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Standard Edition

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# 'Twas the Season

**Merry Christmas** everyone! And to each a **Happy New Year!** Sorry it's belated, but I was busy writing something else on New Year's eve and didn't get round to posting this December edition. In truth, I hadn't even finished writing it by then. 'Twas the season, and I was in the mood to relax and be merry. Writing *The Red String* just wasn't that appealing at all.

This year, or should I say last year? I spent my Christmas and New Year's in the big apple with my aunty Sade and her family. For those of you who don't know, aunty Sade is our editor Simi's mother and also the mystery reader who introduced me to *the song of ice and fire series*. Thus for Christmas, I gave her *the prince of nothing series* in return. Fitting isn't it?

I had a wonderful time with them and in about 20 minutes I will be boarding a train back to Philadelphia. Needless to say, it will be back to the grind when I return, and I'm looking forward to being productive. I hope your celebrations were wonderful and that you also, are ready to return to work. Read on to find out how my 2011 ended, and my 2012 began.

# Christmas Party

I definitely ended 2011 with a blast. Well, more like a pistol shot through a silencer. You know me, I enjoy myself but I don't make too much noise.

On Christmas Day, aunty Sade threw a big party. The house was packed, and the food might have fed 5000 if I wasn't there to eat it all. There was Jollof rice, Mac & Cheese, Turkey, Ham, Rotisserie Chicken, Crispy vegetables with Simi's homemade dipping sauce, apple pie, ice cream, cupcakes, and the piece de resistance a delicious rum cake!

The party itself was not really for me. I didn't know most of the people there and they didn't know me. But I had the best time watching them as the alcohol flowed and they slowly descended into merriment.



# Christmas Party

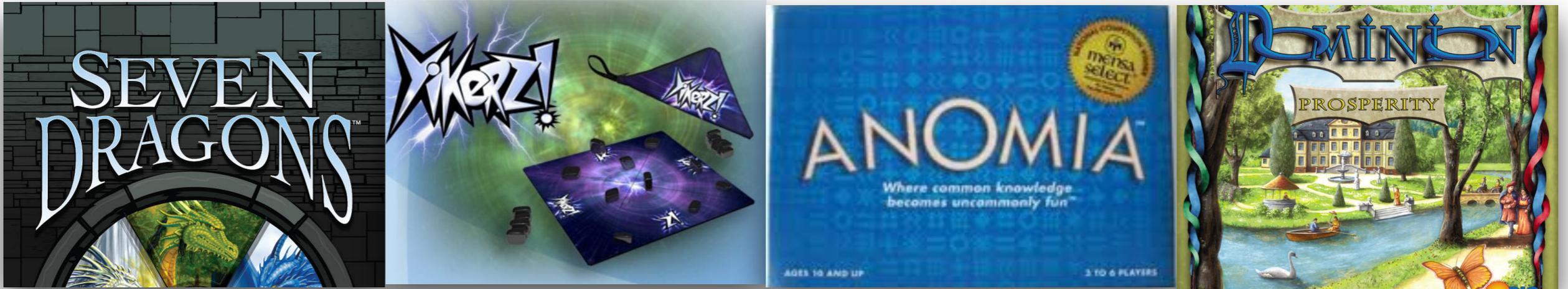
It took a few hours, but by the end of the night these folks were singing and dancing and jumping and prancing, and generally acting the fool - and I made sure I took pictures to prove it. Lol. Keep in mind that most of these folk having a jolly good time are around 50 years old! Now I can believe it when they say 50 is the new 30.

But don't get me wrong, I also had my fair share of alcohol and merriment. But unlike them, I had my priorities straight. I was there for the food, and man was it good food. I even had to ask my aunty Sade to make me a rum cake to take back home. Hopefully it doesn't get crushed in my bag.

Believe it or not, the leftovers from that party fed us all into the new year, and I begun 2012 with a full stomach, and a full cup of inspiration.



# Designer Gaming



The Christmas party was not however the only interesting thing I did during my trip to New York. Because for the first time in a long time, **The Red String™** gang were able to gather in one place. So I visited Simi and her boyfriend Mike at their apartment in Brooklyn.

Now Mike is a pretty interesting guy. He's a techie like me, and so he owns all sorts of cool and fun gadgets. I got to mess with his **RC helicopter** and his **kaossilator** but what we spent most of the night doing, was playing designer games. For those of you who don't know, Designer games are a pretty recent crop of games that started to gain popularity in 1995. They generally have simple rules, deep strategy, and a very high replay value - often allowing multiple game configurations with the same game pieces.

Funny enough, the only reason I know all that about Designer games is because about a year ago, I conceptualised one such game myself. Most of my information comes from the research I had to do then.

To learn more about Designer games visit:

[http://boardgames.about.com/od/news/a/designer\\_games.htm/](http://boardgames.about.com/od/news/a/designer_games.htm/)

# Designer Gaming

I visited Simi & Mike twice during my stay in NYC. On the first visit, there were 5 of us, and we played a game called **Seven Dragons** (amongst other things). Explaining its game dynamics or that of any of the games we played that visit or the next will take way too much time and so I'm not going to do that. What I will do, is say that these games were much more interesting than any board game I'd played prior. Better than Monopoly, better than Ludo, Snakes & Ladders, Life... and most of the other traditional board games I've played.

The sheer depth of strategy involved in these games is what makes them as fun as they are. Often leading players to create elaborate schemes to defeat their opponents. In doing so, players become more engaged and involved in the gameplay.

Amongst the other memorable games played during the visits were **Dominion**, **Yikerz**, **Anomia**, and **Taboo**. Of these, Anomia & Taboo are not designer games. But I strongly suggest you check them all out, as each was interesting in its own way.

To learn more about Designer games visit:

[http://boardgames.about.com/od/news/a/designer\\_games.htm/](http://boardgames.about.com/od/news/a/designer_games.htm/)

# Repealing [trs.mabogunje.net](http://trs.mabogunje.net)

Now for some important news. If you have been with us since the beginning, since before I owned [theredstringblog.com](http://theredstringblog.com), then you know of the URL in the title - and chances are you are still using it.

Sadly, I will be putting that URL out of commission shortly. I'm a fan of simplicity, and having multiple URLs just goes against that principle. Especially since [trs.mabogunje.com](http://trs.mabogunje.com) is hard to remember.

So this is your official notice. [trs.mabogunje.net](http://trs.mabogunje.net) will be down within a week. If you have a bookmark pointing to the old URL, please update it accordingly to point to [theredstringblog.com](http://theredstringblog.com).

If for some reason you can't do this within the week, then you can always go to <http://mabogunje.net/> where I always have a link to the most recent edition.

# Egoraptor



This is **Arin Hanson** (aka *Egoraptor*), or at least his current and 16th avatar according to his website. I stumbled upon one of his creations: **PokeAwesome**, when a friend of mine shared it on Facebook.

It was a parody of the popular Pokemon games by Nintendo and one part of his **Awesome series** on Newgrounds. It was also so hilarious that I just had to watch the rest of the series... and then the rest of his videos... and then the rest of the videos based on his videos... and than the rest of... well, you get the idea.

Now, the even more amazing thing about him, is that he usually does all the voices in his videos - and when I say all, I mean **all**. In a video of about 6 characters, you will hear 6 different and unique voices, and at the end of it all, while the credits are scrolling, you will see his name... His name alone.

I personally like Egoraptor for his humour and the videos he creates. But he is all about the voices, and a lot of the time, he does voices for other peoples videos too! So check out his website, and watch some videos. If you know anything about the things he parodies, I'm sure you'll find him hilarious too.

To learn more about Egoraptor visit: <http://egoraptor.net/about.html/>

# Na me be dis?

I remember when I was younger, when I used sit in the corner of the parlour and listen to my parents as they discussed Nigerian politics with their friends. I used to marvel at the complexity of it all, and how they could sit for hours going on and on about NEPA (now PHCN) or the president (now Goodluck Johnathan) or any number of the various problems that afflict the nation.

Fast forward about 15 years and I find myself in the middle of a passionate conversation about Nigeria. One that has already been going on for about 2 or 3 hours and even now: hours after midnight, the conversation is still running strong. That's when I wondered to myself: Is this me? Do I really possess such strong opinions about my country? Am I the same college student who claims to be apolitical? But more than all that I thought "Have I really reached the age where I can discuss these complexities like my parents used to do? Am I really *that* old?"

Apparently I am. Somehow between learning Chinese, developing websites, going to college, and writing *The Red String*, I turned 24 - and this year I will be turning 25! I'm in my mid-twenties! Can you believe it? Because I can't.

# Naivety **Despite** Reality

“Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves.”

- Matthew 10:16

Back in November, I was contemplating the nature of Christianity. The more I thought about it, the more I came to the conclusion that Christianity is about keeping a pure heart despite the real world. Wow! Brilliant right? Of course we all already know this, but what does it truly mean? I think it means that we as Christians, should maintain naivety despite reality - and that is essentially what the verse above says.

So what does it mean to be a sheep in the midst of wolves? I think it means that you need to be mentally retarded. Hold on, before you toss my article out the window, let me ask you this: What sheep willingly walks into the midst of wolves, and not only does it not try to hide, but it tries to stand out?

# Naivety **Despite** Reality

You see in the real world, bad things happen - and these things change us. Even the most gullible of souls will learn distrust after being deceived enough times; The most generous person will learn to be selfish after being exploited enough times; and the most cheerful person will learn reservation after being ridiculed enough times. But Christianity asks us to resist this change for the worse. It asks us to keep being generous, even though we know exploitation will come. Keep being hopeful, even though we know disappointment will come, and to keep being cheerful even though we know sad days will come.

Before I go on however, let me just toss in my little disclaimer: I am not a pastor, nor am I in anyway a subject matter expert. Everything in this article is purely an opinion - and one I would love to discuss with anyone who disagrees.

So as I was saying, Christianity asks us to be retarded - retarded in the world. Retarded because we believe in God, because we have faith, because we love. Yet, there lies a fine line between retardation and stupidity. Because while the sheep in the midst of wolves may be retarded for being there, it must be smart enough to avoid getting eaten. It must be able to tell the hungry wolf from the full, and the pliable wolf from the stubborn.

# Naivety **Despite** Reality

A sheep in the midst of wolves must not be stupid. Far from that, it must be confident. So confident in fact, that to anyone else it looks retarded. Like the art of the drunken fist, a true master may seem indistinguishable from a drunkard at first, until you find yourself on the floor with broken ribs. So I believe it is with Christianity. A true practitioner need not mention that they go to Church regularly, or that they perform acts of charity. You need not know that they are Christian, to appreciate the goodness in them.

It is this goodness that ought to attract others to us, and it is this goodness that should inspire others to be like us. The selling point of Christianity is not the threat of hell nor is it our reward in heaven, but the inherent good it instills in us as human beings. Heaven, is just an amazing perk. But I digress...

It is my belief, that the hardest step in becoming a true practitioner of Christianity is learning how to be a sheep in the midst of wolves, how to maintain naivety despite reality, how to have faith in the time of adversity. So as we begin the year 2012, I pray that no matter what may come your way, you continue to let your light shine, to escape the wolves, and hopefully even recruit some other sheep along the way. Because that is what we are called to do. **Happy New Year!**