

# Dr. Sanderson's Game Library

I could kick myself for not taking a "Before" picture of our game closet. For those of you who don't know, my husband and I have a hobby of collecting board games. We go to area thrift and Goodwill stores, and we buy every game in sight we don't (think we) have. It's gotten out of control, really it has. In our defense, we have a semi-regular game night with friends where we try out many of the games we obtain. But the game collection outgrew its closet, and we began stacking games on the floor of the closet until even the floor started to overflow with games. So, after we cleaned up what used to be the craft room in our house (gonna call it the 'East room' for now I guess – we can't decide if we want it to be a family rec room or a kid-free parents' cave), we decided to move the game closet into the closet of the East room because it's bigger. And now that phase of the project is complete! And it's awesome!

We threw all of our props and memorabilia from the community theater shows we've worked on in the East room. Since my husband was the handsome 'Dr. Sanderson' in the show *Harvey*, we somehow ended up with the name plate for his office door. We stuck it to the closet in the East Room, and that is where our game closet now resides. Therefore, I'm announcing the opening of Dr. Sanderson's Game Library! Pick a game... ANY game\*! However, the following picture is just a sample of the library – a fraction of the closet. Not only could I not rotate the image (so imagine the scene as 90° to the right), but I couldn't get much of the library in the picture!



*\*unless you are certain game night regulars who are known for kicking butt at the Disney Trivia game – we have “accidentally” misplaced that game, hehe!*

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## Number Quest

One thing I was excited about doing in my blog was writing board game reviews. Since my husband and I have a game collecting hobby and thereby an extensive amassment of games, we can find a new game to play on any given night. But the kids keep us really busy, and so I forgot all about reviewing board games on my blog, not to mention that it's difficult for us to find the time to play them. But last night amidst the chaos of our house, we found time to haul out a new game and learn it. It was such a fun game that it inspired me to write a review – anyone heard of the game *Number Quest* (or sometimes known as *Nubble*) by DK Publishing Inc.?

The game board consists of a color-coded grid with numbers on it. The game is simple to learn, yet complex to play. *Number Quest* combines chance (dice), stratagy, and traditional board game elements such as paper money and tokens. To begin, a player rolls 4 dice which each display the numbers 1-6. The

player then uses these numbers to create any whole number 1-100 with any combination of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. The player then places their color chip on the corresponding number on the game board. The color of the number's space on the board determines how much money a player receives for creating that number. There are also Nubble Bonuses and Double-Nubbles, but if you want to find out what those are you should play the game. Even with the Nubbles (double-nubbles involve prime numbers – but don't worry, you don't have to know anything about prime numbers), it's a very easy game to learn. Also, you don't have to be great at math since there are 'cheat charts' provided.

*Number Quest* is like a two-player strategy game combined with favorite elements of other types of board games, except the best thing is, you can have up to four players.

Here is a picture of the game board; evidently the game used to be called Nubble.



And another fun thing about Number Quest is how the game ends: it is over when there are tokens on numbers connecting the 1 and the 100 all the way across the board, and the player with the most money at that time wins. Also, there are LOTS of variations to the game; there's a kid-friendly version, you can try playing with a timer, or you can even try ending the

game based upon a previously agreed upon time limit or money amount instead of when the tokens stretch across the board. The game is educational for kids, and a great way for adults to exercise their brains, especially if you don't use the cheat chart. Upon first playing, I would give it a 9/10, but keep in mind that we didn't even get in a full game due to time constraints. But it seems like a really fun game and I'm looking forward to trying it with 4 players!

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## Skipping Christmas

As a kid, I was a very avid reader – I would always read myself to sleep. Somewhere in my 20's though, I lost sight of my reading hobby; I guess that's when I got too busy and too tired to lie in bed awake at night and read. During my last pregnancy, however, I started reading before bed again, and it's something that I really enjoy, even though I often get too tired to make it through more than a few pages per night.

When I recently began reading again, I started by reading mostly non-fiction; it was really fun for me to unwind at night and learn something at the same time. I read a book about an Afghan girl who stepped on a land mine, lost her leg, and fled the Taliban by coming to America. I read a book about a family that bicycled across the country – they had kids who were 13, 11, and 3 years old, and they made it from New Jersey to Colorado on their bikes. There was also the book about the Burnham's; they were husband and wife missionaries who were held hostage in the Philippines for almost a year. The wife wrote a book about their daily struggles as hostages – it was fascinating. Then I switched to a few fiction books by Christopher Pike, an author best known for his young adult horror novels. I read those as a

teen, so as an adult, I decided to try his novels for adults – one I really liked and one wasn't so good – *Falling* and *The Blind Mirror*, respectively. I then started a book about the plight of Terri Shiavo, a woman who collapsed in the early 90's and suffered brain damage. Her case was in the national spotlight because her husband insisted that she would have never wanted to live hooked up to machines while her parents disagreed. The governor tried to help, and even the President of the United States tried to step in, but ultimately Terri's right to live became just another case in the courts and her husband won. Her feeding tube was removed and it took her almost 14 days to slowly starve and dehydrate to death. The case fascinated me at the time, and I found this book about it written by Mark Fuhrman of the OJ Simpson murder trial fame. Except that I'm having trouble reading the book since it's about a rather dark and depressing subject, and that's not really how I want to unwind before bed. Though I did learn something interesting from Mark Fuhrman: according to him, a coroner is an elected official who doesn't even necessarily have to have a medical degree. Hmmm...

A friend recommended the author John Grisham, and the other day I ran into the library, trying to be very quick since the family was waiting in the car. His books looked so large and lengthy and intimidating, so I grabbed the smallest one I saw called *Skipping Christmas*. I began to read it, and it's about a family called the Krank's who decide to skip Christmas one year. That sounds familiar, I thought, and after a quick trip to [imdb.com](http://imdb.com), I discovered that the awfully panned movie of 2004 called [Christmas With The Krank's](#) is indeed the movie based upon John Grisham's book, *Skipping Christmas*. So far the book is ok, but nothing that keeps me looking forward to reading it or anything. I have Grisham's only work of non-fiction on hold at the library, maybe I'll get up there today to get it because maybe I'm sick of fiction and it's time to go back to non-fiction... I hate to admit it, but I really like to read true-crime books before bed, mostly about murder.

True, murder is a dark and depressing subject, but not in the same way as the story of Terri Shiavo; it's hard to explain. And it sounds kind of strange, but true-crime books are the ones I seem to be drawn to and I can't watch true-crime on tv in bed anymore – too many nightmares for my husband and I. One of the best true-crime books that I ever read was *The Stranger Beside Me* by Ann Rule. If you don't know, Ann Rule is a famous true-crime writer, and this book was extra-fascinating because it chronicles her relationship with the famous psychopathic serial killer, Ted Bundy. Ann Rule was actually friends with Ted Bundy – they met working at a suicide hotline together. The book chronicles their friendship while working at the hotline, while the murders were taking place, and after Ted was caught – very interesting read, and crazy that one of the most famous crime writers had a friendship (unrelated to her ever writing a book about him) with one of the most prolific serial killers of all time.

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## Fun in South Bend Indiana

Of all the places to find fun, who would have thought that middle of nowhere, IN would be such a sight? Every summer, we meet my mom there about 4 times to swap the kids. She'll take them for a week, twice a summer, so because South Bend just happens to be about as close to halfway for each of us to drive, that is where we meet. We used to meet at a Wendy's just off the expressway, but our horizons have broadened, and my husband and I have been venturing off the beaten path to discover new things to see and do in the area. We found a good restaurant called Eleni's with amazing gyros and saganaki, two of our favorite dishes. We also found an authentic Greek restaurant called Elia's right down the street, but oddly enough, they are almost never open. They

have more exotic Greek food like stuffed grape leaves, moussaka, and baklava, YUM! Their food is excellent, though we've only been able to eat there once because of their strange hours and seemingly constant family vacations. After eating and getting the kids back from my mom, we headed to the [Potawatomi Zoo](#). The zoo is a really cool size, perfect for our family of 3 small children and a now VERY pregnant woman. Not much walking to do at all, yet it has a good amount of animals, native and exotic, all types and sizes from lions, tigers, and bears, to monkeys, bison, alligators, parrots, and red pandas. I will have to mention that the Potawatomi Zoo did not seem very well-kept. A gardener in that place could have done wonders as there were many overgrown weeds, trees, and shrubbery, some even blocking what could have been better views of the animals! One tree was so untrimmed it was blocking a drinking fountain! But as I said, it's a very cute little zoo, and they reciprocate with our home zoo, the Toledo Zoo, so our admission price was free and they don't charge for parking. I was surprised to see that the zoo wasn't very crowded seeing as how it was a Saturday in June under 90°... That zoo could really use a Jack Hanna to fix it up and get the publicity rolling – I see a lot of potential for it, but it does need some work.

After the zoo, we had kids begging for 'one more fun thing' (remember, they had been used to the fun of Grandma's for just short of a week!), my husband whips out Mr. GPS, and apparently he has a phone book feature on him, so from your car, you can find gas stations, restaurants, and most importantly, fun places and attractions to visit!

So KUDOS belong to Mr. GPS this time! Instead of getting us lost and chuckling at us electronically, he led us right to this strip mall that was like a step back in time, it was really strange. It looked like it was right out of 1983. I don't know how to explain it – we should have taken pictures. It would have been a great place to film a movie set in the

early '80's, took me right back to my childhood. Anyway, in this strip mall was a place called Mega Play. From the outside, it looked closed down – they really need to get themselves a big bright 'open' sign. But once inside, it was a huge space where they had tons of video games, pinball machines, indoor minigolf, bouncy castles and tunnels for the kids, lots of ride-ons for toddlers, and right out of 1983 – a ball pit! The ball pit had a pyramid in the middle of it that the kids climb up with ropes and once they got the hang of it, they had a ball – cheesy pun intended. That pyramid gave me a flashback of playing on the same thing when I was little. I think they used to have them in KMarts, and my husband agreed. It was neat to see vintage video games and pinball machines also. The arcade ATARI games they had in one bouncy castle area were free to play – they had Kangaroo, Pole Position, Asteroids, and some shooting game I hadn't heard of. I walked over to the pinball machine area because days earlier, we visited this cool pinball shop in a suburb of Toledo. The guy started it as a hobby, but it grew into a store, and he had all kinds of pinball machines, new and mostly vintage. He had titles on display like Demolition Man, Star Wars, The Shadow, and Hercules (an older game – it was HUGE!). He even had this Looney Tunes racing game (not pinball) that was really vintage and one-of-a-kind... it was cool to see. I wonder if the pinball guy outside of Toledo is familiar with Mega Play? But anyway, back to Mega Play... it was a huge, wide-open strip mall space that had tons of games, ride-ons, and bouncy castles packed into it – lots of fun there, but still spacey so you didn't feel closed in. It was the exact concept my husband and I had in mind for our own business of the same type we started a few years ago. We ended up having to sell the business because it was too labor intensive for the time and staff we had however. Too bad Mega Play is all the way in South Bend, or we could challenge our putt-putt-ing friends to the mini-golf course ☐

After Mega Play, it was time to find something to eat, and



before we knew it, we were out of South Bend and into the country. The kids started getting crazier and crazier, and we vowed to stop at the very next restaurant we found before someone passed out or went insane – and some of us were close to either condition! So, we stopped at a restaurant called Dakota's in Elkhart IN, and I highly recommend it if you're ever out that way. They had the best cornbread, and their steak and cheese sandwich was simply AWESOME! They also have barbecue items, and they happened to have karaoke the night we went... it wasn't too intrusive though. They were in another room and we didn't even know it was karaoke at first until the audience began applauding. The DJ hosting the karaoke was singing a few songs also, and he was pretty good, so he actually sounded like a recording with a live quality. I don't how often they have karaoke there, but their food is great, prices reasonable, nice atmosphere, and the staff is amazingly friendly. Keep in mind I say this coming from a super-friendly town myself, so we're used to the usual chit-chat when we go out to eat – but people in Elkhart were *exceptionally* friendly.

Overall, not a bad place to spend a day – fun and very inexpensive to boot. Too bad with gas prices the way they are we can't consider South Bend for a normal day trip for our family – there is plenty to do! Maybe we'll wander around some more the next time we meet Grandma there in July...

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## Collecting... or Hoarding?

When does a collecting hobby cross the line? I've heard of people who collect things and sometimes get kinda crazy about it... Like this one guest on Dr. Phil who collected Star Wars stuff. No problem there, but once he started talking about

the details of his obsession, it became obvious he had an unhealthy problem. His wife felt like she came in second place to the Star Wars stuff all the time, and he even had a storm trooper costume he wanted to be buried in. When Dr. Phil pointed out the fact that the guest would never fit into the costume, he insinuated that he would be dismembered or whatever it took to get his body into the costume for burial. I guess it's easy to say you've crossed the line when your spouse or the people you live with start to get annoyed and ask you to give them more room for *their* stuff and to get rid of the things you collect. Or maybe it's obvious you have an unhealthy addiction when you start to spend more money on your collection than things you should be spending it on to ensure a healthy lifestyle, like food or clothing. Anyway, the reason I'm bringing this up is because my husband and I are developing an extreme board game collecting hobby. It started years ago when we visited a few garage sales and saw some games we both had as kids, so we picked those up. Then we started visiting thrift stores in the area, and we enjoyed doing that so much that we visit often and pick up several games each time we go... it's kind of like treasure hunting – you never know what you'll find. Games are anywhere from 25¢ to \$3 and since they usually have all the pieces, it's a pretty fun hobby to check out all kinds of different games.

Now, we've moved to a bigger house and have allowed ourselves a big game closet. The problem is, we're getting so carried away that we've outgrown the game closet – there are games now stacked on the floor since we've gotten so many that they no longer fit on the shelves. When we go out to thrift stores, I can't even remember what games we have and I'm always tempted to buy more, but my husband says, "we already have that one". It's really not that big of a problem, I guess we just need a bigger closet... we do invite friends over nearly every weekend to play games, so we are getting use out of them; it's not like they just sit on the shelves (or floor!) collecting dust... And the only family member whose living space is

getting crowded because of all the games is the parrot. He's been screaming at me while I fold laundry so much lately that I don't mind if he gets crowded out! But I can just tell that it's becoming an addiction because when we're at the thrift stores, I always feel like getting new games, even if we already have them apparently... I don't see an end in sight, but I think it's still in the collecting stage; it hasn't graduated to hoarding yet. After all, the duplicate board games we have are only for spare parts, and the other day, I had a brainstorm: If we knock out one of the walls in our game closet, we can combine it with another large closet and have more than twice the space for all the games! For some reason, my husband doesn't share my enthusiasm for this idea...