

## EGSM – Board Games

### Content Warnings

- Discussions of:drugs
- Mentions of: knives & stabbing, guns, murder

**IAN**

Yeah, I've seen people move other people's pieces for them in a game...

**HELEN**

[GASPS!]

**IAN**

...it's like, no!

**ANIL**

That's fine if you all agree to it but...

**(Laughter)**

**HELEN**

Yeah.

**IAN**

[Whispers] no.

**HELEN**

But still, that's...

**ANIL**

Yeah.

**HELEN**

...massive breach of etiquette.

**ANIL**

**(Laughter)**

**IAN**

Yes hugely, hugely.

**[Show Theme - Intro]**

**HELEN**

Hello friends and fans and welcome to Enthusiasm. This is the Rusty Quill Podcast Show where we talk about a few of our favourite things. I am your

## Rusty Quill Enthusiasgasm – EGSM – Board Games

host, Helen Gould, one of the best Rusty Quillers, and today we're talking about board games, and I am tactically excited to be joined by...

**(Laughter)**

...Anil, Ian and Navy. As always, we shall introduce ourselves alphabetically, so Anil, what are your pronouns and what do you do?

**ANIL**

Hi, this is Anil, he/him. I am Rusty Quill's Chief Compliance Officer. I am the one who keeps us safe.

**(Laughter)**

Keeps us on the straight and narrow.

**(Laughter)**

Eh, I've got a nebulous job description.

**(Laughter)**

**HELEN**

Aw, we should clarify, that's in a health and safety capacity, Anil is not security.

**(Laughter)**

**ANIL**

Yeah, health and safety legal, that sort of thing.

**(Laughter)**

**HELEN**

Lovely to have you back on the show.

**ANIL**

It's lovely to be back.

**HELEN**

Aw.

Next up, Ian, what are your pronouns and what do you do?

**IAN**

Hi, I'm Ian, my pronouns are he/him/they. I am an actor, improviser, I teach people to act as well, which is madness let's face it. I was also Trevor Herbert in The Magnus Archives, so I think I was probably the best avatar of a power that they had.

**(Laughter)**

**HELEN**

Yes, I think that's agreed by all.

**IAN**

Certainly the cuddliest – definitely.

**(Laughter)**

**HELEN**

Yes.

**ANIL**

Cuddly in inverted commas or...

**(Laughter)**

**IAN**

Yeah, a little bit knife-y, but you know still.

**(Laughter)**

**ANIL**

Who wasn't on The Magnus Archives?

**(Laughter)**

**IAN**

Yeah, pretty much all of them, yeah.

**HELEN**

What's a little stabbing amongst friends?

**IAN**

Exactly.

**ANIL**

Actually, Arun wasn't. Actually no, he got his stabs in with his words.

**IAN**

Yeah.

**HELEN**

Ah, verbal stabbing.

**(Laughter)**

And finally, Navy, what are your pronouns and what do you do?

**NAVY**

Hi, I'm Navy, my pronouns are she/her and I am a Tech Support Assistant at Rusty Quill.

**HELEN**

Yay, oh, I should also... since I welcomed Anil back, welcome back Ian and Navy as well, you have also been on here before.

**IAN**

No, I haven't.

**HELEN**

[Gasps]

**IAN**

This is my first time.

**HELEN AND ANIL**

Ooo.

**IAN**

Yes.

**HELEN**

Yes.

**IAN**

I have recorded with you before.

**HELEN**

You have.

**IAN**

But it was a lost episode that will never be heard.

**HELEN**

Yes, you were in the secret episode that we had to get rid of.

**(Laughter)**

Well, let's get into it, please hearken back to the days of yore, tell me what is the first board game you remember playing? Because for me, I think it was Ludo, really old school one, which I can't remember much about except that it had like four different colours and was kind of spirally looking.

**(Laughter)**

**ANIL**

It is known by a bunch of names.

**HELEN**

Oh!

**ANIL**

I think it's more commonly known in the US as Parcheesi.

**NAVY**

Yeah.

**HELEN**

Oh! Is that what it's...?

**NAVY**

Yeah.

**ANIL**

Yes.

**HELEN**

I spent so long wondering what Parcheesi is.

**(Laughter)**

**ANIL**

Yes. No, it's Ludo.

**HELEN**

Ah.

**ANIL**

Which you know weirdly enough - one of the simplest games knowing the etymology of its name, Ludo – I play.

**HELEN AND NAVY**

Oh.

**ANIL**

It's Latin, but yeah, no I...

**IAN**

Ah, well like Lego.

**ANIL**

Yeah.

**IAN**

Because Lego is we play, so yeah, ah that's fantastic.

**ANIL**

Mm, weird enough actually you saying Ludo, yeah that probably would be for me, like I had completely forgotten about that, but I remember playing one of the versions here in the UK where you've got a popper in the middle of the board that rolls the dice where you push down on this...

**IAN**

Popomatics – yeah.

**ANIL**

Yeah, this plastic dome, it rolls the dice and then you move, rather than you rolling the dice by hand.

**HELEN**

[Gasps] yes, I remember that, I had a game that did that and it was the most fun part of the game.

**(Laughter)**

**IAN**

Yeah, definitely.

**HELEN**

Just slamming it.

**(Laughter)**

**ANIL**

But for me, like games I played as a young'un would probably be, yeah like the simple, those simple very early kids' games Ludo, I mean you know in inverted commas, snakes and ladders but like we all know that's not technically a game.

**(Laughter)**

**HELEN**

Uh, what?!

**IAN**

Well, you've got no choices in it.

**ANIL**

Yeah, there's no choices, no skill. It's literally a roll of the die and you move the board, there is nothing – there are no mechanics there are no... well, there are the board...but yeah, there is...

**(Laughter)**

**NAVY**

Yes.

**ANIL**

There is literally only one path.

**(Laughter)**

**HELEN**

Oh dear, anyway, so. That sounds like Anil's snakes and ladders was the first "game" that you played?

**ANIL**

Yeah, a bit like yeah so things like Chess, Cluedo those sorts of things were early board games for me.

**HELEN**

Do you know I've never played Cluedo.

**(Laughter)**

**ANIL**

Oh, it's really good! I like, it's a very straightforward design, and if you like mysteries and figuring things out it's actually a very solid, solid game, yeah.

**HELEN**

Aw.

Navy, how about you, what was the first game that you played?

**NAVY**

I was trying to think, I think the first games I would have played besides you know like Chess and Chequers, that would have been more family games like Sorry or Trouble, because that's the kind of stuff that summer camps would have laying around.

**(Laughter)**

**HELEN**

What's Sorry?

**NAVY**

So, Sorry... I actually get these two mixed up in my head all the time.

**HELEN**

Okay.

**(Laughter)**

**NAVY**

And I found out a good amount of people also do.

**(Laughter)**

Sorry is the one with there's these little pegs as pieces and you go around the board and you use cards, like everyone has like a deck of cards that they draw from.

**HELEN**

Sure.

**(Laughter)**

**NAVY**

That gives you your moves and things and the goal is just to get all the way around the board, but you are able to like push people back and mess with their ability to move around the board and, it's pretty simple, a lot of fun; and then Trouble is one of the ones, it's the one that has the popper in the middle, it's one that... and it's just you're trying to get around the board and the dice is rolling and that's really it, I don't remember... I seem to remember there was also a way in Trouble that you could knock back opponent's pieces but, I don't remember, it would have been like... that would have been 20 years ago at this point.

**(Laughter)**

**HELEN**

Good grief.

**NAVY**

But yeah the first like real actual board games I started playing I guess we can talk about later but...

**HELEN**

Okay.

**(Laughter)**

**NAVY**

Yeah, but those were... the first like simple you know family games that I played.

**HELEN**

And what about you Ian?

**IAN**

I mean I've got Sorry down as well, Sorry is quite old.

**HELEN**

Ah.

**IAN**

So I played it. It had pleasingly round cards, my version.

**NAVY**

Yeah!

**(Laughter)**

**IAN**

Which was just, you know...ah.

**NAVY**

I actually also remember that.

**(Laughter)**

**IAN**

Yeah, but that's Ludo, Sorry is Ludo but with cards, or Parcheesi.

**NAVY**

Oh.

**HELEN**

Oh.

**IAN**

Yeah, it's the same game pretty much.

**NAVY**

Oh, oh my god.

**IAN**

And it is fantastic.

**(Laughter)**

**NAVY**

Oh yeah, even the yeah, even the boards look like real...

**IAN**

Yeah.

**NAVY**

Yeah.

**IAN**

Yeah, it's just another Parcheesi variant.

**NAVY**

Oh.

**IAN**

And there's a lovely way that you can play it with taking on more than one card which again, as Anil said, gives you more choice, so if you have three cards in your hand you can go, oh well I can do this, or I can mess up somebody else's go or I can get myself further forward.

**ANIL**

Yeah.

**IAN**

I loved Sorry, a lovely designer game. It's all about the look of it.

**NAVY**

Right.

**IAN**

Board games are beautiful objects, and they should be.

**ANIL**

Especially given that there is a renaissance in board game design particularly over the last ten years.

**IAN**

Yes!

**ANIL**

Now that crowdfunding has made board games actually more feasible to produce.

**HELEN**

So, I mean let's continue on this vein because I hadn't written this down, but this is something that is coming out quite a lot so, do we want to talk about like what makes a good game? Are we going to end up talking about what game design is...?

**(Laughter)**

Because...

**IAN**

Let's go for it, yeah.

**HELEN**

...let's do it! Let's go for it, we touched on it earlier, but let's continue, what's a good game? Apart from one where you have fun.

**(Laughter)**

**IAN**

Well, a game's a simulation isn't it, that's the thing so, even a game like Ludo is simulating a chase of some kind, so I think a good game simulates something well and gives you something of the feeling of what it feels like to do that thing. So, if it is you know killing zombies or piloting a star ship, or being a bunch of bugs jumping around in a bug pile, that, if it simulates that well and makes you feel that thing.

**ANIL**

Yeah.

**IAN**

That's good games design to me.

**HELEN**

What's...

**ANIL**

And it doesn't require a lot of rules. I mean, Hungry Hungry Hippos.

**(Laughter)**

**IAN**

Yeah.

**ANIL**

There is almost no like mechanics to that, but in terms of it...

**IAN**

Don't get me started on the house rules for Hungry Hungry Hippos, honestly.

**(Group laughter)**

**ANIL**

But it does what it sets out to do, it simulates.

**IAN**

Absolutely.

**ANIL**

It simulates a chaotic feeding environment, very, very well.

**(Laughter)**

**IAN**

Yeah.

**HELEN**

It's accurate simulation of hungry hippos.

**(Laughter)**

**ANIL**

And yes it is dexterity based, and I have a general aversion to dexterity based games but, that is me.

**(Laughter)**

**IAN**

Yes.

**NAVY**

For me it's videogames, well either board games or videogames, any kind of game it's just, interactivity is such a powerful tool. Like jumping off what you two were saying, and I think the best kinds of games use that to their, to its full extent, like use the fact that the player is directly interacting with the game to really, not always say something but to really like, to poke at the player you know?

**ANIL**

Yeah.

**NAVY**

To kind of get into their head.

**ANIL**

Yeah, and that interactivity can be manifest in a... like often it is you being able to interact with your other players in order to affect the board game, but like there are games where you are effectively four people playing an individual game...

**NAVY**

Right.

**ANIL**

...but because it's played out on the board it generates that, like your decisions don't directly affect your opponents but, by dint of it all four of you or well, all X

of you sitting around the table and the board, you've got... you create that interactivity, you create that fun environment, like deck building games are often I would see as things like Dominion.

**IAN**

Yes.

**ANIL**

Which is a really, really good game, but you, generally speaking, you are making individual decisions with the shared resources that don't necessarily affect your opponent because each of you has your own deck of cards and things like that, but it creates the fun interactivity because of what comes out of that.

**HELEN**

I see, I see.

**ANIL**

But you know, all sorts of things like good cooperative mechanics, I am a big fan of cooperative games, particularly in this day and age, and I think that if you can create a good environment for cooperation, then that also has a lot of throughputs into you know, decision making and you know, influences on the rest of your life and other activities because, playing... I mean how deep into psychology do we get here...

**(Laughter)**

Rusty Quill Enthusiasm – EGSM – Board Games

Because play is one of the best ways to, and I'm not phrasing this right but, you know, play is so important to our development.

**HELEN**

Yeah.

**ANIL**

Both on a social level and on an intellectual decision making level that, board games are such a good at pushing that and helping develop those skills.

**HELEN**

I also think what board games are often good at is helping you learn things about other people, because I feel that you can learn a lot about someone if they're losing at a game.

**(Laughter)**

**ANIL**

[Wails] Oh.

**(Laughter)**

**NAVY**

And sometimes when they're winning...

**(Laughter)**

**HELEN**

Yes, yes that too.

**ANIL**

Yeah.

**IAN**

Oh yeah, a bad loser isn't great, but a bad winner is terrible.

**NAVY**

Oh.

**HELEN**

Oh.

**(Laughter)**

**IAN**

You know.

**ANIL**

I know people who are both.

**(Laughter)**

**HELEN**

And you no longer play games with them I assume.

**ANIL**

No comment.

**(Group laughter)**

But yeah, just jumping off that, like there is a whole set of games that have cropped up over the like last 15/20 years in particular, which are theory of mind games and they are definitely games that help you get to know and kind of like work better the more you know people, the better you are able to get in their... Dixit, and this is a game... like Dixit is something that we have played on RQ Gaming and Giving a couple of times and it is a really, really good theory of mind game because it is like you, particularly if you know people or are really good friends with some of the other players.

**HELEN**

Yeah.

**ANIL**

You are pitching your clues to them, so that you can maximise the amount of points that you are getting and it's... like Codenames is another one, and I will wax lyrical about like Codegames... Codegames? Codenames! as a good game; and Mysterium which is the offshoot of Dixit simile.

**HELEN**

So, when you say theory of mind, you mean games where you're trying to guess what someone else is thinking?

**ANIL**

Yeah, and because you are looking, or you are trying to get people to buy into a certain thing like what you're guessing or what you... the clues that you are putting forward, you are relying on shared experiences and shared interactions by knowing somebody well enough that it's like right, if I laid this clue down they should know the reference, or I know that they know this reference so they should be able to pick up what I am putting down.

**HELEN**

So, this is making me think about how improv works.

**ANIL**

Yes!

**HELEN**

What do you think about that Ian, as a...?

**IAN**

I mean yeah, I mean as an improviser and like, I think I'm an improviser because I love games, because as a child I wanted to play more and more games and then I saw that there was this intersection between performance

Rusty Quill Enthusiasm – EGSM – Board Games

and games playing. Yeah, and that I think that thing that Anil was saying about the group mind of a game is so much fun.

**HELEN**

Yeah.

**IAN**

That you can you know, you can not taunt... taunt's a terrible word, isn't it...?

**(Laughter)**

**ANIL**

I mean banter is probably the right word but it's...

**IAN**

Oh no banter is a horrific word it makes me feel ill.

**ANIL**

...that's also got horrendous connotations.

**IAN**

Yeah.

**HELEN**

Friendly teasing.

**(Laughter)**

**IAN**

Yes, and yeah you can tease, control, maybe influence people in their gameplay, there's a great game called Skull, I don't know if anyone's played Skull?

**HELEN**

No, what's that?

**IAN**

So, Skull is a bl- it's sort of a bluffing poker-y type game where you're laying down cards, one of which might have a skull and you're trying to tempt people into turning over the card with a skull on it.

**HELEN**

Oh.

**IAN**

And it's got so much potential for getting into people's minds.

**ANIL**

Yeah.

**IAN**

Getting into their heads, you know, one of my favourite things to do is to lay down a card and go, that's definitely a skull.

**(Laughter)**

And just look somebody in the eye with a little smile and it, you know if you...

**HELEN**

Devious.

**IAN**

Oh, evil devious – horrible man, I don't know why I'm on here.

**(Laughter)**

But you know, but it's so much fun and again the drama of that game when somebody is flipping over tiles and they've said they're going to flip over six tiles without seeing a skull and they get five flipped and then they're choosing between one or the other, and in many ways it doesn't matter whether it is a skull or not a skull, the reaction in that moment is again, like improv, improv is the only artform where the performer and the audience make the discovery in art at the same time and the same things happens in Skull. So, it's that moment you can never recapture, you can talk about it on a podcast and it sounds dry but...

**(Laughter)**

...if you're in the room, it's thrilling.

**HELEN**

No, I know what you mean.

**ANIL**

Yeah, and that kind of group thing is particularly what attracts me and can be as Ian has explained there, in terms of the mind games that you can play with people if you are trying to bluff them and such, Skull, yeah Skull is a really good bluff.

Coup is another good bluffing game.

**HELEN**

Oh, I love Coup.

**ANIL**

You've played Coup, haven't you Helen?

**HELEN**

A lot, yes.

**ANIL**

Yeah.

**(Laughter)**

And we've had, yeah, another RQGG fave.

**(Laughter)**

That have been played out on stage.

Or the flip side, with cooperative games where you are talking about your actions before you enact them, Pandemic, the Betrayal at House on the Hill are all good games where you will want to talk about, talk through your actions and hopefully come to a consensus decision about how you are going to act and how the game is going to play out, and in that sense you're driving your own narratives in much the same way as improv does.

**HELEN**

What are your thoughts, Navy?

**NAVY**

I don't know a tonne about improv.

**(Laughter)**

**HELEN**

Oh, it doesn't have to be improv I'm just wondering about this theory of mind thing because you seemed about the game design thing because you seemed keen to view it.

**NAVY**

No, yeah, it's really interesting, board games are just a really interesting space to afford things like that, like I think of in a videogames space, I think of things like Trouble in Terrorist Town or even Among Us, most recently.

**(Laughter)**

But it feels significantly easier to pull that off, or not easier, it just it feels different in a virtual space compared to when you are directly around the table looking someone in the eye and saying "no, actually I'm not a werewolf" or...

**(Laughter)**

Or you know something or whatever or it's... yeah, just a really, I'm trying to decide what point I'm trying to get to here but, it's just a much different feeling and I totally agree with what everyone is saying but yeah, it's a much different feeling when you actually have to sit there and look at someone while you are betraying them.

**(Laughter)**

**HELEN**

This actually reminds me of... I don't know if any of you know about Dropout TV? Which is sort of the...

**NAVY**

Yeah.

**HELEN**

Sort of what College Humor turned into in terms of like making a video content.

**ANIL**

Oh right, okay.

**HELEN**

They've got a really good show called GameChanger where it's a different kind of game every episode, like sometimes it's improvising musical and sometimes it's who can make the best animal noises. Anyway, but there's one called, I think it's called, Paranoia in which...

**IAN**

Ah.

**HELEN**

Now there're in I think California where marijuana is legal, and the aim of the game...

**(Laughter)**

Rusty Quill Enthusiasm – EGSM – Board Games

...is they have about I think eight people and the host, Ally gets two of them really high, and the aim is for... and then they do like some basic exercises like you know write down all the countries that begin with "P" or something, and at the end of each round of the basic like activities, everyone has to guess who's high.

**NAVY**

It's a really good concept.

**(Laughter)**

**IAN**

Oh, that's fantastic.

**(Laughter)**

**HELEN**

It's so...

It's Werewolf, but with weed.

**(Laughter)**

**NAVY**

Yeah, but with stoned people.

**ANIL**

You see I would probably play that more than I am willing to play Werewolf these days.

**(Laughter)**

**HELEN**

It's very funny as well because there's also a I think the role is a poser, which is someone who has to act high.

**(Laughter)**

**ANIL**

Ah.

**IAN**

Nice.

**HELEN**

Anyway, yes, I really recommend that show, it's really funny.

**(Laughter)**

**NAVY**

It is pretty fantastic; I would also recommend it.

**(Laughter)**

**HELEN**

Yeah, although occasionally someone does have to forfeit because they're just too high to finish.

**(Laughter)**

**ANIL**

Something, something high functioning, yeah let's not...

**(Laughter)**

**HELEN**

Insert your own joke there.

**ANIL**

Yes, mm.

**HELEN**

Do you know what actually, that's the perfect time for a break, so here are some adverts and we'll be back in a second.

**[BREAK]**

**HELEN**

And welcome back.

Okay, so we've talked about our first games and what a good game is. So with that in mind, let's talk about some favourites, like what are your favourite games to play? Navy, if you don't mind, I'd like to start with you?

**NAVY**

So, I really like a lot of you know the standards, Betrayal is one of my favourites currently. There is a game, Arena of the Gods that I discovered through my previous job that I really enjoy playing, but currently I think just for the amount that I play it I have to call it my favourite...? There is a board game/card game/deck builder based on the Superhot videogame.

**ANIL**

Oh.

**HELEN**

Oh! How does that work?

**NAVY**

It's really interesting, so, you have a board in front of you that has a bunch of like enemies and obstacles and things, and you have cards in your hand that you use to remove them from the board, and then cards that you remove go into your deck, cards that you play go into the computer or the enemy's deck and then it just, the cards just move from left to right with the enemy's board

## Rusty Quill Enthusiasm – EGSM – Board Games

and every card has an effect, like there might be a card that has an effect, shoot a bullet and you take a card from the bullet deck and you add it to the enemy deck, and there is just a lot of ways that you can lose if either decks run out after you lose if you have a certain amount of bullets in your hand you lose. It just really like it cycles through, and it actually plays with that concept that the game does of time moves when you do because you decide how many cards you know can get cycled through every round and it's very stressful.

**(Laughter)**

It can be played just by yourself, it can be played co-op or against another person, I normally just, I just play it solitaire style.

**ANIL**

Oh that's neat.

**NAVY**

Yeah.

**ANIL**

Because I know very few like board games that can be played solitaire.

**NAVY**

Yeah, it's how I normally play, it's stressful.

**(Laughter)**

But it's fun.

**ANIL**

What's it called?

**NAVY**

Oh, it's just called Superhot, oh yeah, it'll have the, if you've ever seen the videogame.

**ANIL**

Yeah.

**NAVY**

It has the same cover and everything.

**HELEN**

Ah.

**ANIL**

Oh, okay. Is it an officially...

**NAVY**

Yeah, it's a...

**ANIL**

...official time, okay cool.

**NAVY**

I think, I don't remember who actually made it, I don't remember if the actual Superhot developers also made this or if they just licensed it out, but it is an official product, yeah, or an official tie in I mean.

**HELEN**

Nice.

Ian, what's your favourite?

**IAN**

I mean I cycle through them, honestly.

**HELEN**

Okay.

**IAN**

At the moment, I'm really enjoying games that I can take to the pub...

**(Laughter)**

...because you know, going out's a thing and I love it. So, I've got some lovely little card games, theirs is one called 6 Nimmt which is German for take six, I think.

**HELEN**

Oh.

**IAN**

And it can be played with up to ten players.

**NAVY**

Ooh.

**IAN**

So, there's a lot of chaos in it and it's very funny and it's about laying down cards and if the row gets to six whoever put that card down has to take all those cards and they are all worth negative points and it's hilarious, I love that one.

**HELEN**

Oh.

**IAN**

Yeah, and so you put down a card thinking, this one will be absolutely safe, and then other people have put other cards that mean that you are you know, suddenly not as safe as you believed you were.

**(Laughter)**

**NAVY**

Right.

**IAN**

And you're like, "How did you have 35?!" It's lovely.

There's another one, The Crew, in fact it's two games, there's The Crew, Quest for Planet Nine, where you're on a spaceship, The Crew, Deep Sea, where you're on an underwater submarine. It is basically a trick taking game.

**ANIL**

Oh.

**IAN**

It's a cooperative trick taking game.

**ANIL**

Oh.

**IAN**

So, there's a campaign of about 50 missions, and each mission has a different perimeter that is some combination of what you do with the cards, so like maybe one person has to win all of the tricks, or somebody can't win a trick with a nine, or this kind of thing; but you play it without ever referring to what

you have in your hand. So, you're trying to do these things and then somebody will play a card which means suddenly the entire mission is screwed...

**(Laughter)**

...and everybody looks at that person and goes, "How dare you".

**(Laughter)**

And it's fantastic. It's lovely. It is a cooperative game where you can't do that thing that sometimes happens in cooperative games where people quarter back it and play the entire game.

**NAVY**

Right.

**IAN**

I love it, I love it for that.

**ANIL**

Which is the danger with a lot, with cooperative games as a whole.

**IAN**

Yeah.

**ANIL**

The one drawback basically.

**(Laughter)**

**HELEN**

What do you mean by quarter backing it?

**ANIL**

So, quarter backing is usually where there is a disparity of knowledge about the game.

**HELEN**

Ah.

**ANIL**

Often when there is a new player coming into an established group or you know, everybody but one or two players knows how to play the game and you know, “received wisdom on how you play the game” basically comes to the floor, it’s like no, this is what we should do in order to be optimum, this, this, this and this and you overrun other players inputs.

**HELEN**

I see, so it’s like the bad kind of rules lawyer?

**ANIL**

Yeah.

**IAN**

Yes.

**ANIL**

That kind of thing, but it's where one person insists that they know, or one or two people or the group think where somebody is new insists this is the way we need to play, I will like...right, on your turn you move your piece here, I'll move my piece here and this is the best outcome.

**IAN**

Yeah, I've seen people move other people's pieces for them in a game...

**HELEN**

[GASPS!]

**IAN**

...it's like, no!

**ANIL**

That's fine if you all agree to it but...

**(Laughter)**

**HELEN**

Yeah.

**IAN**

[Whispers] no.

**HELEN**

But still, that's...

**ANIL**

Yeah.

**HELEN**

...massive breach of etiquette.

**ANIL**

**(Laughter)**

**IAN**

Yes hugely, hugely.

**NAVY**

Absolutely.

**IAN**

Games like The Crew, where that...or there's another one called Magic Maze, where everyone is playing all of the characters, but Helen if you were playing it with us, you could only move the characters up, I could only move them down, Anil could do them left, Navy could do them right.

**NAVY**

Ooh, interesting.

**IAN**

And we're trying to get them to certain places, but we can't speak.

**HELEN**

Ah.

**ANIL**

Oh, neat.

**NAVY**

That's actually really cool!

**HELEN**

Oh, I love it when games restrict your communication.

**IAN**

Hilarious.

**NAVY**

Oh, and I'm looking at this, it looks like the board like changes also like you build it too.

**IAN**

Yeah, it's almost a... it's a modular board, so every time you play it, it's a different maze you're trying to get through – fantastic.

**HELEN**

Oh, that's lovely.

**ANIL**

Awesome.

**NAVY**

That is very cool.

**HELEN**

I'd happily play that.

**IAN**

The only communication you are allowed is there is a big wooden sort of pole, or stick...

**ANIL**

Oh!

**IAN**

...and you can grab it and rap on the table and look at the person in the eye...

**(Laughter)**

...that you are trying to get them to do something and they're not doing it and there's a sand timer running out – how dare they!

**(Laughter)**

**ANIL**

I think somebody brought this to the games club I used to be part of, but I didn't play it myself.

**HELEN**

That's so funny!

**(Laughter)**

**IAN**

Yeah, it's passive aggression, in a board game.

**(Laughter)**

**HELEN**

I love it! I love it.

**(Laughter)**

Okay, I desperately want to play that.

Anil, how about you, what's one of your favourites, or the favourite?

**ANIL**

I've mentioned Codenames, like I love word games...

**HELEN**

Me too.

**ANIL**

...regardless of how good I am at them...

**(Laughter)**

Because trying to do words against a timer often isn't great for me but you know, it's probably unsurprising that I like word games. Eurostyle games is

also so worker placement ones they're often quite complicated, but they, so, we're talking about things like Agricola and ...

**HELEN**

Oh.

**ANIL**

..and Carcassonne and things like that but, well Carcassonne is a bit of a hybrid game, but I would say that my favourite game at the moment, like Ian I cycle through a whole bunch, but games that like I actually own and really enjoy playing on a repeated basis, Lords of Waterdeep. It is a D & D themed worker placement game set in the forgotten realm city of Waterdeep, where you are playing, you play as hidden Lords and you've got to go around complete quests and you've got limited numbers of spaces on the boards to put your pieces and your agents and things like that. It's a lot of fun and it has a very good online implementation that I have been playing a lot over the last year or so in one of the communities I stream with but, Dice Forge, really, really nice game, and you build your own dice.

**(Laughter)**

And you customise your own dice as you go through the game which is... like the tac- I can't underestimate how good that tactile feel is to it.

Card games like Citadels, Love Letter...

**NAVY**

Oh, Love Letter is amazing, I love it...

**HELEN**

That sounds familiar.

**ANIL**

And it's so simple. Like, and we're talking about games you can take down the pub.

**NAVY AND IAN**

Yeah.

**ANIL**

It comes in a little velvet bag and a stack of cards and a set of cubes.

**NAVY**

Right.

**ANIL**

And it's great. I love small box games like that that you can just...  
Exploding Kittens is another one.

**HELEN AND NAVY**

Yeah.

**ANIL**

We're not really differentiating between like card games and board games here really but...

**HELEN**

You can put the cards on a board it's fine.

**ANIL**

Yeah, sure.

**NAVY**

Tabletop games.

**ANIL**

Yeah, Dominion is one because my sister and brother-in-law have that and that's again they are... because games I can play with my family are few and far between...

**(Laughter)**

**HELEN**

I see.

**ANIL**

As much as I am trying to get my niece, I will be getting my niece to try and play more games, once she is able to grasp rules and have the patience to sit down to play things. Ticket to Ride, really simple.

**HELEN**

I played that for the first time recently, that's really fun.

**ANIL**

Yeah, the base USA game for Ticket to Ride, really, really good and it's again, one of the few games that we have been able to teach my mum to play and play as a family. It's such a good... the expansions vary, some of the supplemental boards are a bit iffy, I don't really like the UK expansion very much, it's got some weird rules.

**(Laughter)**

**IAN**

Yeah.

**HELEN**

I played the Europe one.

**ANIL**

Yeah, Europe is solid but again you've got...

**IAN**

Europe's lovely.

**ANIL**

Yeah, the weirdness about remembering what the tunnels do is a bit weird.

**(Laughter)**

**IAN**

Yeah.

**ANIL**

But for a straightforward game where you've got a limited number of actions, but it generates a lot of fun, the basic drive, but yeah I would say things like... I've been playing a bunch off of like Board Game Arena which has a lot of good licences. Azul is one I was introduced to recently that I really like.

**IAN**

Ah, it's beautiful, isn't it?

**ANIL**

Yeah, it's a tile based pattern game, very, very sweet, runs relatively quickly and then like the cooperative games. I haven't played enough Betrayal at House on the Hill for it to really be a favourite, but I love the concept of it; but Pandemic...

**NAVY**

I really want to play the Legacy version, so bad.

**ANIL**

No, I haven't watched people play that Legacy, I've watched Risk Legacy and Pandemic Legacy, well no, I love Pandemic. I don't like the look of Pandemic Legacy.

**HELEN**

Betrayal on the House of the Hill is the one where you have to figure out who the murderer is?

**ANIL**

Not quite. It's...

**HELEN**

There's like a ghost?

**NAVY**

You're four people exploring the house and the house was built as you go and every time something like a significant event happens, you roll to see if the haunt occurs.

**HELEN**

Oh.

**NAVY**

And if the haunt occurs then one of the four people have the potential of turning into the monster, or whatever that is, and there is a bunch of variations.

**ANIL**

We did play it on RQGG '17 to interesting affect.

**(Laughter)**

**HELEN**

Oh, well I wasn't there then so...

**ANIL**

Yeah, if we've got time, we'll talk about traitor mechanics a bit later, I guess...

**(Laughter)**

Okay.

**NAVY**

Yeah, so one player is the murderer, but you don't really... it doesn't start off that way.

**HELEN**

Oh, so the murderer doesn't know they're murderer until like halfway through the game?

**ANIL**

Yeah.

**NAVY**

Correct.

**IAN**

Or indeed how they're going to do the murders or anything like that it's...

**ANIL**

Yeah, or why they're the bad guy, yeah.

**(Laughter)**

**HELEN**

Ah, that's really fun.

**NAVY**

Right, yeah, it's just a thing that just happens to one of players eventually.

**ANIL**

Yeah.

**NAVY**

Or sometimes you know, everyone is still on the same side.

**IAN AND ANIL**

Yeah.

**NAVY**

There are scenarios where, yeah, no one is traitor.

**HELEN**

But not often it sounds like.

**(Laughter)**

**NAVY**

Not often, no.

**(Laughter)**

**IAN**

Not about to be it.

**HELEN**

I have a soft spot for this very silly little game called Dobble.

**NAVY**

Oh!

**HELEN**

It's a little card game and it's kind of like Snap.

**ANIL**

Yeah, remember what I said about not liking dexterity based games...?

**(Laughter)**

**HELEN**

Yeah, yeah it would be terrible for you.

**ANIL**

Dobble is one of those that hits that spot.

**(Laughter)**

**HELEN**

Yeah, so it's just instead of numbers there are a series of pictures on each card and there's always at least one picture the same on every card.

**IAN**

Yeah.

**HELEN**

Which the mathematics of figuring that out is something I can't, cannot comprehend but, yeah so you basically whoever gets rid of all their cards first wins. I really like it. It's very easy and simple and you start yelling very loudly.

**(Laughter)**

**ANIL**

Yeah, like it's a lot of fun, it's unfortunately not one for me, you know.

**(Laughter)**

**HELEN**

Yeah.

I played a Stars Wars version and I lost mostly because I couldn't name the things. I was like "Uh, a spaceship!"

**(Laughter)**

"Another spaceship" "Some dude!"

So, we're coming towards the end of the episode, we have time for one more question, and as is often the case on this show I'm going to go with like an

advice question which is, what do you think is the ideal first game, like first board game for someone to start with, like what's a good intro if someone didn't... if for example someone didn't grow up with say, Ludo or Monopoly or any of the others that we mentioned at that start?

### **NAVY**

Well, it really depends on the genre that they want to get into, right? Like if you want to start with Dungeon Crawlers, oh there's One Deck Dungeon, is one that I have always recommended to people. Just a general like small brawl games, A King of Tokyo and Arena of the Gods is fantastic.

Small World and Seven Wonders are awesome like simple, more simple strategy games.

There's just, there's so much to look into, it really just depends on what your play preference is.

### **ANIL**

Yeah, I'm going to go with yeah as Navy said, depending on genre, the ones that I have found straightforward enough to teach to other people and get them in, particularly if they aren't gamers are, Ticket to Ride as I said, it's the one game that we have been able to teach my mum to play because it is really straightforward.

The other one, there's a tile game called, Alhambra which is another good one we've been able to teach her that, these are straightforward enough mechanics with a good amount of variation and a little bit of strategy and a little bit of player interaction that you don't necessarily have to push towards, particularly in Ticket to Ride like, because there are routes that you can compete on and things like that, you can have like little bits of a house rule to

make it a little bit more friendlier or okay we won't... if I know you are going in a particular area I won't deliberately go and stop you doing that. Like not necessarily in the rules game but even as rules as written it's a very straightforward game to teach people.

Codenames, for anybody who likes word games is a very good...

**NAVY**

Codenames is fantastic.

**ANIL**

...is a very straightforward game to teach people, even if the actual nuance of it become difficult, it's like how do I pair that word and that word, people will have seen me and Alex playing this...

**(Laughter)**

...or RQGG to varying degrees of success.

**HELEN**

Just completely opposite brains.

**(Laughter)**

**ANIL**

Yeah, and this is what we mean, and this goes back to the theory of mind thing that we were talking about earlier, a very good example of how these things

work out, but again, Alhambra, Ticket to Ride, Codenames, yeah those would probably be, Love Letter again, would be really, really good go to games to teach people.

**HELEN**

Can you talk to me about Love Letter because it sounds familiar, but I don't actually know what it is?

**ANIL**

So, Love Letter is a role based... a card game where you have got a deck of cards and each of the cards have a different role on it and they're numbered so number one is the guard, number two is the priest, oh no – one of them is a priest, one of them is a princess courtesan and a king and a prince and things like, and you like draw two cards, you decide which one you were going to play because each of them has an associated action with them, and the idea is to be the last person standing i.e. to not have your role identified and you then play this for various rounds. So, like if you're forced to discard a card and you discard the princess or something like that you automatically lose.

**HELEN**

I see.

**ANIL**

It's a very simple but layered game, that you can get to grips with very quickly. It's played relatively quickly, and you can moderate how fast you want your

Rusty Quill Enthusiasgasm – EGSM – Board Games

game to be by how many cubes you need to... how many rounds you need to win in order to be crowned the ultimate winner.

**(Laughter)**

**IAN**

Yeah, it shares some DNA with Coup, so I think you would like it, Helen.

**ANIL**

Yeah.

**HELEN**

I think I would like it as well.

**ANIL**

Yeah.

**HELEN**

Ian, what do you reckon is a good beginner game?

**IAN**

I mean, I'm going to refer everybody to the answers they've just been given because they've been...

**(Laughter)**

Rusty Quill Enthusiasm – EGSM – Board Games

That basically is the starter pack...

**(Laughter)**

...of good games I think that's been said. I would add Skull in there because Skull is fantastic.

**HELEN**

Of course.

**IAN**

I love a party game, so I'm going to chuck a party game in here, my current favourite party game is called Dream Crush.

**HELEN**

Oh?

**ANIL**

It's not that one which has the telephone?

**IAN**

No, people think it's got the telephone, it doesn't have the telephone.

**ANIL**

Okay, right okay.

**IAN**

But it's very stylised, 80s sort of looking box, and it's a simulation of Blind Date the television programme.

**ANIL**

Oh.

**HELEN**

I love Blind Date.

**IAN**

You would love this.

**HELEN**

Ah!

**IAN**

Right, so, you start off with three people that everybody could date and you all write down who you think everybody would date, and as the game goes on you find out more and more about these people so, you might find out one of them enjoys taking the dogs for a walk on the beach, that's good, that's nice; but then you might find out somebody just likes writing beat poetry and reciting it on the bus...

**(Laughter)**

**HELEN**

Not on the bus!

**ANIL**

And you had me at the first part but then not the second.

**(Laughter)**

**IAN**

Yeah, exactly, and basically because of the way the cards are written, these people become more and more annoying as the game goes on.

**(Laughter)**

So, it's not who would somebody date because they'd really like to on this date. It's, which of these three people would Helen stand five minutes with...

**(Laughter)**

**ANIL**

Who is the least worst dateable – wow, it really is a dating simulation.

**(Laughter)**

**IAN**

It is, you see there you go, and you get that feel... and it is fantastic and it's hilarious and...

**HELEN**

What did you say, Dream Crush?

**IAN**

Dream Crush, and the art on it is beautiful, they've got loads of different people in to pose as these dream crushes, I think it might have been originally kick started, and the photos are worth the entrance price alone.

**HELEN**

Okay.

**IAN**

These are some horrendously, horrendously, horribly, wonderful people.

**HELEN**

Okay, the next time I have some kind of board games night... I'm going to buy that game! And I'm going to play it!

**(Laughter)**

It's going to be great.

**ANIL**

It does sound right up your alley, Helen.

**(Laughter)**

**HELEN**

**(Laughter)**

Yeah, that sounds hilarious.

**IAN**

Fantastic.

**HELEN**

Alright then, we are now out of time.

**NAVY**

Aw.

**HELEN**

This has been great. This has been so much fun. Thank you all so, so much for coming on the show and talking about board games.

**NAVY**

Thank you.

**IAN**

Thanks for inviting us to.

**ANIL**

Thank you for letting us enthuse about this.

**(Laughter)**

**HELEN**

That's the aim of the show.

**(Laughter)**

Right, listener, I hope you enjoyed it as well, and I will see you on the next episode, but for now it's goodbye from me, goodbye; and it's goodbye from all of them, would you all like to say goodbye?

**IAN**

Goodbye.

**ANIL**

Bye then.

**NAVY**

Bye.

**(Laughter)**

**[Show Theme - Outro]**

Enthusigasm is a podcast distributed by Rusty Quill and licensed under a creative commons attribution, non-commercial share alike 4.0 international license. It is directed by Helen Gould, produced by Lowri Ann Davies, with executive producers Alexander J Newall and April Sumner, and edited by Marisa Ewing, Tessa Vroom, Micelle Snow and Catherine Rinella. Thanks for listening.

**[Show Theme – Outro Ends]**

Hosted and Directed by Helen Gould

Producer by Lowri Ann Davies

Executive Producers: Alexander J. Newall & April Sumner

Editing by Michelle Snow and Cathy Rinella

Music by Samuel D.F. Jones

Art by Anika Khan