

Board Game Paradise Family Story Sequence

Double Confirmation email (free):

Subject Line: Confirmation Email From Board Game Paradise

Click the Link to Learn About Tabletop Games

Hello (name),

My name is Richard, and you recently visited my store in downtown Redlands: [Board Game Paradise](#).

Insert Image of Board game Paradise

I wanted to thank you for visiting, but also wanted to thank you for trusting us with your email address.

A couple times a week, I type out an email that shows parents how tabletop games can help their family disconnect from screens and reconnect with one another.

Each email includes an interesting story that, one way or another, reveals how tabletop games are not only fun, but help kids grow and families grow closer.

In our store you expressed interest and gave us your email address, and I just wanted to double check and make sure we still have your permission.

Please click the link below to receive emails:

Confirm Your Email Now

As soon as you confirm, I'll send you the first story!

- Richard, owner of Board Game Paradise

Email 1: Why These emails

Subject Line: The First Time I Panicked...

I remember the first time I felt real, anxious, panic.

I was 6 years old, and my dad and I were on the way to the airport to pick up my mom and sister.

Now remember, this is pre-9/11, so my dad and I could explore the ENTIRE airport while we waited.

Every lofted ceiling... every suspended model plane... every speed-walking sidewalk thingy...

Pretty sure my little- boy neck was hurting looking up and down and all around!

But in a moment, my wonder and awe suddenly turned to panic:

My dad was gone.

I looked back at the carpeted hallway... *no dad.*

I looked at the rows of big chairs by the windows... *no dad.*

I looked into the sea of strangers... *no dad.*

<https://i0.wp.com/www.travelbinger.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/busy-airport.jpg?fit=750%2C563&ssl=1>

I had proudly just graduated kindergarten, so I knew to look for a police officer and ask for help.

But I was in an airport... and none of those uniforms looked like the guy in the video they showed in class.

The world had gone from wonderful to dreadful in mere seconds.

My heart simultaneously raced and sank into my stomach and... for the first time ever... I felt that anxious, helpless, PANIC:

How will I get home?

What if a STRANGER finds me?

Who is going to make me chicken nuggets?

And just as the tears began to well up in my eyes...

My dad called my name.

I turned to see him running down the hallway to give me a big hug.

Turns out, I had only been gone from him for about 11 seconds...

And for my 6 year old self, that was enough time to briefly convince me I was an orphan.

Now you aren't 6... and you probably are not in an airport...

But we all still feel panic when we feel helpless.

I have spoken to a lot of parents since I opened Board Game Paradise, and you know what I hear all the time?

- *My family isn't spending enough time together...*

- *My kid doesn't like sports and needs a group to belong to...*
- *I feel like screens are rotting everyones brains...*

And when parents have tried all sorts of things and nothing seems to work... that same anxious feeling can slowly creep into their hearts.

But I have found that tabletop games are a simple answer to families wanting to disconnect from screens and connect with one another.

I am even passionate enough about it to open my own tabletop store!

Over the next month or so I'll be emailing you, just twice a week, telling you stories that reveal important things about tabletop games.

How they work... how they help... and how you can introduce them to your family... through stories like these:

How a mom made mac and cheese a delicacy for her kids ...

How losing to my brother 27 times in a row helped me grow...

The tough realities of life hidden in Monopoly...

As a parent myself, I know life is busy and inboxes are full.

But I hope that through delightful, insightful stories our emails can earn a place in your inbox.

Talk to you again in a few days!

- Richard, owner of Board Game Paradise

P.S. Check out our website if you want to see what we are up to!

Email 2: Types of TAbletop games

Subject Line: Blockbuster Video is STILL Relevant (sorta...)

Hi (name),

You remember Blockbuster, right?

The famous, formerly omnipresent video store? Now a cultural memory whose only relevance is as a cautionary tale?

For a moment, let's reminisce... think back to those magical, Friday night visits to Blockbuster.

<https://i.insider.com/5dde9c9bfd9db267664bf9c1?width=700>

Remember that bright blue and yellow sign, a beacon in the darkness, a well of weekend entertainment...

It was the only errand us kids were desperate to join, for one very important reason:

Whoever went got to pick the movies for the ENTIRE weekend.

And one weekend it was my little brother's turn.

Not only that, but it was his very first time he and mom went *by themselves*.

I'm putting it mildly when I say my sister and I were concerned.

We gave him a list of movies and made him repeat the list back to us over and over again so he wouldn't mess it up

And he told us over and over again he understood and wouldn't get it wrong.

My dad's request came last, and his was simple: pick up "Remember the Titans", the story of the Alexandria VA champion football team's dealing with racism.

https://m.media-amazon.com/images/M/MV5BYThkMzgxNjEtMzFiOC00MTI0LWI5MDItNDVmYjA4NzY5MDQ2L2ltYWdlL2ltYWdlXkEyXkFqcGdeQXVyMTQxNzgzNDI@._V1_.jpg

It was an instant classic back in the day, and remains arguably the greatest sports movie of all time.

And as they drove off, my sister and I held our breath... the fate of the weekend held in his hands...

When he got back we rushed to see the haul... and breathed a sigh of relief.

Our little brother had succeeded where so many other little brothers had failed!

And that night we sat down as a family decided to watch dad's football movie.

We popped the popcorn...

Dimmed the lights...

And as opening credits faded...

ALIEN SPACE BATTLE.

"What the hell is this?!" exclaimed my dad.

Turns out, my little brother had "Titan A.E" instead of "Remember the Titan's".

Its an animated movie about humans defeating aliens made of pure energy.

https://m.media-amazon.com/images/M/MV5BYWlzMWFjN2EtOWIwYS00Mzk5LWFE0MjltMDU2YTczM2U0MGNiXkEyXkFqcGdeQXVyMjUzOTY1NTc@._V1_FMjpg_UX1000_.jpg

Definitely not about Denzel Washington and football.

But my little brother's mistake makes an excellent point:

Just as there are a variety of movies... and there are also a variety of tabletop games:

Loud games... quiet games... serious games... silly games... simple games... complex games... group games... one on one games... board Games with lots of pieces... games with no board at all.

Before I send you emails detailing the value of tabletop games, I first want to tell you about the TYPES of tabletop games.

I want to quickly summarize each type of tabletop games so that you would know what I am talking about when I mention them in future emails.

(alt: picture of store, labeled with letters, so people can see where those sections fo games are)

Board Games: These are the most popular “tabletop games”... and you likely already have several at home like Clue or Monopoly. Among the tabletop genres, this genre has the most variety. Some can be mastered by children in an afternoon while others have enough depth and nuance to remain engaging for years to come. Popular examples include “Catan” and “Ticket to Ride”.

Image of wall in shop

Trading Card Games: These games have no boards or pieces, just cards, and are played against a single opponent. They involve a ton of strategy, both when you collect cards and build your deck and when you then play against another player with said deck. Popular examples include “Magic” and “Pokemon”.

Image of wall section of shop

Role-Playing Games: Of all the tabletop games, these sra ethe only ones that, technically, can be played entirely in players imagination. Through a rule book and “Game Master” (player who acts as the chief storyteller) players pretend to be heroes overcoming challenges together. The defining example is “Dungeons and Dragons” which has experienced a surge of popularity through the shows “Stranger Things” and “Critical Role”.

Image of wall section of shop

Miniature War Games: These tabletop games require the most pieces and the biggest table! Player collect miniature soldiers, each with different unique abilities, and pit them against another friend’s army of miniatures. Of all the tabletop games, this one also a hobby, requiring players to spend time money collecting and hours painting their miniatures. Popular examples include “Warhammer 40k” and “Star Wars X-Wing”.

Party Games: These are games best played with large groups, usually 8 players or more. They are highly social and interactive, are silly and full of laughter rather than competition, and sometimes NSFW! Players are often responding to prompts or reacting to one another’s gaffs. Popular examples include Secret Hitler, Codenames, and Cards Against Humanity.

Image of wall section of shop

That was a whole lot at once! But those are the fundamentals and going forward any of the games I mention will fall into one of those 5 categories.

If you want to learn more, please respond, or even call!

We are happy to help anyone learn more about our games.

Talk to you in a few days.

- Richard, owner of Board Game Paradise.

Email 3: Brand Story

Subject Line: Warning: A Potentially Awkward Email

- ALT: My Super Weird Calling

Hi (name),

I'm going to start today's email with a conversational land-mine.

One of those subjects you're supposed to never talk about at Thanksgiving dinner:

Religion.

Now I know you might not be a religious person, and you may even have been hurt by religious people in the past.

And even though I can't personally make that right, as someone who is religious, I truly am sorry about that...

It sucks when a person that hurts you, and it really sucks when that person also believes they are righteous for doing so.

But I want to use these emails I want to give you a peak behind the curtain of Board Game Paradise.

And as crazy as it sounds, I believe my story can't be faithfully told apart from some stuff God did.

I mean, I opened a board game shop, so obviously love tabletop games:

I grew up playing board games with my family...

I started role-playing Dungeons and Dragons in elementary school...

I built my own Magic the Gathering Deck in high school...

But even though all these hobbies became life-long passions while I was in college, running a business is tiring... and risky... and expensive.

And I needed more than passion to open a tabletop games store... *I needed a calling.*

And that calling came during a missions conference I attended with some other volunteer leaders from my church.

Now any christian conference is going to involve a whole lot of praying... and a missions conference is no different.

But while everyone else was praying for guidance and an end to suffering and for people all over the world... *I was thinking about board games.*

And I promise it wasn't out of boredom!

Everytime I would try to clear my mind and focus, a few minutes later tabletop games would come back to my mind.

And honestly, I was ashamed and embarrassed.

I mean everyone else was praying about serious, world-changing things all while I'm thinking about my favorite move in Catan.

But after sharing my distress with a few wise people, they helped me understand that sometimes God 'speaks' by giving us a good thought or feeling we can't shake off.

And for some weird, wacky reason, it was clear that God decided that my great contribution to His Kingdom of goodness and love was going to be a friendly local game store.

But that was in 2014. And I only opened Board Game Paradise in 2020.

So what did I do for 6 years?

I stayed open to His plan as I slowly, but surely, got ready:

- *I started some market research and crunching financial numbers*
- *I organized tabletop gaming tournaments at local businesses (thank you Gourmet Pizza Shop!)*
- *I began selling games at the farmers market*

It may seem like I was putting off my calling, but I really wasn't... I was just staying open.

And when the pandemic hit, and in person gaming was literally illegal... I was still open... but I was also pretty sure it was on hold for awhile.

But then, in the summer of 2020, smack dab in the middle of the pandemic, I got a call out of nowhere from a friend who quit their job and wanted to focus full time on starting something in Redlands.

And my mentors, the people in my life whose job it was to stop me from being foolish, gave me the greenlight.

With the help of friends and family we were able to get up and running in 4 months ... light speed for something like this.

And we've been here ever since :-)

-

Now this story isn't just about how Board Game Paradise got started...

And it's not just about how I believe a truly glorious and loving God can also be kinda a weirdo with a sense of humor...

It's also an encouragement to be open.

I know a trip to Hawaii sounds like the perfect memory-making experience to draw the family closer together...

And I know the idea of some plastic pieces, some rules, all in a simple cardboard box accomplishing the same thing feels insane.

But the memories of a fabulous trip can have a hard time trickling back into everyday life.

And I have witnessed how board games, trading card games, and role-playing games can create connections while people have fun in their very own home.

Whether cooperative or competitive, tabletop games help build better relationships.

And I invite you to remain open to that idea :-)

In a few days I'll email again soon, and tell you how even a game Monopoly provides exactly that.

- Richard, owner of Board Game Paradise

Email 4: Provide awesome teachable moments

Subject line: Life, Death, and...

Hi **name**,

Today's story is quick, and has a video component!

The link to the video is below, but let me provide for you some hypothetical backstory:

It's a Saturday evening, Dillon has turned 8, and he feels it is high-time he play one of the grown up games with the grown ups.

So the family elects to play an American classic: Monopoly.

Some of you already know where this is going...

Monopoly is a classic "friendship ender"; the type of game that encourages you to be ruthless.

Nothing like looking deep into your friend's eyes and with a crooked smile and commenting "Lindsey, dear Lindsey... don't worry... It's juuuuust business..." as you take their final property.

But Dillon here didn't know that, and in his first game, he found out that just what Monopoly is all about:

https://www.youtube.com/shorts/fQ0t_BuXlrU

Now we can all admit there is something particularly funny about seeing a child so perfectly demonstrate the same feeling we all have every April.

But even though it is just a game, “Dillon’s” sorrow is real...

He may be 8, but he is being struck to the soul as his “\$200 from Go” is immediately gobbled up by the mustache twirling, top hat wearing, spectacled monopoly man.

Don’t worry: he’ll process and play again ... Monopoly is still fun (somehow)!

But right now he is feeling frustrated... hopeless... and helpless.

And while not every game is as devastating as Monopoly:

Tabletop games present teachable moments like this all the time.

And I’m not just talking about teaching your kids the reality of taxes (*though that is an option*).

I’m talking about the opportunity to help your child deal with the bombardment of emotions that can come with winning and losing.

In this moment Dillon needs to be comforted... but he is also ready to listen.

It’s an opportunity for parents to connect with their kids.

And having kids myself, that is something I find way, way more precious than having a hotel on Boardwalk.

- Richard, owner of Board Game Paradise

P.S. If even after this story you are STILL interested in playing monopoly, we have several themed versions in our store, including _____.

Email 5: Trial and error

Subject line: STOP Thinking Outside the Box

“Board games are just about fun... they don’t teach much”

That is the kind of nonsense I hear all the time as the owner of a friendly local games store.

And here is a story that perfectly shows why it's utter nonsense:

In high school, my brother and I got into the Lord of the Rings war game: building armies, painting all the minis, constantly playing against each other on our bedroom floors.

It started with the Two Towers starter pack: my brother took the Orthanc Uruk-hai army and I took the horse-riding Rohirrim.

I loved the idea of recreating the epic cavalry charges from the movies, envisioning sweeping through his lines and sending his evil orcs scattering!



(the level of epicness i imagined every time)

But after a few games, I hadn't come close to a victory.

Having “learned my lesson”, I added some “Royal Guardsman” and a “mounted Edoras Captain, complete with special armor and higher attack rolls.

I assumed that with them leading the charge, there was no way his pikemen would remain invincible.

Wrong... I got creamed again.

And again.

And AGAIN.

Each time my brother beat me with the exact same strategy:

- 1) *Pick me off at a distance with crossbowmen*
- 2) *Let me charge into his ranks of pikemen*
- 3) *Finish me off with longsword wielding berzerkers.*



It was annoying and frustrating... but like any well-designed game, I knew the solution was not to just “get a different army”.

I needed to learn from my failures and become a more creative player.

So I got to work.

I dove into the details... examining both our armies... all their strengths and weaknesses... and consider every way they could be used.

And I came up with a new strategy that had less to do with my imagination and more to do with the practical solutions within the game.

Looking back, it's a perfect example of how games force you to think WITHIN the box.

[A study from 2019](#) showed that when you give people limitless options their creativity and critical thinking actually stagnates.

Too many options? People get overwhelmed.

But options within boundaries? Creativity *thrives*.

When your kids eventually enroll in higher-ed classes or get a new job, they have to be creative within limits.

They will have to learn some of the “rules” of how their field works... they are going to need to clearly define success... and they are going to have to find ways to do that best.

This is what every single tabletop game teaches:

- 1) **Provides rules (boundary)**
- 2) **Establishes how to win (goal)**
- 3) **Let's players pursue that goal (creativity)**

They are like fenced in gardens where a kid's creativity can blossom as they grow up.

And of course, unlike chores or school... tabletop games are FUN.

If you want to dip your toes into war games, join us Sundays at 12:30. We'll even have an army set aside for you to play :-)

- Richard, owner of Board Game Paradise

P.S. How did I beat my brother?

I stopped charging... and made him charge ME:

- 1) *Volley fire his unshielded pickman so he has to charge*
- 2) *Ride away from his pikemen*
- 3) *Attack the crossbowmen in the rear*
- 4) *Continue to shoot from a distance*

It didn't ALWAYS work... but at least I stopped losing every single time!

Email 6: Learn how to understand people

Subject Line: Reverse Reverse Psychology

(NAME), allow me to introduce you to OTTO VON BISMARCK.

<https://preview.redd.it/6kwb5fv6upa61.jpg?auto=webp&s=09603af91ae6c907980e1d520e757c173e9d2931>

Yep... that guy... the chancellor of Germany in the late 1800's

He is considered one of the greatest politicians in modern European history.

And the story of the "Ems Telegram" is a perfect illustration of one of the important skills kids can learn through trading card games

(Stick with me here, I promise it will all make sense!)

Here's how it all started:

Germany was scattered in a bunch of minor kingdoms (*think "states"*), and Bismark wanted them to unify into a single country (*like "U.S.A"*).

And to do that, he needed a defensive war: he needed someone else to attack so all the German people could band together.

The perfect opportunity came when Spain asked a German prince to become their king, because France said "no way jose" to the idea of being surrounded by allied nations.

Now Wilhelm, the ruler of northern Germany, knew this was a diplomatic disaster in the making, and sent a telegram politely assuring the French that no german would take the throne.

But here's the thing: it was Bismark's job to let the journalists know about this diplomatic stuff.

And Biskarm did just that... *but with a twist.*

Bismark knew the French and German people intimately, so *he* made some... 'adjustments'... to the original telegram and published two versions: one in French and one in German:

The German version was worded in such a way that it sounded like the French were insulting the king by ordering him around... like he was a younger sibling or servant.

The French version made it sound like the German King was abrupt with France, dismissive of their concerns... considering the French people a "petty annoyance"

The result?

Outrage.

Like... A LOT of outrage.

People were protesting all over France AND Germany.

And it gave the power hungry French Emperor all the excuse he needed to invade Germany... *which is exactly what Bismark wanted.*

Long story short: the war was a DISASTER for France, who got the pants beaten off of them, and all the german states united into a German nation.

Now you might be thinking: ok... so what does an obscure 19th century war tell us about trading card games?

Because a big part of trading card games is knowing your opponent and encouraging them to make a mistake.

Trading Card Games (TCG) don't have a board or pieces: just hand-picked decks of cards that they play one after another.

And in one TCG, Magic, you have to be *crafty*.

https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/thumb/a/aa/Magic_the_gathering-card_back.jpg/220px-Magic_the_gathering-card_back.jpg

Because gameplay isn't like "you go... I go... you go... I go..."

Rather, during a player's turn, their opponent has multiple opportunities to play cards that defend, attack, and counter.

And if you play the wrong card at the wrong time... you are DOOMED.

So a good Magic player understands how their opponent thinks, and constantly is finding ways to get them to make a big mistake.

This video explains exactly what I am talking about:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Z8N9nTizW8>

Simply put: You can't just know the rules... you have to know people... and how they think!

Just another amazing way tabletop games are more than just a fun time... they are social activities that connect us with other people.

And if this sounds up your alley, we have regular Magic nights every week at Board Game Paradise, Thursdays between 4-8.

And we would be happy to gently teach your kids how to play!

We even have competitive, preassembled starter sets that can be purchased.

Until next time,

- Richard, owner of Board Game Paradise

Email 7: table top is more engaging

Subject Line: The Worst Holiday Tradition

Hi (name),

Do you remember meeting your partner's parents for the first time?

My friend Kelly certainly did..

She had been dating her friend Daniel for just about a year. And though his folks were just upstate, she hadn't got the opportunity to meet them.

A certain global pandemic had kinda gotten in the way.

But now it was Thanksgiving... and she would not only be meeting them, but be spending 5 days at their home, with his sister and her husband as well.

She was excited... but understandably nervous... asking herself all the normal questions:

Will they like me?

What if I say the wrong thing?

Will they ask me about future kids?!?

But it turns out, all her worries were for nothing!

The whole week, there were no awkward conversations or weird moments.

There was nothing that happened that made her doubt that they like her.

But it was still a bad time.

Why?

Because pretty much all they did was watch TV.

Holiday movies... thanksgiving football... Office reruns...

And for Kelly, it got old, FAST.

After 3 days, she couldn't take it any more... she just put on her coat, walked out the door, and went on a walk by herself.

The relationship didn't end up working out... for lots of reasons they had trouble connecting on a deeper level.

A lot of people come into Board Game Paradise wanting to get away from screens, and this story shows us why:

For the most part... you aren't really watching movies WITH people... just kinda near them.

Yes, there is the occasional movie that is so interesting that everyone wants to talk about it afterwards.

But usually a movie just pleasantly kills 2 hours or so... no conversation or connection.

Screens are passive... but tabletop games are active.

When you sit down with friends and family over a tabletop game, they are physically and mentally present in the moment... actively engaged as they figure out how best to win.

And during the game you get to know everyone at the table by the moves they make, how they act, and of course, how they handle winning or losing!

With the screens out of the way, there is literally nothing in between people connecting with one another.

It's another reason I love playing tabletop games, and why we invite you and your family to join us for all sorts of [different game nights all week](#).

Talk to you again soon,

- Richard, owner of Board Game Paradise.

Email 7: We will help

Subject line: The worst thing about board games

Hi (NAME),

You know what is often the worst part of some board games?

LEARNING THEM.

Which is a bummer, because you learn by playing them, and that can make you think playing them isn't fun!

Take it from me: I run a tabletop store, and I will be the first to admit that board games can be overwhelming if they have a steep learning curve.

There was this one family awhile back, "the Jones's" (*not real name, but very real family*).

They were new to tabletop games, and had just purchased the game “Wingspan”: an engine-building board game that has become popular across the nation the past year.

But the thing about engine building board games: don’t just have rules... they have rules that stack on top of rules.

And one day Mrs. Jones called in with “a few” questions regarding just about every aspect of the game.

It was clear her and her family had given the game a try and ended up more lost than a swallow flying over Europe in summer.

<https://getyarn.io/yarn-clip/da1c8b0b-02d3-494f-a2dc-d43019bc7158/gif>

So I said: “Tell you what: how about you and your family come into the store and I’ll personally sit down and walk you through the game?”

There was a slight pause on the other end of the phone...

“Uh... really? I guess, yeah... ok that would work... Wednesday you said?”

Clearly, she was surprised by my offer, and to be honest, I half expected her and her family not to show.

But sure enough... 5pm... Wednesday night... in walk the Jones’s... Wingspan in hand!

Even now I can remember the “oh great here we go again” look on their faces as we got out the pieces and set up the board at the big table in the front of the store.

But this wasn’t my first “difficult rules” rodeo... they were lost, but far from hopelessly lost!

After I simplified the rules, each round went something like this:

- **First Round:** Each turn I asked them pointed questions: what do you have, and what is a good move to make? We moved slowly... the round taking twice as long as normal.
- **Second Round:** They move a bit faster, explaining their turn’s as they go, and I offer strategic tips they could try next time to make even better moves.
- **Third Round:** I stay silent the whole time, and hear the youngest whisper “Oh... I see what you are trying to do Dad... “

Needless to say, this learning experience went MUCH better, and from then on there were no more eye-rolling when someone suggested they play Wingspan at home!

<https://c.tenor.com/5iaXWaHna1UAAAAM/eye-roll-ugh.gif>

Classic teenage boy eye-roll

This was my (Richard's) experience helping the Jones's.

But you wanna know something really cool?

Everyone who works at Board Game Paradise has a story just like that... their own version of "Jones's" family.

We know how amazing these games can be, but we also have experienced the frustration of learning new rules .

And we want to help anyone we can get over that hurdle.

So here is our promise: if you have any trouble with any tabletop game, any issue at all, we will find a time to personally sit down and help you learn the game.

It would be our privilege to teach you so well you could even turn around and beat us 9/10 times.

And not just because it is a privilege to serve you...

But also because I'm pretty sure everyone who works here would rather play a game with you and your family than do inventory in the back...

;-)

- Richard, owner of Board Game Paradise.

Email 8: Learn how to be social

Subject line:

“Tabletop nerds are don’t have social skills”

Isn’t that right, (name)?

WRONG.

Tabletop games TEACH social skills.

Let me show you how...

Years back, I was leading a Dungeons and Dragons campaign.

Reminder: Dungeons and Dragons is a role-playing game, where players pretend to be their characters, acting out their reactions and decisions with one another as they adventure through an imagined, described world.

And during this particular session some bandits had ambushed the party one night while they were camping out in an alpine forest... on “May Pegasa”’s watch...

May Pegasa was the character played by my friend Brandon: a knight in shining armor, dispensing justice with his sword everywhere he went.

In May’s eyes, the world is black and white: he sees evil, then he destroys evil... *end of discussion.*

But in that moment he couldn’t fight evil.

Why?

Because bandits had surrounded the camp, and the bandit captain was threatening his friend as she peacefully slept...

The whole table held their breath as “May Pagasa” and this bandit captain (*played by me, the Game Master*) whispered under the moonlight.

Establishing terms... trading insults... making threats...

And the whole time Brandon was weighing his options... trying to get out of this mess:

How close is my sword?

Can I cast a spell to get them off my friend?

What if I run at him really, like, REALLY fast?

But I kept saying: “No... none of that will work... you got a natural 1 on your Perception check (*the lowest roll possible*)... they got the drop on you.”

After some more back and forth, I pressed him:

“Brandon... what will May do?”

Begrudgingly ... and with anger in his eyes... May Pagasa untied his pouch filled with gold and tossed it to the bandit captain.

But then something happened May did NOT expect:

The bandit captain removed his hood... and revealed a symbol... a symbol of a religious order.

The same religious order May belongs to; they were his own brothers in arms.

May's/Brandon's tone immediately shifted from righteous anger to disbelief:

“How could you do this?! Have you lost all honor?!”

“Honor?” the crusaders answered back... “we lost that long ago...”

Turns out his brothers in arms were returning from a years long crusade... and their spirits had been broken by the tragedy of war.

They just wanted to get home, live in peace, and at that moment, survive.

The party, stunned, turned to May... *what would his response be?*

...

Before I finish the story... I want to reiterate my point:

Tabletop games teach social skills.

Most games include social interaction... but some depend on it.

And any kid in Brandon's situation would be wrestling with the fundamental questions that guide our relationships:

- *How should I navigate this conflict?*
- *Do I forgive this person?*
- *How does their reality impact my beliefs?*

Games like Dungeons and Dragons might be an escape from normal life... but they are not an escape from life itself.

Rather, they equip us to handle the real stuff life throws our way.

We really like them at Board Game Paradise, which is why [we have D&D games](#) on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays, and we would love to have your kids join us.

Talk to you again soon,

- Richard, owner of Board Game Paradise

P.S. Oh right... the end of the story!

Everyone at the table wondered what Brandon would decide to say... what threat of vengeance would he give this time?

After a pause, Brandon spoke up:

"May says: "In the temple... I ... I will pray for your safety"

And the bandit crusaders slipped into the forest, never to be heard from again...

Email 9: build relationships with real people, in their presence

Subject line: Toto... we aren't in LAN anymore...

Hi (name),

I've been talking quite a bit about how tabletop games build community... and in a way screens can't.

But some might say: *"Don't you do the same thing when you play video games with other people?"*

Sorta... but not really... not anymore...

Let me tell you a story about my first LAN party:

I was a freshman in college, and had the privilege of living on a floor that had a pretty tight community.

And part of what kept that community so close was how it maintained connection with upper classmen that moved off the floor.

And away we maintained those relationships was through "Halo LAN parties".

What's a Lan Party?

A LAN stands for "local area network", and basically it connects individual xbox consoles, rather than connecting to the entire internet.

People get together with (usually) 4 xboxs and 4 tvs, and 16 people play against each other.

And let me tell you... I was intimidated.

I mean, I was an 18 year old a month into my first semester, now hopping in a car with a sophomore, to go hang out with a bunch of college SENIORS.

And I was nervous they would think I was too sheltered or nerdy, or just kinda lame.

I mean were cool people who could legally buy alcohol... REAL adults!

(Looking back, the idea of a 21 year old being an adult is... well it's crazy)

We pulled up to this strange house, which of course was a pig sty.

But as I walk through the door, rather than being teased or belittled... something else happens:

They start asking me questions... what I like to do... why I chose the school... what I was excited for in college.

Before you know it, I'm sitting in front of a huge TV with two juniors and a senior, strategizing as to how we are going to get the blue team's flag on the Blood Gulch map.

Within an hour ... and with a few lucky shots... I had gone from "freshman kid" to "valuable team member".

It was an awesome night, and I truly felt like I was a part of the floor community.

But here's the sad part:

This almost NEVER happens any more:

Kid's aren't going over to their friends house to play golden eye like we did as kids.

They aren't eager to arrange slumber parties to play Mario Kart.

They aren't fitting as many TV's and xbox's as they can in a house to host a LAN party.

Multiplayer games used to be chance [to socialize in person](#)... which social scientists everywhere insist is essential both for a happy life and healthy development.

But now, kids just play alone online, or with faceless voices of strangers online.

It's social... but it's not really really connecting or building relationships.

It's why [we have events nearly every single night of the week](#), and why we'd love to host you and your family.

We just love being a place that prioritizes that in-person, face to face connection that can never be replaced.

Talk to you soon,

- Richard, owner of Board Game Paradise

Email 10: Can make the night special

Subject Line: Mac'n'Cheese...a Delicacy?

Macaroni and cheese is a lifesaver for parents.

First of all, it's pretty good (*I mean who doesn't like melted cheese?!?*).

But even more importantly for parents... its easy.

You get some boiling water, pour in the noodles, pour in a dried packet, and BAM... dinner time!

That's easier than ramen.

And as if that wasn't enough: **it's cheap too!**

<https://www.budgetbytes.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Homemade-Mac-and-Cheese-fork.jpg>

That's like the holy-trinity for parents: cheap, delicious, and easy.

But here is the danger: if you make it too often, your kids will get sick of it...

And if that happens you have lost one of your most valuable tools in your parenting culinary tool belt.

But in high school I met a friend whose mom didn't succumb to the temptation to make it all the time.

Someway, somehow, she saw an opportunity that none of us (or at least my parents) never saw.

She managed to make Mac'n'cheese special.

How?

Well first she made them normal mac'n'cheese. And her kids liked it.

I mean how could they not... it's man'n'freakin'cheese.

But the trick came, a week later, when they asked her to make it again.

With a surprised look on her face, she turned to her kids and said:

"Oh macaroni and cheese? That stuff is FANCY... I can't just make it all the time!"

Suddenly, mac'n'cheese became a luxury, a scarcity.

Now of course, unless you are melting fine cheese in a roux, mac'n'cheese is not fancy.

But my friend's mom wanted to make sure that any time she was having a really difficult day she could solve all her dinner and/or child behavior problems by telling the kids she would make mac'n'cheese.

And sure enough, from then on, every time mom made it, my friend said she and her sister would literally jump and scream for joy.

Not only that, but they would insist that mom use the nice plates and the nice cups... only the BEST for mac'n'cheese.

It wasn't until my friend went to a friend's house in Jr. High that she realized the con: her friend's family had LEFTOVER mac'n'cheese in the fridge (something unthinkable in her house).

But by then the "damage" was done: even knowing the truth, mac'n'cheese remained her favorite food.

Now I'm not suggesting you make mac and cheese every time you play board games as a family... *though I'm certainly not NOT suggesting that.*

But if you are having a hard time convincing your kids (or spouse) to play tabletop games as a family instead of zoning out on their screens, maybe do little things here or there to make the night special!

- *Play on the floor in pajamas*
- *Have ice cream sundays instead of just ice cream*
- *Light candles and put on music that matches the theme of the game*

If your kids begin to associate game night as special, you won't have to claw them away from their screens to get them interested.

And before long, just like the yumminess of mac'n'cheese, you won't even have to do all the special things to get them to play.

The inherent joy of the game itself will get them excited all on its own.

And best of all, just like mac'n'cheese, tabletop games are cheap, easy, and delici... well, I guess "deliciously" fun?

You get the idea... talk to you soon!

- Richard, owner of Board Game Paradise