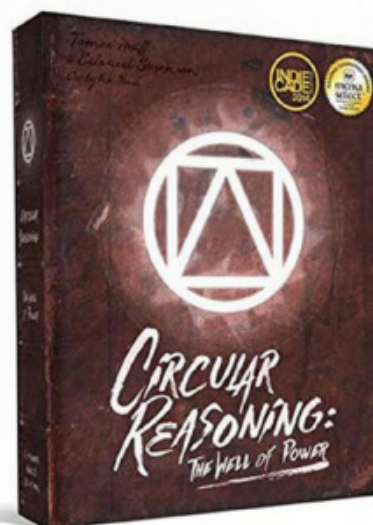
A LOVE OF THE GAME

“I have a huge circle of family and friends, so I fell in love with family and gateway games,” explains Spiro. It was this love of games, combined with her experience working within the industry, which helped launch Breaking Games. The first games released included *Letter Tycoon*, *The Game of 49*, and *Circular Reasoning*, which Spiro described as “games with brilliant but easy-to-learn evergreen mechanics.”

It’s one thing for the founder of a fledgling board game publisher to like these board games, but would the general public? “We launched at Toy Fair in 2014, and to say our games were well received is an understatement,” Spiro fondly recalls. “[The] media loved our games. They were different, quirky, and fun. Some made you think, others made you laugh.”

Circular Reasoning and *Letter Tycoon* went on to win the Mensa Mind Games competition soon thereafter.

This diversity of genre, theming, and mechanics has become the linchpin of Breaking Games. But Spiro’s experience with promotion led Breaking Games to truly harness the power of interpersonal interaction. “My team and I were driven to publish games that resonated with anyone interested in tabletop games, from the casual to the hardcore, to family and adult. We brought our games to trade shows across the nation and did some on-site marketing with attendees to see what their reactions were to our games, what we could improve, what they liked about them. Real feedback in real-time.”



LESSONS LEARNED

“We believe that the more brains you have, the better,” Spiro declares.

Even with Spiro’s experience and Breaking Games’ immediate successes, the publisher was not an overnight sensation. “There are lessons that were learned along the way, but we quickly changed directions or implemented what was needed to ensure that our games are some of the best out there.”

The initial success Breaking Games had could be improved upon, and Spiro — along with her growing team — put her skills into good use. “One of the particularly important lessons we learned is that looks are just as important as mechanics,” begins Spiro. “We did not realize how impactful packaging and branding was. We [put] a great deal of additional effort and

budget towards those things, and it made an immediate positive impact on sales and consumer satisfaction.”

Beyond the obvious investments into making their games more visually and thematically appealing, Spiro also notes that one of the biggest lessons is just enjoying what you do and learning from those customer interactions to better the games. “Through our expertise, combined with consumer feedback, we look at the theme, mechanics, replayability of a game (regardless of genre), and most importantly: our gut.”



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Breaking Games

AN ADMAGIC COMPANY

DESIGNER CENTRIC

Breaking Games not only focuses on the games themselves, but also on those who are creating them. “We have and will always put the designer at the forefront of development, branding, and packaging. We are not here to poach their ideas and make them ours,” Spiro emphasizes. “Breaking Games is unique in that we choose games by designers we believe in first and foremost.”

This is very true in how Breaking Games differentiates itself at conventions, as well. It’s not uncommon to get to play a game from the *Sparkle*Kitty* universe with designer Manny Vega or Luke Laurie teaching *Dwellings of Eldervale* to a gathering crowd.

“We have the designers at our booth, explaining and playing with attendees. There is no better ambassador than the game’s actual designer. You see the spark of interest and the eagerness to play our games – it is all very magical!”

Spiro is also excited when talking about Francesca Carletto-Leon, Kai Karhu, Carol Mertz, and Temitope Olujobi, the designers of recent crowdfunding success, *KROMA*. She is quick to praise all involved and is excited by the game and how it represents her company. “*KROMA* is brilliant, as are the designers! And brilliant games will always have a place with Breaking Games.”





REACH OUT AND CRUSH SOMEONE!

COMING

THIS NOVEMBER TO KICKSTARTER



PERSEVERING THROUGH GROWTH

Despite the challenges of an ongoing pandemic, Breaking Games continues to push forth with its vision for what games can be and where the industry can go.

“Our goal has always been to work with top indie designers who do not have the connections or funds but know they have an amazing game,” describes Spiro. “We turn that dream into reality. Our compass is to find games that are different, weird, funny, entertaining, crazy, and challenging. And while we may be in almost every single mass-market retailer, we want to offer games that feel unique and special.”

Spiro has continued to evolve these platforms, not just through Breaking Games, but also through AdMagic and other enterprises, all in the effort of helping new and emerging designers reach the audience she believes they and their games deserve. She explains how the convention season will not only be different due to the ongoing pandemic, but also how she hopes to reach

gamers with the myriad services she and her team offer. “We are attending conventions again in 2022, as part of our team continues to work remotely. Our team members will be walking the floors and spreading the word about our new capabilities with AdMagic, Print & Play Games, and the newly rebuilt-from-the-ground-up BLACKBOX fulfillment division.”

All of this comes in service of the games and the people who play them. Spiro is always looking to give gamers unique experiences across a spectrum of genres and mechanics. “Our games do not follow any one particular style or genre, except that they are different from anything you have played.”

She continues by talking about what’s coming up for Breaking Games. “*Dwellings of Eldervale* was a sensational hit, but we are currently sold out. We are in the midst of printing more for arrival later this year. I can’t say too much...but in 2022, our feature title will be a game called *MANSPLAINING*. We are also working with a leading animation studio to produce a short series of *MANSPLAINING* animations — something we have never done!”

This is just how Breaking Games continues to innovate and grow, fusing Spiro’s many businesses with her own passion for gaming. As Spiro wisely sums up: “It has been an incredible ride so far.” 🎲





Dwellings of Eldervale is an epic worker placement game set in a once lost magical world (photos by Breaking Games).

**CHECK OUT THE NEW
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50

TREKKING THE WORLD

Explore the world as you tour exotic destinations, collect souvenirs, and plot your way across the globe.

**Naomi Laeuchli**

Game Reviewer and
Casual Game Groupie

On your turn, you must start by moving your meeple. You discard one or more trek cards to do this, moving spaces equal to the combined numbers shown on the cards. You may not move through or onto a space with another player. If you start your turn at an airport location, you may fly to any other airport before moving. If you stop your movement on a location that has a souvenir cube, you collect it. These cubes come in four different colors, with the player who has the most of a single color taking the corresponding bonus tile. These are worth points at the end of the game but can be taken from you if another player collects more of that color during the course of the game. If you collect the last souvenir from one of the regions on the map, you earn a region bonus tile.

After moving, you choose one of three actions. You can draw two trek cards from the display or draw pile. Trek cards come in five different colors and have values of one through three. Another action is to spend two trek cards of a matching color to complete a journey. There are two journey cards available in each game, and each lets you perform a special action such as swapping locations with another player or moving farther across the board. The same journey can be taken multiple times during the game. The final action is taking a tour. There are always four available, each corresponding to a location on the board. In order to collect the tour card, you must be at that location and be able to discard the correct colored trek cards.

The game ends once five region bonuses have been taken or a player has taken their fifth tour. You add up points for bonus tiles, tours, and your largest set of matching souvenir cubes. The player with the most points wins.

Trekking the World

Designed by Charlie Bink



2-5 PLAYERS



30-60 MINS



AGES 10+



MSRP



LUCK

STRATEGY



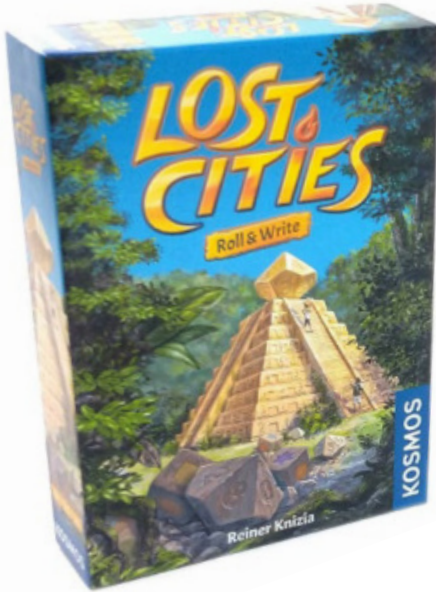
INTERACTIVE

INDEPENDENT



Trekking the World has the feel of a traditional board game, paired with the strategy and elegance of modern gaming. Its theme is fun and the components are excellent and colorful, with the destination card backs each giving a bit of trivia about their locations.

Players can block each other's paths, and you need to weigh going for the souvenir bonuses with racing to a destination before another player claims its card. Trek cards also need to be spent carefully, as you want them for movement, tours, and journeys. All these elements combine into a nicely strategic, while still accessible, board game that is elegantly put together with a tight design.



Lost Cities is a classic two-player card game that is now a roll and write!

KOSMOS



Each player takes a sheet showing six expedition columns of different colors, one dice column, and one artifact column. On your turn, take the three color dice and the three ten-sided number dice and roll them. You then choose one color die and one number die and set it aside. This is the combination you will use this turn that other players cannot use. They must make combinations with the dice left on the table (more than one player may use the same dice).

Write the number you chose in the correct colored expedition column following certain rules. You start at the bottom of the column and work up, you may never skip a box, and you may not write a number that is lower than or equal to a previous number in the column. Before you have started a column, you may use a ten to fill in the bonus circle at the bottom of the expedition column. This doubles all points from this column (negative or positive, so you need to be careful). The first player to reach a certain point on each expedition earns 20 bonus points.

When you write a number in a space that shows an artifact, you fill in the next empty space in the artifact column, starting from the bottom up. When you fill in a space showing an arrow, you can fill in a box for any expedition, copying the number right below it. If you cannot make a legal move or choose to pass, you fill in a space in the dice column. The dice column can be worth more points the more spaces you fill, but once you fill in the last space you are 'exhausted' and that column is worth zero points. All columns are worth

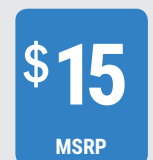
negative points until you reach a specified point. Once all players are exhausted or all bonus points have been earned from each column, the game ends. The player with the most points wins.

Players have interesting choices each round, and the player interaction comes in when you watch what other players are working towards, try to beat them to the bonus points, and draft key dice away from them when it's your turn.

Lost Cities: Roll & Write has many ideas from the original card game, and their translation to roll and write feels like a natural fit. It does its predecessor justice while increasing the player count and adding its own twists to the mechanics in a more compact experience.

Lost Cities: Roll & Write

Designed by Reiner Knizia



LUCK

STRATEGY



INTERACTIVE

INDEPENDENT





In this trick-taking hidden role game, your role changes every round and only one player will emerge victorious.



Each round, the shadow pawn is placed on the start of the track and everyone is dealt a secret role. You are either a shadow or a shaman. Cards are then dealt to all players. There is a card suit to match each of the destinations on the board.

For each trick, the active player plays a card and each other player must then play a card to the trick. You do not have to follow suit. If you do not follow suit, you move the shadow pawn up one space and place the card at its destination on the board.

Next, you resolve the trick for all players who followed suit. First, the person who played the lowest card takes one of the two face-up artifact tokens or draws from the face-down pile. Artifact tokens have abilities such as allowing you to move the shadow pawn back or forward or forcing

you to reveal your role. Some are worth points at the end of the round. Whoever played the highest card will be the active player during the next trick. This player places all the remaining cards in the trick on the corresponding destination on the board.

If a player ever places the last card of a suit on a destination, they activate that destination's ability. Abilities include moving the pawn, swapping roles with another player, or eliminating another player if you have the correct artifact. When eliminated, a player reveals their role. If they were a shaman, the pawn is moved forward one space. If it was the last shadow in play, then the shamans win the round. Shamans also win if there are no more cards and the pawn has not reached the end of the track. If the shamans win, any who are not eliminated earn two points. The shadows win the round if the pawn reaches the end of the board, and any not eliminated earn three points. The game ends once someone reaches eight points, and the player with the most points wins.

Shamans

Designed By: Cédric Chaboussit



3-5 PLAYERS



40 MINS



AGES 10+



\$20

MSRP



LUCK

STRATEGY



INTERACTIVE

INDEPENDENT



The trick-taking mechanism in **Shamans** is unique for the hidden role genre and forces you to strategize in new ways. Low cards can be just as helpful as high cards, and while you want to help your team, you can also work more selfishly to win points for yourself. Who triggers abilities can also be vital. Some of the iconography can be confusing, and with no player aid cards this slows down the learning process, but the aesthetics are gorgeous. This is an unusual, layered game that has you thinking in new ways about familiar mechanics.



8+



3-10



30 Min.

— SCOTT BRADY —

HUES AND CUES

A GUESSING GAME
OF COLORS AND CLUES

**Everyone imagines colors a bit differently.
What hue do you think of when we say “apple”?**

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It is time for a royal visit! The king has arrived in the valley and you and your rival lord are competing to lure him to your chateau and earn the honor of a visit.



The fabric board is laid out in the center of the table and the five characters are placed where indicated. The board shows a series of spaces in a line. At each end is a player's chateau, with each half of the board being considered their respective duchies, while the center space of the board is neutral territory. Along one side of the board is the crown tracker, and you place the crown token in the center of this track. The deck of cards is shuffled and both players are dealt eight cards.

On your turn, you may either choose a type of card to play or use a character's power. There are four types of cards, each corresponding to one of the four types of characters. There are two guard pawns, one king, one wizard, and one jester. You can play any number of movement cards for a single

type of character, but the king must always stay between the two guards.

The wizard's power allows you to summon any character (except the jester) to his location on the board. You can only use the jester's power if he is between your chateau and the king — the jester's power allows you to play his cards as wilds, acting as any character (you cannot play them at the same time as that character's cards, however).

After you have taken your turn, you move the crown token one space towards your chateau for each character on your half of the board and an additional space if both the king and the two guards are there. You then draw back up to eight cards. You win the game if either the king or the crown token reaches your chateau. If the players go through the whole deck twice, the player who has the king on his or her half of the board wins the game.

Royal Visit

Designed by Reiner Knizia



2 PLAYERS



20 MINS



AGES 8+



\$25

MSRP



LUCK

STRATEGY



INTERACTIVE

INDEPENDENT



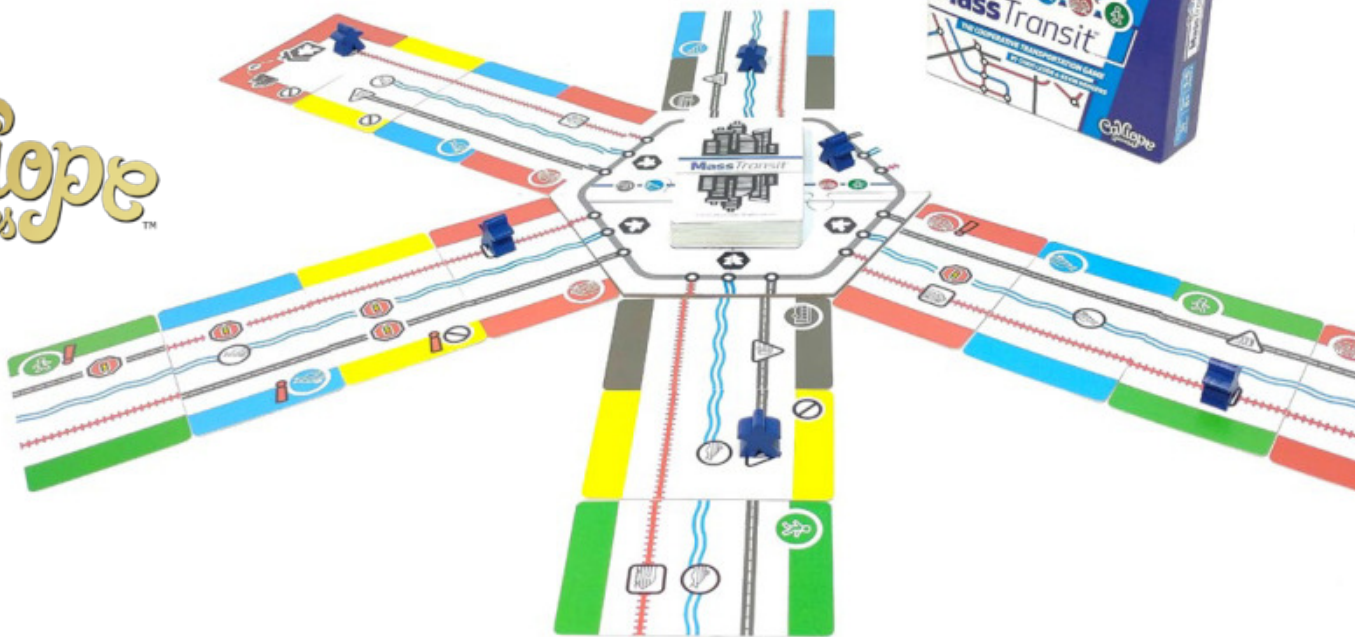
Royal Visit is a tight tug of war between two players. It's about setting up moves well in advance while trying to derail your opponent's plans. Games are close and you need to use each character carefully in order to secure victory.

There are always several good moves to make on your turn, and prioritizing them is trickier than one might expect. Games are fast and the components are just gorgeous. If you're looking for a good two-player game, this one is a royal delight.



Work together with the other players to lay tracks and bring six commuters home from work on time.

Callopie
Games™



One meeple is placed at the start point of each of the six rows. For each row, players will build out three tracks: bus, ferry, and train. Almost every card in the deck has these tracks on them. On your turn, you must play at least two of your cards, but you may play up to four. You may play a card onto a row, lengthening the three tracks in that row. Sometimes a card will show a station stop for a track type and sometimes it will not. You may also spend a card to move a meeple. A card will be colored to show which type of transport it will move a meeple on. When you move a meeple, it moves from the current station stop it is on, or from another station stop on its current card, to the next station stop on its current transport track. You can also discard a walk card to move the meeple to a station on the next card.

At the end of your turn, you draw up to a hand of four cards. Some cards are marked urgent — you must play these on your next turn. These often show traffic stops on one of the tracks. When traveling on that track the meeple will stop there instead of the next station and cannot switch to a new track until you play another card of that track color to move it to the station. Players are not allowed to discuss their cards or say where they hope to play on their next turn. You may only communicate about the board as it currently stands.

In the deck are six suburb cards. There must be a certain number of cards in a row before one of these can be added to it. Each meeple must reach a suburb card to win the game. If players run out of cards before this happens, they lose.

Mass Transit plays fast and is quite accessible. This is a clever little cooperative puzzle game that is challenging, while still easy to pick up and start playing. The box it comes in is quite small, although the game itself takes up a bit of table space. This is a great game for families or if you just want to play something fast, and figuring out the best strategy for the puzzle at the game's heart is quite satisfying.

Mass Transit

Designed by Chris Leder and Kevin Rodgers



1-6 PLAYERS



20 MINS



AGES 8+



MSRP \$15



LUCK

STRATEGY



INTERACTIVE

INDEPENDENT





56

GORILLA MARKETING



ROXLEY
GAME LABORATORY

Choose an item, come up with a great name, and add a catchy tag line. It's all in a day's work in *Gorilla Marketing*!

Each player takes a booklet. As a group, players decide which theme to use (movies, products, bands, etc.) and place the sheet for this theme in the middle of the table. Players will then take turns drawing a die and rolling it. You then check your die result with the theme sheet, which will give you a category. For example, for bands, you might get the category jazz or rap. You write the category at the top of your booklet.

During round one, you start by passing your booklet to the player on your left. Then one at a time, letter dice will be rolled until two red-letter faces have been rolled or you have a total of four dice. You place all of the dice in a row. Each player must now come up with a name for the item they are marketing, fitting the category and theme, using each letter to start a new word, and using them in the order they were rolled. You write your answer

in the booklet you are currently holding. Then you pass the booklet to the player on your left and new dice are rolled. These steps continue until your original booklet makes it back to you.

Next is the judging phase. To judge your booklet, you roll two dice and check the theme sheet to see two options of awards you can give out, such as 'oldest fan base' or 'scariest fans' for the bands category. After choosing one of them, you read all the titles that players wrote in your booklet and choose the one you like the best or which best fits your award. The player who wrote it takes a banana token, and you write the winning title on the top of your booklet. Once all booklets have been judged you move onto round two. Round two plays in the same way, except players are coming up with marketing tag lines for the titles chosen during the first round. The player with the most banana tokens after the judging phase in the second round wins the game.

Gorilla Marketing

Designed by Adam Wyse



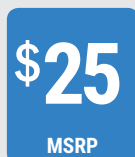
3-8 PLAYERS



20-40 MINS



AGES 8+



\$25

MSRP



INTERACTIVE

INDEPENDENT



Gorilla Marketing has some excellent and attractive components. The gameplay itself is a nice blend of funny party game and puzzle as you try to decide how best to use each letter. It can be a little vague how best to fit the awards to your choice during the judging, but it's more fun when players actually try to do so, rather than simply choosing the funniest title. However, the game is fun and creative, and offers plenty of silly moments.



This colorful little game comes with super simple rules but surprisingly engaging gameplay.

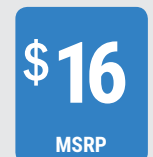
Players start with three lucky cards, each showing a three-by-three grid of boxes, with each box containing a number. The numbers range from one through nine and the same number might appear multiple times. Each turn, a number card is drawn and you may cross off a box with this number on one of your cards. You can spend lightning bolt tokens to add or subtract one from the number when choosing what to cross off. When you complete a row or column you get a reward. This might be a star, lightning bolt, or moon. It also may be the option to cross off another number, which might enable to you complete multiple rows in a single turn.

After nine number cards have been revealed, the round ends. You score points based on the number of stars you have marked off and for completing a lucky card. The earlier the round, the more points completing a card is worth. All players then draw three new lucky cards and keep one, adding it to any uncompleted ones they still have, and a new round begins. The player with the most moons at the end of four rounds scores six points and the player with the least loses six.

Super Mega Lucky Box is such an accessible game; so easy to play but still presenting fun choices. It feels great when you manage to set up a combo. There is minimal player interaction, but the gameplay is light enough to encourage chatting and a sociable casual game night. 🎲

Super Mega Lucky Box

Designed by Phil Walker-Harding



LUCK

STRATEGY



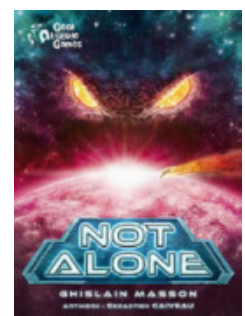
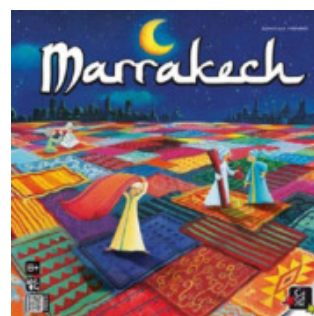
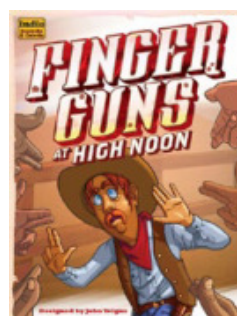
INTERACTIVE

INDEPENDENT



★ OTHER RECOMMENDED GAMES ★

For a complete list, visit CasualGameRevolution.com/games

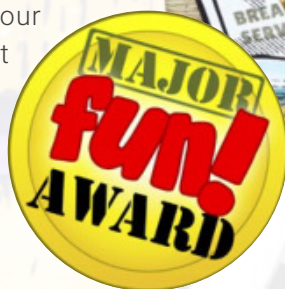




Flapjack Flipout is Major Fun!

The Concept

The morning rush is on! The griddle is hot, and the batter is ready. Don your apron and join the crowd of short order cooks in the kitchen. Sling the most pancakes and complete three orders to become the Champion of Breakfasts!



The Components

Flapjack Flipout is a miniature diner in a box. There are 50 large cardboard flapjacks with differing varieties: chocolate chip, blueberry, apple, pumpkin, plain, plus a daily special — and even a moldy one. The front side of each pancake shows its flavor, while the back side of each pancake is the same.

The deck of order cards looks like pages from a receipt book from any greasy spoon restaurant. Order cards list the number and type of pancakes wanted by a customer. The most eye-catching element of the game is its six large wooden griddles. This is the skillet you will use to

flip your flapjacks as you play. Last but not least, every diner needs a bell, so we know when an order is complete.

To play, everyone grabs a griddle. Spread the flapjacks around the table, face-down. Shuffle the order cards and place the bell where everyone can reach it. Now you're ready to start flipping!



The Mechanics

Flapjack Flipout is a frenetic race to flip and collect the right combination of pancakes to fill the current order. Each round starts when a new order card is revealed and read out loud to all players.

Now the frenzied flipping begins! Take a face-down flapjack and place it on your griddle. The goal is to flip the pancake over to reveal its flavor. It may take a few tries (and a lot of laughing), but you'll cheer when you stick the landing each time.

Once you reveal the flavor of the flapjack you will place it on the table in front of you, keeping it face-down. When you think you have flipped the correct number and type of pancakes to fill the order, ring the bell. Flip over pancakes from your face-down stacks to reveal the right combination for the order. If you're correct, you earn the order card. If there's a mix-up and you reveal an incorrect combination, play continues for the others, but you are out for the round. The first player to collect three order cards wins the game.



What Sets This Game Apart?

Many games combine pattern matching with dexterity, and for good reason. It's a tried-and-true combination. In fact, this duo is so successful very few games in this genre vary from the formula.

Flapjack Flipout adds a third ingredient to the mix: memory. Suddenly, the game is not just about a player's talent slinging cardboard. A player must also devise a simple system to organize their pancakes, since all successfully flipped flapjacks will end up face-down on the table.

This trio of elements creates a wonderful tension between the need to go fast while flipping and a need to go slow enough to remember what type of pancakes you flipped and where you put them.

Memory serves as a clever catch-up mechanism as well. If you did not win the last round, you may save the pancakes you flipped. When the next round begins, you may already have some or even all the flapjacks needed to fill the order... if only you can remember where you put them. "Take your time," the game says, "but hurry!"



Final Thoughts

Flapjack Flipout is quick, challenging, hilarious, and accessible to players of almost any age and experience level. Like any good diner whose cooks can whip up a custom order, you can tweak the game to suit many different players. You can increase the difficulty by adding moldy pancakes and daily specials or dial the game back for younger players by separating the dexterity and memory elements. There are even rules for team play, with one player flipping two griddles at once, the other loading each one. You may be starving by the time you finish playing, but there's no doubt *Flapjack Flipout* offers up a full menu of Major Fun. 🍪

Stephen Conway is the director of The Spiel Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to making the world a more playful place. He also oversees two internationally recognized game award programs, The Major Fun Award and The Spiel of Approval.

For more information visit: thespielfoundation.com, thespiel.net, and majorfun.com



Flapjack Flipout

Designed by Peter Newland, Art by Thea Baldwin



Time to Teach/Learn: 2-3 minutes



Your Turn!

A Spotlight on the
Gaming Community



What is your
favorite
party game?

#1: Codenames

“Great game that uses word association and shows you that not everyone thinks the same way.”

— Kevin R.

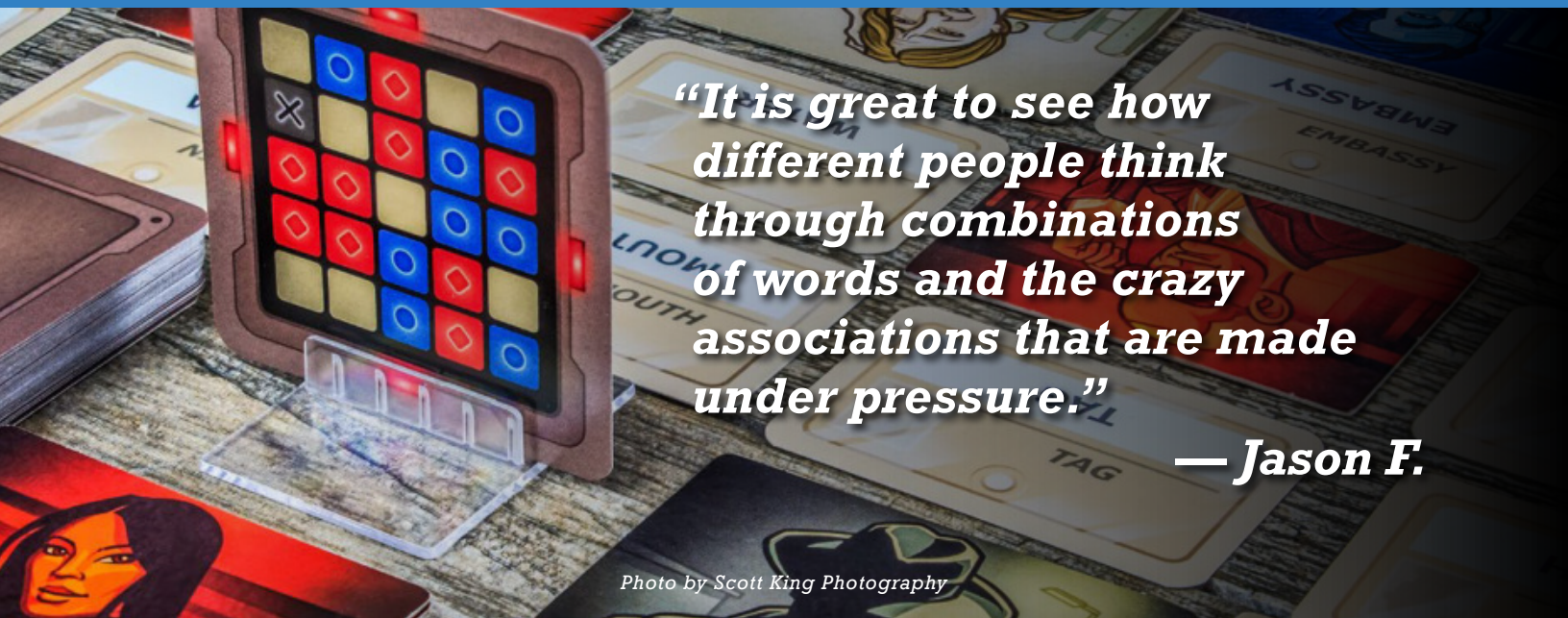


“It engages my brain. It doesn’t ask me to do stupid, possibly embarrassing things. I strongly dislike most party games because I find them inane, childish, and pointless. Codenames is challenging and engaging!”

— L.H.

“It is great to see how different people think through combinations of words and the crazy associations that are made under pressure.”

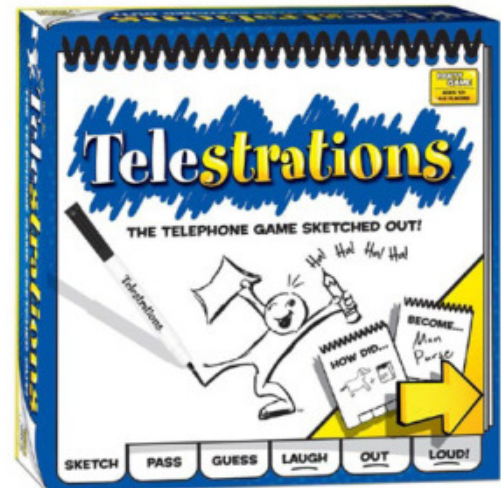
— Jason F.



#2: Telestrations

“It gets hilarious between the awful drawing and poor guesses. Played it lots but never bothered to keep score. A joyous experience.”

— Nichole B.



“So many people can get involved and it’s a ton of fun.”

— Michael B.

“Easy to teach, low barrier to entry, always funny!”

— Marc C.

#3: Just One



“Simple to learn, lots of fun to play, requires that everyone participates (so no one can get lost in a larger group game).”

— Luke D.

“Approachable, endlessly fun, and points don’t really matter.”

— Justin H.

“We can play with everyone. Mom, dad, aunts, everyone joins in that won’t usually play games.”

— Kyle W.



Other Party Games

“Secret Hitler. Gets everyone yelling at each other.”

— Tim T.



“Detective Club. It’s simple to grasp and play like Dixit, but adds the deduction element of games like Chameleon to figure out who the conspirator is who doesn’t know the clue.”

— Edwin G.



“Taboo is my favorite party game. It is flexible for single or team play, and the convolutions of language can be hysterically funny.”

— Kym L.



“Concept. It’s fun and turns the usual requirement for artistic skill on its head.”

— James C.

CHAKRA

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CELESTIA

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MUSE

A stunningly beautiful and fun game for 2-12 players. Play Co-op or competitive. Be a Muse!

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“Obscurio. The art is so intriguing, the guessing is challenging and fun, and the traitor mechanic puts a delightful twist on the gameplay.”

— Karsten K.

“I don’t care for party games, because in my experience they typically fail at their intended purpose of ‘breaking the ice’ or starting conversations. There’s always a dedicated-non-gamer, or person uninterested in the topic/theme; the over-enthusiastic cheerleader doesn’t balance out the curmudgeon; and anything provocative to interest some will scandalize others. Parties are for conversation; game sessions are for games.”

— Dutch U.



Honorable Mentions:

- ***Cards Against Humanity***
- ***Apples to Apples***
- ***Werewolf / One Night Ultimate Werewolf***
- ***Sushi Go***
- ***Wits and Wagers***
- ***Exploding Kittens***



“They are fighting over which party game we should play. I hate to see what happens when we actually start playing.”

Next Issue: What game did you love at first but now hate?

Send your ideas and photos to: editor@CasualGameRevolution.com

GATE KEEPER GAMES & DICE

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premium multicolor resin dice with custom glitter



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