

Contents

Chapter Summaries and Map *xix*

Prologue	3
APPENDIX: The Triad, or A Map of the World and Things Along the Three Properties	20
BOOK I: THE ANTIFRAGILE: AN INTRODUCTION	29
Chapter 1. Between Damocles and Hydra	31
Half of Life Has No Name	31
Please Behead Me	33
<i>On the Necessity of Naming</i>	35
Proto-Antifragility	36
Domain Independence Is Domain Dependent	38
Chapter 2. Overcompensation and Overreaction Everywhere	41
How to Win a Horse Race	43
<i>Antifragile Responses as Redundancy</i>	44
On the Antifragility of Riots, Love, and Other Unexpected Beneficiaries of Stress	48
<i>Please Ban My Book: The Antifragility of Information</i>	49
<i>Get Another Job</i>	51
Chapter 3. The Cat and the Washing Machine	54
<i>The Complex</i>	56
Stressors Are Information	56
<i>Equilibrium, Not Again</i>	60

Crimes Against Children	61
<i>Punished by Translation</i>	61
<i>Touristification</i>	62
<i>The Secret Thirst for Chance</i>	63
Chapter 4. What Kills Me Makes Others Stronger	65
Antifragility by Layers	65
<i>Evolution and Unpredictability</i>	66
<i>Organisms Are Populations and Populations Are Organisms</i>	70
Thank You, Errors	71
<i>Learning from the Mistakes of Others</i>	72
<i>How to Become Mother Teresa</i>	73
Why the Aggregate Hates the Individual	74
What Does Not Kill Me Kills Others	76
<i>Me and Us</i>	76
<i>National Entrepreneur Day</i>	79
BOOK II: MODERNITY AND THE DENIAL OF ANTIFRAGILITY	81
Chapter 5. The Souk and the Office Building	83
Two Types of Professions	83
<i>Lenin in Zurich</i>	85
Bottom-up Variations	88
Away from Extremistan	90
<i>The Great Turkey Problem</i>	92
Twelve Thousand Years	94
<i>War, Prison, or Both</i>	95
<i>Pax Romana</i>	96
<i>War or No War</i>	97
Chapter 6. Tell Them I Love (Some) Randomness	100
Hungry Donkeys	102
<i>Political Annealing</i>	103
That Time Bomb Called Stability	105
<i>The Second Step: Do (Small) Wars Save Lives?</i>	105
<i>What to Tell the Foreign Policy Makers</i>	106
What Do We Call Here Modernity?	108

Chapter 7. Naive Intervention	110
Intervention and Iatrogenics	111
<i>First, Do No Harm</i>	112
<i>The Opposite of Iatrogenics</i>	113
<i>Iatrogenics in High Places</i>	114
<i>Can a Whale Fly Like an Eagle?</i>	116
<i>Not Doing Nothing</i>	117
<i>Non-Naive Interventionism</i>	119
In Praise of Procrastination—the Fabian Kind	121
Neuroticism in Industrial Proportions	124
<i>A Legal Way to Kill People</i>	125
<i>Media-Driven Neuroticism</i>	127
The State Can Help—When Incompetent	128
<i>France Is Messier than You Think</i>	129
<i>Sweden and the Large State</i>	131
Catalyst-as-Cause Confusion	131
Chapter 8. Prediction as a Child of Modernity	134
<i>Ms. Bré Has Competitors</i>	135
<i>The Predictive</i>	135
<i>Plus or Minus Bad Teeth</i>	136
<i>The Idea of Becoming a Non-Turkey</i>	137
<i>No More Black Swans</i>	139
BOOK III: A NONPREDICTIVE VIEW OF THE WORLD	141
Chapter 9. Fat Tony and the Fragilistas	143
Indolent Fellow Travelers	143
<i>The Importance of Lunch</i>	144
<i>The Antifragility of Libraries</i>	145
On Suckers and Nonsuckers	147
<i>Loneliness</i>	149
<i>What the Nonpredictor Can Predict</i>	150
Chapter 10. Seneca's Upside and Downside	151
<i>Is This Really Serious?</i>	151
<i>Less Downside from Life</i>	153
<i>Stoicism's Emotional Robustification</i>	154

<i>The Domestication of Emotions</i>	156
<i>How to Become the Master</i>	156
<i>The Foundational Asymmetry</i>	157
Chapter 11. Never Marry the Rock Star	159
On the Irreversibility of Broken Packages	159
Seneca's Barbell	161
<i>The Accountant and the Rock Star</i>	162
<i>Away from the Golden Middle</i>	163
<i>The Domestication of Uncertainty</i>	165
BOOK IV: OPTIONALITY, TECHNOLOGY, AND THE INTELLIGENCE OF ANTIFRAGILITY	169
Do You Really Know Where You Are Going?	169
<i>The Teleological Fallacy</i>	170
<i>America's Principal Asset</i>	171
Chapter 12. Thales' Sweet Grapes	173
Option and Asymmetry	175
<i>The Options of Sweet Grapes</i>	175
<i>Saturday Evening in London</i>	176
<i>Your Rent</i>	177
<i>Asymmetry</i>	178
<i>Things That Like Dispersion</i>	178
The Thalesian and the Aristotelian	180
<i>How to Be Stupid</i>	180
<i>Nature and Options</i>	181
<i>The Rationality</i>	183
<i>Life Is Long Gamma</i>	184
<i>Roman Politics Likes Optionality</i>	185
<i>Next</i>	185
Chapter 13. Lecturing Birds on How to Fly	187
<i>Once More, Less Is More</i>	190
<i>Mind the Gaps</i>	190
<i>Search and How Errors Can Be Investments</i>	192
<i>Creative and Uncreative Destructions</i>	193
The Soviet-Harvard Department of Ornithology	194
Epiphenomena	197

<i>Greed as a Cause</i>	197
<i>Debunking Epiphenomena</i>	198
<i>Cherry-picking (or the Fallacy of Confirmation)</i>	200
Chapter 14. When Two Things Are Not the "Same Thing"	202
<i>Where Are the Stressors?</i>	203
<i>L'Art pour l'Art, to Learn for Learning's Sake</i>	204
<i>Polished Dinner Partners</i>	206
The Green Lumber Fallacy	207
<i>How Fat Tony Got Rich (and Fat)</i>	210
Conflation	211
Prometheus and Epimetheus	212
Chapter 15. History Written by the Losers	217
<i>The Evidence Staring at Us</i>	221
<i>Is It Like Cooking?</i>	224
<i>The Industrial Revolution</i>	226
<i>Governments Should Spend on Nonteleological Tinkering, Not Research</i>	229
The Case in Medicine	230
<i>Matt Ridley's Anti-Teleological Argument</i>	233
<i>Corporate Teleology</i>	234
The Inverse Turkey Problem	235
<i>To Fail Seven Times, Plus or Minus Two</i>	238
The Charlatan, the Academic, and the Showman	238
Chapter 16. A Lesson in Disorder	241
The Ecological and the Ludic	241
<i>The Touristification of the Soccer Mom</i>	242
An Antifragile (Barbell) Education	243
Chapter 17. Fat Tony Debates Socrates	249
Euthyphro	250
Fat Tony Versus Socrates	251
Primacy of Definitional Knowledge	253
<i>Mistaking the Unintelligible for the Unintelligent</i>	254
<i>Tradition</i>	257
The Sucker-Nonsucker Distinction	259
<i>Fragility, Not Probability</i>	259
<i>Conflation of Events and Exposure</i>	260

Conclusion to Book IV	261
<i>What Will Happen Next?</i>	261
BOOK V: THE NONLINEAR AND THE NONLINEAR	263
On the Importance of Attics	263
Chapter 18. On the Difference Between a Large Stone and a Thousand Pebbles	267
A Simple Rule to Detect the Fragile	268
<i>Why Is Fragility Nonlinear?</i>	270
<i>When to Smile and When to Frown</i>	271
<i>Why Is the Concave Hurt by Black Swan Events?</i>	273
Traffic in New York	274
<i>Someone Call New York City Officials</i>	275
Where More Is Different	276
<i>A "Balanced Meal"</i>	277
<i>Run, Don't Walk</i>	278
Small May Be Ugly, It Is Certainly Less Fragile	278
<i>How to Be Squeezed</i>	278
<i>Kerviel and Micro-Kerviel</i>	280
<i>How to Exit a Movie Theater</i>	283
Projects and Prediction	283
<i>Why Planes Don't Arrive Early</i>	283
<i>Wars, Deficits, and Deficits</i>	286
Where the "Efficient" Is Not Efficient	286
<i>Pollution and Harm to the Planet</i>	287
<i>The Nonlinearity of Wealth</i>	288
<i>Conclusion</i>	289
Chapter 19. The Philosopher's Stone and Its Inverse	290
How to Detect Who Will Go Bust	290
<i>The Idea of Positive and Negative Model Error</i>	293
How to Lose a Grandmother	295
Now the Philosopher's Stone	297
<i>How to Transform Gold into Mud:</i>	
<i>The Inverse Philosopher's Stone</i>	299

BOOK VI: VIA NEGATIVA	301
<i>Where Is the Charlatan?</i>	302
<i>Subtractive Knowledge</i>	303
Barbells, Again	305
<i>Less Is More</i>	305
Chapter 20. Time and Fragility	309
From Simonides to Jensen	309
Learning to Subtract	311
<i>Technology at Its Best</i>	315
To Age in Reverse: The Lindy Effect	316
A Few Mental Biases	321
<i>Neomania and Treadmill Effects</i>	322
Architecture and the Irreversible Neomania	324
<i>Wall to Wall Windows</i>	327
<i>Metrification</i>	327
Turning Science into Journalism	329
What Should Break	331
Prophets and the Present	332
Empedocles' Dog	334
<i>What Does Not Make Sense</i>	335
Chapter 21. Medicine, Convexity, and Opacity	336
How to Argue in an Emergency Room	338
First Principle of Iatrogenics (Empiricism)	339
Second Principle of Iatrogenics (Nonlinearity in Response)	340
<i>Jensen's Inequality in Medicine</i>	342
Burying the Evidence	344
<i>The Never-ending History of Turkey Situations</i>	344
Nature's Opaque Logic	348
<i>Guilty or Innocent</i>	349
<i>Plead Ignorance of Biology: Phenomenology</i>	350
<i>The Ancients Were More Caustic</i>	352
<i>How to Medicate Half the Population</i>	353
<i>The "Rigor of Mathematics" in Medicine</i>	355
<i>Next</i>	356

Chapter 22. To Live Long, but Not Too Long	357
Life Expectancy and Convexity	357
<i>Subtraction Adds to Your Life</i>	359
<i>The Iatrogenics of Money</i>	363
<i>Religion and Naive Interventionism</i>	364
If It's Wednesday, I Must Be Vegan	365
<i>Convexity Effects and Random Nutrition</i>	365
<i>How to Eat Yourself</i>	368
<i>Walk-Deprived</i>	369
<i>I Want to Live Forever</i>	370
 BOOK VII: THE ETHICS OF FRAGILITY AND ANTIFRAGILITY	 373
 Chapter 23. Skin in the Game: Antifragility and Optionality	
at the Expense of Others	375
Hammurabi	380
The Talker's Free Option	382
<i>Postdicting</i>	385
<i>The Stiglitz Syndrome</i>	386
<i>The Problem of Frequency, or How to Lose Arguments</i>	389
<i>The Right Decision for the Wrong Reason</i>	391
The Ancients and the Stiglitz Syndrome	392
<i>To Burn One's Vessels</i>	393
<i>How Poetry Can Kill You</i>	393
<i>The Problem of Insulation</i>	394
<i>Champagne Socialism</i>	395
<i>Soul in the Game</i>	396
Options, Antifragility, and Social Fairness	397
<i>The Robert Rubin Free Option</i>	398
<i>Which Adam Smith?</i>	399
The Antifragility and Ethics of (Large) Corporations	400
<i>Artisans, Marketing, and the Cheapest to Deliver</i>	402
<i>Lawrence of Arabia or Meyer Lansky</i>	405
<i>Next</i>	406
 Chapter 24. Fitting Ethics to a Profession	 407
<i>Wealth Without Independence</i>	408
The Professionals and the Collective	409

The Ethical and the Legal	412
<i>Casuistry as Optionality</i>	414
Big Data and the Researcher's Option	416
The Tyranny of the Collective	419
Chapter 25. Conclusion	421
Epilogue	425
Glossary	427
Appendix I	435
Appendix II	447
Additional Notes, Afterthoughts, and Further Reading	457
Bibliography	481
Acknowledgments	505
Index	507