**Podcast #90: The Generation Train**

**Sections and timestamps**

00:00:00 - New funky intro theme song

00:00:10 - [Intro](#_z68jrqwcdld8) - Complete

00:03:19 - [Blackout: Hong Kong](#_3ku3s7f26sid) - Complete

00:08:25 - [Just One](#_4jmhz6397tw8) - Complete

00:12:42 - [Sumer](#_9ht47bgtha06) - Complete

00:19:02 - [The Quacks of Quedlinburg](#_rvjwijruqmuc) - Complete

00:26:56 - [Schummel Hummel](#_rb1zh5plmi32) - Complete

00:34:03 - [The Thing](#_7dql4z5dko3x) - Complete

00:41:25 - [Pipeline](#_5g3c64jc4pf) - Complete

00:55:10 - [Gen7: A Crossroads Game](#_f6x6qiutlesr) - Complete

01:07:28 - [Wrap-up and farewell](#_275wrwa3n3v7) (2 minutes) @tapgiles

## Intro [00:00:10]

**Quinns**: Hallo everybody, and welcome to the 90th ever episode of the Shut Up & Sit Down podcast, and the first podcast of the year 2019!

**Matt**: [Mouth-trumpet fanfare]

**Quinns**: My name’s Quintin Smith, and my bugle boy, as you have heard before-

**Matt**: Keep it bugglin’! It’s me Matt Lees. And that is not the first bit of hot new brass that you will have seen – or heard, with your ears – on this podcast today.

**Quinns**: No, that’s right! We have updated our theme! Which previously we liked to describe as “Affordable BBC World Service.” It’s now “Sexy Late Night Talk Show.”

**Matt**: Yeah! We thought it would be funny to have a ridiculously 90s saxophone intro and stings, so we hope you like it! We like it. It was done by Steve Davit, who is a saxophonist in a band called Marian Hill, also a fan of the show. He does his solo stuff, and we asked him to do something that sounded like a 90s talk show, something slightly embarrassing.

**Quinns**: Yeah, something a bit embarrassing. We’ve now got stings we can play with, you can look forward to them later, but most importantly, because this is by, now, a real fan of Shut Up & Sit Down who lives – I believe – around Philadelphia, it means he can come with us to PAX Unplugged this year. This is like more than fifty percent of the reason why we changed our sting. He can come with us to the 2019 live podcast at PAX Unplugged AND he can play saxophone live on stage.

**Matt**: Yeah, that’s…

**Quinns**: It’s gonna happen.

**Matt**: That’s gonna be quite exciting.

**Quinns**: I can already think of so many crap jokes we could do with it. It’s gonna be fabulous. If you’re just tuning in, this is- That’s not how this works, this isn’t radio. This is a podcast about board games, and boy oh boy! In this new year, starting with a bang… starting with a board? No that’s not anything.

**Matt**: We’ve got a real bumper stock. I looked at this list-

**Quinns**: That’s also not a thing.

**Matt**: It is a hell of a bumper stock.

**Quinns**: Okay, right. The list is as follows: We’re looking at Blackout: Hong Kong again, which we talked about a couple of episodes ago, but Matt’s now played it.

**Matt**: Yep.

**Quinns**: What do you think of it, Matt?

**Matt**: It’s alright.

**Quinns** [talking over Matt]: Don’t say anything! We’re gonna talk about it in a bit.

**Matt**: Okay.

**Quinns**: We’re talking about Just One, a party game that is just better than it has any right to be. We’re going to be talking about Sumer, which is a game for the Nintendo Switch. That’s right, in the 90th podcast, we’ve broken our own rules to talk about a video game. We’re gonna be talking about Quacks of Quedlinburg, a four-syllable word that we now have to memorize. Thanks, Wolfgang Warsch. We’re gonna be talking about Schummel Hummel, which I believe means “cheating bee”? That’s a little card game about cheating and bees. We’re gonna be talking about The Thing! Goodness me, this *is* a long list, isn’t it?

**Matt**: Yes it is.

**Quinns**: We’re gonna be talking about The Thing, the board game of The Thing.

**Matt**: Some of this stuff might get bumped. Do you think it might get bumped?

**Quinns**: I don’t actually think so.

**Matt**: Gosh.

**Quinns**: Because some of it is middling.

**Matt**: Yeah but- Okay. Okay.

**Quinns**: We reserve the right to bump, much like any number of R&B stars.

**Matt**: We can edit it so that it’s different.

**Quinns**: Yeah, we can, yeah.

**Matt**: Yeah, wow.

**Quinns**: We can do that. We’re gonna be talking about Pipeline, a game of oil, the companies that make oil, and the players who don’t understand oil, but sometimes make money anyway.

**Matt**: I’m worried about this podcast already, because I feel like there are a real number of stone-cold bangers on this list.

**Quinns**: Well it’s okay Matt, because then we’re going to end the podcast by talking about Gen 7!

[Funky sting]

## Blackout: Hong Kong [00:03:19]

**Quinns**: Let’s talk briefly about Blackout: Hong Kong, a eurogame by Alexander Pfister, which I got very excited about a couple of episodes ago, a game about running an organization in Hong Kong after a power cut and you have to keep the city running, you have to keep medicine and food flowing. You gotta keep that food flowing, Matthew.

**Matt**: And the reasons you were excited about it, you had every right to be excited about, because actually the coolest mechanics in it are very evocative and very cool. The whole thing of having to send people out to scout and recon, but every time you do you’ll lose somebody from your group/gang, depending on what kind of unsavory types you’re hiring: Very interesting! We played it a bunch when we were in Philadelphia. We played it just me and you, you had played with some other people, and to be honest, I found that the more we played it… It’s a very competent puzzle by Mr. Pfister, but it doesn’t have the same kind of thematic flair as Great Western Trail.

**Quinns**: This is really more of a public service announcement I think, because I got so excited about it, and you played it once and also were pretty hype, but yeah it doesn’t have the staying power of other economy management games that we recommend. And I was thinking about why that is, and for me, usually – I don’t know, thinking about eurogames I’ve played a lot recently, like the fabulous A Feast For Odin – and the thing with Blackout: Hong Kong was that I would finish it and go, “Yeah, I think I did pretty well.” And then I played it again and would go, “Yup, I sure did pretty well again.” But I wasn’t taking, from one game into the next, knowledge of what I did wrong, or what I was excited to try. And every game of it I just sort of did what made sense.

**Matt**: I think “exciting to try” is the key thing for me there, because I felt that really, whilst it was very cool to have a eurogame which had a different theme of having to stock up on survival aspects, whether it’s “We’re gonna go and get food, we’re gonna get water, we’re gonna get fuel,” but there wasn’t really any thematic feeling of difference between any of the different mechanics in the game, and I think generally that’s the thing. Like maybe you could make a really big gang of people, maybe you could do this. But it didn’t feel different, unlike in Great Western Trail, where it’s like, “Maybe I’m gonna go and ride this train really far. Maybe I’m gonna get award-winning cows.” That felt enough...

**Quinns**: If you haven’t played Great Western Trail, that does make the game sound completely insane.

**Matt**: Yeah, it does, but I felt like when I was taking a different approach in Great Western Trail, A) it was a choice, and I could choose to do that. Even though sometimes it was like, “Okay, this feels like the right choice now.” But there was enough thematic difference, where in this, really, it’s admirable that they’ve tried to use a different, interesting theme, but I didn’t feel like- in a euro of moving cubes around, there’s no different between water, and food, and fuel, and tools; it’s just different cubes. And if you’re playing a game where it’s like: Wood! Or, you know, carrots! Then that’s not so bad? But in this, I don’t know, it struggled to correctly convey the emotional abstraction? And I don’t know if that’s possible, but yeah.

**Quinns**: I guess it’s an interesting question, maybe for minds smarter than us, that when you’re dealing with farming games, like Agricola – the grand-daddy of so many of these sorts of games; big complicated farming simulator – whether you get a Carrot, or a Child, or some bricks that you can use to make a wall, those are resources that are applied very differently, and so of course you might logically assume that if you’re making a game set in the 21st century, like Blackout: Hong Kong, that it’ll be just as thematic to have batteries and food and medicine, but actually in the 21st century, those resources are just… resources, when you’re delivering them to a population on a large scale. I suppose, if I was redesigning the game from scratch, the way to make those resources fit more adequately into the mechanics would be to make it on a much smaller scale. Because on a smaller scale, if you have a gang of eight people, if you don’t have food, or medicine, or batteries, those are going to do very different, tangible things to that group.

**Matt**: Well it’s a bit like the way that sci fi often doesn’t work in game design with stories, because it’s harder to envision. A good thing about euros is, “Oh, I can combine these two bricks to make a building.” That kind of loosely makes sense, and is immediately obvious. When you’ve got more abstract combinations, eh! It might not. But also yeah, even the fact that all this cool art, and all the cool different character types, I just wasn’t looking at it. It just became very purely mechanical. There is a question here of about how well eurogames, as a format, really can convert themselves to interesting thematic settings like this, and how much they’re best-suited for like, “This is a game where you’re gonna build some stuff.”

**Quinns**: Yeah, I mean certainly it’s the puzzle that doesn’t get any easier to unpick, right? I mentioned A Feast For Odin earlier; why is it in A Feast For Odin, when you get a necklace, which is a bizarre-shaped brick, which you then put on your player board, that feels, Matthew, like you’ve *got* a necklace. And you’re so proud of your necklace, and mechanically, it doesn’t even have an effect! It’s just a different shape.

**Matt**: The belle of the fjord! ...doesn’t really work.

**Quinns**: You’ve got the rest of 2019 to do better.

**Matt**: Let’s move on.

**Quinns**: Okay! Yes, so, Blackout: Hong Kong, definitely one to try, but perhaps not one that we’d recommend buying, until you’ve got, for example, lots of other Alexander Pfister’s other games, like Isle of Skye, or Great Western Trail.

## Just One [00:08:25]

**Quinns**: Let’s talk about something a bit more positive, let’s talk about Just One! Which is so simple I can’t imagine we’re gonna be talking about it for a long time, but my goodness! I’ve been having a lot of fun with this!

**Matt**: It’s really quite good.

**Quinns**: How would you describe Just One, Matthew Lees?

**Matt**: I’d describe Just One by saying that it’s a game where you have… You know when you have little placeholders at restaurants, or like weddings – wedding’s better – where it’s like a little bit of plastic that effectively has got a name on it, except they’re blank, and you have little pens, and each time there is one person who has a card in front of them, and it has five different words, they choose a number, and then everyone else sees that word, and they go, “Okay, word number four,” and then they all have to write a clue…

**Quinns**: So, for example, they might be trying to get you to guess… uh…

**Matt**: “Stone.”

**Quinns**: “Stone.” Great.

**Matt**: And so you think, “Okay, ‘stone,’” and I might then write, like, ourgh, like… “Cannabis,” or something.

**Quinns**: Oh, okay sure.

**Matt**: Yeah. Because! [Quinns laughing] Sorry, this, we’re confusing… Because! The trick of the game effectively is, you write on this thing, and then when you’re all ready, the person who has to guess looks away, and everyone shows all the other clue givers their clues, and if there’s any crossover – if two people have written the same clue, or something ridiculously close – those clues are then wiped out of the equation, and the person won’t get to see them. Once that’s happened, you share the remaining words with the person who has to guess, and they have to look for the connection between all of these words and guess what the word is.

**Quinns**: So, for example, if I have to guess the word in this cooperative game – we should stress, it’s a game where you’re trying to get the answer successfully enough times – everyone turns their weird little plastic place settings around and I see that my friends have written, “Clothes,” “Torso,” “Arms,” and those are my clues, so I guess, “Shirt?” And then all my friends go, “Hooray!” Because that was correct.

**Matt**: Yeah, so I think the interesting space with that game is that you want to write something that’s gonna be not too obvious, because if it’s too obvious someone else would write it and then you’ll wipe out the clue, but if everyone writes things that are kind of left field..

**Quinns**: That are just so Byzantine, yeah.

**Matt**: ...then it becomes really quite hard to work out what the word is.

**Quinns**: That is the game. You know, there’s not even anything beyond, “Play thirteen times and try and get as many points as possible.” That’s the entire game! And yet, there’s something about it that’s just joyous? Like it’s a puzzle that everyone gets really invested in someone getting the answer right. It’s also got a nice social dynamic where, of course, everyone knows the answer except one person, which is quite tense? If you’re guessing, you feel tense, if you’re everybody else, you feel like you’re in on a shared secret?

**Matt**: Yeah, and it’s even that thing, because no one ever really wants to think that they’ve written down something which is super obvious, when you do flip it round and you’ve written the same thing as someone else, you don’t feel that annoyed about it, because it’s just like, “Ah, okay yeah, we both thought that was a good idea.”

**Quinns**: Yeah, exactly! It’s almost flattering that someone else also- It was such a good idea, other people had it! And now, you’ve lost.

**Matt**: It’s really interesting actually, and I really like the use of the plastic and the white pens, to be honest, because increasingly I find, especially with roll-and-write [Roland Wright] games – fantastic designer – I really like the fact that it’s- A lot of the time I think, “Actually, you know what, this would be better as just paper and pencil.” There’s something more nice about the tactility of that. Whereas this, the quick pace of it of like, “Write a thing on, rub it out, write a thing on, rub it out,” and the wonderful clackiness of the plastic things as you flip them around and rotate them-

**Quinns** [talking over Matt]: Everyone rotating their place setting around, yeah.

**Matt**: -is really very nice.

**Quinns**: Yeah, no, I thought so as well. If you’re looking for a party game that’s just a sure-fire crowd-pleaser that might not get anyone excited, but is just startlingly entertaining?

**Matt**: It’s super playable. [**Quinns** [in agreement]: Playable]. I’d put it in that same field as Skull, or Cockroach Poker, or something. When we played it at the end of PAX Unplugged, I was really tired, and someone started getting it out, and I was like, “Ehhhh, am I in the mood for a party game or whatever?” And then we started playing and it’s like, immediately someone puts a pen and a thing in front of you and then you’re playing, and it’s actually like, “This is fun.”

**Quinns**: I completely agree. Although, to paraphrase, or outright steal from a friend of ours, we finished playing it, and I went, “What did you think?” And he went, “Yeah, I enjoyed it, but Just One is a good title.” Implying he did not want to play it more than once.

**Matt**: Fair.

**Quinns**: And I felt the same way, but then when it got brought out again later, I thought, “I’ll play it just once more.”

**Matt**: Just once more. That’s how they get you!

**Quinns**: So that’s Just One, a game about addiction-n… sort of…

## Sumer [00:12:42]

**Quinns**: Let’s shift gears completely, Matthew. Let’s talk about – and we’re gonna justify ourselves here – let’s talk about a game for the Nintendo Switch.

**Matt**: Yup.

**Quinns**: Nintendo’s new video game console.

**Matt**: Might have heard about it, it’s taking the world by storm.

**Quinns**: And this game we’re talking about is called Sumer. That’s S-U-M-E-R AND, wait for it, this gets even better, that’s a reference to the ancient culture of the Sumerians.

**Matt**: I’ll have Sumer that [“some of that”] please!

**Quinns**: Well, if you want to get Sumer that, it’s available in the online shop for the Switch for some money.

**Matt**: This is something that we saw being produced, possibly four years ago to be honest, so we’ve been a bit slow to cover this, but it’s effectively a real-time eurogame which is up to four players at once.

**Quinns**: Yes, so the designer is a friend of ours – we should stress – and also knows an awful lot about board games. And so Sumer is actually their attempt to bring board game mechanics onto a video game console. But this isn’t like the adaptations of Ticket to Ride or Carcassonne that are board games you *can* play in a digital environment. This is something that takes the *ideas* of board games and makes them into a video game. So what this is is a competitive eurogame. It’s a worker placement game, right? Which is where you have a certain number of people – one, two, three, four – and you can put them on different spaces that get you different awards. So if you put a person here, you get a brick. But also – and this is key to the genre – if you put someone on that space that gets you a brick, no one else can have it. So, with Sumer, we’ve got this combination of a worker placement game, and – I’m gonna go for the thing everyone’s played – Super Mario Brothers. So this is what’s called a platformer, where all the players at the same time are released in this Sumerian ziggurat-

**Matt**: And it’s like “Three, two, one,” and you immediately start leaping and jumping to try and get to the spot you want to get to first, and hoping that no one else is going for it.

**Quinns**: And this is where it gets really interesting if you’ve played worker placement games, because unlike those games, where obviously you have time to think, in Sumer, you might be running to the beer-brewing spot at the top. Someone else gets there first, and drops a worker!

**Matt**: Argh! I guess I’ll get a goat? And then you go, “I don’t need a goat! Oh noooo!”

**Quinns**: Yeah, it’s my favorite thing about auction games, or real-time games in general, which is: You can make mistakes.

**Matt**: And the satisfaction of actually finishing your turn first. Because what’s lovely is [**Quinns**: Oh yes!] you’re in this little ziggurat, and you have to jump around the thing, put all your workers to do the things or carry your materials around to put them in other places to make other materials – you know, traditional eurogame-y style things – but then you have to go back to bed. [Quinns laughing] And if you’re the first in bed, then you get a bonus. And there’s something I love about that. We played this a bunch just two-player, didn’t we?

**Quinns**: Yeah, we did, we did.

**Matt**: Just head-to-head.

**Quinns**: It’s not something I would recommend just as a single-player experience.

**Matt**: No, no, you *can* play against AI, and I’ve played it against AI portably, and it’s quite fun, quite a fun little throwaway thing, and it’s a nice touch that when you play it on the Switch in portable mode that all the characters have big bobbly heads?

**Quinns**: Oh nice, so you can actually see things.

**Matt**: So you can see things, but also it’s funny. Anyway, yeah, you play it multiplayer at the same time, and with two players we were just having a great time shouting at each other. There’s some amazing level of smugness for when you manage to jump to the place you want to get there, getting the thing, getting everything you want, and then going to bed first and just sitting back being like, “Yes, that was a good turn!”

**Quinns**: Yeah, and also it has a lot of swearing, which is so important in any locally-played game where you’re sat on the sofa with your buddies playing a video game.

**Matt**: And also I really liked the fact that in between rounds it allows you to spend some of the points, I think- Wasn’t it points you bid?

**Quinns**: You end up with money, which I think is a secondary resource.

**Matt**: Basically, being able to then bid on special powers and special upgrades.

**Quinns**: Or upgrades for the Ziggurat itself.

**Matt**: So you could make a new room, and anyone can use this room, but you get to choose where it goes. So it’s like, “Hey, this new bakery is right next to my bedroom!” And everyone else is like, [pained whisper] “Oh god.”

**Quinns** [laughing]: I love it.

**Matt**: The fact that you bid for them in real-time as well, though, of being like, “Euugghh-uugh!” Pressing left and right to be like, [deeply conflicted] “How much money?” and then seeing someone else suddenly moving up to catch you and panicking and being like, [even more deeply conflicted] “Oh I spent twenty-five on this jelly!”

**Quinns**: I always say that auction mechanics are the domain of board games, and there’s loads of different ways to do auctions. Everyone can make one bid in a blind auction, or you can go round and round forever. You can do closed-fist type auctions… I just named two of the same kinds of auctions, there. It doesn’t matter, the point is Sumer actually has an auction that you don’t see in board games, because you have this track, which says how much you’re willing to bid, and then a time limit, and everyone can advance as far along this track as they want, which means you can completely psych people out by rushing your bar all the way to like, “Oh I’ll spend thirty coins!” And then just as the time’s about to run out, you drop back as fast as you can.

**Matt**: I think it’s a really fun mechanic, because often I find that auction mechanics in games can get a little bit mathsy, for obvious reasons, of people really gaming it exactly to work out “What is this worth?” and then doing that. Whereas this, you *could* do that, but you tend to lose your nerve a little bit, and the fact that it’s not a digital- It’s like an analog slider rather than a digital one, so it’s not like, “I’m bidding thirteen, if I press left I’m gonna bid fourteen.” It just moves constantly and then jumps up, and it means that you’re on thirteen, and then someone else is on thirteen as well, but they’ve gone slightly ahead of you so just tap it a bit.

**Quinns**: Oh yeah! [laughing]

**Matt**: And then you’re still thirteen but ahead, and then they tap it, and then you’re like, “Oh I’m on fourteen.” It’s very easy to get into a bidding war in which you end up spending way more goats – I think – than you wanted to.

**Quinns**: Goats! That was it. It was a lot of like, [cursing the gods] “Oh, why did I spend so many goats?!”

**Matt**: Especially then because you get to the next auction and you’re like, “Flying boots!” And you’re like, [pained] “Oh I want them! But I bought... a masonry? Oh god!”

**Quinns**: “I bought another bakery next to my bedroom.”

**Matt**: Yeah, it’s a really interesting game, and the fact that it’s on the Switch… Lots of people have a Switch, I think. It’s really worth checking out.

**Quinns**: Yeah, although the one thing I would say about it is: It is very much asking you to do some tricky eurogame calculations of like, “Oh, but is this reward better than this? How do you make bread? Oh you combine these ingredients.” All the stuff you do in a eurogame, but very much against the clock. So it’s not something I would throw in front of people in the same way I would, like, Bomberman. Which might be obvious, but people should not go into this expecting the kind of playful local multiplayer they always get.

**Matt**: No, it’s very much like, “Here’s a local multiplayer game made for people who really love eurogames.”

**Quinns**: Yeah, basically, yeah.

**Matt**: It’s a real interesting little treat. Definitely recommend having a look.

**Quinns**: Yeah, that’s Sumer for the Nintendo Switch. S-U-M-E-R.

## The Quacks of Quedlinburg [00:19:02]

**Quinns**: Let’s talk about a game that has been exciting the banonkers of of Matthew Lees and myself.

**Matt**: My banonkers are nowhere to be seen.

**Quinns**: Let’s talk about Quacks of Quedlinburg.

**Matt**: Oh boy!

**Quinns**: And before we start, we mentioned this in the news on Monday. www.shutupandsitdown.com publishes a weekly news round-up where Matt and I get very excited talking about new game announcements. It’s all in a written format as well, because, guess what, that’s the best way to consume news.

**Matt**: Mmmm!

**Quinns**: So, Quacks of Quedlinburg is by Wolfgang Warsch, who last year put out The Mind, a fabulous card game – and you can google all of this on our site, and the words Shut Up and Sit Down if you want to see our reviews – but The Mind, Illusion, the game I can’t-

**Matt**: Pretty Darn Clever?

**Quinns**: Oh, Ganz Schön Clever, yeah. And also Quacks of Quedlinburg. All of this came out last year. Quacks is his big box board game.

**Matt**: Quacks of [mumbles], as I call it.

**Quinns**: Quacks of [mumbles], or, as we more realistically call it: Quacks.

**Matt**: It’s got the most bonkers name. Quacks of Quedlinburg.

**Quinns**: And most annoyingly, that’s now becoming a naming convention, because his next big box board game with the same publisher is called like: The Tavern of Tiggaliggagubuggug. [The Tavern of Tiefan Thal]

**Matt**: Oh wow, we’ve got another…

**Quinns**: Oh, Friedemann Friese.

**Matt**: ...Friedemann Friese on our hands.

**Quinns**: WIth awful naming conventions.

**Matt**: But I’ll let him off for now, because his games are quite consistently very good.

**Quinns**: Yeah, so Quacks of Quedlinburg won a few awards last year. We finally played it. Matt, how would you describe the competitive game of Quacks?

**Matt**: It is absolutely fantastic!

**Quinns** [laughing]: Okay!

**Matt**: It’s an exploding potion bag builder! Which is the sort of sentence I like to say out loud and is one of the reasons I enjoy this hobby. Effectively, you have a big cauldron in front of you, which is your little personal game board, and each round you pull ingredients out of a bag, and you put them on the cauldron, and there’s stuff in there that makes the potion bubble, but if you put too much of it in, your cauldron is gonna explode.

**Quinns**: Metaphorically, this is not real bubbles.

**Matt**: Yeah, it’s all in the theater of the mind.

**Quinns**: Very good.

**Matt**: But it means that effectively you’re just working around this track, and if you blow up your cauldron it’s not the end of the world, but it just means that then at the end of the round, if you stop and you’re like, “That’s it, I’m not pulling anything else out this bag, that would be crazy,” then it means that you will get the gold *and* victory points for however far along this big twisting circular track of cauldron that you’ve got, but if you blow it up you only get to choose one, so you either have victory points *or* money.

**Quinns**: And Matt, what do you spend money on?

**Matt**: You spend money on more ingredients to put in your bag!

**Quinns**: Oh my *goooddd!!!*

**Matt**: But you’re never allowed to look in your bag for the whole of the game, which means that you constantly have an idea in your head of what is in your bag, but you can’t really remember and you’re probably wrong. [Quinns laughing] You think, “I’m gonna keep pulling things out, because surely I can’t pull another of the horrible white things out now. I’ve bought like, eight of those things!” And then at the end of the game you count, and you actually have three.

**Quinns**: Yeah, all of this is fresh in my head because I’ve just written a first draft of our review for it.

**Matt**: Nice.

**Quinns**: But there’s a couple of things that I would stress about it. And actually this is a terrible idea because I’m just rehashing points we’re gonna make in our video review. BUT! It’s such a good game I’ll say them all twice. First off, it’s bizarre how in the shopping phase between rounds- Because this is quite a big game, it takes about an hour. You do it nine times across, thematically, nine days of this potion-making festival. And between each day you buy maybe one or two chips to throw into your bag. So you throw one tiny little disk into a bag that already has ten things. And that tiny addition of changing the odds of what you’re pulling out of your bag makes you *so excited* to play it again! Which makes no sense. Like, “I’ve got twelve things in this bag, I’ll put one more in, so I’ve changed all the probabilities a tiny bit.” But oh my goodness! I’m desperate to start pulling stuff out my bag and risking explosions!

**Matt**: Yeah, because this time, it’s gonna be like, “This will combo with that,” and usually it won’t. And I think what’s wonderful about it is it’s basically just sitting around playing slot machines with lots of old ladies with rinsed hair.

**Quinns**: Yeah, rather than a cup- Yeah, honestly that’s so much of the appeal! Rather than a cup full of quarters, you have a bag full of magical quarters that you chose to put in there yourself.

**Matt**: And what’s wonderful is the fact that everyone will have a bad turn probably. The way it will shake out is just- Very much like any kind of gambling-based thing, it’s about knowing when to stop. Knowing when it’s not your time. And what’s wonderful really and what I love most about it is when you get to the last round of the game, or the round before, and you just pull out four of the bad white tiles in a row, and you’re like, “What?!” By this point you know that the odds have diminished so much, but then you think, “Oh I can’t keep pulling them out.” And you do!

**Quinns**: Here’s my pitch of why Quacks works so well as a game, right? Because, for people who don’t have much board gaming experience, it’s like you say, it’s a slot machine. It’s exciting, you might pull out the mushroom that means if you pull out a white thing next its value is doubled! And then you pull out the white three and you move six spaces, which is so exciting you have to stop playing the game to tell everyone around the table what just happened to you.

**Matt**: And they go, “Aww that’s not fair you’re so lucky!”

**Quinns**: Yeah, exactly. So that’s the game as a simple accessible way to play, and that’s how I often play it. But if you want to really get competitive, if you have a head for numbers and figures and just want to play it as a gambling game… The word I use in the current draft of the review is: It’s just a nemesis! Because you will, as a smart man – or woman, obviously – be like, “Oh! Well I know there’s only two more white things in the bag, I can feel eleven more tokens, which means two out of eleven chance I blow up. I love this odds! Let’s go!” And then you’ll pull one of them, and you’ll go, “That’s not fair!” [Both laughing] But of course obviously it’s fair! It’s just there’s something about the probability of Quacks... of Quedlinburg – let’s give it its full name, as long as we’re talking about it on the podcast – there’s something about the probability of it that just so *evades* common sense? You know what I mean?

**Matt**: Yeah, I mean common sense and numbers and humans aren’t really a combination that ever works.

**Quinns**: Well this is it! This is your wheelhouse, right? It’s the way that humans will look at a certain set of numbers and be like, “Those are good odds.”

**Matt**: Yeah, our perception of odds is just completely wrong most of the time. I think what I love most about it is yeah, you’re always excited to play the next round, even if you’ve just blown up your cauldron. And when you have a bad round, it’s catastrophically bad in a fun way. It’s not just the euro thing of being like, “Oh I guess you had a season that wasn’t that great,” it’s like, “My cauldron *blew up!”* [Quinns laughing] And the other thing is, everyone will laugh! But then it will happen to them, and everyone will laugh at them. Or just some of the sheer volume of swearing we had whilst playing it. People just at the top of their lungs out of nowhere just going, “Arrrrggghhh!” and you being like, “Oh gosh” and looking at what they’ve done. But it’s fun!

**Quinns** [talking over Matt]: But it’s fast enough, that-

**Matt**: It’s not like you’re genuinely not- You’re only angry at [laughing] yourself.

**Quinns**: Well you always make the choice to pull that token out the cauldron.

**Matt**: Exactly!

**Quinns**: It never blindsides you.

**Matt**: You could have dropped it and pulled another one out.

**Quinns**: Yeah yeah yeah, oh well of course that. I meant you made a decision to add another token to the bag. But of course you’re right Matthew, you, with your fingertips, chose what token it would be. Also you can’t blow up out of nowhere, you always know-

**Matt**: You always know.

**Quinn**: -you always know, “Okay, if I keep going, then I may blow up.”

**Matt**: Yeah, it’s honestly alarmingly fun, and it has reversible ingredient rules, so you can basically play with three or four different variations in the base game, I think?

**Quinns**: Yes, you can swap all of the ingredients. There’s like seven different things, from dead man’s breath to moths to mushrooms and spiders.

**Matt**: All the stuff you put in potions at home.

**Quinns**: Basically, yeah. But what those ingredients do can be swapped out, so you can play with a full set, or you can swap it out for any one of three other sets? Also you can flip the player boards to play a slightly more advanced version to do with bonuses, which we won’t get into now.

**Matt**: And I think I played it about three times over the weekend of PAX Unplugged, and every time I was just like, “This is great.” Every time I would have just happily played it again straight away afterwards.

**Quinns**: Yup, I’ve played it maybe five, six times in quick succession, which is nuts for us, just choosing to do that, just because I wanna play this game again.

**Matt**: It’s a lot of fun.

**Quinns**: Which means I’m super hype that the expansion, which was called The Herb Witches-

**Matt**: Mmm, herbal witches!

**Quinns**: -herbal witches, which sounds like a terrible brand of haunted chewing gum [Matt laughing] – has been revealed. It’s going to have some new ingredients, some new stuff. It doesn’t look like a huge expansion, but frankly I will buy anything that adds more to this game. I’m very excited to do our video review of Quacks of Quedlinburg.

**Matt**: It’s a cracker.

**Quinn**: It’s real good. Shall we move on?

**Matt**: Yes.

## Schummel Hummel [00:26:56]

**Quinns**: Okay, let’s talk about a little card game, which had us crying with laughter and we need to figure out if that’s because we were tired or not. Let’s talk about Schummel Hummel.

**Matt**: Oh yeah, Schummel Hummel.

**Quinns**: Which is out. I think you have to google- So I’m going to spell this for you, because the name, which is Cheating Bee, it’s currently for sale under the German name, but the English rules are included and you can buy it yourself. So Schummel is S-H… Oh my god this is the worst podcast (?)-

**Matt**: I can spell this. S-C-H-U-M-M-E-L [**Quinns**: Great.] H-U-M…

**Quinns and Matt together**: M-E-L?

**Quinns**: Great! You’re listening to Words With Friends: The Podcast.

**Matt**: Hey, that’s German, I can do German a bit!

**Quinns**: You can! You did it, man! So this is Cheating Bee. It’s from the Drei Magier Ugly Animals line of games, which you may know from such hits as Cockroach Poker, Cockroach Poker Royale, Cockroach Salad, Cockroach Soup. It’s a rehash of a game called Cheating Moth? It’s now been upgraded to a bee, which we can all agree is a superior insect.

**Matt**: Yup.

**Quinns**: Schummel Hummel is a game about cheating, where players need to discard their cards. The deck is dealt out between a table of players, and one player – who I believe starts as the oldest player – is a role known as the Watch Worm. Now, what follows in the rules explanation of Schummel Hummel is the most tedious arrangement of pointless rules in the world. It’s almost like one of those parodies of card games, where it’s like, “Well now, of course, if you draw a butterfly, then everyone has to touch the table, but if it’s a yellow butterfly, then no one can touch the table.”

**Matt**: I mean one of the rules specifically is if there’s a wasp card, then you all have to touch it, I think. But then, if the wasp has a stinger, then you don’t.

**Quinns**: Which is a tiny-

**Matt**: It’s a tiny difference in the art.

**Quinns**: Yeah.

**Matt**: We didn’t actually understand the game, really, for the first time we played, did we? It was not until afterwards that we kind of like- It’s one of those weird games where you can read the rules and play it, and still not quite get it because you don’t understand why the rules are there.

**Quinns**: It’s such a sleeper hit. We ended up having so much fun with it that we were talking about doing a video review of this little small-box card game, purely because I think without a video review it would just vanish without a trace. Because it’s so difficult to get your head around. But the point of all of these cards which have different rules that everyone has to learn, is basically: The game’s difficult to play. Which means when it comes to your turn, actually figuring out what card to play and putting it down and then everyone else doing the correct thing is hard for *everybody!* Much easier, then… to cheat! And cheating in Schummel Hummel is completely legal. In fact, you are supposed to drop cards in your sleeves, literally off the table, over your shoulder, but here’s the catch. So there’s two rules. First off, if the Watch Worm sees you, you’re busted, you get a penalty, and you become the new Watch Worm. Second most important rule, if any *other* player sees you cheat… they’re not allowed to say *anything*.

**Matt**: And you’re only allowed to get rid of one card at a time.

**Quinns**: Yes.

**Matt**: One more than you should. So you can play two cards at once if you want, and as long as- Not even “no one notices,” as long as the *Watch Worm* doesn’t notice.

**Quinns**: Yeah, which is why we also started to realize on multiple plays: Oh, of course, all the little fiddly rules, like, “Oh, if someone puts down a card-” The actual card you play has to have a flower in the corner that has a matching color? But of course, you can cheat on that as well, and if the Watch Worm doesn’t notice, because they’re too busy making sure that Alice doesn’t drop more cards down her back, then that’s fine! And that’s a way to get rid of cards!

**Matt**: That’s a legit way of cheating, you can cheat just by not following the rules. Here are the rules, you just can ignore them. And as long as the Watch Worm doesn’t notice... We also realized that we were playing this around a table standing up, which didn’t work so well because people could literally rest their hands on the edge of the table and just drop cards without anyone noticing, which is not a usual thing.

**Quinns**: I mean, to be clear, it was hilarious-

**Matt**: It was absolutely hilarious.

**Quinns**: -because we would finish the game, and then the Watch Worm would look at the floor and see about [laughing] forty cards on the floor.

**Matt**: There would be *so many* cards on the floor, and you’re like, “How did that even happen?” I mean, we also realized that the Watch Worm probably could actually be a bit militant. If people start putting their hands down towards their laps, you could be like, “Ah, ah, ah, nope, nope! Hands on the table!”

**Quinns**: Yeah, we came to realize that the Watch Worm should basically be playing a policeperson. Because they also do have to play the game!

**Matt**: Yeah, they’ve gotta play! And they have to catch one cheating because that’s the only way that then *they can cheat*. By passing on the Watch Worm’s mantle. It’s absolutely mad, and it’s incredibly satisfying to just go, “Upp! Upp!” as you watch someone dropping a card on the floor.

**Quinns**: Oh gosh, I think we are gonna have to give this some more coverage in some format, whether we play it on a stream or do a video review.

**Matt**: Yeah, but it’s incredibly funny and I think what I like about it most is the fact that-

**Quinns**: Is the grasshoppers?

**Matt**: Well the grasshopper’s incredible, and we’ll talk about that in a second. The reason I love the grasshoppers, and the whole thing, is it’s one of these games that just really challenges what you think about what games can be.

**Quinn**: Yeeaahhh!

**Matt**: Because we were playing it in a bar with people who play a lot of games and who know games, and people were like – even people playing it – “What the *hell* is this?” [Quinns laughing] Just because it doesn’t seem to make any sense, but in a way which is like, yeah! You know what? You can do whatever you want with games! And it doesn’t have to be serious.

**Quinns**: Yeah, it’s wild.

**Matt**: It can just be *deeply* silly. So either side of you, you’ve got a grasshopper card, and the way it works is that at any point in the game, if somebody has played a card in the center of the table – you know, finished their turn by playing a card – if you have a grasshopper card in your hand, you stop the game and you show it to the person that you took it from, basically. So between me and you, for example, there was a grasshopper card, and effectively, if it’s not there at any point and someone has just put the card down and you go, “Ah! I’ve got the grasshopper card.” And you put it back and then they have to pick up cards. But what this leads to is a game in which you are constantly trying to pick up the grasshopper cards-

**Quinns**: Because there’s no penalty for getting busted doing it! [laughing]

**Matt**: Nope! There’s no penalty! And it meant the whole game was literally just me and you, and you just going, “Put it back. Put it back. [Quinns laughing] Put it back. Put it back.” And then me literally going and putting it back and then immediately picking it up again, and you’d go, “Put it back. Put it back. [Quinns laughing] Put it back.”

**Quinns**: Which of course- But then if another player plays the wasp, then we’re gonna be late to slap our hands down.

**Matt**: Yeah, and then the great thing was, I would just be picking it up constantly and you just going, “Put it back. Put it back. Put it back.” Until eventually you’d just- I’d pick it up and you’d just be looking the other way, and it would work. But then whilst you’re doing that, maybe the person to your left is also taking your grasshopper. It’s just... It’s mad! Everybody’s just cheating constantly, you’ve constantly got more things to keep an eye on than you possibly can. It’s just riotously funny and silly.

**Quinns**: I mean, I’ll admit that after seven years- Oughmm, going on seven years of doing Shut Up and Sit Down now, occasionally I’m pretty grateful to have a game that just plays like nothing. It reminds me of when we played Blood on the Clocktower last year, which they just sent me the prototype review copy of, so we can get to work on that.

**Matt**: Oh, cool!

**Quinns**: But, Blood on the Clocktower, even though it’s so similar to Werewolf, in play it was just so weird, and it made me feel like I was playing Werewolf for the first time.

**Matt**: Yeah, I think that’s a key thing, really. A lot of the time it’s not really about structural differences or thematic differences, and the exciting thing about a card game is-

**Quinn**: Does this make me feel like I’m new to the hobby again?

**Matt**: Yeah, you can just tweak something quite abstract, or quite seemingly subtle, and this is really, I think, the interesting thing about our job. And often people go, “Why should I get *this* game when I’ve got *this* game?” And it’s like, “Well actually, because this *tiny* change changes everything.”

**Quinns**: Yeah, yeah.

**Matt**: And that’s always the exciting thing, is finding those things.

**Quinns**: So we might indulge ourselves with a review of Schummel Hummel later this year, partially just so we can teach people how to play it? Because…

**Matt**: Yeah, at the very least it might be something that we try and play on the stream somehow.

**Quinns**: Yeah, absolutely.

## The Thing [00:34:03]

**Quinns**: Let’s talk about a new game from… Mondo, is it? Who make movie posters?

**Matt**: Uhhh?

**Quinns**: Or, sorry, who *made* movie posters, but are now branching into all kinds of really exciting beautiful projects in the board game space! Let’s talk about their new project, The Thing!

**Matt**: Ahhhh, yes. The Thing I played at… uh...

**Quinns**: PAX Unplugged again.

**Matt**: I keep forgetting.

**Quinns**: This is basically the PAX Unplugged podcast.

**Matt**: It is! And I’m amazed how well I remember all these games, consider that was months ago.

**Quinns**: Sure.

**Matt**: And, in between that and this, I consumed rather large quantities of red wine and cheese. Because of a little thing called… [pronounced with a hard T] Christmas. Anyway. The Thing is based on the popular film of the same name. That is, The Thing.

**Quinns** [laughing]: Thanks Matt.

**Matt**: Yeah, but the John Carpenter edition, not the 1950s one where some people get stalked by a big carrot in black and white.

**Quinns**: What?! Is that a thing?

**Matt**: Yeah, it looks like a carrot. Because my mum said she’d seen it, and I’m like, “You’ve seen The Thing?” Because she’s quite squeamish and doesn’t like scary stuff. And she’s like, “Yeah yeah yeah yeah! I’ve seen The Thing!” I’m like, “Mm, it’s one of the most frightening, gory things imaginable.” And she’s like, “No it isn’t.” And I was like, “Are you kidding me?”

**Quinns**: Also, in addition to being freaky, it’s also just a really great movie.

**Matt**: It’s amazing.

**Quinns**: LIke, [in awe of his memory of The Thing] ugghh.

**Matt**: And this is why I wanted to play the game actually. I dragged off a couple of other people to play it with me, who were like, “Ehhh, okay, whatever,” and then didn’t realize until we started playing that neither of them [chuckling] had seen the film [Quinns laughing] and I was like, “A-what?” No wonder no one wanted to play it. The Thing is possibly one of my favorite films ever. And effectively, the game looks pretty barebones from afar. It actually hangs together a lot better than I expected. It is a kind of deception game, you know hidden role game, betrayal-style game. So if you’ve ever played…

**Quinns**: Battlestar Galactica.

**Matt**: Yeah. Battlestar Galactica is probably the best comparison, really. It’s very similar to that in lots of regards, in the fact that at the start of the game- The only difference is, in the start of the game, there is *definitely* someone who is The Thing. It’s not like in Battlestar where it’s like, “Hey, maybe everything’s fine, and we’re just paranoid.” Somebody is a Thing, right off the bat. As the game goes on, you have more infections that can happen. However it may be that the infection card gets given to the same player again, in which case there’s still only one Thing.

**Quinns**: Okay?

**Matt**: But, odds are, maybe there’s another thing.

**Quinns**: And you’re in an Arctic base, is that right?

**Matt**: Yup, you’re in an Arctic base. For those of you who haven’t seen the film, just *go and watch the film, it’s amazing!*

**Quinns**: I mean the plot of the film is basically: Some people are in an Arctic base, and there is a Thing.

**Matt**: A Thing. But it’s a shape-shifting thing that looks and talks and acts like a normal person, and there’s really no way of knowing if they are an alien or not, until the point where they suddenly become a big alien and eat you in a horrible way. Effectively, it really works as this hidden role thing, because again, you have to go into rooms, you have to perform searches, and you have to put in cards to help or hinder. But you have these sabotage cards that literally you can just chuck in, and it’s great because rather than having a set hand of things, you can be like, “Oh, don’t take me on this mission, I’ve got to get rid of my cards, because my cards are all sabotage cards.” And actually maybe you’re The Thing, and actually you’ve got good cards, which you then throw in the bin, which is really satisfying.

**Quinns**: Ah, okay. So you played a lot of Battlestar Galactica back in the day, but of course, it’s not perfect, but that’s a beloved hidden role game. How does this distinguish itself?

**Matt**: You know, it’s kind of tricky for me, because I didn’t think Battlestar was amazing? I loved it because I loved the show, but I gather that really most people say you wouldn’t bother playing that without the expansions, or at least one of the expansions.

**Quinns**: Sure.

**Matt**: And I haven’t played that, so I can’t really compare it to that. But yeah, it was thematically really quite tight, and actually it really felt very evocative of the films. It had some really nice touches in the fact that basically, you can either – as The Thing – destroy the base, and just mess it up as much as you want, and then by doing that, it means at the end of the game, before they try and get on the helicopter and leave, they can’t test people to see who is The Thing. Because at the end of the game, whoever is in charge – and whoever’s in charge is who has the gun – can basically say, “Look, I’m going to test this person, test this person, test this person.” And then they will know for sure who is a Thing and who isn’t. But if you trash the base, they can’t do that! And then it means they just have to pick who’s going on the helicopter with them.

**Quinns**: So what do you do if, as The Thing- I mean the question with all of these hidden role games so often is: When you are discovered, when we all know that Matt- We’ve tested Matt and he’s The Thing, what happens then?

**Matt**: Ummmmm.

**Quinns**: Because this is the one game on the list I haven’t played, so now I’m just probing your forty-five-day-old memory.

**Matt**: I don’t actually know if that came up, to be honest.

**Quinns**: In our playtest, sure.

**Matt**: No, in the playtest we played, there wasn’t a point where anyone a hundred percent *knew*, basically.

**Quinns**: Ahhh!

**Matt**: I think especially it gets muddier. I think the reason it works is because it doesn’t have the whole mechanic -- that I know of -- it doesn’t have the whole, “Now you are a Cylon, go and live in Cylon land, bye bye.” In this, I think it’s more that people might suspect you, but then next round you’re gonna have somebody else who’s also a Thing, and then the round after you’re gonna have somebody else who’s also a Thing, so it kind of becomes that maybe people don’t trust you, but then they might not trust the other people either?

**Quinns**: Oh, okay.

**Matt**: So it becomes that thing of being like… It kind of gives you a second wind of people might not trust you for a round, but then in the next round when they don’t trust someone else, you can be like, “Hey, come on! I told you it’s not me anyway! [Quinns laughing] Let me back in the club!” And you can say, “Ahh, you know, I’m good for it!” In the game I played, I was The Thing, and I managed to get right to the end where we get in the helicopter, and I was super close to getting away with it, because you can either win by just trashing up and messing people up, or you can just be chosen to be- You can kill everyone, or you can get on the helicopter. I think. I think you can kill everyone. I’m a bit fuzzy about it. But anyway, what surprised me was the fact that- Oh you could definitely kill people, actually, because I remembered that there was a really nice thematic thing in the fact that one of the items you could get was a flamethrower. With a flamethrower you can either test someone, using the flamethrower to see if they’re a Thing or not, and only you get to see, so again it’s just your word of whether or not they’re good or bad.

**Quinns**: Oh, okay, that thing, right.

**Matt**: So you can either test someone with a flamethrower, and you can do that twice, or you can spend both charges of the flamethrower fuel to just immolate someone. [Quinns laughing] And no one can stop you from doing that! If you’re the one with the flamethrower, you can just be like, “I don’t trust Quinns! I’m going to burn him to death with a flamethrower.” And then that would be you out, and maybe you were The Thing or maybe you weren’t.

**Quinns**: And it looks beautiful as well. The game The Thing looks lovely, right?

**Matt**: Yeah, it’s quite a simple design. It looks very plain from afar, as I say, until you get closer and look at it and realize it’s quite hard to actually make a board which is mostly snow that looks like not just plain white? No, I enjoyed it. It was definitely something where it felt like a pretty solid deception role, and the whole time I had the Morricone soundtrack in my head: “DUN DUN! DrRrR DrRrR!” I found it quite evocative and quite fun. I think if you’re a fan of the film, it’s pretty decent at the very least. I don’t know if it’s great or not, because I only played it once, but I enjoyed it.

**Quinns**: You know, so many board gamers will put on movie soundtracks when they’re playing a board game. Like, “Oh I’m playing an Arkham Horror board game, I’ll put on the soundtrack to whatever, the Constantine movie or something.” Nice to have a board game where you can put on a movie soundtrack and it’s actually really appropriate. Because you could put on-

**Matt**: Yeah, because it’s literally the film.

**Quinns**: -the actual Thing.

**Matt**: I mean, it’s just nice for me as well, the fact that they’re clearly big fans of the film, and that really does show through in terms of all the levels of detail of how they frame things, and how they’ve done things. Yeah. No it was really enjoyable.

**Quinns**: Oh lovely. Well, one we might look forward to playing more in future.

## Pipeline [00:41:25]

**Quinns**: Let’s talk about a game we both had our eyes on next. Let’s talk about the first cut-from-new-cloth game by new publisher Capstone Game. It’s… Pipeline!

**Matt**: ♫ Pipeliiiiine! ♫

**Quinns**: ♫ Leading the way! ♫ It does lead the way. What’s at either end of the pipe? Oil.

**Matt**: Money.

**Quinns**: And money, yeah. Actually, oil at one end, money at the- No, it’s all oil.

**Matt**: All oil, all the way up.

**Quinns**: It really is. So Pipeline is a game from a publisher who are known for putting out quite heavy, complicated games, and Pipeline is so complicated a game- Well, complicated isn’t even the word. Involved and nuanced game of running this oil... business. I was gonna say oil manufactury, but that’s not right. It’s like, what do you do? You get oil, and then you process it, and then you sell it.

**Matt**: Yeah, you buy some crude oil, and then you’ll process it a bit, and then maybe you’ll keep processing it, and then you’ll sell it. And the tricky thing about that is, in this game, effectively, yeah you might think, “But if I buy this little thing of oil for just six doll-os, then I can make it to this big barrel at the top which gets me sixty dollars!” But the markets… [Quinns laughing] fill up.

**Quinns**: You know, that sentence would have been fine if you were, [strained] “But the markets!”

**Matt**: “But the markets!” Yeah, but the markets, effectively. So it means you think, “Well I’m gonna make this much profit on that,” but then someone else does that as well, and then they sell it first, and then you realize literally there is no demand for that now, so you’ve just got to sit on it for a while, OR you start to realize that actually everyone’s going for the big barrels of super-processed oil, but you’re like, “There’s a big demand for medium-processed oil. There’s a lot of money to be made in that.”

**Quinns**: Yup, and then beyond this, it’s- I think maybe how I might describe it is it’s just more exhaustive than other games of that type. Every part of the business is kind of in play? On your turn you can take an action which might be to expand how much oil you can hold, it might be to buy oil, or to process it, it might be to sell it, to upgrade some aspect of your business, it might be to take a loan, or to acquire a machine to automate part of your business so you don’t have to be there all the time.

**Matt**: Yeah.

**Quinns**: And then of course, the other thing, the final thing you can do, relates to pipes. And interestingly, we thought the game was centered around this, but it’s actually not the most- It doesn’t feature as heavily as it does. It’s more just like a shiny, flashy- I don’t want to say gimmick, because it is really interesting.

**Matt**: It’s definitely not a gimmick.

**Quinns**: It’s a flashy thing that attracts you into a game, and then the game is just really robust around it.

**Matt**: Yeah, I think that’s the thing. We sat down to play it and I was basically looking forward to Pipemania, and being like, “Yeah! I’m making pipes all match up!” And I *did* get that, but I got that wrapped around an incredibly dense, complex [**Quinns**: And rewarding and rich] economic puzzle. Rewarding as hell. I loved it. I really loved it. And I smashed you all into the ground with my incredible oil machine!

**Quinns**: You got like *ten* dollars more than me!

**Matt**: It’s not true, get this man out! I’m in charge of oil now!

**Quinns**: You are king of oil. I’m not gonna deny that. You and I were both sweating a lot over it.

**Matt**: Oh, it was *hell*!

**Quinns**: Because usually with eurogames, we’ll laugh because one of us is just having a fun time, moving a token, and then the other one is having a meltdown.

**Matt**: It’s like, [strained] “I’m trying to crunch this out!” But especially because I was trying to do the pipe puzzle, which I’m usually pretty good at-

**Quinns**: So yes, can I just quickly explain the pipe puzzle?

**Matt**: Yes.

**Quinns**: So, in addition to having your oil and your holdings and your upgrades to your business and your money, you have a set of domino-shaped tiles – so two-by-one – that show pipes! And there’s three different kinds of oil in the game, which the designer of the game- I thought thematically it’s like, “Oh, are there three different kinds of crude?” He was like, “No.” It’s a board game, there’s orange oil, green oil, and…

**Matt**: White oil.

**Quinns**: White, yeah, great, whatever. But that means you have three different colors of pipes. And each of these domino pieces that you might acquire show these different pipes turning in different directions. So you might have a white pipe running horizontally and then an L-shape of orange pipe, whatever. But you then buy additional amounts of personal pipe and government pipe, which come from two different sources, and slowly expand these dominoes, putting them next to each other like- It’s a tile-laying game, like you play Carcassonne. And what you’re trying to do is create really long lengths of, for example, orange pipe, but the dream is to create a sort of block, which has an orange pipe going in a circle, and a white pipe going in a circle, and a green pipe going in a circle, because then you’re using every possible square of pipe? Rather than having pipes that run off into nothing, or…

**Matt**: Yeah.

**Quinns**: Am I describing this okay?

**Matt**: Yeah, I mean basically it’s just trying to create a network of- You want your pipes to be as long as possible, and you’re trying to create a network, but they all overlap, and it becomes quite difficult to do that, and it effectively means you have to start making decisions of being like, “Am I okay to cap out that at five lengths of thing?”

**Quinns**: Yeah, because you’re thinking, “If I put this domino here, I will never be able to expand this pipe anymorrrreee?”

**Matt**: Yeah, because you basically think, “Oh, what matters to me?” Also how much pipe you need to upgrade the crude to the next stage is dependent on all sorts of-

**Quinns**: Counterintuitively you’re not using the pipe to transport oil. The length of pipe you have determines your ability to process that particular color of oil to a higher level.

**Matt**: And that’s slightly randomized- That *is* randomized when you play.

**Quinns**: *Everything* about the game is randomized when you play.

**Matt**: So it means, maybe for the first, to upgrade green oil from zero to one, you only need four, a pipe length of four, but then to get it from level one to level two, that’s gonna be six length of pipe. And it means that if you basically want to take one crude oil, because you can only use each pipe for one bit of oil at a time, it means if you want to take that- It’s quite stark. I remember this game so clearly [Quinns laughing], which considering we played months ago…

**Quinns**: That’s because you basically- It was like you had adrenaline and fight-or-flight in the system the whole time.

**Matt**: I was exhausted, it was the last thing we did, but I just loved it. So if you want to take some zero green oil to level two, then it means you will have to have a pipe that is *ten long*, and then you look at it and you’re like, “Well what is it for the next level? The top level?” And you’re like, “It’s another five.” And you’re like, “Is it worth trying to make a pipe that is fifteen long?”

**Quinns**: No. There is no way.

**Matt**: And it’s like, “Maybe it is, maybe it isn’t.” But it’s making those decision of being like, “Okay-” Especially because you’ve got the government pipe, which is cheaper and more available, but then that all gets snaffled up, and then you’ve got the shop pipe, which is expensive, and you’re like, “How much is it worth to get *that* tile? Like, is it actually worth a whole action, all this money, for *that* tile which is gonna keep this together?” And then you’ve got the fact that you can buy machines, because even running your pipe after you’ve built it, running your pipe and getting oil is a whole turn for you.

**Quinns**: You have to send your little tiny man there.

**Matt**: You stand your man on a pipe.

**Quinns**: You imagine him turning a crank to push the four hundred tons of oil down this-

**Matt**: And he comes back with a big barrel he’s carrying. But your whole turn is just like, “I’m running a pipe!” And that feels, when you’ve got a tiny crap pipe [Quinns laughing] it feels *awful*. But then you can buy a machine, which means that the machine will run pipes automatically for you *every turn*, but it costs money!

**Quinns**: But no, not only that Matthew – because this was what actually a ruined a player in our game – that machine you buy, that you want to connect to your pipe network, has to go on top of a pipe! Which means, by design, it’s going to cut not one, but multiples of your pipes in half? But that could be great, because if you put in the middle of a long pipe, then it means you’ve now got two short pipes, which could mean you take- Hang on. [**Matt**: Yeah, yeah!] Hang on I can do this. You manufact- No, you *refine* bad crude up a little bit, but you do it twice. [**Matt**: Yes.] Which may be better!

**Matt**: Yeah, because if you’ve got loads of tank, it’s got loads of capacity. It is incredibly dry and incredibly satisfying.

**Quinns**: Well, also, on that note, we should mention that a friend of our, Bern (sp?), who we were playing the game with, at one point turned to the designer who was sat next to us, and said, “So what did you used to do at NASA?” And we all laughed, because we thought that was a joke at how complicated the guy’s board game is, but of course the guy was pretty deadpan. He then said to us, “Oh yeah no mostly just did programming for the-” [chuckling] I can’t remember what his actual job was, but it turns out, he-

**Matt**: It’s like, “Oh yeah, you worked at NASA.”

**Quinns**: -he really did work at NASA. But despite that, and despite the fact that the game thematically – even though Ian O’Toole is one of our favorite artists, Ian O’Toole has given it a very functional and clean-looking but not exciting-looking wrapper – the game itself is quite fluid and is quite human, because… because of markets, basically. If I’d look over at your board and see you’re refining the white oil, then I know you’re gonna be cornering the market on that, which means I shouldn’t go there. So I did find myself looking at other players quite a bit.

**Matt**: Yeah, that is very true. You’re not just building your own little engine. And what was interesting is the fact, to try and work out what other people are doing, it was like, “Okay well what oil have you got in your tanks? Have you got loads of green oil?” Because you had to plan ahead, especially with the markets, because people would just snaffle stuff up. And obviously when there’s a lot of stuff it’s cheaper, so it means sometimes you would be buying oil that you were then not gonna use for a while, and it would just be that thing of someone just bought up loads of green oil, like, “Okay, well I’m just not going to expand my green pipe.” Or looking at their pipes and being like, “Alright, well they’re working on white oil *now*, but what’re they doing with their pipes?”

**Quinns**: There was also a really bizarre system of something I’d not see before – and this is so inside baseball, you have to really like board games to find this interesting – but the way they did upgrades, I really liked. Because you can buy upgrades for your business that are absurdly powerful. This is quite common in eurogames. You can spend some money, if you go to this space first and spend your turn, you can get this benefit to, I don’t know, oil-buying for the rest of the game. And suddenly for the rest of the game you don’t need to spend an action to get oil, oil just flows into your system. It’s astonishing! So far so every other economy management game ever. But what this does: Every upgrade in Pipeline has three levels. So if you go back to that action space in the next round of the game, which is next year, and you get exactly the same upgrade again, it’s almost like the Flare cards in Cosmic Encounter: You get a super-charged version of what you had. If you do that a third time? You get something that pretty much breaks the game, but it happens so late in the game? That you don’t have much time to use it?

**Matt**: And also you have to be the person who gets that upgrade first, because-

**Quinns**: Which means suddenly you have to dick around with turn order.

**Matt**: -there has to be a thing. (?)

**Quinns**: Do you remember how turn order was- I can’t remember how turn order was determined, but players could control it.

**Matt**: Yes.

**Quinns**: I can’t remember, but you could plan your entire turn in a way that meant you would definitely go first next turn, and you had to do that by going *last* on the previous turn, which meant that you could then be first, which meant that you could get the upgrade again.

**Matt**: It had so many interlocking system that were fascinating, and I think what I found fascinating about it is that usually I play a eurogame and if somebody said to me afterwards, “How many points did you get?” “Eighty.” “You know if you play this right you can get like, two hundred and fifty,” then I’m like, “Eh! I don’t care.” In this, I think because you’re building this big machine with pipes and machines, I kind of felt like, it took me such a long time to get my machine going, but when I did it was like… Oh my gosh there’s nothing like it. I was suddenly gone from being like, “I’m so, so broke. I have nothing,” to just being like, [mad oil baron voice] “I’ve got machines pumping out so much oil!” I was *rolling* in money!

**Quinns**: That was what was so exciting, because for the whole first, I don’t know, thirty percent of the game, which in a two and a half hour game, or two hour game, that’s more than half an hour, right? [**Matt**: Yup.] You’re working on individual dollars. You’re like, “Oh, my god, that crude now costs six dollars.” But then you sell your first crude for like, twenty-two dollars, and it feels like *so much money*. But then by end game, you’re like, [unenthused] “Well, I could do *this* action, but that only gets me a hundred and thirty dollars.”

**Matt**: The fact that the third round of the game, the third year, is only four or five turns, it’s actually much shorter than the first one, but you just make so much money, it’s like, boom!

**Quinns**: You know what it’s like? It’s like Food Chain Magnate, where to begin with, those individual dollars count so much, but then by the end, it’s about taking off. It’s about creating a machine that blasts off, which is so exciting.

**Matt**: And a thing that was always quite exciting to me was it was just a case of trying to build a machine- So rather than trying to build a gradual machine, just trying to build a machine that when it activated, it was just going to start churning out money at an alarming rate, and the realization that wanting to play it again was like, “Yeah, maybe I’ll try some different stuff, maybe I’ll try and go for some upgrades or whatever,” but being like, [desperately greedy] “No, I could have really-” [Quinns laughing] If I just got that machine to take off a couple of turns earlier in the game, I don’t know what the difference could have been! It could have been insane! It could have just been like, [explosion noise].

**Quinns**: Hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of dollars.

**Matt**: And that’s quite exciting, especially because you really do have a very tangible sense of not just points, you’ve got this huge machine that you’re building. And if you make loads of money early on- Because at the beginning you’ve got just potential the whole time, you’re like, “Oh, I *could* get that, I *could* get that,” and you’re like, “Yeah, but you’ve got fifteen dollars, you could buy *one* of these things.” [Quinns laughing] You’re like, “But I want *three* of them!” You know, if you make some money early on, then suddenly you could have this insane pipe network, and you could just be churning out money.

**Quinns**: It’s a heck of a thing.

**Matt**: Really exciting.

**Quinns**: You know how I like my analogies, Matthew. I would, of all things, compare Pipeline, with its sort of old money oily setting- I’d compare it to the eurogame equivalent of caviar? And I’ve been thinking about this.

**Matt** [confused disbelief]: Oily?

**Quinns**: It’s gonna be expensive, it’s gonna be classy, it’s also not gonna be for most people. But if you *are* into this specific thing, if you want to run economy-building engines, I can’t think of something that’s a better test.

**Matt**: I liked how simple and cutthroat it was. It reminded me of Container in some ways, but it felt way more parsable and way less frustrating than Container. And the frustration of Container I enjoyed, and I had a lot of fun with that, but in this you *did* have turns where you couldn’t really do anything, but it wasn’t because the person next to you had done something weird, it was just like… It was just very cutthroat and money, and the sudden point of being like, “Now I’ve got loads of money now.” And it was just like- There was something very pure about it in a very fun way.

**Quinns**: Pure, yeah. I think in my head caviar is pure, even though I don’t like it. Because they’re little crystalline balls, you know, they’re translucent.

**Matt**: Yeah, but also caviar’s weird, because it’s one of those inflated economy things, of like, “Is it actually that good? Is it actually worth the money it is?” Probably not.

**Quinns**: Well, sure, sure, sure, I see what you mean there, I see what you’re doing, that’s good.

[Funky sting]

## Gen7: A Crossroads Game [00:55:10]

**Quinns**: Finally, then, let’s move on to the game that people on Twitter have quite literally been pestering me to talk about after I hinted on our Instagram [**Matt**: Yes.] that we would be talking about it. We’re gonna talk about Gen7 now, A Crossroads Game and the second in Plaid Hat’s series of Crossroads Games, a series that started with Dead of Winter, a game which we really like – still, I think – there’s certainly nothing quite like it, a sort of fragile alliance co-op game where you’re trying to survive a frosty zombie apocalypse together.

**Matt**: It’s imperfect and slightly odd, but there’s a lot to love there.

**Quinns**: Yeah, a lot of good storytelling, a lot of interesting mechanics. So at long last we have our second Crossroads Game. Gen7 is a cooperative campaign-based game set on board a generation ship. This is where players – three or four of you – work together as the key officers of one of the generations on a generation ship. A generation ship being a ship that takes so long to get to its destination that the humans on board give birth to a new generation, and then that generation takes over and they give birth.

**Matt**: Or as we call it in the UK: Southern Rail! [Quinns laughing] That’s a joke for like-

**Quinns**: I thought that was going to be a like booze-cruise, sex-cruise type thing. No, that was better.

**Matt**: No, it’s a joke about, we have terrible trains in the UK, they’re very slow. Carry on.

**Quinns**: Well, some of them are alright, but Southern is…

**Matt**: Southern is… yeah… it’s a joke for people who live in London! There we are.

**Quinns**: So yeah, Gen7 is a game where you’re gonna be placing dice, dice representing your subordinate officers, you’re gonna be trying to deal with problems. It’s a bit like – if I had to draw an analogy – if you saw my First Martians review, a couple of years ago, it’s a game where things are going wrong in your sci-fi habitat.

**Matt**: Yeah, you have different aspects of the ship which are breaking, and it means then you can’t sit in that seat and do something there because it’s broken.

**Quinns**: And the fragile alliance elements that it borrows from Dead of Winter is that there is a common pool of resources – processes and nuts and bolts and stuff – but everyone also has their *private* supply. And everyone, on top of that, has things that are going wrong with the ship, but also, you’ve got your private little tasks that the AI assigned *you* to do.

**Matt**: Yeah, the idea of like, you’ve been given these tasks from the AI. Mainly they’re to keep you busy, because you’ve got to keep busy. It’s important to keep busy.

**Quinns**: Let’s not think about the fact that we’re trapped!

**Matt**: Let’s not think about the fact that you’re gonna die in space, keep busy. So yeah, you can get upgrades, you can effectively maybe be slightly less than perfectly helpful with your other crewmates, and then because of that, you will get promoted, which will give you a little upgrade in terms of your abilities, but also it means you get more votes whenever you get a big story decision on the ship and you have to make a choice, you will literally get more votes than other people because you outrank them.

**Quinns**: Yup.

**Matt**: And honestly we played this at Gen Con last year, and we were very excited about the idea of it, basically. We played a demo for half an hour, and we thought: This is quite fascinating. We had some really interesting stuff come up on cards we were playing, a lot of narrative stuff.

**Quinns**: We were really excited for how the game would evolve across the course of the campaign.

**Matt**: And, fundamentally, the idea of it being this idea if it’s like a colony ship, and this idea of like a drift of values, of being like, “Are you gonna stick to the line and be super regimented to keep the humans alive, or are you gonna allow for some creativity and some heart to unfold, knowing that it might actually put the human race at risk?” Interesting ideas! Unfortunately…

**Quinns**: Unfortunately.

**Matt**: Unfortunately, having played the game a bunch, it’s not very good!

**Quinns**: Yeah, I think this is probably the most- In terms of the hopes I had for it and then my actual experience of playing it, I think it’s up there with- Well, it’s certainly not- It didn’t annoy me as much as First Martians.

**Matt**: Sure.

**Quinns**: First Martians was a real disaster thanks to the rulebook and a couple of other things. But yeah, I would absolutely not tell anyone to buy Gen7, *especially* not because I think it comes in at about ninety-five or a hundred dollars. This is an enormously expensive box that we didn’t have much fun with at all.

**Matt**: No, and it’s an incredibly frustrating thing as well, because as a game that when people have been asking us over the past year, “What are you guys excited about?” [Quinns groans] it’s a game that I particularly have been saying repeatedly I was very excited about. This is an important reminder for everybody basically: That’s a fun question to ask us, and we will give you an honest answer, but don’t buy games based on that, because we play a half an hour demo for something- And it’s interesting as well, when we started playing and going through, we got very lucky with the cards that we were drawing, from decks that we shuffled, so things…

**Quinns**: Oh you mean during our playtest.

**Matt**: During our playtest, yeah. Our playtest made the game feel…

**Quinns**: So, sorry, because people have been picking me up on language recently. So you’re talking about when we played that at Gen Con last year. We had pretty much a perfect experience of the game.

**Matt**: Yeah, we did, we had a perfect experience and a lot of the mechanics and ideas we were excited about just aren’t really explored or coming to fruition in the game.

**Quinns**: No, so, I’ll start with mechanics first. The game you are playing of assigning your dice around the ship and solving problems? Our first game of it, and to some extent almost our second, were relatively interesting, but as we just got further into the campaign, realizing how much this game did not evolve, did not change… There are all kinds of exciting envelopes that you open to release new components into Gen7. Seeing what was in those envelopes was really pretty disappointing to me? It didn’t change the game enough that, by the time I was playing our third game of Gen7 in a seven-game campaign, I was just thinking, “Oh my god I don’t want to play this game again.”

**Matt**: No, yeah, we got, I think, five in and it was just like, “I don’t want to do this anymore.” Especially because the fact that unfortunately, the biggest disappointment for me – and we won’t go into spoilers for anyone who does care – but really, it looked like it was going to be an interesting exploration of a simple but really quite odd theme, and in reality it has a story which tries to do all sorts of things, and tries to do stuff- Simultaneously tries to do too much, but also does too much at a glacial pace that means when we got to the fifth mission in the game, I think – which is after about six or seven hours of sitting and playing it – it felt like this would be now be the end of the prologue in a sci-fi film. Like this would be the first ten minutes of a film, and now like, “There’s your (?) open. Now it’s time for the story.” Which is crazy, for a game which is supposed to be a story-based game. But also the fact that the core mechanics of the game, as the story unfolds, make less and less sense.

**Quinns**: Yup.

**Matt**: And the impetus for carrying out and playing the game in the way that the game is built, just you think, “Really?” You kind of expect it to just be like, “Now open this envelope and the entire game is different.”

**Quinns**: Yeah, sure, so the reason that we always held up Dead of Winter highly as a story game was a couple of things. First off, the story between the players, of who’s betraying who and how do we feel and are we going to cast this guy out of the colony, could be really, really interesting. And the second thing that worked in Dead of Winter was the crossroads cards that told you a lot of backstory about the characters under your control, the humans. Now both those games were completely separate, but they were pretty interesting, they both worked functionally. Gen7 adds a third game to that, because you still have characters that are coming up on the crossroads cards and you’re making decisions about them. That, for me, was the strongest part of the game, and-

**Matt**: Yeah, I think so.

**Quinns**: -overwhelmingly diluted in the box. We got hardly *any* of their story.

**Matt**: Yeah, no we didn’t. And I mean, there was more to add, but again it was just the pacing of it was just bonkers!

**Quinns**: Yeah, so to clarify, the third story the game adds is this campaign book. It’s that when you do certain things in the plot, you now have this enormous book – which is adding dramatically, I would expect, to the price of the game – whereby you flip through pages and you read a choose-your-own-adventure. So now we’ve got the plot between the players, which quickly falls apart, the characters under their control, which you don’t get nearly enough of, and this campaign book which has the ridiculous thing that- Part of the appeal of Gen7 is that there are many different stories to tell. Based on decisions you make, your plot *forks* along several different possible avenues, some of which fold back in the classic video game way. Now, Matthew, I’m gonna ask you a question: If you had friends and you played Gen7’s campaign once, and saw *one* of the paths through that campaign, would you then play it again to see another path?

**Matt**: No.

**Quinns**: No, me either, that idea is kind of reprehensible to me based on how tiring I found it just to get halfway through one of the campaigns. So that means, so much of your effort into telling a story is going into plotlines that players aren’t going to see?

**Matt**: Yeah, and honestly it was a fascinating idea, and the fact that I actually- Looking through some of the cards that we had for the crossroads cards, and reading through the whole book... Basically, at the point at which we though, “You know what, we’re done with this,” I flipped through and read a lot of the book, and realized actually it’s got some cool ideas. It *is* like going down different forks of avenues, but it’s all this one reality, and it’s this one overarching story and it’s just about how you fall through it, and discovering things at different points: Interesting! The fact that a lot of the story is very carefully seeded and teased through some of the crossroads cards and thematically drawing you in and giving you kind of clues, but a Chekhov’s gun, et cetera about the overall thing: Great! But the big problem is the fact that the *game* is not that interesting. Especially, you know, it’s fun to play *once*, but then to play it like eight, nine times…

**Quinns**: Yeah, by which you mean play *one game* of it. And part of the fun of *that* is that, if you play the first mission of the campaign, it’s like in Seafall, which we saw a couple of years ago. To play a big campaign game once is partially exciting because you’re just daydreaming about all the secrets and mechanics that will be awaiting you. And in both Gen7 and Seafall, once you start playing the game, you know, “Come on. Give me that mechanic.” The reveals are only ever disappointing.

**Matt**: Yeah, and then also I think you were right to point it out when we were playing that so many of the beats and reveals and things are to do with these characters in the story. The coolest characters in the story are characters in the book-

**Quinns**: Yes.

**Matt**: -that you look at. So they’re not even the characters that you are, or the characters that you’re friends with or following around.

**Quinns**: No, it’s this very wobbly thing. We instantly, as soon as Gen7 started, all fell in love with the character. You are given one character who’s under your control. They have the best backstory, the best writing, they are the most human, the most plausible. And then they play absolutely zero role in the plot!

**Matt**: Yeah, you know, the thing is, I liked a lot of the writing in Gen7, and I think that’s what originally think, “Hey, this could be really cool.” It just doesn’t- [frustrated] I don’t like to say this, because it seems like it’s just dismissive and derogatory, but it’s just a bit of a mess! You know, you’ve got this game system which just doesn’t hold up with the story, and with the context, and doesn’t feel like- You know, we got to a point where it’s like, “Really?”

**Quinns**: “Are we still doing this task when this other thing has happened?”

**Matt**: Yeah, like, “Really? We still have to do *that* every game?” You know, in Pandemic Legacy it’s frustrating when it’s like, “Oh, we’ve still got to keep making these little supply centers or whatever?” You know you kind of think-

**Quinns**: But it’s like, “Yeah, you do.”

**Matt**: Yeah, because it’s your job. It’s annoying that you have to do it in Pandemic Legacy, you’re like, “We still have to do that?!” And it’s like, “Yeah, you do work for the CDC, it’s your job to do that, even though the world feels like it might be falling apart in other interesting ways. Do your job.” Fair. But in this you’re like, “I don’t… REALLY???” And even the whole mechanic of like, [sly plotting voice] “Oh, I’m gonna be slightly more self-serving to get promoted.” That just makes less and less sense immediately. It felt like they had some cool game mechanics, and then they had an idea for a cool story, and they just don’t match.

**Quinns** [sadly]: Yeah.

**Matt**: And… yeah.

**Quinns**: I’m not going to try and reverse engineer exactly what happened in the design of Gen7...

**Matt**: No no no, absolutely not. It doesn’t really matter.

**Quinns**: Sure. But yeah, what does matter, I think, to me, is that if I saw someone holding it in a shop, I would try and steer them away from buying it.

**Matt**: Yeah, no, absolutely. It was very disappointing.

**Quinns**: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Matt**: For lots of reasons.

**Quinns**: ...Well! On that cheery note…

**Matt**: And sorry to people if- Because we have talked it up a bunch, we have said, based on a demo, that it was great. So if you did buy it and you’re like, [disappointed whine] “Oh man!” I’ve seen some people say, “I bought it and everyone says it’s rubbish but I’m loving it.” Great, good for you, have a good time. But if you did buy it off our recommendation, I’m really sorry about that. But also, do bear in mind that it’s not a review unless it says “Review.” Which is a really important thing.

**Quinns**: Yes! God! It’s a bizarre thing we’ve had over the last 7 years. I’ll tweet about something, and someone will go, “Yeah, great review.” It’s like, [desperate to put the genie back in the bottle] “No!”

**Matt**: It’s not a review!

**Quinns**: It’s not! We haven’t-!

**Matt**: And it *does* matter. Because we won’t say something is a review unless we feel like we have made a concrete judgement that we’re willing to stand by.

**Quinns**: Even the podcast. We talk about so many games on this podcast, and people will say, “I liked that review on the podcast.”

**Matt**: “I liked your review of that.” It’s like, [mock frustrated scolding] “It’s not a review!”

**Quinn**: These are just impressions. We should probably clarify that.

**Matt**: Yeah, that’s important to clarify. And that’s not to say don’t get carried away with hype sometimes, and go, “They’re excited about this, I’m gonna be excited about this, I’m going to pre-order it.” But just know that that might mean every now and then we get it wrong.

## Wrap-up and farewell [01:07:28]

@tapgiles

**Quinns**: Well, the good news is that we have a run of really pretty exciting video reviews coming up.

**Matt**: Some of the stuff we’ve talked about today… we’ve got some amazing stuff for you this year.

**Quinns**: Not just that, man. If you don’t often go to our Youtube channel, I think it’s worth a visit. Not just for great reviews we did last year like Brass Birmingham and Root [**Matt**: Ooh!] and Welcome To…, [**Matt**: Ooh!] but we’ve got video reviews coming up of Treasure Island, Quacks of Quedlinburg, and… ooOOOOOOoooh?

**Matt**: I’m looking forward to Oooooh! [laughs]

**Quinns**: No. What’s it called? The game with the hexagons…

**Matt**: Oh yeah! With the tower!

**Quinns**: Monolith Arena.

**Matt**: I’ve been thinking about that a lot.

**Quinns**: Monolith Arena is a heck of a thing. And we’re going to play that some more and see if it warrants a video review.

**Matt**: And we’re not going to do questions from the big amazing roughly-mailbag today, because this is the first time me and Quinns have been in the same building again since the end of last year, because he’s been away doing some work in India and I’ve been in London toiling away on videos. And we’re going to go and play a board game!

**Quinns**: We’re going to play a game *right now*!

**Matt**: Because that’s what we do!

**Quinns**: Oh, we forgot to talk about Franchise. We need to talk about Franchise. Matt…

**Matt**: I need to go to the toilet. We’ve all got things we need to do.

**Quinns**: There’s so many games!

**Matt**: Franchise I want to play again. [Strange sounds]

**Quinns**: You got so excited you knocked over the podcasting gear.

**Matt**: I punched the podcasting gear. It’s really fun, you living in Brighton and me getting to visit. But it means occasionally you’ll post a photograph on the Instagram and Twitter feeds about playing a board game. And I’ll be like… “It’s not fair! I want to be playing that board game right now!”

**Quinn**: [Laughs] Well, let’s make up for lost time and play some great games tonight.

**Matt**: Yeah, Franchise was pretty cool, the time we played it for 10 minutes. I was like, “I think this might be great!”

**Quinns**: Hey, it’s good to be back with you, Matt Lees.

**Matt**: It’s good to be back too!

**Quinns**: Let’s… make some… content.

**Matt**: Games!

**Both**: Bye!

(Late night talk show music plays them out.)