

Lucky places

Description

Imagine two worlds: one in which apparently random events have a positive outcome for most people most of the time – it only rains when you have an umbrella, you only run out of petrol while next to a petrol station, a knocked vase falls on a soft cushion, toast always lands jam side up. In the converse unlucky world the opposite is the case. People take for granted that it will rain on their picnic, they will fall ill the day before a holiday, they drop the car keys while standing over a stormwater drain.

The two conditions have more to do with psychological outlook than probabilities. The root of the word *happy* is *hap*, which the OED defines as “good fortune, good luck; success, prosperity.” We carry this positive connotation into words such as *happenstance*. Even the word *happen* happens to derive from *good luck*. The world in which probabilities are skewed towards favourable outcomes is a happy place, of *happy* coincidences; the converse world is an unhappy one.

We live in a “lucky” world anyway. In 1994 when astronomers observed Comet Shoemaker-Levy 9 crash into Jupiter there was talk about how fortunate we are on earth to have a massive neighbour like Jupiter with a gravitational field sufficient to draw in space objects most threatening to Earth. Of course we wouldn’t be here to reflect on it if the chemical, geological and astronomical conditions were not at some optimal condition in the universe to accommodate life. Human beings are lucky to exist.

The CGI film *Luck* (Dir. Peggy Holmes, 2022) is a work of family-friendly froth that plays on the theme of luck and its opposite as two worlds siphoning both good and bad luck in balanced measure to the people of real earth. In the good-luck world pedestrians step off terraces onto mobile platforms that are always in the right place at the right time. Stairs need no handrails, waiters in restaurants throw food at you and it always lands on your plate, your disposable paper cup always ricochets into the recycle bin wherever it is tossed. Conversely, in bad luck land the first drink from a bartender always falls on the floor when shot across the counter, doors always jam, darts always miss the board.

The architectures of these two worlds are fascinating. An architecture of luck leaves everything to chance, arguably the condition in cities before fires, epidemics, infestations, flooding and other disasters forced regulations and building controls.

I need hardly state that good luck for some may come about only due to the bad luck that befalls others. As well as CGI animations and cartoons, the good/bad luck scenario is usefully explored in the context of play, and games of chance. See post: [Bad players](#).



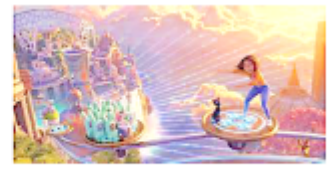
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