I have a hunch that there aren’t too many of you out there who don’t simply adore Gizmo and his Gremlin spawn. I’m also pretty sure the average fright fan doesn’t mind a good board game every once in a while. So a few months ago, when WizKids/NECA announced the release of a GREMLINS-themed game, I thought, “Match made in heaven! How could this go wrong?”

Skip to the present day: I now own a copy of GIZMO’S GREAT ESCAPE, and Murphy‘s Law triumphs again. If you happen to come into possession of this little monstrosity, please, keep it out of the sun, keep it out of the water and most important of all, just keep it out of your house!

The game’s “board” is, in actuality, an 11 x 8 1/2-inch piece of paper with some very simple grid graphics Photoshopped onto it. I have to admit, though, I had only slightly less fun trying not to rip the paper while getting it out of its plastic baggie than I did during the eight minutes it took me to play this game.

There are a total of 60 tiles on the board: 10 Traps, six starting positions, four exits, and the remaining are open spaces adorned with patterns straight out of the “generic wood-panel tile” aisle of your local hardware store. According to the screenshots on the Trap squares, the game takes place in Mrs. Peltzer’s kitchen during that infamous scene from the original film. To start, one player chooses to be Gizmo while the other chooses to play as Spike and four other nameless, yet screen-accurate, Gremlins. You place the tokens on their designated starting points, with Gizmo located on one side of the room, the exit on the other and five Gremlins and a few Traps in between. From here on, it pretty plays out like the most basic board game imaginable: Draw a card, then move the amount of spaces indicated. If you’re Gizmo, get to the exit. If you‘re playing as the Gremlins, kill Gizmo. This “action” will drain about eight to 10

minutes out of your life. Considering how quickly it ended, I was quite impressed how this still managed to get very old, very fast.

There does happen to be one single redeeming quality within this steaming pile: the six miniature figures. Although still not worth the $19.99 suggested retail price, the 1 1/2-inch tokens are very nicely sculpted and have somewhat detailed paint jobs considering their size. They are almost identical to WizKids’ HeroClix, only missing the numbered, clicking bases, and they seem to be slightly sturdier. In addition to Gizmo and Spike, we get a few of the more memorable critters from the films: poker Gremlin, Santa Gremlin, derby hat Gremlin and ski mask Gremlin. My plan is to toss the board and cards, display the figurines and count my losses.

I know, I know, it’s tough to resist that adorable little furball known as Gizmo, but do yourself a favor and skip this one. If for some reason you really, really need to play some sort of GREMLINS-related game, scratch that itch by heading over to eBay and picking up the cartridge made for the Atari 2600 back in ’86. It’s half the price, and double the entertainment.

{jcomments on}