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JEFFREY S. ROSENTHAL is a professor of statistics at the University of Toronto. He received his BSc in mathematics, physics, and computer science from the University of Toronto at the age of 20; his PhD in mathematics from Harvard University at the age of 24; and tenure at the age of 29. He has been awarded the CRM-SSC Prize, the SSC Gold Medal, Fellowship of the Royal Society of Canada and of the Institute of Mathematical Statistics, and the COPSS Presidents' Award. He has also received teaching awards at both Harvard and U of T. Rosenthal's first book, *Struck by Lightning: The Curious World of Probabilities*, was a national bestseller in Canada and was published in fourteen countries and in ten languages. Visit him online at Probability.ca and on Twitter @ProbabilityProf. Despite being born on Friday the Thirteenth, Rosenthal has had a very fortunate life.

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KNOCK ON WOOD

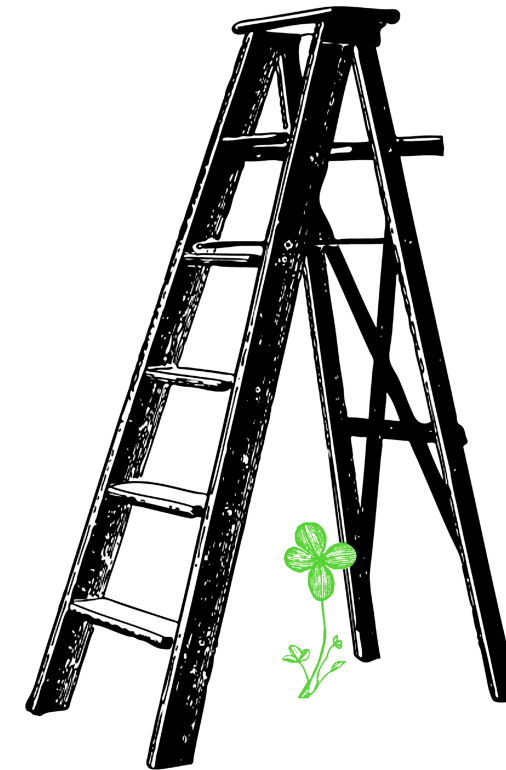
*Luck, Chance,
and the
Meaning of
Everything*

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KNOCK ON WOOD

*Luck, Chance, and
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JEFFREY S. ROSENTHAL

Bestselling author of *Struck By Lightning: The Curious World of Probabilities*

CAN \$32.99

FOR CENTURIES, people around the world have prayed for good luck and warded against bad. Every language features a good luck greeting. Sailors have long looked for an albatross on the horizon as an auspicious symbol. Jade, clovers, rabbits' feet, wishbones: these items have lined the pockets of those seeking good fortune. For some, it's bad luck to walk under a ladder, to enter and leave a home through different doors, or to say "Macbeth" in a theatre. But is there such a thing as luck, or does luck often simply explain common sense? Don't walk under a ladder because, well, that's just dangerous. You won the lottery not because of any supernatural force but because a random number generator selected the same numbers that you picked out at the corner store. You run into a neighbour from your street on the other side of the world: chance or pure fate? (Or does it depend on how much you like your neighbour?)

Jeffrey S. Rosenthal, author of the bestseller *Struck by Lightning: The Curious World of Probabilities*, was born on a Friday the Thirteenth, a fact that he discovered long after he had become one of the world's pre-eminent statisticians. Had he been living ignorantly and innocently under an unlucky cloud for all those years? Or is thirteen just another number? As a scientist and a man of reason, Rosenthal has long considered the value of luck, good and bad, seeking to measure chance and hope in formulas scratched out on chalkboards.

In *Knock on Wood*, Rosenthal, with great humour and irreverence, divines the world of luck, fate, and chance, putting his considerable scientific acumen to the test in deducing whether luck is real or the mere stuff of superstition.