



The Curse of the Bambino, The Goat, and Other Famous Sports Jinxes By Judy Chinitz

The Curse of the BAMBINO was a SUPERSTITION that evolved from the failure of the Boston Red Sox baseball team to win a World Series...a curse which held for a whopping 86 years. You heard that right: the Red Sox did not win the baseball championship from 1918 all the way until 2004 when the curse was finally broken. This MISFORTUNE (well, a misfortune if you're a Red Sox fan!) began after the Red Sox traded their star player, GEORGE HERMAN RUTH, JR., aka Babe Ruth, the Babe, or The Bambino – or perhaps we should just say, the greatest baseball player to ever have lived - to their rival team, the New York Yankees.

Spell: BAMBINO SUPERSTITION MISFORTUNE
Which team are we talking about today (full name)? BOSTON RED SOX
Who is the rival team to the Boston Red Sox (full name)? NEW YORK YANKEES

What are some of George Herman Ruth's nicknames? THE BABE, THE BAMBINO, BABE RUTH

What was believed to be the reason for "The Curse?" TRADING BABE RUTH

What state is Boston the capital of? MASSACHUSETTS

I mentioned that the Curse of the Bambino was a superstition. Name another more well-known superstition.

Prior to trading Babe Ruth, the Red Sox had been known as one of the most successful professional baseball FRANCHISES. They had won the very first World Series title in 1903, establishing themselves as “the ones to beat,” and had also won an additional five world series CHAMPIONSHIPS after that. With Boston, Ruth had played 6 seasons and 3 of those years, he'd led them to World Series VICTORIES. In 1919, Ruth – who was at the time, both a pitcher and a hitter – broke the major league home run record with 29, and led the American League with 114 runs batted in and 103 runs. He was in 100 games in left field and also, went 9-5 as a pitcher. In spite of the fact that Ruth was the biggest draw in baseball, new Red Sox owner, HARRY FRAZEE, made the decision, on January 5, 1920, to sell

Ruth's contract to the Yankees for \$125,000 in cash and \$300,000 in loans, which he used to finance his Broadway production of "No, No Nanette."
Oops.

Spell: FRANCHISES VICTORIES CHAMPIONSHIPS

What record did Ruth break in 1919? HOME RUN RECORD

Who was the new owner of the Red Sox in 1919 (first and last names)?

HARRY FRAZEE

What show did Frazee want to stage? NO NO NANETTE

Ruth was both a what? PITCHER, HITTER, BATTER, OUTFIELDER

What did he do to finance the show? SOLD RUTH'S CONTRACT, SOLD RUTH TO THE YANKEES

How many home runs did he hit in 1919? 29

In what year was the first World Series? 1903

So how did the legend of the curse come about? Simple, really. While Ruth was on their team, the Red Sox won 6 World Series. But, from the day they sold Ruth, they went without a title until 2004. That's 86 long years of crushing loss for their fans to contend with. And as if that isn't bad enough, look what happened to their arch RIVAL, the previously MEDIOCRE Yankees! The Yanks went on to become, by far, the most successful franchise in baseball. In total, the Yankees have won 27 World Series. The Red Sox have won 9, 6 of which were before the sale of Ruth. To put the Yankee's DOMINANCE into perspective, the next most winning team in baseball is the St. Louis Cardinals, with 11 World Series titles to their name. As former Yankee Hall of Fame shortstop, PHIL RIZZUTO would have said, "Holy cow!"

SPELL: RIVAL MEDIOCRE DOMINANCE

Who was one of the Yankees' shortstop greats? PHIL RIZZUTO

What is the next most winning team in baseball, after the Yankees? ST.

LOUIS CARDINALS, CARDINALS, ST. LOUIS

In baseball, the shortstop stands between what two bases? SECOND, THIRD

In what state is St. Louis? MISSOURI

How many World Series have the Yankees won? 27

While the Curse of the Bambino may be the most famous of baseball legends, it's not the only one in the annals of baseball. In fact, it wasn't even the longest. The Chicago Cubs won the World Series in 1907 and 1908...and then, did not win again until 2016. That is a record-setting 108 years of misery for Cubs fans, all due to the Curse of the Goat. What on earth does a goat have to do with baseball, you ask? Well, therein lies a tale. While the Cubs did not win any World Series after 1908, for many years they were still an incredibly successful baseball team. They captured PENNANTS (the National LEAGUE championship) in 1910, 1918, and an astounding four pennants in a ten-year span (1929, 1932, 1935, 1938). The Cubs would play in the World Series in each of those years, although they did not win. Still, overall, they were a very winning club. That is, they were until game 4 of the 1945 World Series. And then, it all went horribly, horribly wrong. That year, the Cubs faced the DETROIT Tigers and in the middle of the series, they went afoul of a local Chicago saloon owner, and apparently WARLOCK, mage or sorcerer, WILLIAM "BILLY GOAT" SIANIS and his pet goat, MURPHY.



VAKT: SIANIS AND MURPHY USING THEIR WITCH POWERS

SPELL: PENNANTS LEAGUE WARLOCK
What team did the Cubs face in the 1945 World Series (full name)?

DETROIT TIGERS

Who is supposedly responsible for the Curse? WILLIAM SIANIS, BILLY GOAT SIANIS, MURPHY

In what state is Detroit? MICHIGAN

October 6th, 1945: a sad, sad day in Cubs history. The Cubs entered game four of the World Series leading the Detroit Tigers 2 games to 1, and needing to win only two of the next four games played at their home in WRIGLEY FIELD. Billy Goat Sianis, owner of the Billy Goat Tavern and a FERVID Cubs fan, bought two tickets to Game four. Hoping to bring his team good luck he took his pet goat, Murphy, with him to the game. But at the entrance to the park, the ushers stopped Billy Goat and goat from entering saying that no animals are allowed in the park. Billy Goat, frustrated, appealed to the owner of the Cubs, P.K. Wrigley. Wrigley replied, "Let Billy in, but not the goat." Billy Goat asked, "Why not the goat?" Wrigley answered, "Because the goat stinks." According to legend, the goat and Billy were so upset (how does one judge the upsetness of a goat, you do have to wonder) that Billy threw up his arms and exclaimed, "The Cubs ain't gonna win no more. The Cubs will never win a World Series so long as the goat is not allowed in Wrigley Field." Uh oh! The Cubs were officially JINXED. SUBSEQUENTLY, the Cubs lost game four, and the remaining series games, getting swept at their home field.

SPELL: FERVID JINXED SUBSEQUENTLY

The Cubs' home field is called what? WRIGLEY FIELD

What day was the goat not allowed into the ballpark? OCTOBER 6, 1945

Who refused to let the goat into the ballpark? USHERS, PK WRIGLEY

What was the name of Sianis' bar? BILLY GOAT TAVERN

Why would Wrigley not let Murphy into the ballpark? HE SAID THAT GOATS STINK, GOATS STINK

How would you feel about sitting next to a goat at a sporting event?

Being incredibly mature, Billy Goat promptly sent a telegram to P.K. Wrigley, stating, "Who stinks now?" For the next twenty years, throughout the remainder of Billy Goat's life, the Cubs would finish each season at 5th place or lower, earning the team the name, "The Lovable Losers." The World Series would become a dream, and "wait 'til next year" would

become the team's motto. From 1946 to 2003, the Cubs would have only 15 winning seasons, finishing in first place a mere 3 times, have no pennants, no World Series appearances let alone wins, with only four POSTSEASON experiences, resulting in a complete reversal of their fortunes. But if you can believe it, the team did not learn its lesson! In 1973, Billy Goat's nephew and new Billy Goat Tavern owner, Sam Sianis, with the help of Chicago TRIBUNE columnist, DAVE CONDON, brought a goat to Wrigley in an attempt to lift the curse. The goat was escorted to Wrigley in a white LIMOUSINE, and given a red carpet entrance to the park with a sign saying, "All is forgiven. Let me lead the Cubs to the pennant." But in a clear example of "those who don't learn from history are doomed to repeat it," the ushers at the entrance denied the goat "SOCRATES," a DESCENDANT of Murphy, yet again. The Cubs saw their mid-season first-place lead wither away to another unsuccessful season.

SPELL: POSTSEASON LIMOUSINE DESCENDANT

What goat was used to try to break the curse? SOCRATES

What newspaper columnist attempted to help break the curse in 1973?

DAVE CONDON

For what newspaper did he work? CHICAGO TRIBUNE

How was Socrates brought to the game? IN A WHITE LIMOUSINE, RED CARPET ENTRANCE, SIGN READING ALL IS FORGIVEN

You are an usher at Wrigley Field in 1973, and two guys approach you leading a goat. What do you do?!

The next year, The Tribune Company, new owners of the Cubs, finally invited the goat to opening day at Wrigley Field in an attempt to lift the curse. Sam Sianis and his goat finally walked the grass of Wrigley Field, and in an effort to lift the curse, Sam raised his hat and said, "The curse is lifted." And VOILA! The Cubs won the World Series and everyone lived happily ever after. Just kidding! Psych! The Cubs did indeed improve: they won and won and won their way to their first postseason game and division title in almost forty years. They continued their winning ways, taking the first two games of the National League Championship Series against the San Diego PADRES. They just needed to win one of the next three games at San Diego to finally reach the World Series. Sam and his goat waited for the call to go along with the team and ensure the

victory...only to be left behind in Chicago. So, what do you think happened? Like duh: a bizarre series of freak plays led to the Padres sweeping the Cubs in San Diego... of course, and sweeping the Cubs out of the series. The Cubs were still cursed.



VAKT: SOCRATES MAKING EVERY EFFORT TO LIFT THE CURSE

SPELL: BIZARRE VOILA NATIONAL
What did Sam say to lift the curse? THE CURSE IS LIFTED
What team did they play in their first National League Championship in 40 years? SAN DIEGO PADRES, PADRES
What did the Cubs do to ensure defeat in the National League Championship? THEY LEFT THE GOAT HOME, DIDN'T BRING SOCRATES TO SAN DIEGO
What is a padre? PRIEST, CHAPLAIN

So, a few more fun bits of goat trivia:

1994: The Cubs started the season horribly, losing twelve home games in a row, which was their worst home start in history. In an effort to end this streak, Sam Sianis and his goat went to Wrigley Field only to be denied entrance yet again...if you can believe it. Amidst the chant of "Let the Goat in!" from the Wrigley crowd, Hall of Famer, ERNIE BANKS, tried to help his former team by ESCORTING Sam and his goat into Wrigley. Sure enough, the Cubs won the game 5-2, ending their worst home start ever. A lesson finally learned? Apparently not. 1998: the Cubs finished the season with 89 wins, and tied with the SAN FRANCISCO Giants for the final playoff spot. During the tie-breaking game on September 28th, the Cubs brought in Sam and his goat...and went on to win the game 5-3. Into the postseason they went. But once again Sam and his goat were left behind in Chicago, while the Cubs got swept in by the Atlanta Braves, and yet again, were bumped out of the postseason.

SPELL: ESCORTING SAN FRANCISCO WRIGLEY

What did the crowd chant at the 1994 game? LET THE GOAT IN

Who helped get Socrates and Sam into the ballpark (full name)? ERNIE BANKS

Against what team did the Cubs play for the final spot in the playoffs in 1998? SAN FRANCISCO GIANTS, GIANTS

What happened in 1998 when they left Sam and Socrates home during the playoffs? THEY LOST TO THE BRAVES, THEY WERE SWEEPED BY THE ATLANTA BRAVES

So what do you think of the Cubs' decision to leave Socrates and Sam back home in 1998?

So how did the Cubs finally break the curse, winning the World Series in 2016? It could, of course, have been nothing more than a COINCIDENCE...if you believe in that sort of thing. Then again, it could be because, in 2015, a group of Competitive Eaters (yes, there really is a professional eaters tour...which could end up being a lesson for another day!) decided that the best way to kill the curse was to eat it. Literally. So, they organized a CEREMONIAL "eating of the goat." It didn't work but the idea was thought to have merit among Cubs fans. So, the following season, when the Cubs actually made it into the World Series, a DEVOTEE butcher shop, CARNIVORE, INC, located outside of Chicago, made goat sausages

and distributed them for free to fans outside Wrigley Field. This group effort - the CONSUMPTION of hundreds of pounds of chopped up goat mixed with garlic - apparently did the trick: the curse was crunched, munched, and ultimately devoured.

SPELL: CEREMONIAL COINCIDENCE DEVOTEE
What group first decided to try to eat the curse? COMPETITIVE EATERS
What butcher shop took the idea even further the following season?
CARNIVORE INC

What did Carnivore Inc hand out for free? GOAT SAUSAGES, GOAT MEAT SAUSAGES

What would have been your suggestion to break the Curse of the Goat?

When it comes to the laying upon of curses, WIZARDRY, magic, and witchcraft are not confined to the United States alone. How about this one from Japan?! As you may be aware, fan celebrations are different the world over. In America, we prefer the ticker tape parade but in Japan, baseball fans, in this case, HASHIN Tigers fans, celebrated a victory in the 1985 Championship Series by KIDNAPPING a statue of COLONEL SANDERS from a local Kentucky Fried Chicken... and throwing it into the local DOTONBORI River. This DESECRATION apparently enraged the chicken-loving Kentuckian restaurateur, who had died 5 years previously but didn't let the small matter of not being upon this earth come between him and his revenge. He CONDEMNED the Hanshin Tigers from beyond the grave year after year after year of coming last or almost last...which continues despite the statue's recovery from the depths in 2009.

SPELL: DESECRATION CONDEMNED WIZARDRY
What Japanese baseball team is cursed by the Colonel (full name)?
HASHIN TIGERS

Of what culinary establishment is the Colonel the figurehead? KENTUCKY FRIED CHICKEN

What river is mentioned in this paragraph? DOTONBORI

What happened to merit this awful curse? THE FANS THREW A STATUE OF COLONEL SANDERS INTO THE RIVER, A STATUE OF COLONEL SANDERS WAS DUMPED IN THE RIVER

How are the Tigers trying to break the curse? THEY RECOVERED THE STATUE IN 2009, FISHED THE STATUE OUT OF THE RIVER



VAKT: HANDS DOWN (PUN INTENDED), THE COLONEL'S CURSE IS THE WORST IN JAPANESE BASEBALL HISTORY

Here's a nasty one: After one of ARGENTINA'S most popular soccer clubs, Racing Club de AVELLANEDA followed its 1966 domestic title with more national and international victories in 1967, fans of its bitter rival, Club ATLETICO INDEPENDIENTE, broke into Racing's home field and buried seven dead black cats under a stadium entrance. Damn their evil hearts! Racing, which had won 15 league titles prior to the INTERMENT, subsequently swooned while Independiente captured a string of championships. Racing became so bad that they were demoted from the top tier league in 1983 and worse still, temporarily suspended from the league after declaring BANKRUPTCY in 1999! By that point, six of the cats had been disinterred. However, with the seventh corpse still missing, a priest performed an EXORCISM in front of tens of thousands of fans. But even the blessings of the priest could not overcome that 7th feline foulness. However, months after a stadium redevelopment in 2001 unearthed the seventh skeleton, Racing won its first domestic title in 35 years.

SPELL: ARGENTINA BANKRUPTCY INTERMENT
What club was cursed for its soccer triumphs? RACING CLUB DE AVELLANEDA
Who lay the curse? CLUB ATLETICO INDEPENDIENTE
How was the curse laid? THEY BURIED SEVEN DEAD BLACK CATS UNDER A STADIUM ENTRANCE
What happened to poor Racing? DEMOTED FROM TOP TIER LEAGUE, HAD TO DECLARE BANKRUPTCY
What did they first try to break the curse? THEY HAD A PRIEST PERFORM AN EXORCISM
What happened when the final feline frame was found? WON THEIR FIRST TITLE IN 35 YEARS

And finally, another famous American sports curse: in 1998, San Francisco 49ers running back GARRISON HEARST became the first professional football player to appear on the cover of the wildly popular MADDEN football video game produced by EA Sports. Although he had a Pro Bowl season, Hearst suffered a GRUESOME ankle injury in a playoff game. It was the first in a series of injuries and poor seasons that seemed to strike players appearing on the video game's cover. According to *Digital Trends*, 16 of the 22 players selected to appear on the cover through 2021 subsequently suffered troubling or shortened seasons. Definitely a curse! In fact, although he blamed contract NEGOTIATIONS rather than the supposed curse, running back LaDainian Tomlinson turned down a cover appearance. His replacement on the *Madden 2008* cover, quarterback Vince Young of the TENNESSEE Titans, endured a QUADRICEPS injury and threw nearly twice as many interceptions as touchdowns. So...did the injuries have more to do with the bruising nature of football than a video game? Who knows?

SPELL: GRUESOME NEGOTIATIONS TENNESSEE
The cover of what game box curses football players? MADDEN
Who was the first professional football player to appear on the cover? GARRISON HEARST
What happened to Hearst that season? HE SUFFERED A GRUESOME ANKLE INJURY IN A PLAYOFF GAME, GOT HURT, ANKLE INJURY
What happened to Vince Young after appearing on the cover? QUADRICEPS INJURY, THROUGH TWICE AS MANY INTERCEPTIONS AS TOUCHDOWNS

Through 2021, how many players (out of what total) ended up with troubled or shortened seasons? 16 out of 22

So, what curse would you like to cast, and on who or what?!

Judy Chinitz, MS, MS is the Director of Hand to Mouth Therapy. She is a New York State Licensed, Special Educator, and Certified S2C Practitioner. Judy has been actively involved in the world of autism, both biomedically and educationally, since her son, Alex was diagnosed 26 years ago. With a Master's degree in nutrition, she has worked with many of the top physicians in the field, authoring numerous book chapters, articles, and her own book on diet (*We Band of Mothers: Autism, My Son and the Specific Carbohydrate Diet*) and other biomedical treatments. In July 2019, when she was introduced to Spelling to Communicate (S2C), everything changed for both Judy and Alex. He went on to pass the GED exam with distinction and was recently accepted to the State University of New York, Purchase. Once she saw what spelling/typing for communication could do, Judy changed her entire career path, and in May of 2020, opened up the Mouth to Hand Learning Center, where she teaches many other nonspeaking students.

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