

2004

# The Curse on My Team is Far Superior to the Curse on Your Team

Martin Schreiber-Stainthorp

Follow this and additional works at: <http://scholarship.richmond.edu/messenger>



Part of the [Nonfiction Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Schreiber-Stainthorp, Martin (2004) "The Curse on My Team is Far Superior to the Curse on Your Team," *The Messenger*: Vol. 2004: Iss. 1, Article 14.

Available at: <http://scholarship.richmond.edu/messenger/vol2004/iss1/14>

This Non-fiction is brought to you for free and open access by UR Scholarship Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in *The Messenger* by an authorized administrator of UR Scholarship Repository. For more information, please contact [scholarshiprepository@richmond.edu](mailto:scholarshiprepository@richmond.edu).

## **The Curse on My Team is Far Superior to the Curse on Your Team**

*Martin Schreiber-Stainthorpe*

Listen closely Red Sox fans, because you're about to be pissed off by a Cubs supporter. I'll just go right out and say it: the curse on my team is far superior to the curse on your team. Being a Chicago Cubs faithful is like trying to get drunk off mouthwash. You know that there is some alcohol in there, and hey you gotta do what you gotta do, so you keep chugging that Listerine hoping that the joys of drunkenness will eventually come and compensate for the enormous pain you currently feel in your mouth. Then you wake up licking wet tile below the toilet bowl.

We all know the feeling, but only Cubs fans have experienced it annually for the past 95 years. Hoping for a Cubs World Series is akin to Sloppy Joe hoping to become intoxicated off just one case of Beast. It's a valiant, but ultimately futile effort.

Despite the long losing legacy, us Cubbie fans were finally feeling a little buzzed on a Tuesday night in October. It seemed as though all that pain was finally coming to an end. Chicago led a team of Jewish retirees from Florida by a 3-0 score, and were five outs from the World Series. But suddenly, faster than I could say Barukh atah Adonai, Elohaynu, melekh ha-olam asher keed'shanu b'meetzvotav v'tzeevanu l'had'lik neir shel Chanukkah, it was all over. The Cubs gave up eight runs in an inning that had Satan and Steve Bartman's fingerprints written all over it.

After another loss the next day, the Cubs were done, while those so-called "Marlins" moved on to face a universally-hated team from New York in the Fall Classic. Enjoy that series. And by enjoy, I mean enjoy not watching. Because you won't. Nobody will. Except for Drew Mayo.

I was upset at first. But a small part of me felt some relief, reassured that this was not the year the streak would end. When something defines you, you become attached to it. The Cubs and losing are as inseparable as meat and cheese when pulling a prank on an Orthodox Jew. Repeated failure creates a tragic comedy, a romantic parable about hopes and dreams and the inherent inequities in life. Someone has to be the loser. Someone has to be the underdog. And when one team embraces this role so thoroughly and completely, as the Cubs have done, you love them all the more for it. The Cubs are like the kid in the school play who buys into that "there are no small roles, only small actors" crap, and plays his non-speaking "tree" role with so much gusto. They make losing into an art form.

When the Cubs finally win, it will mark the ending to a remarkable story of perseverance and courage. But what comes after it? The Cubs and everything they have stood for over the past years will be rendered obsolete. They will become just another above-average franchise, an Atlanta Braves or a San Francisco Giants, classy teams with tradition but without a

common story or theme to unite their followers and create a common bond. Statistically speaking and all curses aside, the Cubs have to win eventually. You would think. But the longer it takes, the better the story becomes.

If Rudy had walked onto the Notre Dame football team and started by the third game, it would have made a nice story. But struggling through junior college and two years on the Fighting Irish practice squad, only to come on for one play against the Georgia Institute of Technology Yellow Jackets? That is goose bumps material. Repeated, unrelenting failure culminating in victory is a rare treat usually reserved for Hollywood plot-lines, so when it occurs in real life we need to take full advantage of it.

Now I have no real reason to discredit Boston and all the pain and suffering their fan base has been through. I'll relent: our curse is really not superior, and you probably have even more to whine about than I do. But Red Sox fans seem to renounce what they are. Like Adam Sandler in "Billy Madison", they have "loser denial", bitter about the past 85 years and convinced that they should have been, and will be, winners once again. Both teams wallow in their respective curses and streaks, no doubt, but Boston fans seem more ready and willing to throw off the shackles of defeat. Cub fans have more of a dual nature to their love of the team, hoping for victory while also rejoicing in the "lovable losers" aura that surrounds it all.

Some may call this shallow, superficial, and selfish, at least jealous White Sox fans do, but it actually approaches a deeper understanding of love and desire. Winning satisfies an immediate need for gratification. The Yankees are like a hot girl that always puts out. But losing is more like a loving relationship, in that you will put up with years and years of failure just so that, maybe, one day, you will have success; a success that will feel so much sweeter for all that was endured. It's like sitting through "Crossroads" just to get a glimpse of Britney Spears in her underwear. Let's be honest guys, we all saw that movie. And it wasn't just because we're big Dan Akroyd fans.

So bring on more losses, curses, and beer, because on the North Side of Chicago losing isn't everything, it's the only thing.