



SHUFFLED

COMPLETE THEM
ALL. MAKE YOUR
CONVENTION
LEGENDARY.

CONVENTION QUESTS



PLAY A GAME YOU'VE
NEVER HEARD OF



PLAY 2 ROUNDS OF THE
SAME GAME



TEACH A GAME



DISCOVER A MECHANIC
YOU'VE NEVER PLAYED
BEFORE



BROWSE THROUGH AN
ARTICLE WHILE WAITING
FOR YOUR TURN



PLAY A GAME IN
PROTOTYPE STAGE



PARTICIPATE IN A
TOURNAMENT



PLAY A GAME THAT HAS
ITS OWN UNIQUE
CURRENCY NAME



WIN A GAME



PLAY A COOPERATIVE
GAME



PRE-ORDER A GAME YOU
REALLY ENJOYED



BUY AN INDIE GAME
WHOSE DESIGNER YOU MET



FREE SPACE



LOSE A GAME



DO A D&D CAMPAIGN OR
A ROTC SESSION



GET A BOARD GAME
ACCESSORY



PLAY A 10-MINUTE
GAME



GET YOURSELF INTO A
NEW BOARD GAME
GROUP ON WA



RECOMMEND A GAME TO
SOMEONE



ATTEND ONE OF THE
TALKS



MAKE AT LEAST ONE NEW
BOARD GAME FRIEND &
MAKE PLANS



PLAY A 4 HOUR
GAME



FOLLOW A NEW
BOARD GAME CONTENT
CREATOR



PLAY A GAME WITH A
CUSTOM DICE



TAKE A PHOTO OF A
GAME

HOW MANY
WILL YOU
COMPLETE?

EXPLORE. PLAY. CONNECT. REPEAT.
YOUR CONVENTION STORY BEGINS HERE.



CHETTINAD DUET

2 Games for 2 Players.

Players: 2

Ages: 14+

Play time: 20-30 min (both games)

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Not one, but two 2-player games inspired by the Chettinadu region of Tamil Nadu in one box.

CHESSINAD

Chessinad is a tug of war, where you place tiles to form patterns. Each pattern formed lets you "tug" 1 spot towards your side.

- ~1 min rule teach & set-up
- Great for the elderly, new-entrants to gaming, or as a light filler game.

TRADE-ITION

Trade-ition is a worker placement race to finish two of six possible tasks in a Chettinad Village. The twist? Only the player who finishes the second task wins.

- ~8 min rule teach & set-up
- Great for players at all stages of their gaming journey.

PRE-ORDER CAMPAIGN

Until July 31, 2026, you can avail a 20% discount if you pre-order. We plan to start printing in July, and dispatch orders by Oct '26. More details, photos and videos will be updated soon on our website. For group buys, email us at contact@xotoxo.com.

Note: Art assets are still evolving, and there may be some changes in the final product compared to the picture above. Follow our website or social media @xotoxogames for the latest updates.

How To Play This Issue

This issue of Shuffled is not just here to be read. It is here to be carried around, scribbled on, flipped through, hunted through, and maybe even played.

Inside, you'll find a few convention-special extras designed to make the issue feel a little more like a table full of possibilities. All articles with interactive elements have been marked with a 🌟 in the table of contents.

The Cover: The Convention Quest

The cover of this issue has been designed for you to mark things off and build your own convention experience. Enjoy the bingo on the cover and treat it like a must-do list for your board gaming journey.

The Shuffled One Day Adventure

Start with the opening prompt at the bottom of the next page and follow the page numbers through the magazine. Every choice will lead you somewhere new as you navigate a day at a tabletop convention. Will you stay on schedule, get distracted by prototypes, spend too much money, or end up playing just one more game? There's only one way to find out. If at any point you are exhausted, overwhelmed, or simply done - turn to Pg 45 and read ending F. It will always be there for you.

The Library Side Quest

The library can be massive and intimidating. For moments of distress, decision paralysis, or simple inspiration, turn to the Convention Survival Guide and find the Library Side Quest that you can tick off and complete. You can use it at TTOX, at a board game café, or even at your favourite local meetup.

The Connection Mission

For a lot of people, board game conventions are more than just places to play and buy games. They are places to meet people, find old friends, and step out of your usual gaming circle. Find The Connection Mission, included in the Convention Survival Guide, and try to complete it at the next board game event you attend.

Releases & Recommendations

We know how it goes. You read about new games and recommendations, tell yourself you'll remember them, and then immediately forget which ones you actually played, wishlisted, or wanted to try. In the listicles in this issue, you'll find checkboxes to help you keep track of the games you tried and the games you want to come back to later.

The [Extras]: The BoardHopper Sticker

Your TTOX experience does not have to live only in your memory. It can live on your phone, bag, laptop, or wherever you like to display your little badges of honour. Use the BoardHopper app to log all your plays. At the end of your TTOX experience, note your plays on the sticker provided and wear your convention stats with pride.

Editor's Note

Hello Meeples,

To start with, I want to thank everyone who gave their time, effort, and attention to Volume 1 of *Shuffled*. The warm reception the first issue received across the country completely surpassed my personal expectations.

When I first started working on this idea, I was asked by many people, "Why a magazine? Is that a medium that will be accepted in today's world?" To which I jokingly responded, "Board gamers read rulebooks for fun. I definitely see a magazine falling well within the spectrum of things board gamers would enthusiastically indulge in."

I am very pleased to say that Volume 1 gave us our answer. It showed us that there is room for slower, more intentional board game writing, and that this format does have a place in our community. The entire team at *Shuffled* is deeply grateful for that.

That being said, we are still a young magazine, and part of the joy of being new is having the space to experiment. We are still discovering our identity and voice issue by issue, and this volume is slightly different for that very reason.

With Volume 2 launching as our first print issue at TTOX Summer Edition, I am both excited and nervous to see how it makes its way into people's hands.

Personally, conventions hold a very special place in my heart. I still remember walking into my first convention starry-eyed and mesmerised by the love for board games that was so apparent in every person there. Now that I've also organised one in Mumbai, it is even clearer to me that conventions are where the energy behind this hobby is most visible.

The coming together of gamers, designers, publishers, retailers, hosts, creators, and curious newcomers is something we rarely get to experience in everyday life. For me, going to conventions has become something of a pilgrimage.

With that in mind, this issue focuses on conventions and the role they play in the tabletop ecosystem. For those attending TTOX, I hope this volume acts as a guide, a companion, and a small pause between games – something that helps you understand what to expect, what to look forward to, and what to notice while you are there.

And for those who can't be there, I hope it offers a small window into the goings-on, the conversations, and the excitement of the convention floor. More than anything, I hope it helps you feel connected to the energy of TTOX, and excited for the end-of-year convention season that is now just around the corner.

Welcome to Volume 2 of *Shuffled*.

Let's meet between tables.

- Lux

You enter the venue and your mind is blown away. Your plan feels minuscule in the midst of all these people and the promise of new games to discover. What do you decide to begin your day with?

a. The Library First b. Check the tournament board c. Find your friends d. Something smells yummy!

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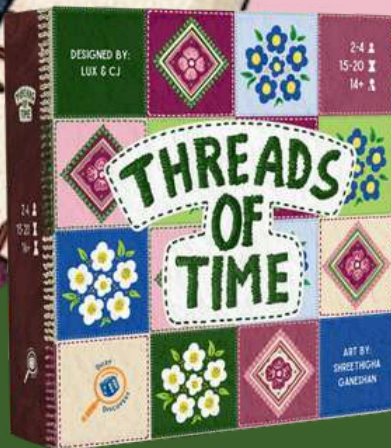
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THREADS OF TIME



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Grandma's favourite?



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IN PLAY



The Convention Survival Guide

A practical, chaos-tested guide to surviving your first big board game convention without missing the fun.



TABLE TALK: The Perfect Convention Day

Two gamers debate what makes the ideal convention day: careful planning, spontaneous wandering, or something in between.



MADE IN INDIA:

TTOX Releases To Look Out For

A spotlight on the new Indian games launching or showing up at TTOX





The Convention Survival Guide

A board game convention is, in many ways, the perfect nightmare for anyone prone to analysis paralysis.

There are hordes of exhibitors, sprawling game libraries, eager designers, curated play tables, tournaments, demos, schedules, maps, and approximately twelve different things you want to do at the same time. It is exciting. It is thrilling. It can also be deeply intimidating, especially if you are walking in for the first time.

So, as the first step into this convention issue, we figured the most useful thing we could give you was a survival guide. Not a strict itinerary. Not a perfect plan. Just a few things to aim for, keep in mind, and return to when the convention floor starts feeling like a giant rulebook with no quick-start guide.

Whether you are new, confused, overwhelmed, or simply looking for inspiration, here are a few ways to make the most of your day.

After all, conventions are the ultimate optimisation puzzle.

So, for this guide, we're treating the convention like any good game: four core actions, limited time, and a whole lot of tempting choices.

PLAY

Play something, not everything.

Yes, FOMO is very real. You will walk into that sprawling library, spot twenty titles you have been meaning to try, and immediately convince yourself that this is the day you finally become a board game completionist.

Unfortunately, conventions come with limited time, limited table space, and very limited human battery. So make peace with the fact that you will not be able to play everything. You can, however, play well. Pick a few games you are genuinely excited about, leave room for surprises, and treat the day less like a checklist and more like a very chaotic tasting menu.



SIDE QUESTS. IF YOU SEEK INSPIRATION:

- ☐ Play something you have been meaning to for over 6 months
- ☐ Play an indie game that just launched, maybe even at TTOX
- ☐ Play one heavy game but also one light game
- ☐ Play one game simply because there is an open table
- ☐ Play something you have not heard of before today
- ☐ Play something someone from the library suggests

Check out the library in advance.

Many conventions give attendees a sneak peek into the game library before the event. Use it.

For TTOX, the full library is hosted on BoardHopper, which means you can browse games, shortlist titles, and wishlist the ones you are eyeing before you even reach the venue. This gives you a starting point when you get there, instead of standing in front of a wall of games and mildly panicking.

Shelves decked with games. You hear games, mechanics, and publishers for the first time.

Some of them feel familiar, while the vast majority of games offer new adventures.

How do you begin your gameplay today?

a. Ask a volunteer b. Grab the game you had wishlisted c. Sit down at a random open table d. Find your friends

Pg. 03

Pg. 04

Pg. 05

Pg. 06



Try a designer table.

The next generation of indie board games is reliant on your input. Head to the designer table and give anything whose theme appeals to you a shot. Remember that these are not completely perfect games. Have an open mind and be honest about what is working and what isn't - and most importantly, don't be mean about it.

Play the big game early.

If there is a heavy game on your mind that takes a few hours, try to play it early.

You will be at peak energy, tables are usually easier to find, and your brain has not yet been turned into convention soup. It also gives your day a natural rhythm: big game first, lunch break after, lighter discoveries later.

Your future tired self will thank you.

Listen to the library team.

The library team has seen what people love, abandon, replay, and secretly obsess over across multiple editions.

Tell them what you enjoyed, how many people you have, and how much time or brain space you're working with. They'll probably suggest something you wouldn't have picked yourself, but end up loving.

Take their word for it. They're talking from experience.

BUY

Set a budget

Possibly the most important rule: have a budget. Will you cross it? Maybe. Convention hype is very real and very persuasive. It is easy to get swept up, buy something you had no intention of buying, and later wonder which version of you made that decision.

So set a number before you enter the exhibitor section. Even if you stretch it, having a limit gives you something to return to before impulse takes over.

Buy early

Start your day with a stroll through the exhibitor and store area. Many stalls come in with limited stock, and popular titles can run out before the end of the convention. If there is something you already know you want, try to buy it early instead of spending the rest of the day nervously checking whether it is still available. It also gets the shopping out of the way, so you can spend the rest of the day playing, exploring, and actually being present.

Carry an empty backpack or extra bag.

Your day will thank you. If you plan to buy games and move around the convention all day, carry a backpack or an extra tote. Board games look cute on shelves. They feel significantly less cute when you are carrying them around for six hours.

Stroll before you buy

Do one full round before making impulse purchases. Walk around, see what is available, compare prices, check what is limited, and then decide what fits your budget. Have a priority list in mind. Buy the must-haves first, then come back to the "nice-to-have" items if you still have money and enthusiasm left. Also, don't forget to peek into the pre-loved games section. You might find some amazing deals there. And don't forget to keep a small budget aside for pre-loved games. You might find great deals there!

You expected a name to be dropped, but you're given a lecture on greatness. Their reasoning behind why you should play this game tugs at an itch you never knew you had. What do you make of this discovery?

a. Play with friends b. Play with strangers c. Make mental note and play what you wanted to d. You spot a designer table

Try it before you buy it.

If you are unsure about a game, try to play it before you buy it. Look for it in the library, check if there is a demo table, or at least ask to see the components and understand how it plays. This is especially useful for high-value games. A big box is a big investment, and “everyone is buying it” is not the same as “you will enjoy it.”

Don't force-buy

If you somehow still have budget left, congratulations. That does not mean you need to spend it. Do not buy something just because you have money left or because the convention is ending. Those are often the purchases that turn into shelf guilt later. It is perfectly okay to leave with money unspent.

Diversify your purchases

Yes, board games are the main event, but they are not the only thing worth buying. Conventions are also great places to find inserts, upgrades, dice trays, tokens, sleeves, accessories, art, stickers, and other tabletop-adjacent merch. Most of your haul may still be games, but leave a little room for the small things that make your gaming life nicer.

CONNECT

For a lot of people, conventions are not just about playing games. They are annual reunions, first meetings, chaotic catch-ups, and the only time you see that one person from another city who shares your exact niche taste in trick-taking games. So instead of telling you to “network,” we’re giving you a side mission list. Tick off as many as you can.

The Connection Missions

EASY MISSIONS

- ☐ Play with someone you didn't arrive with
- ☐ Play with someone from a different state
- ☐ Talk to a designer and understand their design process

MEDIUM MISSIONS

- ☐ Thank someone from the organising team, maybe even get them water
- ☐ Play at a guided table and connect with a bunch of new people
- ☐ Have lunch or a tea break with someone you met at the convention

HARD MISSIONS

- ☐ Join a table you know no one at
- ☐ Exchange numbers with someone you would actually play with from your city
- ☐ Make one post-convention game plan

SURVIVE

Trust us, when we say this, conventions can be exhausting. At some point, the adrenaline will wear off, and the exhaustion will wash over. Here are a few things to do to make sure you make the most of what you want out of the day before, during, and after the event.

You ask the volunteer for the game you've planned to play ever since you knew this was part of the library. You're almost met with disappointment as the volunteer tells you that someone has borrowed it. As you turn away, the volunteer calls your name. The game is back in the library. How do you accept this fortunate turn of events?



a. Join a few strangers Pg. 05 b. Text your friends Pg. 06 c. You hear about a fun exhibitor & it distracts you Pg. 07 d. Your stomach protests Pg. 17

Before the event:

Pack light

Even if you do not plan to buy anything, you will probably leave with more things than you came with. Flyers, cards, promos, purchases, tote bags, stickers, emotional baggage from losing a game you were sure you understood – it all adds up. Carry only what you need. You will be walking around a lot, and future-you will appreciate the lighter load.

Carry a power bank

A convention can easily become a 10-hour day, and there is no guarantee you will find a free charging point when you need one. Between photos, payments, maps, schedules, group chats, logging plays, and finding people, your phone will be working overtime. Carry a power bank.

Check the schedule in advance.

Look through the schedule before you arrive. Mark the events, tournaments, panels, demos, or registration windows you genuinely do not want to miss. Set alarms if needed. Convention time moves strangely. One “quick game” can very easily become two hours.

Wear comfortable shoes

You will be on your feet a lot. Wear shoes or chappals you can comfortably walk, stand, browse, queue, and mildly panic in for an entire day.

During the event:

Take breaks

As tempting as it is, do not play game after game without stopping. Take time to walk around, breathe, snack, chat, browse, and simply enjoy the energy of the space. Your brain needs a reset between games, especially if you want to remember

anything you played by the end of the day.

Alternate between game weights

Do not play only heavy games. Do not play only fillers either. Mix it up. A heavy game followed by a lighter game, or a quick filler before jumping into something meatier, can help you keep your energy balanced and your day more enjoyable.

Log your plays

Use BoardHopper, BG Stats, BoardGameGeek, a notes app, or whatever system works for you. Your future self will be delighted to look back and see what you played, what you loved, and how much you managed to fit into the day. It also helps when someone inevitably asks, “What was that one game we played near the library?”

Don't go too far for lunch.

If you are stepping out for food, stay nearby. Going too far can break the flow of your day, and coming back may suddenly feel like a side quest with too many steps. Eat, rest, recharge, and return before your convention momentum disappears.

After the event:

Share the joy

Tiny, mildly self-serving request: share what you loved. Post the games you played, the people you met, the stalls you enjoyed, or the moments that made you laugh. It does not have to be a polished review. A story, a photo, or a quick “this was fun” is enough. For you, it becomes a memory of the day. For someone else, it might be the first time they realise spaces like this exist.

You find your way to the table. People you've never met. The game has brought you together.

You might probably forget their names tomorrow. But for now, this game is all that matters.

What do you do next?

a. There was this fun prototype b. Warm up done. Time for tournaments c. Spot your friends d. You spot someone's shopping



TABLE TALK:

The Perfect Convention Day

This time, we, Joy & Dripta are headed to a gaming convention too! Welcome to a day in our life at the game convention. It is way more than a day- ranging from excitement the day we book passes to long after when the hangover of every new game and gamer we meet lingers on.



JOY & DRIPTA

20:00.

The Eve of Convention

On Friday night before the convention, the excitement is at its peak! Like a dam holding thousands of gallons of water from the water body swollen behind it. And when morning arrives- the dam is not able to hold water anymore.

08:00 am,

Counting Minutes to Gates Open Time

T-60 mins: We are crammed into a booth at a local Udupi joint, aggressively gobbling down idlis and vadas. It's pure strategic fueling; we need a solid carb-fortress in our stomachs so we don't finnick or crash before a late lunch. But for once, our minds aren't actually on the glorious softness of buttery Bangalore idlis. Instead, we are mentally mapping the convention floor, visualizing the myriad of colors in the game library, and anticipating the inevitable wall of sound—the hustle, bustle, and booming laughter of hundreds of nerds in one room.

Once those convention doors slide open at 09:00, we instantly split-and-conquer based on our gaming personalities.



09:15 am,

Spirits Merge and We Separate for the Day

Post Convention Decisions

Another convention day gone by, drenched out of energy and no charge in us- it feels like a round of Powergrid where you simply forgot to power your houses! The mind though is still racing- reflecting back since the minute gates opened first thing in the morning.

A gaming convention day is a game board in itself. Excited to collect resources and get the engine going- you really forget that time runs by and soon it is time to tick whatever is on your list post lunch. Feels like end game objectives that are critical but you may miss out. There is no perfect day at a convention so we hope you find your vibe and build your own day in the life of a board gamer.



2-3 phone calls, almost walking past each other, you finally find your friends. The group you've been planning this with. In familiar company, the crowd doesn't matter anymore.

What do you all do together?

a. Go to the library desk b. Check out the exhibitors. c. Someone wants to shop. d. Someone wants to try a prototype

J: Straight to the library- no time to waste. Gaming plans were already built on WhatsApp groups the week before. Couple of phone calls and all of us are at the table ready to unbox and sail away. Convention mornings are the absolute golden hour to play those white-whale games that have been sitting on your bucket list for months. The energy is fresh, and your brain isn't fried yet. Think complex engine-builders like Food Chain Magnate, optimizing habitats in Ark Nova with the marine expansion, or staring in awe at the sheer table presence of the shiny deluxe Castles of Burgundy Special Edition. If it's an enthusiastic teach close to what @meeplesyrup pulls off- my convention cannot get better.



15:38 pm.

Time for An Absolute Fuel Refill

Well, let's skip the boring part. Lunch on convention days is just sprinting to the nearest food stall or joint, selecting the least time taking food and gobbling it up like a resource crunched gamer in a tight euro. And even at conventions where the organizers do go the extra mile to invite on point roll stalls or the known pizza joint in town-taste is bottom of mind as we actually are drooling on the shrink wrapped shiny boxes around us!

The main hall feels like a high-efficiency flea market, but exclusively custom-tailored for the world of nerds. I love wandering through the publisher booths and artist alleys. It's a sensory overload of meeple-printed tees, gorgeous custom wooden token upgrades, tiny gaming memoirs, and that specific, intoxicating smell of shrink-wrap on a brand-new box. There is nothing quite like the thrill of hunting down a rare, small-box indie game from a niche publisher you've been tracking for months, finally getting to shake the designer's hand as they pass it to you.

D: Meanwhile, on the other side of the magnanimous hall, I immediately drift far away from the heavy cardboard! While J is crunching numbers, I'm soaking in the atmosphere. Yes, conventions mean games, but for me, they mean gamers so much more! The games in the library will wait a little, but the people won't. I want to catch up with every familiar face from the community first, swapping stories about what we've been playing lately.

20:00 pm. End Game Scoring

The best game is one you immediately want to play again as soon as you finish round 1 (last we experienced this was SETI). The best gaming convention is similar! We merge to start saying our gratitudes to organizers and goodbye to new and old friends. A convention may hold 9 hours of intense fun but holds more memories than what it looks like. Like J's first ever 1 point victory or D's house rules that players swore they will implement when they play next. The clock is up but it is time to put the meeples back in the bag.

16:00 pm. Back for More

By mid-afternoon, our two worlds inevitably collide. We meet back up at a table, J with bloodshot eyes from a grueling four-hour victory point battle, and me with a tote bag overflowing with expansion packs, custom dice, and promo cards. We swap stories, compare notes on the coolest things we've seen, and then—without missing a beat—pull up two chairs to dive into a quick, chaotic party game with a group of complete strangers. That is the true magic of these conventions: two different styles of enjoying the hobby, but the exact same feeling of belonging.

New boxes opened everywhere. Tables lined with people teaching and talking about different games. This game speaks to you and you ponder whether you should add one more purchase.

What do you do next?



a. Chat about unreleased game b. You decide to buy it after all c. A giveaway announcement distracts you d. Go to library.

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2 to 8 players



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MADE IN INDIA: TTOX Releases To Look Out For

CHETTINAD DUET

Price: 1.999 (1599 for pre-orders)

2 players

20-30 minutes



Chettinad Duet brings two 2-player games inspired by the Chettinad region of Tamil Nadu into one box. In Chessinad, players place tiles to create patterns, tugging spots towards their side in a quick, easy-to-teach filler that works beautifully for new players and families. In Trade-ition, players race through a Chettinad village, placing workers to complete two of six possible tasks – but only the player who finishes the second task wins. With fast setup, accessible rules, and thoughtful play, Chettinad Duet offers two distinct experiences for players at every stage of their gaming journey.

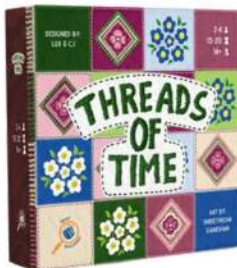
- ☐ Want To Play
- ☐ Played
- ☐ Want To Buy
- ☐ Bought

THREADS OF TIME

Price: 999 (699 Special Price)

2-4 Players

15-20 mins



Threads of Time is a quick card game where players add colourful patches to two shared quilts: one Vintage and one Modern. Every patch placement creates new opportunities, closes off others, and brings you one step closer to becoming grandma's favourite. Compete with your siblings and prove that you are the best!

- ☐ Want To Play
- ☐ Played
- ☐ Want To Buy
- ☐ Bought

BOOM MACHALE

Price: 1090

4-10 players

15-20 mins



Boom Machale is an explosive, fast-paced card game that's equal parts strategy and chaos. Light your firecrackers, shell-shock your friends, and watch the game descend into delightful mayhem. Quick to learn, impossible to put down, and guaranteed to fire up every game night.

- ☐ Want To Play
- ☐ Played
- ☐ Want To Buy
- ☐ Bought



CANTRABAND

Price: 699 (499 Special Price)

4-8 Players

20-30 mins



Cantraband is a high-stakes game of global smuggling, blending sharp memory with ruthless deduction. Divided into two rival underworld dynasties, your mission is to outmaneuver your opponents and seize control over a majority of the nine Contraband Empires. Every ask, every bluff, and every declaration brings your kingdom one step closer to absolute dominion.

- ☐ Want To Play
- ☐ Played
- ☐ Want To Buy
- ☐ Bought

JOBBIT

Price: 799

2-8 players

15-20 mins



JOBBIT is a quick, easy to learn and fun game. A light strategy game for families, friends and colleagues of all ages. Win by collecting points with Progress cards. Sabotage other players with the Bad Boss, Recession and Mafia cards. The cards are relatable giving rise to a lot of jokes and a 'Take That' mechanism giving the game constant twists. Small portable game ideal for travel and vacations!

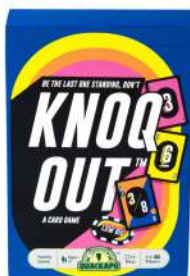
- ☐ Want To Play
- ☐ Played
- ☐ Want To Buy
- ☐ Bought

KNOQ OUT

Price: 499

3-6 players

15-20 mins



KNOQ OUT is a trick-taking card game for 3 to 6 players. The goal is simple: be the last player with cards in your hand. Each round, every player plays one card of the lead colour. The player with the highest card wins the round and draws one new card. All other players keep losing cards. When you have no cards left, you are out of the game.

- ☐ Want To Play
- ☐ Played
- ☐ Want To Buy
- ☐ Bought

The components feel mismatched. You can see something interesting with tokens from your favourite game. You're whisked into a project where you become part of those who bring it to life. You're not sure if you completely understand the theme; but there's something that speaks to you.

What do you all do tell the designer?



a. Play the prototype b. Go to the exhibitors instead. c. Give feedback and find your friends d. You get hungry, so you go.

ELECTION TAMASHA

Price: 3499

2-4 Players

30-75 minutes



Election Tamasha is a satirical board game about Indian elections, designed for 2-4 players aged 18 and above. Easy to learn in 15 minutes and playable in about an hour, it lets players experience the chaos, strategy, and drama of politics. Players split into two parties, act as the high command, nominate candidates, campaign across 9 constituencies, gather funds and supporters, and react to attacks, Victim cards, Breaking News, and endgame horse trading. With caste, religion, identity, corruption, and clean-image politics in play, Election Tamasha turns political arguments into a fun, educative, and entertaining tabletop experience.

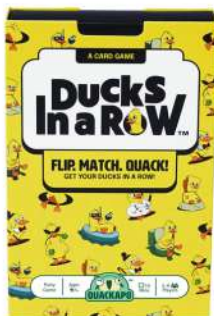
- ☐ Want To Play
- ☐ Played
- ☐ Want To Buy
- ☐ Bought

DUCKS IN A ROW

Price: 499

2-9 players

15-20 mins



Ducks in a Row is a fast observation card game for 2 to 9 players. Players take turns flipping cards face up onto a shared grid. When you see three cards in a row that match by colour or by duck type, shout "QUACK!" before any other player. The first player to shout wins those three cards. Watch the grid carefully. A match can appear horizontally, vertically, or diagonally. The player with the most points at the end of the game wins. Each game takes approximately 10 minutes.

- ☐ Want To Play
- ☐ Played
- ☐ Want To Buy
- ☐ Bought

KHUFIA MAFIA

Price: 1590

7 - 26 Players

30 mins



Khufia Mafia is a fresh take on the iconic classic. Uncover unique roles, wild twists, and second chances. Even villagers have active roles now, so no more sitting around waiting to die. Easy to learn, wildly unpredictable, and almost guaranteed to cause a little drama.

- ☐ Want To Play
- ☐ Played
- ☐ Want To Buy
- ☐ Bought

The rules are explained. You take part in a journey for the future. There are parts of the game that work brilliantly. While some actions feel like they could do a bit more polish. [Each of your decisions are being noted by the designer with eager eyes.



a. Give very detailed feedback b. You end up talking for an hour c. Your friends are calling for you d. Time for a tourney!

OH MY WORD

Price: 699

2-5 Players

15-20 mins



From the creator of THIS IS RIDICULOUS!!! comes a new word-making game called OH MY WORD! The rules are simple. You're dealt a hand of letter cards. You make words and score them. The first person to reach 100 points wins. Make longer words than your opponents and you get rewarded, but make shorter words... and you get penalized. So use your cards wisely because as Mark Twain once said... "The difference between the almost right word and the right word is really a large matter."

☐ Want To Play

☐ Played

☐ Want To Buy

☐ Bought

THIS IS DITICULOUS!!!

Price: 499

3-5 Players

15-20 mins



A brand new 3-in-one expansion to your favourite party game, This Is Ridiculous!!! Use it to add more people to your game OR Use it as regular playing cards OR Use it to play the new game DITICULOUS!!! where all you have to do is make words using morse code. Yeah... morse code. Oh don't worry, it's not as hard as it sounds. It's simply resource management but just with dits and dahs or dots and dashes or whatever you want to call them.

☐ Want To Play

☐ Played

☐ Want To Buy

☐ Bought

KANTARA: SPIRITS OF THE FOREST

Price: 999

2-4 Players

30-45 minutes



Kantara: Spirits of the Forest is an official strategy card game that brings the environmental and mythological themes of the Kantara universe to your table. Developed by Mozaic Games in collaboration with Hombale Films and Astra Studios, the game challenges players to balance human ambition with respect for nature.

☐ Want To Play

☐ Played

☐ Want To Buy

☐ Bought



As you walk into the tournament zone, you're in awe of all the people excited about a single game. You scan everyone there, some faces look confident, some excited, everyone's here to give it their best. Are you ready?

a. Sign up! b. Watch a round first. c. Maybe not today, go to library d. Your volunteer friend suggests you help out instead

MEEPLE MATTERS



A City Built On Cardboard

A deep dive on an attendee's journey through the warmth, wonder, and chaos of Gen Con



A City Built on Cardboard

100,000 People and the Kindest Crowd I've Ever Seen

by Saumil

When people hear that more than 100,000 people attend Gen Con, they usually imagine chaos.

I did too.

I expected overcrowded halls, loud personalities, long lines, and the kind of social exhaustion that comes from being surrounded by strangers for four straight days. Instead, what I experienced at my first Gen Con in 2025 was something completely different: one of the most respectful, welcoming, and deeply human gatherings I've ever attended.

Somehow, Gen Con managed to feel massive and intimate at the same time.

For those unfamiliar, Gen Con is one of the largest tabletop gaming conventions in the world, held annually in Indianapolis. It celebrates board games, role-playing games, card games, miniatures, cosplay, and geek culture in all its forms. But describing Gen Con as "a gaming convention" feels incomplete after experiencing it firsthand. It's more accurate to call it a temporary city built around shared enthusiasm.

And what struck me most was not the games. It was the people.



THE MOST EXTROVERTED INTROVERTS I'VE EVER MET

There's a stereotype that tabletop gamers are antisocial introverts hiding behind dice, cards, and rulebooks. Gen Con shattered that stereotype almost immediately.

The people I met were some of the most approachable strangers I've encountered in any large gathering. Conversations started naturally in hallways, demo tables, food courts, elevators, and even while waiting in line. Complete strangers would teach games, share recommendations, compare experiences, or simply chat because you happened to be carrying the same game box.



You see different games on a single table. The volunteer wearing the company tshirt is excited to talk about the game in front of them. You're deciding if you want to give this game a home.

What do you do?

a. You're buying it b. A demo of the game is about to start c. You chat with someone next to you & join them

What made it fascinating was that many people still clearly were introverts. But Gen Con creates an environment where enthusiasm becomes a social bridge. Shared interests eliminate the awkwardness that usually exists between strangers. It felt like being surrounded by “extroverted introverts” — people who may not thrive in ordinary social settings but become incredibly open once they find common ground.

And at Gen Con, common ground is everywhere.

A SPACE WHERE EVERYONE BELONGS



One of the most beautiful things about Gen Con was how diverse the crowd felt without making diversity feel performative.

There were families introducing children to games for the first time. Teenagers in cosplay. College students hunting for indie games. Retired couples playing strategy games together. Hardcore hobbyists hauling giant backpacks full of miniatures. First-time attendees nervously exploring the halls. Entire communities and clubs gathering around shared traditions.

Every age group was represented.

Every type of personality was represented.

Every level of gaming experience was represented.

And somehow it all worked.

Nobody seemed concerned with status, career, education, or background. The only thing that mattered was whether you loved the culture enough to participate in it.

The atmosphere reminded me of hacker conventions from the early 2000s — spaces where belonging came from curiosity and contribution rather than credentials. At those events, nobody cared where you came from as long as you were excited to be there. Gen Con carried that same spirit. As long as you had something in common with the culture, you were welcomed in.

“As long as you had something in common with the culture, you were welcomed in.”

THE JOY OF SHARED OBSESSION

One thing became very clear very quickly: people at Gen Con are deeply dedicated to their hobbies. Not casually interested. Dedicated. You could see it everywhere.

In the elaborate cosplay costumes that clearly took months to create. In the passionate game designers demoing projects they had poured years into. In the collectors searching for rare memorabilia. In the players debating strategies with astonishing precision.

Tables of games waiting to find an owner to take them home. You're wondering if you should buy this or think it through. That thought is being subdued amidst the crowd. What do you do?



a. You get roped into buying something b. You find the last copy of an awaited game c. Your friends and you pool in money

And then there were the traditions.

Cardhalla, for example, perfectly captured the spirit of Gen Con. People spend the convention stacking cards into enormous collaborative structures, only for them to eventually be destroyed in celebration. It's absurd, communal, creative, and completely sincere all at once.

Even games like Robo Rally had crowds of enthusiastic players fully immersed in the experience. There's something refreshing about being around people who care deeply about something purely because they love it.

In many ways, Gen Con feels like a celebration of unapologetic passion.

CREATIVITY EVERYWHERE

Another thing I didn't expect was how creative the convention felt beyond the games themselves.

Publishers and creators weren't just selling products — they were creating experiences.

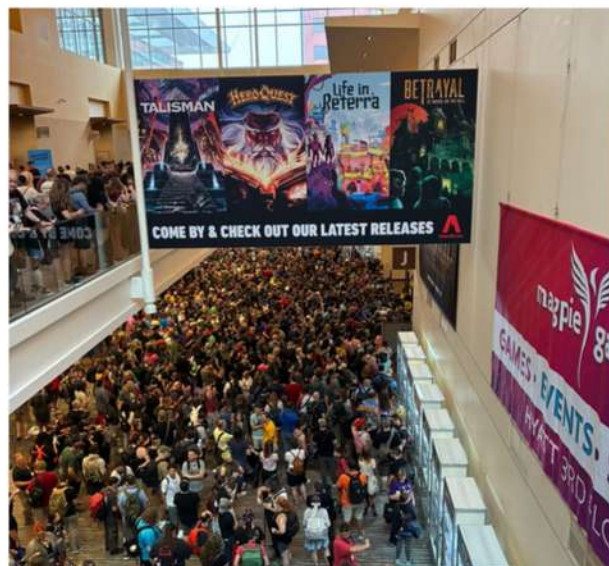
One of my favorite examples was the trading pin culture around CATAN. What could have simply been merchandise became a social interaction system. Pins became conversation starters, collectibles, and mini social quests all at once.

That same creativity extended throughout the convention floor. Booths weren't merely displays; they were invitations to participate. Demos became performances. Communities formed around tiny moments of interaction.

Even the airport felt transformed.

Seeing Gen Con culture spill into the Indianapolis airport was surreal and oddly heartwarming.

Travelers carrying game boxes, wearing convention badges, and discussing strategy games in terminals made it feel like the convention had temporarily expanded beyond the convention center itself. For a few days, the entire city seemed to synchronize around shared enthusiasm.



MEETING THE LEGENDS

One of the most surprising parts of Gen Con was how approachable many well-known personalities were. I had the opportunity to see and interact with creators and figures like Elizabeth Hargrave, James and Clarissa Wilson, Eric Olsen, and Tom Vasel.

What stood out wasn't celebrity status. It was humility.

These were people with major influence in tabletop gaming culture, yet they carried themselves with warmth and openness. Conversations felt genuine rather than transactional. They listened thoughtfully, shared insights generously, and treated fans like peers rather than audiences.



A familiar face, but you take a moment to recognize them. Memories of a table played ages ago. You remember what you played together, but their name eludes you. There is no hesitation and you begin a conversation. What do you do with them?

a. Catch up over food b. Join a game with them c. Head to playtest together d. Head to the tournaments to watch

That kind of accessibility changes the feeling of a convention. It creates an environment where inspiration feels attainable rather than distant. Instead of celebrities on pedestals, Gen Con felt full of experienced community members eager to encourage others into the hobby.

THE CULTURE OF GIVING

If I had to summarize the core lesson of Gen Con in one sentence, it would be this:

The more you give, the more you get.

That philosophy seemed woven into every part of the convention experience.

The attendees who seemed to enjoy Gen Con the most were rarely the ones obsessively rushing between events. They were the people willing to slow down and engage with others.

Some of the best moments happened unexpectedly — an unplanned game session, a conversation in line, a recommendation from someone I had just met. Gen Con rewards openness.

You don't experience it fully by optimizing every hour. You experience it by allowing room for discovery.

"The more you give, the more you get."

THE BIPOC LOUNGE AND COMMUNITY SPACES

One of the spaces that left a strong impression on me was the BIPOC lounge. This, and many other lounges hosted by different groups were more than just a meeting area, it felt like a

genuine community hub. People gathered there for mentorship sessions, demos, conversations, one-on-one chats. There was a spirit of encouragement and accessibility that reflected the broader strengths of Gen Con culture at its best.

It reminded me that conventions aren't only about products or entertainment. They're also about building communities where people feel seen, supported, and included. Those quieter spaces often become just as meaningful as the main events.

"There was a spirit of encouragement and accessibility that reflected the broader strengths of Gen Con culture at its best."



A REFRESHING BREAK FROM SCREEN CULTURE

Perhaps the most unexpected feeling I had throughout Gen Con was relief. We live in a world increasingly dominated by screens. Most social interaction today happens through phones, notifications, feeds, and digital platforms competing endlessly for attention.

You finally catch a break in between all the commotion. It feels nice to finally drink some water. Time has been flying, but its now time for a break. You grab a bite and feel energized. What's next?



Gen Con felt like a temporary rebellion against that reality. People looked at each other. They gathered around tables. They focused on physical objects, shared experiences, and face-to-face interaction.

Instead of staring at screens, people stared at game boards. Instead of scrolling endlessly, they laughed, negotiated, strategized, and collaborated in real time. There was something profoundly refreshing about watching thousands of people fully present with one another.

It reminded me how different human interaction feels when attention isn't fragmented. At Gen Con, people interacted with those who were present rather than absent. And honestly, that may have been the most meaningful part of the entire experience.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Before attending Gen Con, I expected a convention centered around games. What I found instead was a community centered around connection.

Yes, there were incredible games, creative exhibits, talented designers, and endless things to buy. But the lasting impression came from the culture itself — the kindness, openness, enthusiasm, and sense of belonging shared among thousands of people.

In a gathering of over 100,000 attendees, I expected noise and disorder. Instead, I found respect. I found curiosity. I found community. And I left understanding why so many people return year after year.

Gen Con isn't just about gaming. It's about remembering how joyful it feels to share space with people who genuinely love what they love — and aren't afraid to show it.

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BEYOND THE BOARD



When The Dungeon Has A Time Slot

A look at how TTRPGs change when the dungeon moves from a long-running campaign to a convention schedule.



The Convention Optimisation

When a convention floor plan becomes a nightmare, only logic can save the day.



The Invisible Table Captain

A convention-themed puzzle break for readers who like their magazines with a little deduction on the side.



The Dungeon Has A Time Slot

by Arvinth "Macha" Sundar & Labeeb

Before you sit down for a convention RPG session, know this: the dungeon has a closing time. You have three to four hours, five strangers, one deeply suspicious NPC, and approximately seven minutes before someone tries to seduce, rob, adopt, or set fire to something important. Campaigns, meanwhile, are a different beast. They have time for slow-burn character arcs, five-year foreshadowing, unresolved parental trauma, and at least one side quest that began because someone was convinced there was treasure at the bottom of a well.

In this piece, Arvinth looks at the chaos that ensues from behind the GM screen, while Labeeb jumps in from the player's side of the table to ask the important question: what actually changes when an RPG goes from a one-shot convention sprint to a long-running campaign spiral?

MEET YOUR PARTY

Before we enter the dungeon, it's only fair to know who is holding the torch and who is absolutely going to touch the cursed object.

ARVINDH: BEHIND THE SCREEN

Arvinth became a GM in 2020 with no teacher, no experience, and the dangerous belief that enough YouTube could replace wisdom. His first game involved 20 pages of notes for a 3-hour Lost Mines of Phandelver session for a one shot at a WeWork. It proved to be fully chaotic. Then, a month later, he attempted his first campaign with eight players because Matthew Mercer did it, and he did not yet know better. Six years, a thousand-plus new players, and many chaotic tables later, he has learned one thing very clearly: convention games and campaigns are different beasts, and running them well takes very different skills.

LABEEB: AT THE TABLE

Labeeb started his journey into TTRPGs 2 years ago and is part of an ongoing D&D campaign. He tries out different systems like Daggerheart and Gaslands: Refueled when attending conventions. He has recently also dipped his toes into GMing with a Daggerheart oneshot recently. He also was part of a legendary party that fed a kraken its own tentacles, which is seen as either a red flag or a glowing endorsement depending on the table.



Most of the prizes on display seem enticing. The chance to win a game that you don't own pushes you to sign up. You hope that you don't get the beginner game you already have.

What happens?

a. You win something b. You spot someone you know c. The organiser asks if you'd like to help next time d. You want to buy

THE CONVENTION WONDER

Once you're at a convention table, the usual RPG rules of time and patience go out the tavern window. There is no "we'll explore that next session." There is only now, the dice, the table, and whatever strange decision someone makes before the slot ends.

ARVINDH: THE CONVENTION GAME IS A SPRINT

My job in a convention session is simple: get you from zero to memorable in four hours. The tension is preloaded before anyone sits down. Stakes are high, grey areas are few, and if players ignore the plot, the plot comes to them.

This creates some of my favourite gaming memories. Players who fed a kraken its own tentacles. A party that spontaneously launched a dragon taxi service. One group that poisoned a town's water supply with corpses, another that turned zombies into an infinite power source for a grain mill. The skill isn't scripting. It's controlling the shape of the sandbox while leaving room for shenanigans. Cut to the action fast. Keep player options clear without letting the session sprawl. Know when to use an X-card, interrupt an argument, or firmly say no. Above all, keep things simple: convention players range from first-timers to veterans, and your job is to make the game work for all of them in the same three hours.

LABEEB: CONVENTIONS GIVE ME A SMALL DOSE OF EVERYTHING

I was part of the party that fed a Kraken its own tentacles. In my defence, I didn't want to be the spoilsport to new players when Arvindh was letting chaos brew. I'm sure both Arvindh and I will never forget that session. It had many other fun details as well, apart from kraken cannibalism:

- We had our barbarian (the muscle) run away from a fight
- We were the only party who can proudly say that we died before Arvindh was able to show us the finale of what he had in store for us

Conventions have given me opportunities to try out systems like Daggerheart and Gaslands: Refuelled.

As a player, I believe that a convention session offers a glimpse of what the system has in store for you. You get a bit of everything and understand how different things work in a full-fledged campaign. Nothing is left for later. If you have an idea, now is the best time to execute it. This is a rounded experience where the adventure is over in 3 hours.

As Arvindh mentioned, GMs create a sandbox that allows players to roleplay, interact with the environment, and how can you miss a combat encounter or two? Conventions or oneshots are one of the best ways to gauge whether you would like to continue exploring the system as a GM or a player.



Faces you've been seeing everywhere. You don't know their names, but you feel a sense of camaraderie now that you've become one of them. You didn't think you would be volunteering today, but you've become someone everyone turns to. How do you help?

a. Help with library returns b. Teach a game to newbies c. You wanted to help, but you see something fun being tabled





I was curious about Daggerheart for around a year before I got to try it, and I enjoyed it well enough to try it further and started my GM journey with it. On the other hand, I blindly tried Gaslands: Refuelled and was in awe at how there is a system that only focuses on a simple mechanic, providing so much adrenaline-fuelled joy.

THE CAMPAIGN ADVENTURE

If convention games are a sprint, campaigns are the long, strange walk where the party keeps adopting NPCs, ignoring the main road, and accidentally creating emotional consequences the GM now has to honour. Campaigns have room for things to breathe: character arcs, slow reveals, recurring villains, running jokes, bad decisions, and the kind of plot thread that disappears for twelve sessions before suddenly ruining everyone's day.

ARVINDH: CAMPAIGNS ARE A DIFFERENT BEAST

Six years ago I started that campaign with eight players. I'm down to five now, scattered across the country. Some got proper send-offs. Others just faded.

Campaign GMing is closer to gardening than storytelling. You plant things and wait. An adversary called The Mother has been hunting my players for five years. Every decision they've made has slowly pulled them toward a confrontation they don't fully understand yet.

But players are unpredictable. A battle I'd built toward for months, set in a zero-gravity underground ballroom, ended as a low-stakes skill challenge because the party found a loophole. The epic moment deflated. That's campaign GMing too: you learn to hold your plans loosely.

LABEEB: CAMPAIGNS LET YOU GROW WITH YOUR CHARACTER

Campaigns offer you a whole degree of flexibility as a player which is impossible at a con. Your party can see their characters grow and evolve across the span of a campaign. You don't focus only on the immediate mission.

The backstory you've made for your character is part of the story you're telling with your GM and party.

Campaigns allow you to experiment with your character and understand their limitations. Your party becomes a well-rounded unit that works better over time. No idea is left unheard because you have plenty of time. My party has healed a dragon attacking us, and on a subsequent meeting, even coerced it to fly away, ruining the GMs preparation for a season-ending encounter. An adventure or quest can be kept for later, unless there are timebound consequences as part of the narrative.



You finally make it to the table. Your opponent looks calm and prepared. You begin to doubt if you've signed up for something you weren't prepared for. You take a breathe and begin to focus. The timer begins. What happens?

a. You lost. Go to the library b. You win, but the next round is an hour later c. You win!! d. The tourney made you hungry

The skills here are different. Obsessive note-taking. Deep world-building that rewards players who pay attention. A genuine understanding of what your players want from the story, not just what you want to tell. And the willingness to work with them rather than against them, even when they cheese your best encounters.

The biggest difference in a campaign is that our actions have long-term consequences. The story doesn't end after the session. It continues and branches out with an overarching narrative.

PS. If you want to attempt to scale down a well because you believe there is treasure, you have ample time. Whatever doesn't happen this session can always carry over to the next one.

THE ONE THING BOTH DEMAND

Whether you are running through a three-hour convention slot or returning to the same campaign table for the fiftieth time, the heart of the game stays the same: the table matters more than the plan.

A convention game may need sharper pacing, clearer stakes, and faster decisions. A campaign may need patience, memory, and the willingness to let choices echo across months or years. But in both, the best moments usually come from the same place: players feeling like their ideas matter, their choices change things, and the world is alive enough to respond.

Whether you are determining a one-shot or foreshadowing a villain for five years, every tool at the table exists for one reason: to make the players feel like they were part of a story only this table could have created.

And if that story somehow involves a kraken eating its own tentacles, well, then so be it.

"Whether you are determining a one-shot or foreshadowing a villain for five years, every tool at the table exists for one reason: to make the players feel like they were part of a story only this table could have created."

ARVINDH'S ADVICE

Here's my favourite tip for stress-free DMing: prepare a situation, not a plot. Planning your adventure helps you know the NPCs, items, and locations well, making it easier to recall them during the game. So, at the table, your job is to react logically to whatever crazy things your players are doing! Good luck!

LABEEB'S ADVICE

As a player, never hesitate to voice your ideas. Nothing is dumb and your wacky move could flip the story by the head and take you across an interesting storyline. Your GM is there to help you.

You're looking at a tourney table. Players look like they're playing the decisive game. No mistakes are allowed. There are people discussing each move. Someone else is learning the game for the first time as they watch. What do you do?



a. You sign up for the next tourney b. Someone tells you a game like this one c. You hear a commotion from the exhibitors



The Convention Optimisation

by Prasanna Seshadri

Prasanna is attending The Crazy Convention. Unfortunately, after a series of hassles with the venue contact, the floor plan has become a complete mess. Now, Prasanna has limited time, but also wants to experience everything. A reasonable person might make peace with missing a few things. Prasanna is not that person.

He has decided to navigate the convention by moving from square to square, horizontally or vertically, without ever backtracking or visiting the same square twice.

Even so, he does not want to mix up different parts of the convention, and wants to do one thing at a time fully, before moving on to the next thing. He has a method, based on moving from square to square on the floor plan horizontally or vertically without any backtracking or revisiting any square.

Doing this, he must register, passing through both the registration desks, collecting his ID card and the goodies that are part of attending the convention, and then he must decide to go to each activity and go to all parts of that activity before moving on to the next activity. He may do this in any order, but would need to stop by the Food Court at some point. He even wants to sample all the different kinds of food! Greedy fellow...

Since he is in a hurry to complete everything, he must leave each section almost immediately after arriving and trying it out. This means the entrance

square and exit square must be diagonally touching each other for each activity space he enters.

Note that the Tournament section is divided into the starting areas and then the finals area, in proper Prasanna fashion he is planning to reach all the finals! (Greedy AND self-involved). Judging Prasanna aside, figure out the floor plan he's concocted to do everything at the Crazy Convention!

REMEMBER:

- Move only horizontally or vertically.
- Visit every square exactly once.
- Pass through both registration desks before visiting any activity section.
- Complete each activity section fully before entering another.
- Visit every square in the Food Court consecutively.
- In every activity section, the entry and exit squares must be diagonally adjacent.
- In the Tournament Section, visit the starting areas before the finals area.

The Invisible Table Captain

Why Tech is the Secret to Scaling the Convention Experience

by Chiranjeev (CJ) Pant

One of the most consequential conversations I've ever had about board games didn't happen over a table; it happened on a phone call with Lux, from Dicey Discovery. It was early 2025, right after the Winter edition of TTOX '24.

We had entered the hobby around the same time in '22 and had been to each TTOX since then. This TTOX however, was different: it was the only one I have ever missed, and it was Lux's first time behind the scenes as a volunteer. As she described her time managing the game library, the conversation shifted from the games played to the struggles of logistics. She spoke about the manual grind of tracking hundreds of borrowed games using standard, analog methods.

Jokingly, she gave me an ultimatum: "Either you volunteer at the desk with me next time, or you need to whip up an automated spreadsheet to save us."

Though it was said as a joke, it sparked a realization. I began to look at the Indian tabletop market—and conventions globally—through a different lens. After several deep dives with Phalgun (Mozaic Games & TTOX) to map out the attendee journey, it became clear: Tabletop conventions are gatherings of the most passionate people on earth, yet their experience often hinges on manual intervention that simply doesn't scale.

For tabletop conventions to grow, we need to stop relying on volunteers to be manual data entry operators and empower them to add value to the attendee experience.

"Tabletop conventions are gatherings of the most passionate people on earth, yet their experience often hinges on manual intervention that simply doesn't scale."

THE PROBLEM: THE VOLUNTEER BOTTLENECK

As an event scales from 100 to 1,000 attendees, the number of volunteers required to manage things manually doesn't grow linearly—it explodes.

When a volunteer is buried in clipboards and spreadsheets, they are "gatekeeping" the fun. To get a game or join a tournament, a participant has to find that one specific person. This creates a dependency on volunteer availability that leads to a lot of "Convention Anxiety"—that feeling of standing in a crowded hall, unsure of what's available or where to go and not being able to find anyone to help you. Solving this is important as this is where a lot of first time or early stage attendees might mentally disengage with the convention.



You had a list of games you wanted to buy, but this wasn't one of them. There's a sudden wave of excitement for this new game in your bag. You can't wait to table this once the convention is over. What's next?

a. Find your friends and show off b. You look around a bit more c. It is getting late, you think about the day.

"When a volunteer is buried in clipboards and spreadsheets, they are 'gatekeeping' the fun."

The solution isn't to replace the volunteers; it's to enhance their efficiency so that only necessary interactions flow to them while minor logistical matters can be handled without intervention. We need tech to handle the "boring" stuff so the participants can enjoy their journey and interactions.

THE THREE PILLARS OF A TECH-ENABLED JOURNEY

To understand how tech elevates a convention, we have to look at the three distinct phases of the participant's journey.

1. **Pre-Convention: Decoupling Preparation** The experience starts weeks before the doors open. Traditionally, ticketing and itinerary making are static. You buy a ticket and hope for the best. By democratizing information early—providing digital, searchable libraries and dynamic event schedules—we remove the "pre-convention anxiety." When an attendee can browse the "Exclusively Available Games" or book a limited-slot tournament before the convention, they arrive at the venue with a plan instead of a list of questions.

2. **During the Convention: Real-Time Discovery** This is where the "Invisible Infrastructure" matters most. During the heat of the event, tech should follow the "Blink and you miss it" Rule: If you can catch the tech at work at its job, it is failing.

Whether it's game discovery (seeing what's actually on the shelf right now) or instant event registration, the goal is to minimize unnecessary friction points.

Platforms like BoardHopper were born from this exact need—to provide an easy to manage service layer for logistics. When the tech handles the checkout, the volunteer at the desk is liberated. They stop being a clerk and start being a Curator, free to recommend games and facilitate matches because the "spreadsheet work" is already done. For example, incorporating scan based checkout (something every supermarket has been doing for ages now) into this flow makes the entire process accurate and seamless.

3. **Post-Convention: The Persistent Community:** The "Post Con Nostalgia" is very selective and blurry. You leave a weekend of gaming with a bunch of memories and new friends more than enough to max out party games, but it's all a bit blurry. You can almost remember the name of that one game you played with those two other people but can't quite place it. The adrenaline rush of the convention is now gone and you claw away at your memory trying to remember details.

A tech-enabled convention provides a **Digital Takeaway**. By logging plays and discovery highlights, the experience doesn't end at the exit sign. Participants leave with a record of their weekend—a "con-resume" they can use to find those same players on community platforms or move a newly discovered favorite directly to their wishlist.

KEEPING IN TOUCH

What's more is that for people who are not regular gamers, it still provides a means to stay in touch with the community year-round rather than a reactivation for the next convention.

The joy of gaming is something that people take time to grow into. While conventions might be a great starting point, discovering games and a community happens with repeated interactions and the ability to access and stay in touch with them even when a convention is not around the corner.

When I moved to Mumbai in '24 I felt that I was leaving behind a lot of friends that I had made in the Bangalore board gaming communities and really wanted a space where we could keep in touch. I have seen convention attendees with a similar feeling after the 3 day high of gaming together.

Tech helps users stay in touch over distances, and reconnect outside of a couple of conventions. Seeing which friends are attending other small-group events round the year in your city, comparing top scores & leaderboard positions and virtual play sessions are a few things that help make the bond feel just a little bit stronger.

Interaction between gamers is the glue that holds communities and most importantly the interest in the hobby together. Platforms like Board Game Arena are pivotal where for a moment you can forget that there is physical distance separating you and the table comes alive over a real-time play session and a conference video call. The tech works to replicate the joy of tabletop gaming not substituting it and is one of the primary reasons people gravitate towards it.

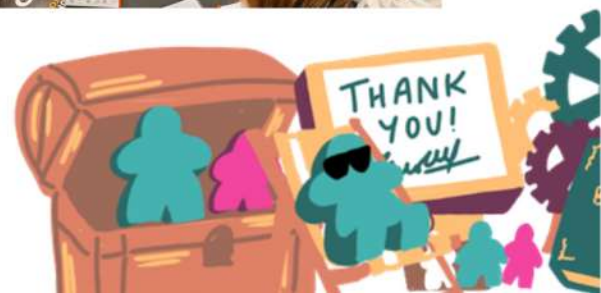
"The tech works to replicate the joy of tabletop gaming not substituting it"



STAYING FOCUSED ON THE HERO

As a community, we must remember that in board games, the Hero (or if you are very competitive, the Villain) is always the person sitting across from you. The joy of engaging and losing yourself in the game on our table and the social connection are why we show up.

Technology should never be the **Hero**. It should be the magician's gimmick—the invisible force that works silently and hidden from its audience so that they can revel in the magic of it all. By embracing tech that prioritizes the participant's journey, we aren't "digitalizing" our hobby. We are protecting its heart. We are ensuring that the next time someone like Lux or I stand behind a library desk, we aren't looking at a spreadsheet or busy noting down people's names on a piece of paper—we're looking at a room full of people who are exactly where they belong: at the table having the time of their life.





What is BoardHopper

**BUILT FOR PLAYERS, COMMUNITY HOSTS,
CONVENTIONS AND CAFE OWNERS**



FOR PLAYERS

Discover.Play.Connect

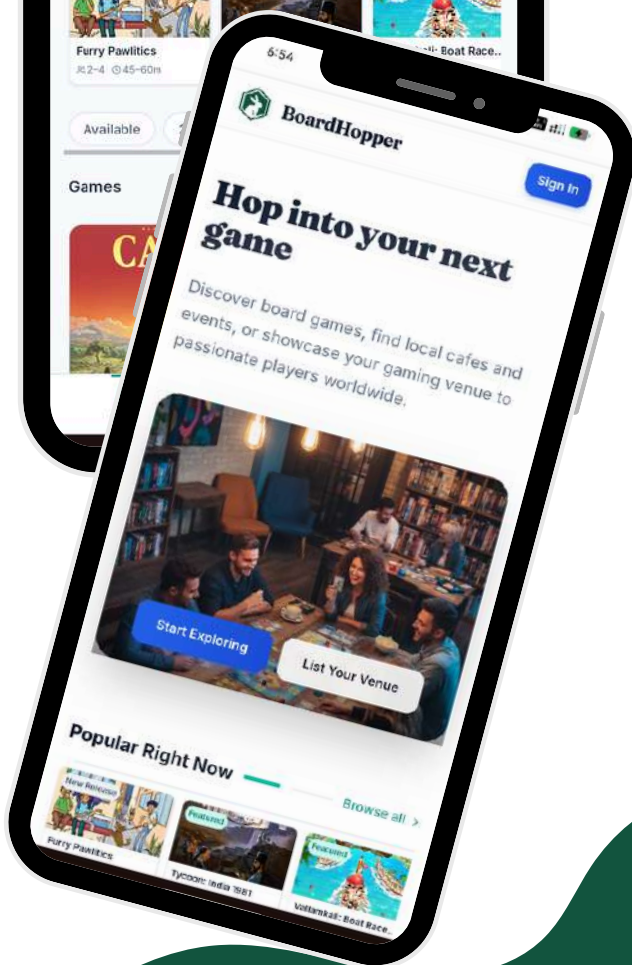
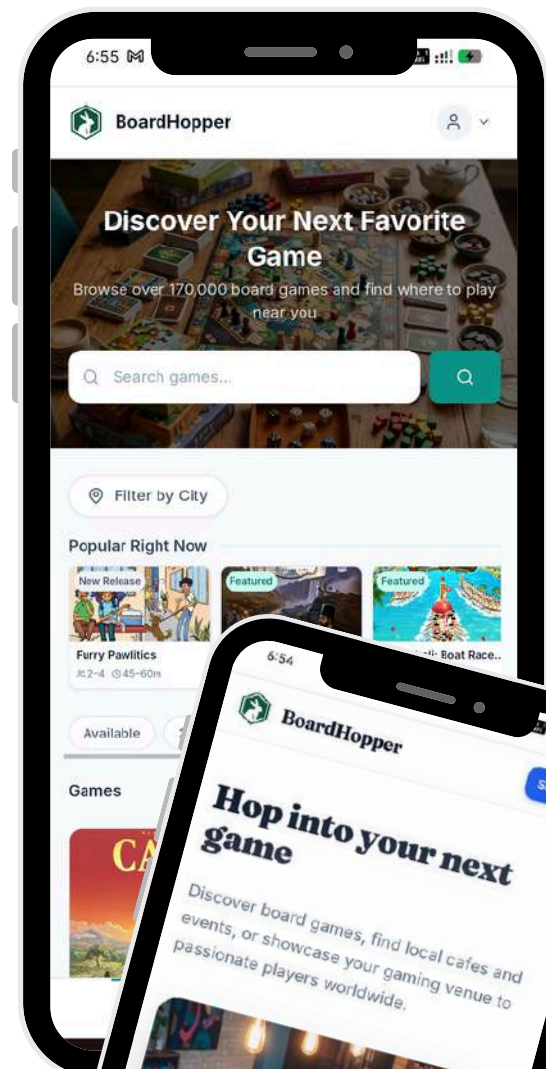
- ✓ Discover games, cafes and events near you
- ✓ Find your next favourite game
- ✓ Track what you play and map your journey
- ✓ Connect with a thriving boardgaming community



FOR COMMUNITIES, CAFE OWNERS & CONVENTIONS

Manage.Engage.Grow

- ✓ Manage your game inventory with ease
- ✓ Create and promote events that bring people in
- ✓ Understand your community and their preferences
- ✓ Grow your community and your business



FIND YOUR NEXT FAVOURITE GAME
BUILD THE NEXT POPULAR COMMUNITY

 www.boardhopper.in

 [@board.hopper](https://www.instagram.com/board.hopper)

Scan to get started!



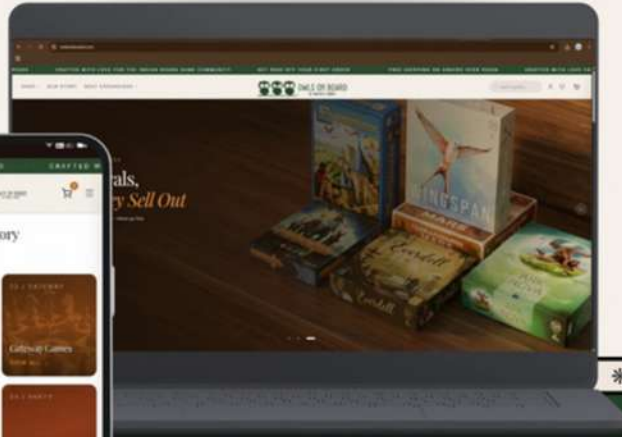
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DESIGN LAB



The Anatomy of A Great Demo Table

An annotated guide to setting up a playtesting table the crowd won't want to miss



1 TENT CARD

WHAT: Game name, one-line description, player count, play time

WHY: Helps people understand the game at a glance before they even sit down.

2 TAKEAWAY CARD

WHAT: Social links, website, preorder link, QR code, contact details

WHY: Gives interested players an easy way to find the game again after the convention.

3 PLAYER AIDS

WHAT: One quick-reference card near each player seat

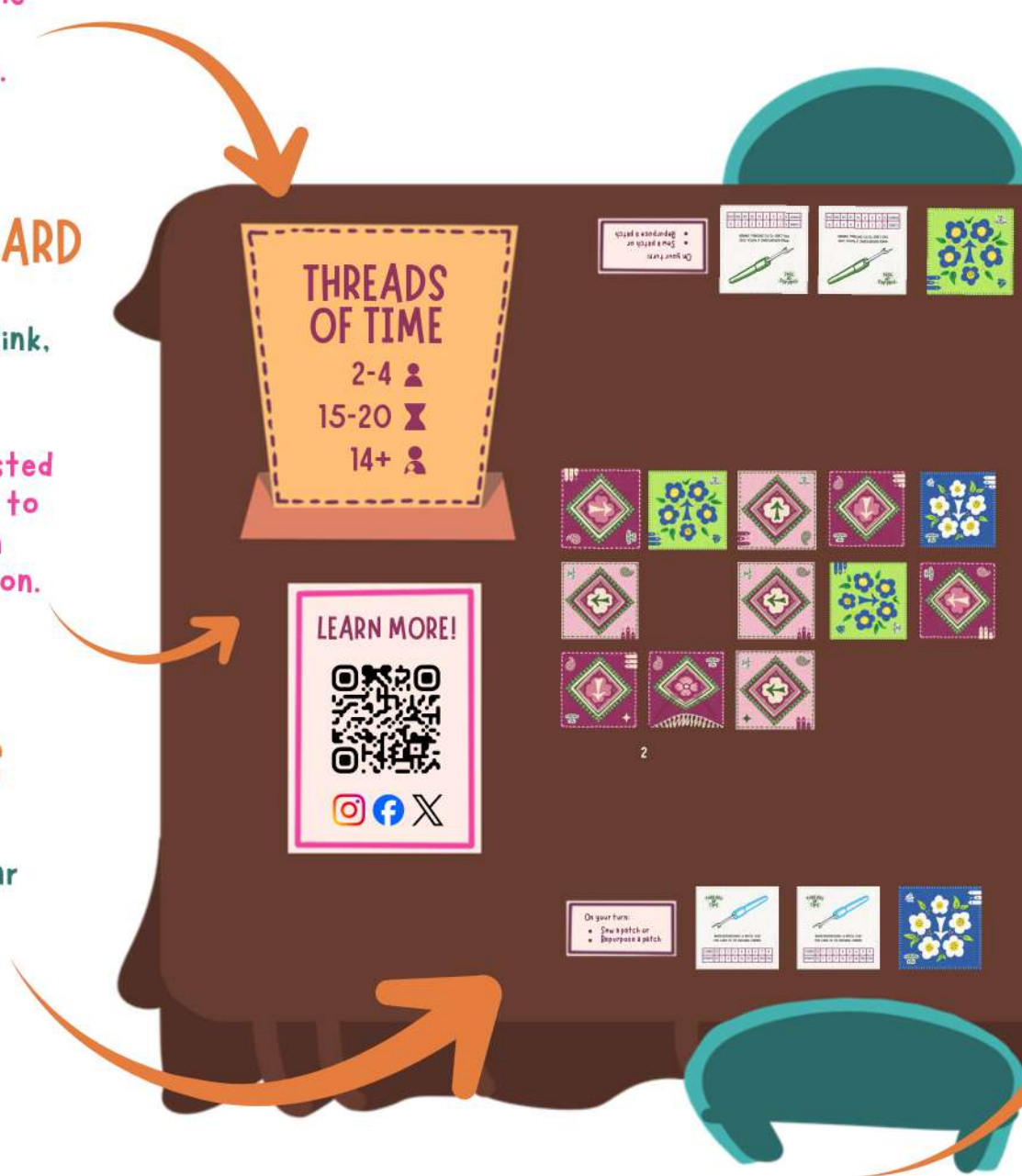
WHY: Reduces teaching time and helps new players follow the turn structure.

THE ANATOMY OF A GREAT DEMO TABLE

4 GAME IN PROGRESS

WHAT: A mid-game setup in the centre of the table

WHY: Makes the table feel active, inviting, and easier to understand visually.



How to lure tired convention-goers to your table with the power of good design.

8

FEEDBACK QR/FORMS

WHAT: QR code to a feedback form, or short physical feedback sheets

WHY: Captures reactions while the play experience is still fresh.

7

PENCILS & PENS

WHAT: "A small stack of pencils and pens within reach

WHY: Makes it easy for players to take notes, fill feedback forms, or jot down thoughts during the playtest.

6

OPEN SEAT/NEXT DEMO SIGN

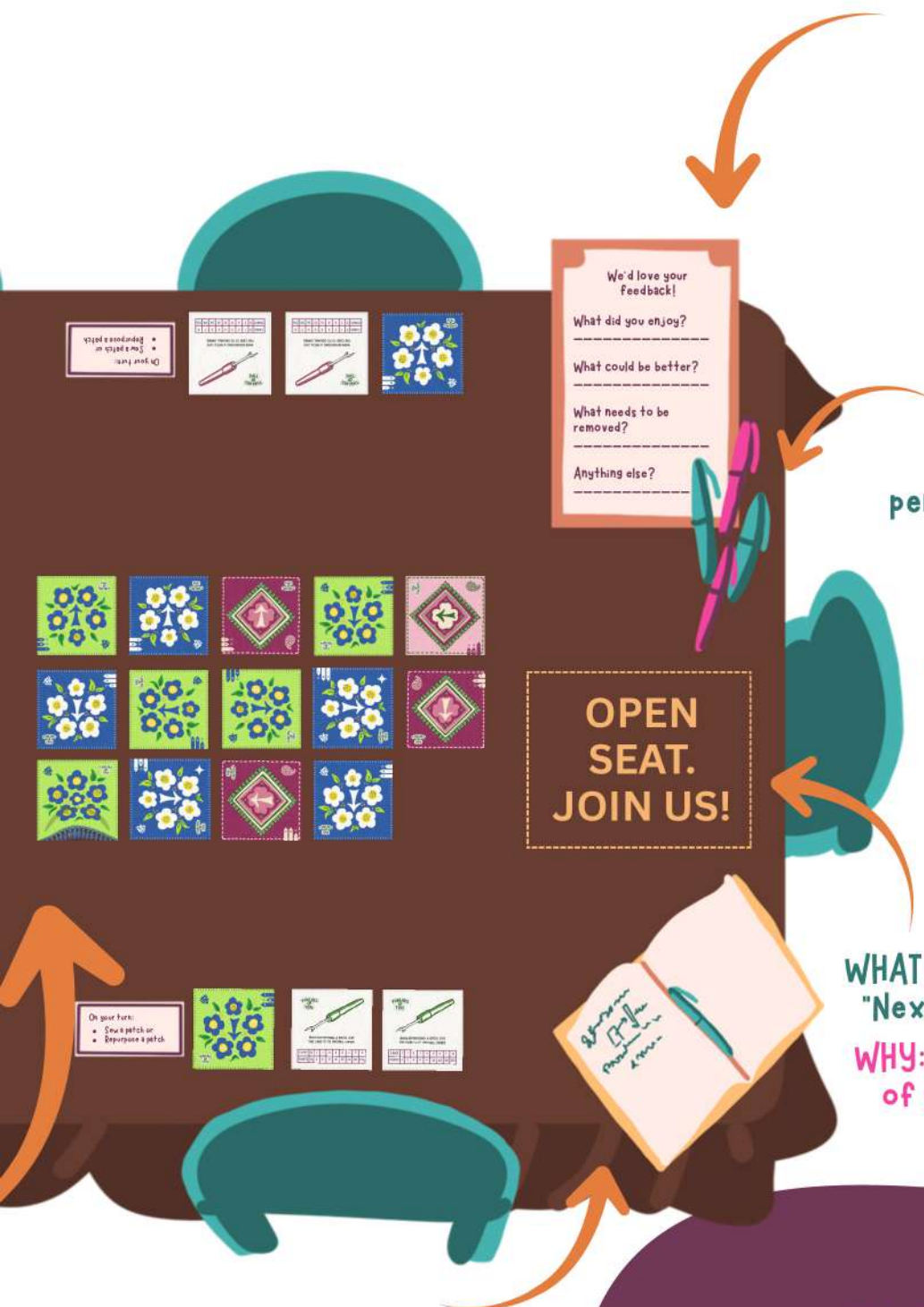
WHAT: "Open for Players" sign or "Next Playtest at: ____" signs

WHY: Removes the awkwardness of people wondering whether they can join.

DESIGNER NOTES 5

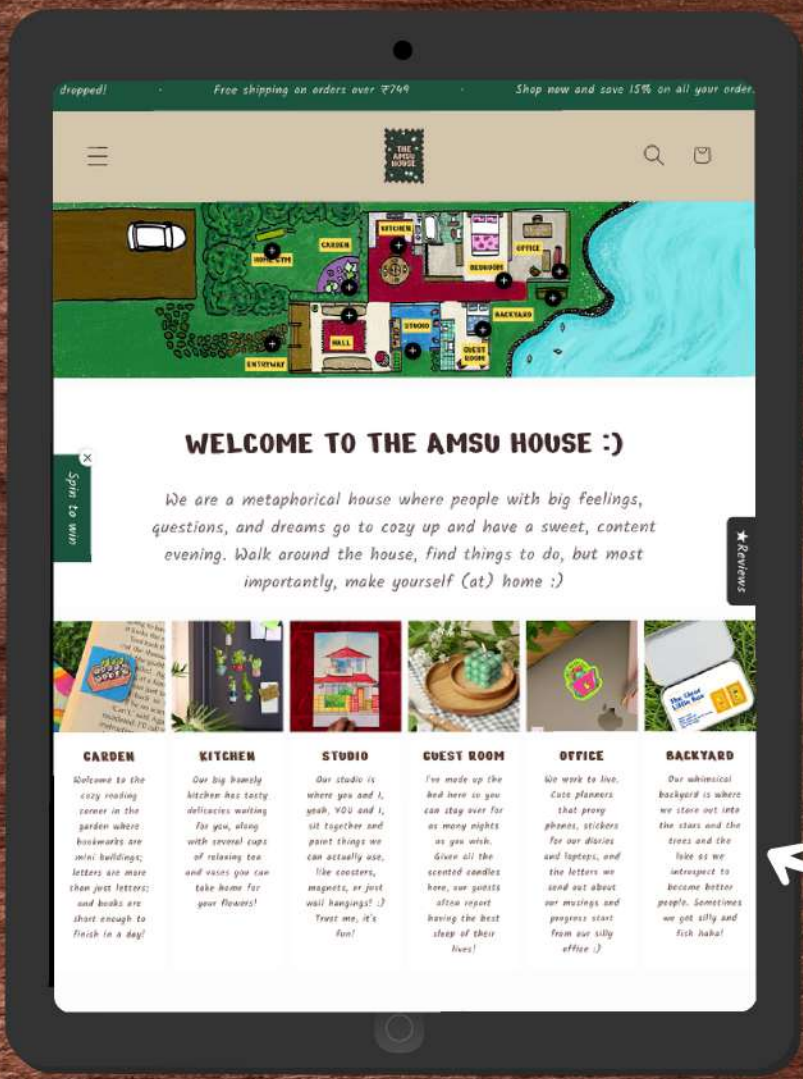
WHAT: Your own notebook, observation sheet, or checklist

WHY: Helps you track player behaviour, confusion points, and repeated feedback patterns.



NOT EVERYTHING BELONGS ON THE TABLE.

The most important part of the demo is still you: your presence, your energy, and your ability to explain the game in 30 seconds without turning it into a rulebook recital. Your table gets people to stop. Your pitch gets them to sit. The game gets them to stay.



Belladon is your one-stop creative partner building one-of-a-kind creative solutions for you.

Game Design

Gifting Options

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Belladon

Reach out to me at shreethigha@belladon.co

SHUFFLED RECOS



Librarian Laments

A curated list of overlooked library picks worth hunting down curated by the TTOX Library Team





Librarian Laments

Every year, the TTOX Library grows bigger, better, and harder to fully explore. Now nearly 800 games strong, it has become one of the central fixtures of the convention – and one of its biggest attractions. But with a library that large, some wonderful games inevitably stay on the shelf. Year after year, the library team watches a few of their favourites quietly miss the spotlight. So this year, we asked them to pick the hidden gems they wish more people would discover, borrow, and bring to the table more.

STAR REALMS

Picked by Zahid



1–4 Players



1.91



20 mins



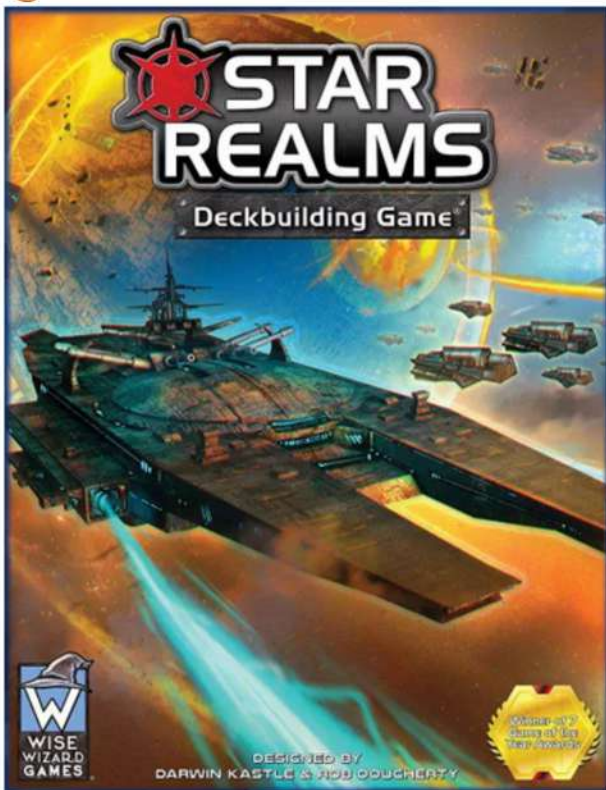
Wise Wizard Games



Robert Dougherty & Darwin Kastle



Vito Gesualdi.



About

In Star Realms, players build their own space fleet through trade, combat, and clever card combos. Grow your military, strengthen your economy, protect what's yours, and use your warships to take down your opponent's realm.

Why it deserves more plays

Star Realms is extremely quick and simple to get into, but there's a lot more strategy here than it first lets on. It has that nostalgic sci-fi feel in its theme and card art, while still making every game feel sharp and fresh. It's fast, competitive, and endlessly replayable – exactly the kind of game that deserves to be far more popular in India.

☐ Interested to play

☐ Played

☐ Would play again



You're on the fence of leaving, but something always comes up. The game you've been waiting for is finally free. You missed a dealer's stall. You find someone you know.

What is it this time?

a. One more game. Library. 30 mins max. b. One last round of the exhibitors c. You have been here for 11 hrs. It's done.

Pg. 02

Pg. 12

Pg. 44 [Ending B]

HIDDEN LEADERS

Picked by Phalgun P • Mozaic Games

2-6 Players
1.81

20-40 mins
BFF Games

Andreas Müller, Markus Müller & Raphael Stocker
Satoshi Matsuura



About

The island of Oshra is in turmoil. Following the Emperor's death, tensions rise between the Hill Tribes, the Imperial Army, the Water People, and the Undead. In Hidden Leaders, players secretly support different factions while influencing the struggle for the throne and trying to ensure the right leader comes out on top.

Why it deserves more plays

Hidden Leaders is one of those games that quietly turns every table into chaos in the best possible way. It mixes hidden roles, shifting alliances, and clever card play into something that feels social, strategic, and delightfully unpredictable. The rules are easy to pick up, games move quickly, and every session ends with dramatic reveals and accusations.

- ☐ Interested to play
- ☐ Played
- ☐ Would play again

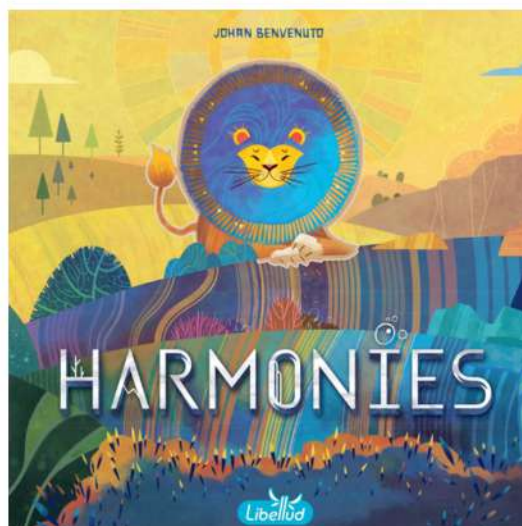
HARMONIES

Picked by Tharang

1-4 Players
2.01

30-45 mins
Libellud

Johan Benvenuto
Maëva da Silva



About

In Harmonies, players build beautiful landscapes by placing coloured tokens to create habitats for different animals. The better your landscapes match each animal's needs, the more wildlife you can attract and the more points you'll score.

Why it deserves more plays

Harmonies is a game with tile-placement mechanics are simple enough to explain in minutes, yet the interlocking scoring conditions create a satisfying puzzle. Its really quick to set up and really easy to teach but has incredible depth and strategy to it. I love that the tiles add a tactile element that keeps me engaged and to top it all of it has incredible art. Just a game that checks all the boxes and feels like its made for every type of player.

- ☐ Interested to play
- ☐ Played
- ☐ Would play again

You have been waging a battle with yourself. Your body says it's barely keeping up, while your mind feels ready to go for more.
Do you listen to your body or mind?

a. Push through. Library awaits b. Find your friends c. Just one last thing d. No, you're tired. That's it.



PARKS

Picked by Shwetha · @mozaicgames

👤 1–5 Players

🧠 2.31

🕒 30–60 mins

🎮 Keymaster Games

🎭 Henry Audubon

🎨 Josh Emrich & Lisk Feng



About

PARKS is a stunningly beautiful game about hiking through the 63 U.S. National Parks. As players move along the trail, they gather memories, visit breathtaking landscapes, collect resources, and experience the quiet wonder of nature one step at a time.

Why it deserves more plays

PARKS has an incredibly calming presence at the table. The artwork makes you genuinely stop and appreciate the beauty of the national parks, and even the box insert is one of the most aesthetically pleasing ones I've seen in a board game. But it's not just pretty — the gameplay strikes a wonderful balance too. It's engaging without overstaying its welcome, making it the kind of game that feels satisfying whether you're easing into the day or winding down after a long convention slot.

- ☐ Interested to play
- ☐ Played
- ☐ Would play again

FURNACE

Picked by Karthick

👤 2–4 Players

🧠 2.32

🕒 30–60 mins

🎮 Arcane Wonders

🎭 Ivan Lashin

🎨 Sergey Dulin, Marta Ivanova, Ilya Kononov, Vadim Poluboyarov, Oleg Yurkov & Egor Zharkov



About

Furnace is an engine-building Eurogame in which players take on the roles of 19th-century capitalists building their industrial corporations and aspiring to make as much money as they can by purchasing companies, extracting resources, and processing them in the best combinations possible.

Why it deserves more plays

People often look at Furnace and assume it's just a small auction game. Then, a few turns later, they're deep in engine-building mode, wondering how it got so intense so quickly. The bidding system is genuinely clever because losing bids can sometimes be just as valuable, or even better, than winning. Play this once with a competitive group, and it absolutely pops off.

- ☐ Interested to play
- ☐ Played
- ☐ Would play again

BOOKS OF TIME

Picked by Akhilesh, The Board Clan

1-4 Players

2.61

45-60 mins

Filip Glowacz

Board&Dice

Filip Glowacz



About

Books of Time puts a clever twist on tableau building, letting players construct three great books, each filled with pages of abilities to write, unlock, and combine in satisfying ways.

Why it deserves more plays

The setup and production of Books of Time are immediately memorable. There's something genuinely satisfying about building actual books and flipping through pages as your engine comes together. But beyond the table presence, there's a sharp tactical puzzle here. Playing a perfect game is incredibly difficult, which is exactly what makes it so rewarding when everything finally clicks.

- ☐ Interested to play
- ☐ Played
- ☐ Would play again

THE RED CATHEDRAL

Picked by Lux, Dicey Discovery

1-4 Players

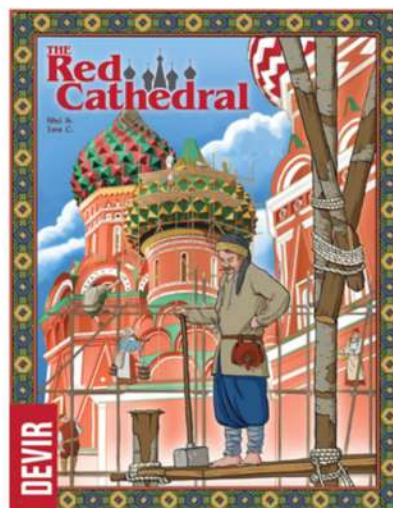
Isra C. & Shei S.

80 mins

2.81

Devir

Chema Román & Pedro Soto



About

In The Red Cathedral, players take on the role of construction teams working to build St. Basil's Cathedral in Moscow and earn the favour of Tsar Ivan. You'll gather resources, contribute to different sections of the cathedral, decorate your work, and prove that your team deserves a place among the city's most trusted builders.

Why it deserves more plays

The Red Cathedral is one of my all-time favourites. It has a surprisingly low setup time for the amount of game it delivers, and the gameplay is wonderfully satisfying. There's a particular mechanism at its heart that I deeply enjoy — one that often shows up in heavier games, but here it's used in a clean, approachable, medium-weight way. It's a brilliant step up from the usual suspects that get borrowed from the library every year, and I think it's an absolute must-try at TTOX.

- ☐ Interested to play
- ☐ Played
- ☐ Would play again

You're seeing people slow down. Some tables look like they're winding down. The volunteers are noting the few remaining players. The designers are checking if they have all components from their prototypes. What's your last move?



a. One last thing from the store b. Find your friends for one final game c. You stand still for a moment and book your cab

DEAD RECKONING

Picked by Akhil, Meeple Syrup

1–4 Players 90–150 mins
3.44 John D. Clair

Alderac Entertainment Group
Ian O'Toole



About

Dead Reckoning is a game of exploration, piracy, and influence set in a Caribbean-inspired world. Players command their own ship and crew, sailing across open waters, discovering islands, battling rivals, and building their fortune through clever upgrades and strategic decisions.

Why it deserves more plays

I've brought Dead Reckoning to almost every TTOX, and somehow it still hasn't made it to the table — which honestly feels criminal. It's such a fun pirate adventure. Sailing through unexplored waters, slotting new abilities into your cards, upgrading your crew over time, and then resolving combat by dropping cubes into a dice tower just makes the whole experience feel incredibly alive. It's thematic, dramatic, and packed with satisfying moments that deserve way more attention at the library.

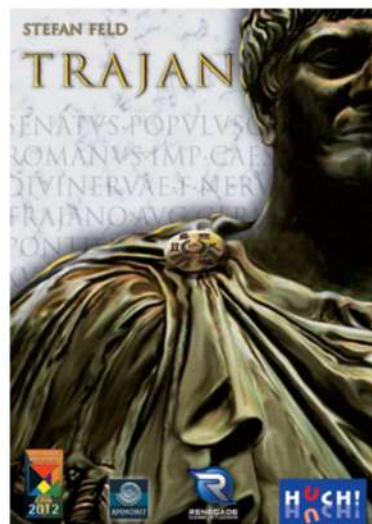
- ☐ Interested to play
- ☐ Played
- ☐ Would play again

TRAJAN

Picked by Kishore, Dice Hard

2–4 Players 60–120 mins
3.63 Stefan Feld

Renegade Game Studios
Jo Hartwig



About

Set in ancient Rome, Trajan is a development game where players compete to increase their influence across different areas of Roman life, including politics, trade, military power, and culture.

Why it deserves more plays

Imagine ruling ancient Rome while your brain is secretly playing fancy mancala the entire time. That's Trajan. The puzzle is chef's kiss — so many moving parts, so many decisions, and yet everything clicks in that classic Stefan Feld "I'm stressed, but I love it" way. It's criminally underplayed for how clever it is. At Dice Hard, I've tabled Trajan so many times, and not a single revolt yet — which honestly feels like a recommendation in itself.

- ☐ Interested to play
- ☐ Played
- ☐ Would play again

TTRPGCON BINGO THINGIE

To claim a box, post a pic of one of the things below & tag
@ttrpgcon on Insta!

Something that went wrong with caption: Nat 1 Morning selfie doesn't count.	You wearing mismatched footwear in a cool place. I swear I don't have a foot fetish.	A d6/d20 in an unexpected spot. No Starbucks. Or toilets.	Drawing of your current mood as a monster. Bonus points for horns.	Something that looks like a real world magic item. Empty BLR Roads not allowed.
You in an anime pose. None of that freaky ara-ara-ara stuff though.	Your honest ratings of a 3 movie marathon. Om Dar B Dar, Sisu & Wyrnwood perhaps?	Your dice collection. Caption it: "my kinda party." Size does matter.	Assign a D&D class to everyone in your friend group. Edgelord has many meanings	A real world sign that could belong in a campaign. "Customer Is King" is acceptable.
A collage of you having the same meal, three times. Bonus for Girl Dinner.	Recreate a famous meme using only dice and stationery. Pepperidge Farm remembers.		Screenshot a real convo that reads like a quest briefing. Your friends think you're crazy. Act the part.	The most "goblin-energy" object in your home. Don't show us "that" crunchy sock though.
A mini somewhere unexpected. Again, NO TOILETS. WTF!	A dungeon built from household objects. A TTRPG style dungeon, mind you.	A postcard you're sending a friend. Or Airtel customer care. Make Sid happy.	Fan art of any TTRPG character. Furries & stick figures welcome.	Your favourite fantasy/sci-fi/romance book/Salary Credit SMS. We all have our fantasies.
A quest hook based on something mundane from your week. The Demon Prince Belial has taken the last packet of milk from the Nandini booth. Get it back!	A drink menu rewritten with magic potion names & descriptions. Remember: Alcohol is a solution.	Magic item style description of any ordinary object. Windows: A magical device that lets you see through walls!	Rewrite your to-do list as quests. As Maggie would say, "Slay!"	Collage of your 7 horcruxes. Finally, your soulless job comes in handy!

Show your completed card at TTRPGCON on August 8 & 9 in Bangalore to get your prize! And if you have questions, DM @ttrpgcon on Insta!

Want to join in on the adventure? Get your copy at: [TTRPGCON.IN/bingo](https://ttrpgcon.in/bingo)



The Shuffled One Day Adventure Conclusions

Ending A – The Perfect Day

You played good games. You saw your people. You bought something you will actually open within the month. You learned about two games you did not know existed and have opinions about both of them. The hobby feels larger than it did this morning in the specific way it only does at conventions — like there is always more, and that is a good thing, not an overwhelming one.

The parking lot feels like an exhale after a long held breath.

Same time next year.

Ending B – One More Game

It is 10:47 PM. The hall closes at eleven. You are on turn three of a six-player game that takes ninety minutes and everyone at the table knows this and nobody is saying it out loud.

This is entirely your fault. You looked at your phone two hours ago and thought one more thing and here you are, committed, happy, slightly delirious, unwilling to leave.

You have never been more yourself.

Ending C – Wallet Damage

You take stock somewhere between the parking lot and the car. The receipts in your pocket. The games in the bag. The promotional tokens from four different booths that you will never use but could not throw away. The math is genuinely upsetting. You are doing it anyway, standing next to your car in the evening air, tallying things up with the resigned arithmetic of someone who knew this was coming.

The games are good. You know they are good. You were there when you decided.

Worth it. Probably.



The Shuffled One Day Adventure Conclusions

Ending D – Community Champion

You did not play as much as you planned. The list in your pocket is mostly unchecked. But you taught three games to people who had never played before, and one of them – somewhere around the rules explanation, somewhere around the first real turn – got a look on their face that you recognized immediately because you wore it once too.

That look is why you are here.

Someone said thank you, genuinely, on their way out. That counted for more than any win today.

Ending E – Playtester Supreme

The designer shook your hand twice. You gave notes on component clarity, the cognitive load of the iconography, the pacing problem in round four, and the specific failure mode of the catch-up mechanism when one player pulls too far ahead too early. They wrote all of it down.

They asked follow-up questions. They looked at you the way people look at someone who has just made something better.

Ending F – I'm Tired, I'm Leaving

The special ending. Available whenever you need it. The convention got the best of you today, and that is okay, because it gets the best of everyone eventually. Your bag is heavier than your legs can reasonably justify. You said your goodbyes three times and got pulled back into a conversation each time for another twenty minutes and finally, finally, made it out the door.

Tomorrow: water, a real meal, and absolutely no looking at the receipts until you are ready. The games will still be there. The friends will still be there. The convention will come back next year, same building, same smell, same gravity. You'll be ready.

The con won today. Respectfully.

VOICES IN THIS ISSUE



LUX

Lead [Editor of This Issue]

Lakshmi R V, aka Lux, is the editor of this issue, a wannabe game designer, self-proclaimed library queen, and professional enabler of “just one more game”. She runs Dicey Discovery out of Mumbai, hosts chaotic but well-curated game nights, and is constantly tinkering with new ideas. At a convention, you’ll find her at the library, helping people find their next favourite game. Instagram: @dicey.discovery



JOYDEEP & DRIPTA

Table Talk: The Perfect Convention Day

Joydeep has been gaming since 2016 and is now the proud owner of a tiny library of games. Dripta was pulled into the hobby when she signed up to be Joydeep’s forever 2P. Together, they buy, teach and play games every week in Hyderabad, limited only by storage space. At a convention, you’ll find Joydeep mid-discussion about a game’s design choices, while

Dripta is either backing him up, balancing him out, or finding their next table. Instagram: @when_boardgamers_meet



ANURAAG CHATTERJEE

Editor of The Issue

Anuraag is a working web content writer who is a literature enthusiast, with a passing interest in game development and food, he spends his days writing, eating, and then writing some more. At a convention, you will spot him gawking at the possibilities of how big this hobby really is and in deep FOMO of everything around him.





LABEEB

The Dungeon Has A Time Slot

More widely known as the.senseless.thinker, Labeeb started board gaming in 2023 and has never looked back. He has racked up an impressive BGA profile and is often seen with 20 parallel games running. At a convention, you'll find him squeezing in a game between two scheduled sessions, checking BGA on the side, and somehow still saying yes to one more table. Instagram: @character.trailers



ARVINDH MACHA

The Dungeon Has A Time Slot

Arvindh loves playing TTRPGs and runs the 10,000 Game Masters project and TTRPGCon, an event focused on helping people enter the world of tabletop roleplaying games. He has a lot of love for zombies, snakes and worldbuilding. At a convention, you'll find him at a TTRPG table, pulling new players into strange worlds and stories they did not expect to care about this much.

Instagram: @PutThePlayerFirst and @TTRPGCon



PRASANNA

The Convention Optimisation

Prasanna is the master puzzle maker in our country: a two-time captain of the gold-medal-winning Indian team at the Asian Sudoku Championship, six-time National Puzzle Champion, former runner-up at the World Puzzle Championship, former Director of the World Puzzle Federation, and regular puzzle contributor to The New York Times. At a convention, you'll find him studying the floor plan like it's a logic grid, discovering the most efficient route, and then getting happily distracted by a clever game anyway.

Instagram: @the.ps18





SAUMIL

City Built on Cardboard

Saumil is a seasoned gamer and internationally recognised speaker and instructor, having regularly presented at hacker conferences worldwide since 1999. He spends his leisure time breaking software, designing tabletop games, taking pictures and searching for tigers in the forests of India. At a convention, you'll find him paused in the middle of the chaos, quietly noticing the things everyone else is too busy rushing past.

Instagram: @therealsaumil



CJ

The Invisible Table Captain

Chiranjeev Pant, aka CJ, is the founder and brain behind BoardHopper, the fuel on which the entire convention library runs. He does the quiet, invisible work that makes a game table actually function — the person who teaches, nudges, resets, explains, includes and keeps the experience moving without making it about themselves. At a convention, you'll find him at the library, making sure the games, people and systems all keep moving.

Instagram: @board.hopper



SHREETHIGHA

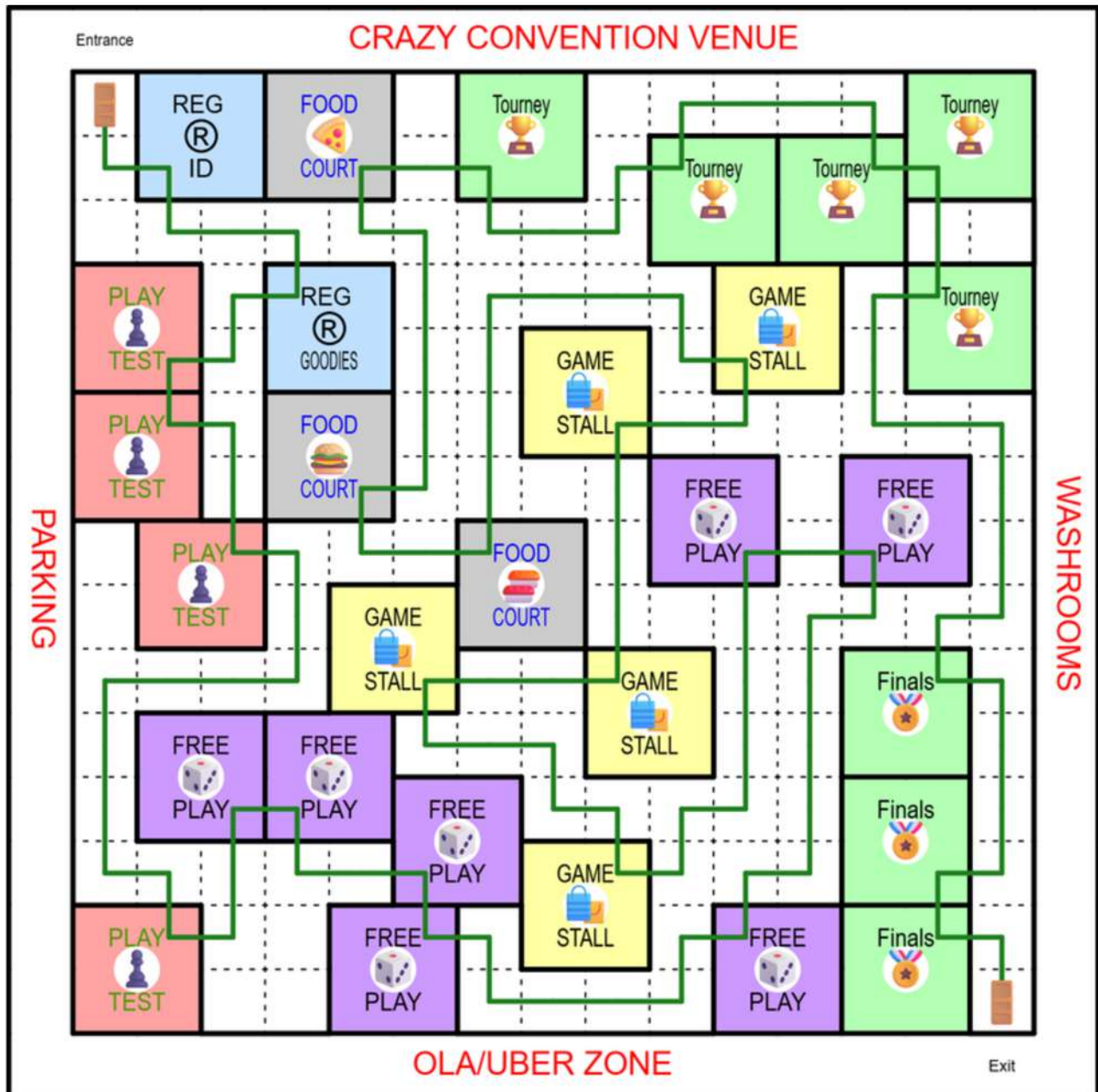
Lead Designer of This Issue

Shreethigha, juggling several creative endeavours out of Chennai, rediscovered her love for design and the fun in illustrating in the world of boardgames, where the rules aren't so strict, and the objectives are playful, quite literally. At a convention, you'll find her gawking at the illustrations, colour palattes, and the styles people have used in their games, while wondering how she could incorporate these principles into her games.

Instagram: @theamsuhouse



The Convention Optimisation Answers



THE CONVENTION ROLL CALL

