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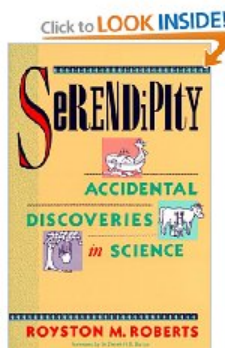
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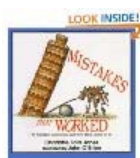
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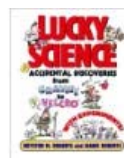
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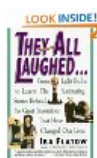
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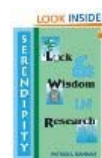
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This book is a collection of anecdotal "re caps" of the accidental discoveries that led to revolutionary scientific development, including Edward Jenner's creation of the smallpox vaccine and Newton's gravity theory. Roberts tells us that Jenner made the fortuitous connection between cowpox and smallpox by investigating the claim of a milkmaid who avoided smallpox illness in the barnyard. Likewise, a shrewd Newton developed gravitational theory while observing the fall of the famous apple. It's clear that Roberts (chemistry, Univ. of Texas) feels most engaged and comfortable in the fields of chemistry and biology, for these sections are the largest and the most informative and concisely written. Elsewhere, the book suffers from a choppy and dry presentation. Recommended for larger subject collections only.

-Lauren Bielski, New York

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#### Product Description

Many of the things discovered by accident are important in our everyday lives: Teflon, Velcro, nylon, x-rays, penicillin, safety glass,

sugar substitutes, and polyethylene and other plastics. And we owe a debt to accident for some of our deepest scientific knowledge, including Newton's theory of gravitation, the Big Bang theory of Creation, and the discovery of DNA. Even the Rosetta Stone, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the ruins of Pompeii came to light through chance. This book tells the fascinating stories of these and other discoveries and reveals how the inquisitive human mind turns accident into discovery. Written for the layman, yet scientifically accurate, this illuminating collection of anecdotes portrays invention and discovery as quintessentially human acts, due in part to curiosity, perserverance, and luck.

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**ISBN-13:** 978-0471602033  
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Tremendous, April 2, 2002

By Henry Raddick (London UK) - See all my reviews

An excellent book on the breakthroughs in science which have in some way been fuelled by chance. Inspiration came to Archimedes while sitting in the bath and to Isaac Newton under an apple tree, as we all know; but Roberts offers other less well-known yet fascinating tales of scientific discovery. I was intrigued to read that Bill Gates invented the left-handed mouse while "working on something else" - according to the Microsoft guru himself.

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By [Victoria Tarrani "writer, editor, artist, des..."](#) (Betwixt FL and CA, USA) - [See all my reviews](#)

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This is a fun book filled with vignettes about the discovery of something that we take for granted today. Serendipity is a gift for finding something good by accident, luck, or good fortune. Velcro®, penicillin, X-rays, dynamite, streaking, yes streaking, all have their roots in serendipity.

Archimedes was the first stalker. He calculated a way to measure the actual amount of gold used in a crown that the king had commissioned. King Hiero had provided the gold, but did not trust the goldsmith. Archimedes had already written mathematical formulas for finding the volume of a sphere and cylinder, but this was an irregular solid object. He was in the public baths in Syracuse when it dawned on him that the volume of an object would displace an equal volume of water. He ran from the bathhouse yelling, "Eureka, I've got it!" He simply forgot to put his clothes back on. The king was right to be suspicious, by the way.

Had it not been for his intelligence, sound judgement, and wisdom he would not be credited with the discovery. This is the theme throughout the book. "Accidents become discoveries because of the sagacity of the person who encountered the accident."

For students or trivia champions knowing the background, especially the accidental and humorous beginnings of something, makes remembering who discovered what and why easier. The bonus is that you get a few good chuckles too. Five stars for the discoverers.

Victoria Tarrani

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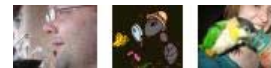
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