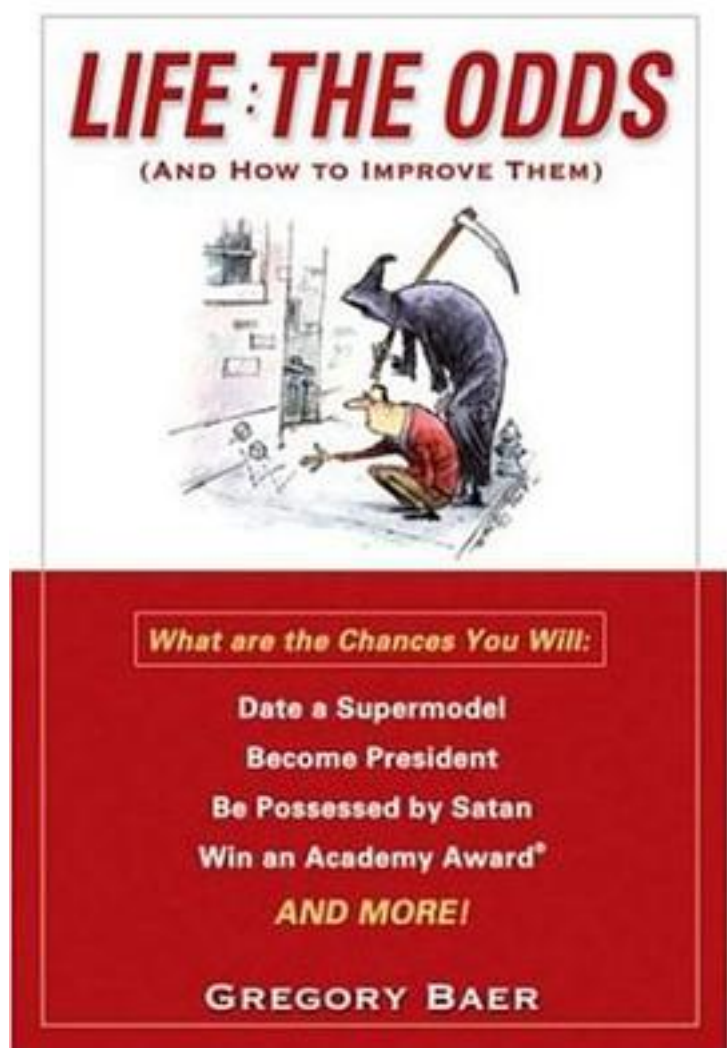


# Life: The Odds: And How to Improve Them (精装)



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著者:Gregory Baer

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The lowdown on life's most intriguing possibilities, in the bestselling, brain-tickling tradition of the Worst Case Scenario Survival Handbook series.

Most of us have wondered about the likelihood of striking it rich, being audited by the IRS, or living to be one hundred years old. But how many of us have actually sat down and calculated the chances that we could marry a millionaire? Or that the earth could be destroyed by an asteroid?

Now, with Gregory Baer's *Life: The Odds*, you can find out the answers to these questions and more in a fun, freewheeling, and compulsively readable way. Baer not only gives startling stats but also advice for nudging fate in your favor. Readers will discover the odds of:

1. Bowling a perfect game
2. Catching a ball at a Major League Baseball game
3. Being canonized as a saint
4. Picking a winning stock
5. Surviving a train crash
6. Getting away with murder (or getting convicted)
7. Being well endowed (or poorly endowed)
8. Reaching the summit of Mount Everest

A great book with a great hook, *Life: The Odds* is a sure bet to make you laugh-and to make you think.

This is an entertaining book that succeeds despite its author's missteps as a humorist. In presenting the odds of all manner of events both possible ("Dating a Supermodel") and improbable ("Becoming a Professional Athlete"), Baer (The Great Mutual Fund Trap) is clearly emulating the Worst-Case Scenario books, which have turned studying extreme real-life events into a cottage industry. Baer knows and expertly uses statistics and probabilities: it is fascinating to learn, for example, that the chances of dying by being hit by an asteroid are three times greater than dying in a train crash or an earthquake and are 250 times greater than dying from a shark attack. He also provides some revealing sidebars on certain topics, such as his look at how the odds of celebrity divorce are even worse than the already horrible odds of divorce for newly married couples ("about even money, 1 to 1"). Baer sometimes interrupts his statistical analyses with attempts at Dave Barry-style one-liners, but they fall flat, such as when he insults the livability of Cleveland or comments on the looks of Prince Charles's paramour Camilla Parker Bowles. Because of its range of topics, this book should gain some word-of-mouth praise, however, and will likely improve water-cooler conversations.

Adult/High School-Forty-four short chapters use statistical probability to determine the chances of achieving or surviving certain life events. The subjects range from the commonplace-sharing a birthday-to the (hopefully) far-fetched-destruction of the Earth. Each section explains the situation, runs the numbers, then tells how to improve the odds. The main purpose of this book is humor, not 100 percent true cause and

effect, so the actual conclusions drawn aren't necessarily, and don't claim to be, entirely guaranteed. (For example, if you don't want a marriage to end in divorce, simply moving to Massachusetts, the state with the lowest divorce rate, isn't necessarily going to help.) But the process does explain probability and other statistical concepts in a lighthearted way. Baer uses tables, graphs, pie charts, and narrative to reach his conclusions. The facts and research are well documented and often contain links to Web sites that further explain the issues at hand. Most of the subjects covered have real teen interest, such as "Getting into an Ivy League College" or "Becoming a Professional Athlete," while "Being Poorly Endowed," about penis size, is sure to cause some snickering. The author does use some clunky one-liners that are bound to elicit groans, but the book's real strengths lie not in the dumb jokes but in the facts and statistics, which are interesting enough on their own.

Jamie Watson, Enoch Pratt Free Library, Baltimore

Width (mm) 134

作者介绍:

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标签

数学

评论

感觉还不错。一定要善始善终。

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有意思的概率问题

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书评

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