

Not Your Mother's Library Transcript

Episode 18: Playing Games

(Brief intro music)

Rachel: Hello, and welcome to Not Your Mother's Library, a readers' advisory podcast from the Oak Creek Public Library. I'm Rachel.

Leah: And I'm Leah.

Rachel: We want to talk a bit about something totally new that the library has to offer. It's a pretty exciting collection that has been in the making for months, so we are very proud to present OCPL's official Board Game collection! You can now check out a wide assortment of board games by visiting the display in the Children's area or by filling out the Curbside Pick Up Request Form. There are about 45 games available at time of recording, and more will be added over time. Games are available for all age groups and a vast range of players, depending on how many others you plan to play with. We have "Apples to Apples," "Chutes and Ladders," "Monopoly," "Pandemic," "Scattergories," and a whole bunch of others, including some that relate specifically to STEM education. You can view a full list and find more information about each game by browsing the CountyCat catalog or by visiting the 'Parents' page on our website. That's oakcreeklibrary.org/parents. I'll make sure to drop a link in the show notes. The loan period for these games is one week, with one renewal available upon request. If you plan to checkout any of these games, please note that they must be returned to the circulation desk inside the library. Dropping them in the bookdrops will damage the materials and make it easier for pieces to go missing so, again, please return them at the first-floor circulation desk. That's the desk that you see when you first enter the library.

Leah: To celebrate this new collection, we thought it would be fun to talk about some of our all-time favorite tabletop games! I typically like board games, but I am not a fan of playing cards. Luckily for me today, our topic is more about tabletop board games, so score! The first one that I want to mention is my OG classic favorite, "Clue." Eagle-eared listeners who caught my Mini-episode 5 where I talked about my favorite movies might remember that I adore the movie "Clue," which is based on the board game. Since the movie came out shortly before I was born, it's hard to say if I played the game first or saw the movie. A little bit of a chicken or the egg debate but, regardless of which came first, I love them both! Just on the off chance that any listeners aren't familiar with the game, straight from the manufacturer Hasbro Games: "One murder...six suspects. In this suspenseful Clue game, players have to find out who's responsible for murdering Mr. Boddy of Tudor Mansion in his own home. Get the scoop on the mansion's rooms, weapons, and guests and start detecting! Was it Plum with the wrench in the library? Or Green with the candlestick in the study? Eliminate information throughout the game in this classic whodunit. The player who correctly accuses Who, What, and Where wins!" Who doesn't love a good mystery game, am I right?

Rachel: I certainly love 'em. Let's see...I'm going for a tasty vintage for my selections. Let's start with a game called "Goosebumps: Terror in the Graveyard." This game is based on the horror anthology book series of the same name written by popular children's author R.L. Stine. His books are still read by loads of people to this day, but back in the '90s the "Goosebumps" franchise was truly all-consuming. There

was a television series and endless merchandise. I remember that, at one point, my brother had the “Goosebumps” bed sheets. Totally rad. Anyway, they also came out with some tabletop games, including the fantastically named “Shrieks and Spiders,” “A Night in Terror Tower,” and “One Day at Horrorland.” The first of these, though—and the best, in my opinion—was “Terror in the Graveyard.” It released in 1995, is best suited for ages 7+, and allows for 2-4 players. It’s not terribly complex and only takes about 45 minutes to complete a playthrough. You assemble the game using the box, which is a cool feature. The base becomes a graveyard with spaces and tombs that move, hedges that block the way, and a haunted crypt. To win, you need to take out the crypt’s ghost. Each player has two characters, but you can only choose to move one character each turn. Roll the dice to move both a character and a tomb—when a tomb moves, so does the playing field. Occasionally, you’ll land on a ‘Goosebumps’ space, and you’ll have to draw a card that will make you perform certain actions. As you play, try to foil the other players’ movements by using ‘Goosebumps’ cards to turn them into monsters or force them to a different spot. Monsters can be cured by rolling dice and landing on a magic potion square. You have to be careful, though, because your character could fall into an open tomb space, and they can’t get out of those until the game is over. If you reach the final crypt, you can take out the ghost by successfully rolling to drop a skull down a chute. If the skull lands just right, it will trigger the ghost’s spring mechanism, launching it into the air. That means you win! If you fail, you can try on your next turn. I really enjoy this game because of the moving playing field and the springy ghost. Mine is a bit defective, and the spring will trigger at random, so that keeps things interesting. Plus, if you like “Goosebumps” books, the show, or any of the movies, you will probably like the game version.

Leah: Well, that sounds really interesting. I might have to borrow your...your copy? Your game? One of those two. All right, the next game I want to talk about isn’t a board game at all, but perhaps it’s loosely based on one. I really like the game “Bananagrams,” which is basically letter tiles that you try to make words out of. It’s really great because it’s super portable; all the tiles fit into a banana-shaped pouch. So easy to throw in a bag to take with you on vacation. Or...maybe to a hospital waiting room while you’re not-so-patiently waiting for your nephew to arrive. Was that a bit specific? Well, I played a few rounds of “Bananagrams” while in just such a location. We even challenged ourselves to only make baby-related words. To be honest, some of the words we came up with were...a stretch, but they worked! One thing you definitely need to play the game: a large enough table. Or floor. Because you can grow the game in any direction, sometimes you need to very carefully move all the pieces up just a little bit if you really want to get that amazing word in at the bottom of the game space. Now, there are multiple ways that you can play the game. Honestly, I don’t think I’ve ever actually played following the game instructions as they’re written. I’m much more of a ‘give me a bunch of tiles, and then have everyone take turns putting words out there’ kind of gal. I don’t even usually care about score keeping; I’m much more all about cooperative games and playing together. But there definitely are ways—including the correct way—to play the game and have it be much more competitive.

Rachel: That sounds a bit like “Scrabble,” and I’m really bad at “Scrabble,” so I will leave “Bananagrams” to you. (laughs) Much like the “Goosebumps” game I mentioned earlier, the other one I want to discuss is also based on a kid’s horror anthology show. “Are You Afraid of the Dark?” could be described as an older sibling to “Goosebumps.” It came out in Canada in 1990. If you want to hear more about both of these series, check out Mini-episode 18 of this podcast, because I talk all about them. Anyway, the board game version of “Are You Afraid of the Dark?” came out the very same year as “Terror in the Graveyard.” It is aimed at ages 8+ and also suits 2-4 players. The board itself isn’t as interesting. It’s

more of a classic kind of game. As you go, you try to gain points in different categories—like ‘knowledge’ or ‘courage’—and obtain tools, like a flashlight or a skeleton key. The more you gain the better because you need a minimum of six points in any category to return to the Midnight Society’s campfire and win the game. There are ‘Secret Passages’ that you can use as shortcuts, but you’ll need certain skills and tools to use them. You could also end up in ‘The Pit’ but can escape by rolling a starred die. It’s good fun, and the landmarks on the game board are all references to episodes of the show. If you want to play either of the games I’ve talked about, they can only be bought through third parties on eBay or—if you are incredibly lucky—your local thrift shop. They went out of print years ago, so you might have to do some searching. In the interim, I recommend checking out free games from the library. Good plug? I think it was decent.

Leah: A great plug! Definitely you guys should look into the game collection. My next and final mention is “Harry Potter: Hogwarts Battle.” It’s a collaborative, cooperative deck-building game. Honestly, I’m not the biggest “Harry Potter” fan, so I never would have picked this out. But it’s my fiancé’s favorite game. He convinced me to give it a try and, to my surprise, I really dig it! The basic premise is that you play as a character from the book-slash-movies to try and defeat the villains from the books-slash-movies. You set up the board to feature a location, a stack of villains, and a stack of challenges. Don’t come for me if those aren’t the technical names for the piles, all right? I’m still learning. Anyways, each player selects their character card, and on the card are your special abilities. You also get a specific starter deck of cards with that character. On your turn, you deal yourself six of those cards and flip over a challenge and do whatever is facing you. Then you look at the two villain cards that are out and see if they affect you. After that, you look at your dealt cards and see what you can do. Your cards can contain attacks, ways to get money, the ability to give hearts—or health—to yourself or another player, and I’m sure I’m missing something there, too. Once you play any attacks, you can spend the money you collected to purchase more cards for your deck. You can buy more spells, more items, or even allies. All of which greatly help you defeat the villains! If you’ve played the game, you might realize I’m only describing the lower levels of the game. That’s because my fiancé hasn’t introduced me to the more complex upper levels yet, as we only play really casually. But soon! Soon I will explore more of the game. I know that further in the game there are more dice involved and more tokens and all of that kind of stuff. But, speaking of soon, when I was researching for this episode, I found out that there are expander packs for the game. Which, of course, my man has. And with one of those packs—“The Monster Box of Monsters” expansion—you can play as Luna Lovegood, which was always the character I liked best in the books and the movies because my dad’s nickname for me is Luna. Simple as that! And you better believe that I’ll be immediately playing as Luna when I get the chance to in the game! And with that, it’s the end of episode. Check out the show notes for the information on everything we just talked about, plus a link to a page on our website with more information about the board games we have to offer. Already want to request some? We’ll link to the Curbside Pick Up Request page, too. Subscribe and rate the podcast if you like what you hear. You can reach us through Oak Creek Public Library’s website or Facebook page. Just use the #notyourmotherslibrary. Until next time, happy reading. Bye!

(Brief outro music)