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Creative Writing Sample

## Losers No More

It's November 2, 2016, 108 years since the Chicago Cubs last won a world series title, and coincidentally, a baseball is sewn together with exactly 108 stitches. The Chicago Cubs play at a stadium called Wrigley Field, where the left and right field foul poles are both 108 meters away from home plate. The movie *Back to the Future Part II* predicted the Cubs winning the 2015 World Series, that would have been last year, but the run time of the movie was 108 minutes. The last time the Chicago Cubs won a world series game was in 1945 against the Detroit Tigers, and even though they lost that series in the end, the one game they won was on October 8<sup>th</sup>, 1945; the date was 10/8. It's now November 2, 2016, 108 years since the last time we won it all in 1908, if there was any year to sucker punch a century long curse in the face it was this one; the luck was finally in our favor.

Before the 2016 World Series the Chicago Cubs were leading all the world's major sports franchises in one category: going the longest without winning a championship. Yes, my hometown team the Chicago Cubs have stood atop the loser totem pole for more than a whole century. "The Loveable Losers" as our rivals call us. But unlike other teams we have logical reasons to blame for our constant losing: curses, from things such as billy goats, black cats, and the devil himself Steve Bartman. Now the first two are more self-explanatory than the last, but they provide nowhere near the same amount of agony that Mr. Bartman has caused us Cubs fans.

Back in 2003 during the National League Championship Series—the round just before you get to the World Series—good ole Steve happened to be sitting along the third-base line and interfered with a potential inning ending out in the 8<sup>th</sup> inning. He was just a stereotypical Cubs fan before he touched that ball, but after, he was the asshole wearing this gross shamrock green turtleneck, with bland wire frame glasses and headphones listening to the radio broadcast. Which even after all these years that's still what pisses most Cubs fans off the most because who the hell goes to a ballgame and listens to the radio broadcast!?! Well Steve did, and he messed the whole damn season up by interfering with the ball—and Moises Alou's glove—thus giving the Florida Marlins another chance to score. Wherein that moment of a game the Cubs were easily in control of and leading 3-0, the Marlin's seized the momentum and went on to score 8 runs on two-outs, ending the Cubs chances at moving on to the world series. The Marlins who were only in their 10<sup>th</sup> year of existence then went on to win the World Series that year, making the series loss because of Bartman sting that much more.

I was only six years old at the time, but I remember being so mad simply because my dad was practically throwing things across the living room. Even after more than 10 years Cubs fans still know the name Steve Bartman like he's their hated cousin, although given its been a whole decade, I can't help but feel bad for the poor guy. If you look back at the replay of that game's television broadcast, you'll watch all the fans in the area go for the baseball headed towards them and yet it perfectly singled out Bartman's hand. The curse of the billy goat reared its ugly head and picked out this poor guy for the entire city of Chicago to blame the series loss on; it's somewhat tragic. As the Marlins went on to score 8 runs the fans began to hurl down their cold beer and sloppy food at a him. All Steve Bartman could do was sit there miserably while the television station continuously showed his face during any and every break in the game. The

entire stadium eventually started a ‘f\*\*\* you’ chant against him, it was a relentless wave of insult to injury and he eventually had to be escorted out of the stadium for his own safety. Years later I actually heard that he moved to Florida, although I’ve never wanted to find out if that was true or not, it’s an oddly satisfying thought to think he did. Cubs fans everywhere will never be able to let it go and while that generation of Cubs baseball is now long behind us, I couldn’t help but think about if he was watching this 2016 world series, and if he was even still a Cubs fan. I remember asking my dad before the game, jokingly of course, if he would like to see Steve Bartman in the stands, and he said,

“Are you f\*\*\*ing kidding me, not in the stands not even in the state! Get that bad ju-ju out of here!”

There’s a certain level of passion and resiliency that goes into being a Cubs fan. I was born into the role, wrapped up in a Cubs blanket within minutes of birth and thereby inheriting the decades of losing before 1997, and the decades ever since. Not only was my grandfather unable to see a Cubs championship after ninety years of his life, but likewise my father too went through fifty-five years of his own life suffering at the hands of the not so lovable losers. My dad was without a doubt the reason I became a Cubs fan and unfortunately now, I can only ask the good Lord why he stuck with the team for that long. I can only ask God why they aren’t here to watch their team accomplish the thing they always knew would happen one day.

I know it’s weird, but I love thinking back about all the times the Cubs blew their chances at winning the game because it reminds me of the some of best times I spent with my dad and grandfather. How pissed they would be getting at the Cubs, screaming at the television as I sat there as a six-year-old giggling at them for jumping up and down. It’s funny that the Steve Bartman incident still gives all of us die-hard Cub fans uneasy flashbacks whenever our team

starts winning ballgames. I'm one of those fans who, like my father, every time something bad happens and we lose the game that wire-framed face pops into my mind. I start to think about all the ways he played a role in causing our misery once again. Although we're Cubs fans. We know what it's like to lose and bounce back. We've uttered the phrase, "maybe next year," so much that it should be our team slogan. Yet here we are, November 2, 2016, in Cleveland, Ohio, for a winner take all Game 7 in the 2016 World Series. Looks like next year is now.