

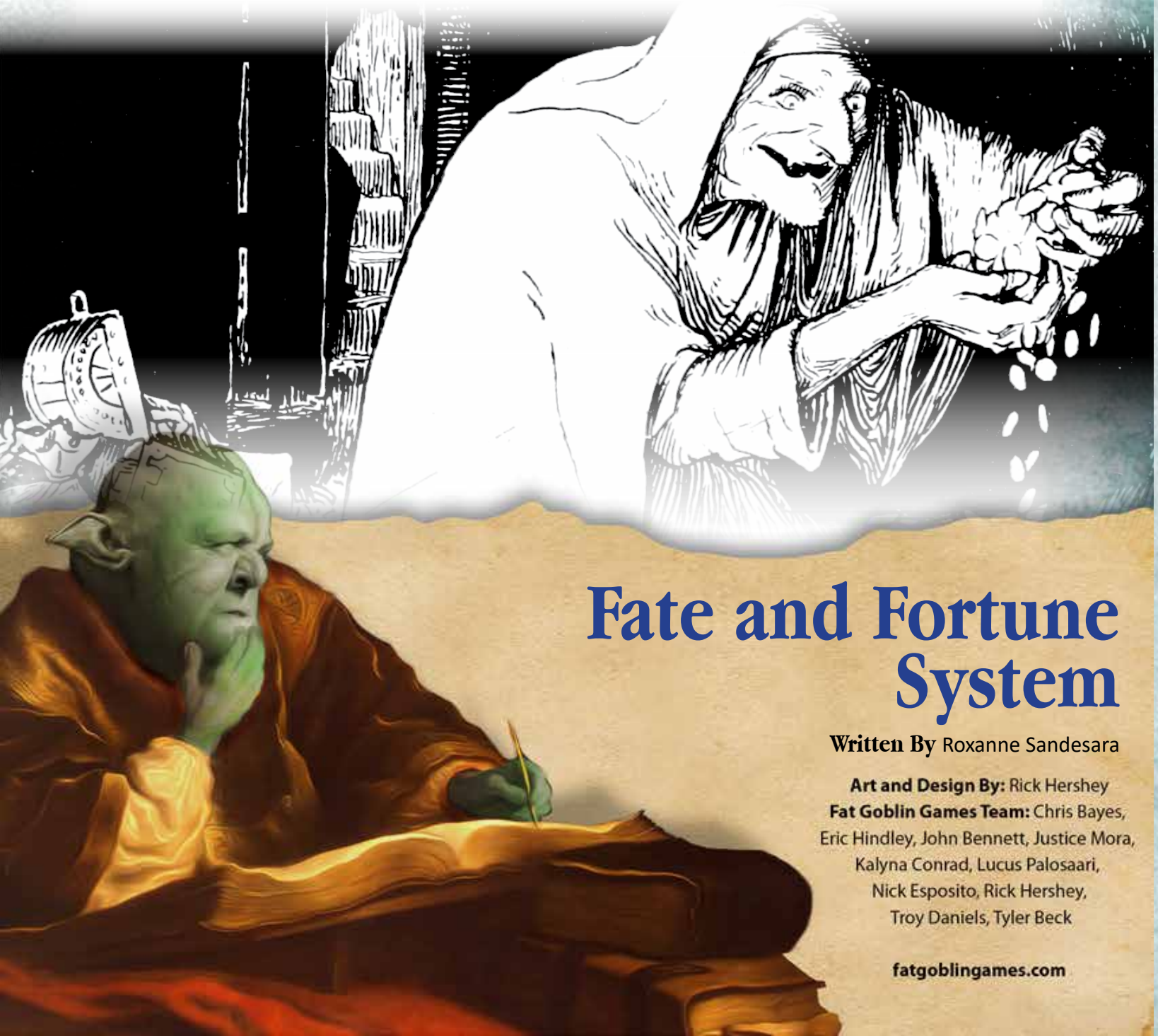
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Fat Goblin Games Presents

# SIDEBAR #17



## Fate and Fortune System

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Fate and Fortune are always at the forefront of both the players and adventurers minds and it is a wonder that there are not more systems for the *Pathfinder Role Playing Game*® that explores and evolves the concept to an actual rules system. This Sidebar explores that issue and resolves it in the idea of Hexed and Blessed characters. Prepare to enter a new and exciting world where your characters should take nothing for granted as chance plays a bigger role than ever in the game with Sidebar #16 - Fate and Fortune!

The Sidebar product line brings you an assortment of ideas, homebrew rules, and various options from the talented pool of writers at Fat Goblin Games for use with the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game. These short and low-priced products are perfect for Game Masters and Players who want to integrate unique new options to their games.

## FATE AND FORTUNE

Roleplaying games, especially those of the 'tabletop' variety, have always been games of numbers. With rare exception, there has always been the desire to introduce into the play of the game an element of chance and randomness, the possibility of failure, together with the possibility for success. It is for this reason that most games have as both centerpiece and symbol the polyhedral dice of the hobby.

One aspect that arises in the human mind when the idea of chance and randomness is given is the possibility of luck. There are always those who seem to roll what is needed to succeed, no matter how improbable it may be, exactly when it is most needed. In truth, there is little that a game master can do to encourage or discourage that reality; human beings will see patterns, even in that which has no real pattern.

But within the game worlds that we explore, there is also luck. And where we can do nothing to control, and little to shape luck within the reality of the dice rolls at the table, shaping and demonstrating luck within our game worlds is often vital to good storytelling. Heroes are not just those with the good hearts and intentions to stand against the impossible odds; they are those with the uncanny luck to succeed, where others would fail.

But how does one model this luck within the game world? It is a challenge many have undertaken, in many different ways, with various degrees of success. Hero Points, Brownie Points, DM Points and a host of other methods exist out there, and many have been codified for use and adaptation. But is there more that can be done?

One of the real-world elements that exist in the study of luck is *numerology*: the magic and mysticism of numbers. Many years ago, the idea of *numerology* found its way into a latter edition of *AD&D* in the priestly sphere of *Numbers*. But beyond this, little has been attempted, despite how seemingly appropriate it may be. Yet how else might numerology come into play?

One such idea might be to use the facility of traits and drawbacks, as defined in Pathfinder. These traits are inherent little quirks of the character, based in his or her - or its - origin which shape avenues and abilities for the future of the character. And so, here are three traits, and three drawbacks, intended for Pathfinder campaigns and characters where numerology and luck can have a very real effect on the game.

## TRAITS

### BLESSED

A character with an auspicious birth, this character is blessed by the spiritual energies of his or her world. Things just seem to go well for him or her in many cases, and many will see him or her as lucky. When a character with this trait rolls a 3 on a d20 roll, or an 03 on a d100 roll, this should be treated as the best and most advantageous roll that could be made in that circumstance (the equivalent, perhaps, to a natural 20 on a 'to hit' roll or saving throw, for example). Note that any character taking the Blessed trait must also take the Blessed drawback.

### HEXED

A character with an inauspicious birth, this character is touched in a negative way by the spiritual energies of his or her world. Things often just seem to go poorly for him or her, and many will see him or her as unlucky. When a character with this trait rolls a 13 on a d20 roll, or a 13 on a d100 roll, this should be treated as the best

and most advantageous roll that could be made in that circumstance (the equivalent, perhaps, to a natural 20 on a 'to hit' roll or saving throw, for example). Note that any character taking the Cursed trait must also take the Hexed drawback.

## WITCH-TOUCHED

A character with a mysterious and sometimes confounding birth, this character is not touched in a particularly beneficial or negative way by the spiritual energies of his or her world. Instead, he or she is just profoundly touched and affected by those energies, which will be drawn to him or her, sometimes for good and others for ill. When a character with this trait rolls an 8 on a d20 roll, or an 08 on a d100 roll, this will then be followed by an extra d100 roll. On a roll of 01-50, the result will be deemed the worst that could possibly be rolled in that circumstance (the equivalent, perhaps, to a natural 1 on a 'to hit' roll or saving throw, for example), while on a roll of 51-00 the result will be deemed the best that could possibly be rolled in that circumstance (the equivalent of a natural 20 on a 'to hit' roll or saving throw). Note that any character taking the Witch-touched trait must also take the Touched drawback.

## DRAWBACKS

**Blessed Drawback:** A character who is Blessed can also fall victim to the reversal of fortune, when the darker energies of fate and fortune are ascendant. When a character with this drawback rolls a 13 on a d20 roll, or a 13 on a d100 roll, this should be treated as the worst and least advantageous roll that could be made in that circumstance (the equivalent of a natural 1 on a 'to hit' roll or saving throw, for example). Note that any character taking the Blessed drawback must also have the Blessed trait.

**Hexed Drawbacks:** A character who is Cursed can also fall victim to the reversal of fortune, when the lighter, brighter energies of fate and fortune are ascendant. When a character with this drawback rolls a 3 on a d20 roll, or an 03 on a d100 roll, this should be treated as the worst and least advantageous roll that could be made in that circumstance (the equivalent of a natural 1 on a 'to hit' roll or saving throw, for example). Note that any character taking the Hexed drawback must also have the Cursed trait.

**Touched Drawbacks:** A character with a mysterious and sometimes confounding birth, such a character already suffers the height and depths of fortune. Since their trait already embodies both the good and the ill of their numbers, their drawback instead is their sensitivity to the ebb and flow of spiritual energies around them. A Touched character will feel a chill when in areas of spiritual energy, a shiver up the spine when the attention of that which is beyond human is focused where they are, and so forth. Game effects for this include a Touched character having a +8 bonus to any roll when checking to see if their action triggers a Haunt or Loci. In addition, the character is such a spiritual magnet that the character suffers a -4 penalty to any saving throws to resist spiritual possession.

## A Note Regarding Critical Hits

The simplest way to handle the question of Blessed, Hexed, or Witch-Touched rolls and critical hits is simply to consider them automatically successful hits, but not critical threats. However, for a bit of extra flavor it might be worth allowing such rolls to be critical threats, but only when rolled against those possessing the relevant drawbacks. A Blessed character rolling a 3 against a Hexed or Touched target, for example. Such rolls would still require a roll to confirm the critical hit. Of course, if the Blessed character rolled a second 3, that would automatically confirm the critical hit. Note that if using this rule, a character with the Touched drawback is eligible for such a critical from a Blessed, Hexed, or Witch-touched attacker, but would also be eligible to achieve such a critical against a target with any of the three relevant drawbacks.

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# WANTED

WH'RE HATH ALL THE GOODE MEN GONE  
AND WH'RE ART ALL THE GODS?  
WH'RE'S THE STREET-WISE N'COLES  
TO FIGHTETH THE RISING ODDS?  
ISN'T TH'RE A WHITE KNIGHT UPON A FI'RY STEED?  
LATE AT NIGHT I TOSS AND I TURNETH AND I  
DREAMETH OF WHAT I NEED

I NEEDETH A HERO  
I'M HOLDING OUT F'R A HERO 'TIL THE ENDETH OF  
THE NIGHT  
HE'S GOTTA BE STRONG  
AND HE'S GOTTA BE FAST  
AND HE'S GOTTA BE FRESH FROM THE FIGHTETH

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