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An Anthropologist on Mars: Seven Paradoxical Tales—Oliver Sacks. In the same intriguing fashion he employed in *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat*, Sacks, a neurologist, follows seven patients with various neurological dysfunctions to illustrate how the nervous system forges creative new paths of growth and evolution. The surgeon whose Tourette's syndrome is at bay only when he is operating and the woman whose autism does not allow her to socialize with people but gives her extraordinary insight into the behavior of animals are a couple of the lives Sacks portrays. Originally published in hardcover in 1995. Vin, 1996, 327 p., paperback, \$13.00.

Edison: Inventing the Century—Neil Baldwin. The author of *Man Ray—American Artist* turns to the genius of Thomas Alva Edison in this penetrating biography. An inventor with an endless flow of ideas and the political skills to electrify lower Manhattan, Edison proved a tough infighter in business and a man who, while preaching family values, neglected his six children from two marriages. Backed by years of research and access to Edison family documents, Baldwin examines Edison as man and myth. Originally published in hardcover in 1995. Hyperion, 1996, 531 p., b&w photos, paperback, \$14.95.

Palms Throughout the World—David L. Jones. Remarkably, there are more species of palm trees in existence than these 800 species and their respective 123 genera. Jones details the Latin names, place of origin, types of flowers, ease or difficulty of cultivation, and hardness and provides a color photograph of each. Initial chapters cover the distribution, biology, propagation, cultivation, and economic importance of palms in general. Smithsonian Bks, 1995, 410 p., color photos, hardcover, \$49.00.

The People's Guide to Deadly Drug Interactions: How to Protect Yourself from Life-Threatening Drug/Drug, Drug/Food, Drug/Vitamin Combinations—Joe Graedon and Teresa Graedon. Not only can some drug combinations be dangerous, they can also render the drugs useless. Focusing on all types of medications, including prescription, over-the-counter, vitamin supplements, and herbal remedies, the Graedons provide a multitude of lists of drugs that do not mix with common medications such as aspirin and antihistamines and heart pills. St. Martin, 1995, 434 p., hardcover, \$25.95.

Swamp Screamer: At Large with the Florida Panther—Charles Fergus. The Florida panther is a misnomer. The animal is actually a puma that once thrived throughout the Everglades but is now on the brink of extinction. Fergus's close involvement with the wildlife biologists who doggedly track the 50 or so remaining panthers, as well as the hunters, developers, and residents who also play a role in the preservation or decimation of these cats, enables him to offer a clear insight into what is at stake for all involved. FS&G, 1996, 208 p., hardcover, \$23.00.

The Time Before History: 5 Million Years of Human Impact—Colin Tudge. Tudge seeks to define the true history of humans to some 5 million years ago, when apes and hominids split. He explains the changing *modus operandi* of Earth and how it has affected human evolution. For example, *Homo sapiens sapiens*' survival and adaptation to climactic change, the effects of plate tectonics, and technological advances are all crucial to our present existence, as are the other creatures who share the planet with us. Tudge discusses these issues at length as he sorts through the many debates regarding human evolution—he leans toward the "out of Africa" theory—in order to make predictions for the future based on our past. Scribner, 1996, 366 p., hardcover, \$27.50.

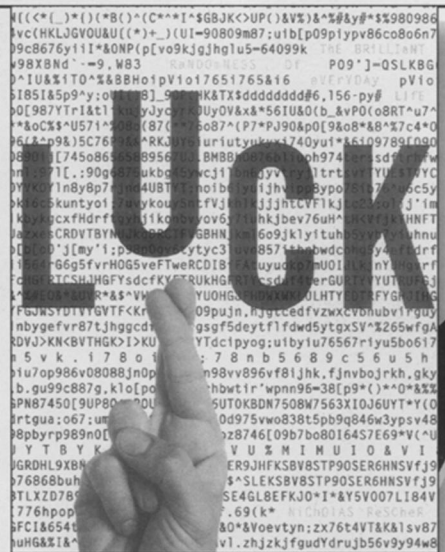
The Way Science Works—Tom Ruppel, ed. A companion publication to the wildly popular *The Way Things Work*, this highly informative and attractive reference dissects many aspects of science and technology. For example, you can see the inner workings of a car's transmission, a computer, atoms, and orbits through two-page spreads filled with straightforward text and almost three-dimensional illustrations. In eight sections ranging from transportation, power, and manufacturing to research, medicine, and space, this book crosses the many fields of the scientific world, making complex ideas and structures easy to understand. Macmillan, 1995, 288 p., color illus and photos, hardcover, \$35.00.

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Luck touches us all. But although luck has a firm hold on all our lives, we seldom reflect on it in a cogent, concerted way. "Why me?" we complain when things go wrong—though seldom when things go right. Why is life so unfair? But to lack a clear perspective on what luck is and how it works is to ask for trouble.

In *Luck*, one of our most eminent philosophers offers a realistic view of the nature and operation of luck to help us come to sensible terms with life in a chaotic world. Differentiating luck from fate (inexorable destiny) and fortune (mere chance), Nicholas Rescher weaves a colorful tapestry of historical examples from antiquity to the present. It was a matter of bad luck for King Philip II of Spain, for instance, that a storm scattered the Invincible Armada in the English Channel. It was a matter of good luck for those who couldn't buy passage aboard the sold-out *Titanic*. And while it would not really be lucky merely to survive our journey: it has been estimated that a traveler would have to take a scheduled flight daily for four thousand years before an accident would occur to him.

Luck cannot be manipulated or controlled, Rescher argues, but it can be managed to some extent. From the use of lots in the Old and New Testaments to Thomas Gataker's treatise of 1619 on the great English lottery of 1612, from casino gambling to playing the stock market, Rescher's *Luck* shows how the tiger of luck can be tamed to improve our chances for good luck, reduce those for bad, and in general improve the fortune of mankind. — from Farrar Straus & Giroux



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