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As we begin this month's edition, I just want to take a moment to thank all those who've clicked the 'Like' button on our [Facebook page](#). Thanks to the **25** of you (so far), I've been able to assign a username to the page. This essentially means our Facebook page now has a customised URL. So you can now check us out at <http://www.facebook.com/redstring.blog> on Facebook.

I know this edition is **ridiculously late** but as I mentioned on the blog, I've been experiencing some difficulties with getting back to the U.S. It looks like those difficulties may soon be over so you can expect a special edition on it all once I'm back and settled in the U.S.

So what do I have for you this time? Well, the articles in the last edition seemed to be **extremely popular**. So I've reassessed my content and decided to try having more articles and less reviews :) So many of you read it that now I can't complain about electricity in Nigeria in public because you instantly remind me of [The Benefits of Being Backwards](#).

Now here's what I've got in store. **One yarn each** from [Christine](#) and [Chinwe](#). **3 articles** by yours truly, some tech stuff, and a bit about [another interesting personality](#) I've stumbled upon!

Christine's yarn is a short story and will be continued in subsequent editions.

Tokyo Magnitude 8.0

Oh! Before I go on I must talk about this anime series I watched some time ago. It occurred to me to mention this after my [Pray for Japan](#) piece

[Tokyo Magnitude](#) is an anime that tells the story of two children in Tokyo after the city is struck by an **8.0 magnitude earthquake**. The siblings Mirai and Yuki and eventually also the single mother Mari who joins them, struggle through an utterly devastated Japanese capital in an effort to make it home.

Although the series is fiction, it is a **true representation** of what might happen if such an earthquake ever hit Tokyo in real life, and considering recent events in Japan, I think it is something you all should watch.

Having seen it, I am truly glad that Tokyo was not directly affected by the earthquake and tsunami in real life, and I believe I am that much more appreciative of what those who were affected must be going through. Watching it would give you at least one more reason to **pray for Japan**.



Journey to Self

I don't know where I'm going

He was my high-school sweetheart. After graduation, it just seemed like a good idea to move in together. We had already been together for about 3 years. Our apartment wasn't a mansion or anything, but for our first place on our own it was great. Something about the whole thing just made me feel like I had finally earned the title of adult.

But I sure know where I've been

I got a job as a cashier at the local supermarket. He got a job as a landscaper. We both worked hard and saved a little money every pay check. I took classes in the evening hoping that I could get a better job as a secretary or something. He was trying for a position as a crew leader or his other goal was to put away a bit of money and start his own company. I was his biggest cheerleader on both ideas. I never had a doubt he would be great at whatever he decided to do.

Journey to Self

Hanging onto the promises

He worked and he slaved, but his superiors would never give him the position as crew leader. We continued to pinch pennies and do what we could to save up so that we could start his own company. After several years we had enough money for him to get a truck and some other equipment. He hired one other guy and started out as his own man. We were both so excited. We had worked so hard for this day and we finally got here.

Unfortunately our high spirits were short lived. His guy proved not to be the best of people and he had to go through the process of hiring another guy. He hated taking the extra time out of his schedule to do this so he hired two people hoping that at least one would work out. During this time his mood was simply awful. He would growl and snap at me and for the first time ever, I just did not feel comfortable around him.

In the songs of yesterday

Over the next year, his business continued to experience many ups and downs, and I just learned to avoid him at those times. I continued to work my cashier job and take my evening classes. I was also hoping for better things for my future. I did not see myself forever working as some sort of supermarket cashier. I wanted better. However, by the end of that year it seemed that my plans would have to be put on hold just a little bit longer. I discovered I was pregnant...

- End Part I -

New Boyfriend, New Shoe

I recall an intense debate I had with a few Nigerian guy friends about how fickle a lot of Nigerian girls are becoming. “**They carry around designer bags without even knowing who designed them!**” one of my friends exclaimed in irritation “if you can’t buy them a \$500 Gucci bag they won’t date you. Abeg joh I can’t deal with Nigerian women!” I waved my hand in the air and gave a silent hallelujah as I brought to mind a few friends of mine who had sold out to the ‘Sugar Daddy’ mentality, in order to afford the luxury of sun glasses bigger than their faces. How proud I was not to be counted in that number.

Over the weekend however something changed, **drastically**. I became baptized into the “New Boyfriend, New Shoe” church. The one that preaches the doctrine of ‘Loubotins’ before ‘Love’, and ‘Lace-Up Boots’ before you ‘Look For Me’. But this conversion was not one without fire, in Nigerian terms, it pained me plenty. It was a slow transition that occurred upon my realization of a shameful double standard that still riddles the Nigerian mentality. Alas, I discovered that we still lived in the age of the “**I am the man, and I can do what I want**” school of thought.

I’ve attended numerous parties with Nigerian boys, friends and acquaintances alike. I see them pre-game hours before, and hear their plans to ‘corner’ females other than the ones they are in relationships with, just for fun. “My girl better not show up tonight mehn, I’ve set some heavy P[arolls]!” they say, while shaking hands like members of some twisted political party congratulating each other on achieving absolutely nothing. People are under the assumption that because I’m usually an active member of conversations I miss out on half the discussion itself; this could not be further from the truth. As a writer I am constantly character assessing, personality identifying, and most importantly conversation recording; I hear it all and I remember it all, **in scary detail**. However, until this past weekend this double standard was one I was willing to ignore as it didn’t affect my personal well being. I was content with wishing my male comrades bon voyage on their conquests and retiring to my room to make love to my **kindle**.

New Boyfriend, New Shoe

Spring came around this year suddenly and with full force like a bad flu. No seriously, I was struck with a bad flu, and once the weekend came around pretty much bed ridden for a whole two days. It was while in bed, unable to go anywhere or have any fun, that my passion for shopping and shoes was reignited, and thoughts of romance took the back seat. Everyone who knows me knows I adore my boyfriend, it's as clear as a bee sting to the forehead. However my blackberry (which I'm still yet to trade in for a droid despite numerous threats to my friends list) was as silent as hill, from Friday night to Sunday evening. You see, I have no recollection whatsoever of what our current disagreement was about this time, but I knew it couldn't be anything so important that his vex would surpass my flu. **DSW** and **ASOS** became my lovers; **Guess** and **Steve Madden** became my friends. The longer my significant other kept an ice-box where his heart used to be, the stronger my feelings for Steve grew. Alas, by Sunday evening, retail therapy had cured me and I was back on my feet (**true story**).

Once I had packed my 'portmanteau' and was dispatched back to **illadelphia**, I was met with caring questions from concerned friends. One recurring question was "how's the boyfriend?" In all honesty, the first name that came to my mind was Steve Madden. He had been there for me when I'd run out of tissues with which to blow my nose, and my body refused to maintain a reasonable temperature. He was the first one that came to mind. A few guy friends however rose to the defense of my doting boyfriend person. "He's a man joh!" they said vehemently. "You want him to be calling you every five minutes because of cold, did you die? No! So free the guy." Logic compelled me to argue some simple facts with them, of course I didn't expect anyone to call me every five minutes, not even your friendly neighborhood telemarketer. However, it would have been nice if he could rent a uhaul to hold his ego (which can be a turn on when used in the Beyonce context) and text to find out if I'd run out of **Kleenex**.

New Boyfriend, New Shoe

The point is **Steve Madden** stepped up to the plate and took care of me. He gave me a mental foot rub that soothed me so sweetly I didn't notice funds seeping from my bank account, and I realized females of the "New Boyfriend, New Shoe" church are judged ever so wrongly. We only find in material things what we lack in relationships. It's not that we can't purchase these items of hearts desires ourselves, **no!** *In the voice of **honorable Patrick***. In fact, part of the reason Nigerian boys complain is because they can't afford to constantly spend money on their women paying for the services of Mr. Madden, as the women do themselves. Although I plan to go back to attending my regular church next Sunday, and I know this lapse in my boyfriends judgment (if I still have a boyfriend after this article) was only a glitch in our perfect system, I go back with a deeper understanding of the material demands females make of men. Simply stated, if you did your job right as a significant other we wouldn't bother so much about material things. But in the mean time, as you're there setting 'P' and what not, please pick up a pair of pink pumps from **DSW**. If women are expected to put up with the philandering of men, then men should equally be prepared to meet the demands of women. No?

Back to shoe shopping I go.



R.I.P Jerry LaVigne Jr.

No, no. No one died... at least not yet. [Jerry LaVigne Jr.](#) is an Internet personality I've been seeing a lot of recently. He believes that most artists are not appreciated until they are dead and so he signs all his videos off with an R.I.P.

Now although he is not dead, you might find yourself **dying of laughter** while watching his videos. Jerry has talked about topics from [How to cheat on your girl](#) to [Reasons women go to the club](#). His raw, I don't give a shit attitude is hilarious to watch and hear, and ~~sometimes~~ most of the time, he tells it just like it is.

He also does some amazing sketches and while I know not what he does for a living, I do know that if it's not comedy, it really should be. Jerry is on [Myspace](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [YouTube](#), and if you haven't checked him out yet, I suggest you do so **right now!**

My personal favourite video is [Don't chase women!](#)

Do Me a Favour, **Get Dropbox!**

So my tech spiel for this month is a little self serving, and was inspired by [a Lifehacker article](#). I want to talk to you a bit about Dropbox, and make no mistake my aim is to persuade you to sign up for a Dropbox account via [my referral link](#). So what is this Dropbox of a thing?

Dropbox is a **free online file sharing and backup solution**. With the Dropbox application, you can **sync files between all your computers and phones**. With public and shared folders, not only can you keep and work on your own files, you can **collaborate with others on files you share**, or just simply make them public so that anyone can see them.

Like a version control system, Dropbox also **keeps a history of your work**. This allows you to undo changes and undelete files. So with Dropbox you can edit your files **anyhow**, access them **anywhere**, and share them **everywhere**. A **free Dropbox account** comes with a whopping **2GB** of space which can be increased by up to **400%** if you get other people to sign up via your [referral link](#).

Therein lies the self-serving part. I want to increase my Dropbox space, and I want you to sign up via this link: <http://db.tt/7Cq6p3g>. What's in it for you? **The increase goes both ways**. I get extra space and so do you. Furthermore, I already backup all editions of The Red String on Dropbox, so I can share my folder with you - giving you instant access to all the editions as soon as they are available. It's not much, but it is something. Even if you feel you have no need for a Dropbox account, sign up anyway. If not for yourself, do it for me. **Get Dropbox now!**

To learn more about Dropbox, visit: <http://www.dropbox.com/features>

The Meaning of Humblerra

If you have been following the Nigerian elections be it on your own or via your Nigerian friends, you should by now be very familiar with our honourable first lady, Dame Patience - and her **wonderful command** of the English language. In particular, her statement about the PDP **Humblerra** should be called to mind.

While it was not her first and neither will it be her last linguistic error made on public television, I want you to think of that particular statement (the one that took her mainstream) as you read this article. Sure we all had a good laugh at it and her subsequent *lapsus linguae*, but believe it or not there is more to the Humblerra than meets the eye.

You see, when the first lady of an anglophone country cannot speak proper English, it really **should not** be a laughing matter. As I say this, I still laugh every time the Dame releases another hit single and really, if it was just about her I wouldn't be writing this article.

The Meaning of Humblerra

In the **3 months** I have now spent here, I have heard countless grammatical and verbal errors made by public figures and TV personalities ranging from newscasters, to show hosts and people in positions of power. Just the other day, the **president of FIDA (the federation of women lawyers)** released her own hit track called "**Concientize**" and she didn't do it just once. She released the remix, the instrumentals, the drum solo... In fact she must have repeated it about **10 times!** Thus proving beyond a reasonable doubt that she believed it was correct English.

Now a slip of tongue once in a while by anyone is forgivable. I'm not saying that you have to be a master of English. But by the time every Tope, Dilichukwu, and Hamsat is dropping bombshells every 10 minutes on **National Television!** Things have gone too far. And it didn't just started today. My grandmother used to record all the mistakes she heard on TV in a notebook out of frustration. She's a retired school teacher. But after she had filled two exercise books full of mistakes she had to give up.

Forget about how **the Americans have ruined the English language**, let's take a look at ourselves. At least their incorrect English is there for all to read and accept in the dictionary and is officially recognised as a "**dialect**" of English. These errors that I've heard so often are not the results of a difference in dialect or pidgin or any such thing. They're just mistakes. **Plain and simple.**

The Meaning of Humblerra

Given this, it should be obvious what the true meaning of Humblerra is. **It is a cry for help.** A cry that tells of the decrepit state of the Nigerian educational system. That begs us to please put it out of its misery so it can stop producing poorly spoken graduates. That shows how **all classes of Nigerians are affected** from the most affluent (like **the president's wife**), to the (I assume) well educated (like **the president of FIDA**), all the way down to the poor and poorly educated from whom one might expect to hear such things.

So next time the Dame or some other Nigerian drops another hit single, please think on this and realise that for all our posing and posturing, Nigeria really does have **serious problems** that need to be addressed by **serious leaders.**

Having completed what is said to be **the most free and fair elections in Nigeria's brief history**, let us then hope that our elected officials will be up to the task - and no one needs to be more so up to it than the husband of our ever present reminder; Our president, **Mr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan.**

Counselling Since 1987

Recently, my father hosted a meeting for the **Government College Ibadan (GCI)** Old Boys Association of which he is a member. To this meeting came the wife of one of the old boys - **Mrs. Lola Otulayo** who worked alongside my mother back when they were in the **Minaj broadcasting company** together.

I didn't remember her, or even my relationship to her but as soon as I saw her I thought she was a very good-looking woman. So when my mother began to regale me with tells of how I used to chase away the men that followed her back in those days, I could see why I would have been protective of her. I imagine she was even better looking back then.

In particular, the story of how I assessed one potential suitor for this aunt of mine and thus convinced her to never see him again had me **rolling on the floor laughing**. Even more hilarious to me was the fact that after that incident, my aunt made sure to schedule potential suitor visits at times when I would be in the office to give **my expert opinion**. Keep in mind that I was **only about 6** at the time.

Apparently at that first incident, I essentially told her that the guy looked so scruffy that there was no way he could take care of anybody when he obviously couldn't take care of himself! LOL! Needless to say, he from thenceforth made sure to see her in my absence. It's funny how time doesn't change everything. I may be older and supposedly more mature now but I still "counsel" women much older than myself today - and **I thoroughly enjoy it**.

Counselling Since 1987

A lot of my best friendships are born out of 'counselling' and I don't discriminate. Older, younger, same-age, my words are free for all women. I tell it like it is and whether you choose to listen or not is up to you. I've known that I enjoy doing this for a while but I didn't think it went as far back as age 6. **WOW! Isn't that crazy!?** I must have come out of the womb with a **PHD in Psychiatry** because I love to sit back and listen to women talk about their problems then brainstorm with them on solutions.

Actually I think I just love to hear gist, and women tell the best stories. Because truth be told **99% of the time** most women know what the solution to their problem is. Either that, or they've all but made up their minds on a course of action - **for better or for worse**. Such that the real reason they tell anyone (whether they know it or not) is to confirm their own suspicions about the side-effects of the action they are about to take.

I've realised that one of the reasons men get fed up with talking to women is that they treat it the same as if they were talking to a man. You tell me a problem -> we talk about it -> I give you my advice -> you use it (or not) -> we move on. Simple, straightforward, and fast. But the process of talking to women in my experience is **fundamentally different!** Because **they don't need your advice**. They just want someone to listen, empathise, and help them straighten out their own thoughts.

Once you accept that your role in the conversation is really **more participatory than it is active**, such conversations become a lot more fun. It's like listening to an interesting speech, you might nod your head, be moved to tears, throw in a few jokes... but for the most part you're being talked to not talked with and when it is indeed time for you to talk, you are then called upon. At this point you will be the one giving the speech and she will be the audience. That is if, she hasn't mentally sorted herself out before then.

Counselling Since 1987

So men, be patient when talking to your girlfriend, wife, daughter or female friend about their problems. They just need you to listen. You can throw in some advice but don't be surprised when it isn't taken or she tells you that's what she was thinking or whatever. **The conversation is less about your input, and more about their output.**

That's it from me.

Yours truly,

Damola Mabogunje

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