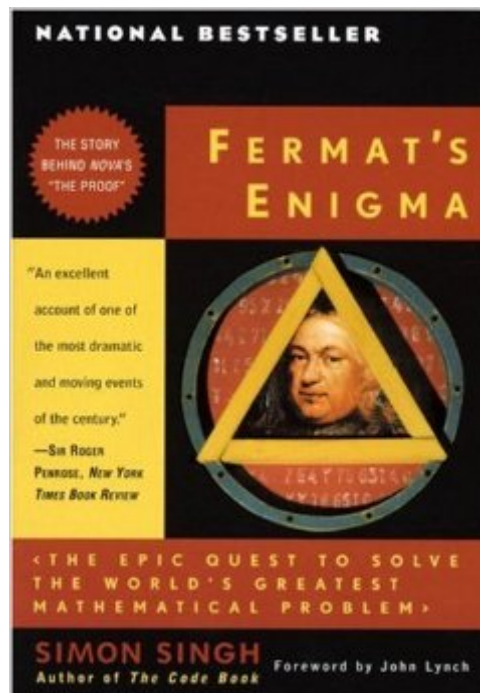


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Fermat's Enigma: The Epic Quest To Solve The World's Greatest Mathematical Problem



Synopsis

$x^n + y^n = z^n$, where n represents 3, 4, 5, ...no solution!"I have discovered a truly marvelous demonstration of this proposition which this margin is too narrow to contain."With these words, the seventeenth-century French mathematician Pierre de Fermat threw down the gauntlet to future generations. What came to be known as Fermat's Last Theorem looked simple; proving it, however, became the Holy Grail of mathematics, baffling its finest minds for more than 350 years. In Fermat's Enigma--based on the author's award-winning documentary film, which aired on PBS's "Nova"--Simon Singh tells the astonishingly entertaining story of the pursuit of that grail, and the lives that were devoted to, sacrificed for, and saved by it. Here is a mesmerizing tale of heartbreak and mastery that will forever change your feelings about mathematics.

Book Information

Paperback: 315 pages

Publisher: Anchor; 1st Anchor Books ed edition (September 8, 1998)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0385493622

ISBN-13: 978-0385493628

Product Dimensions: 4.9 x 0.8 x 7 inches

Shipping Weight: 11.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars See all reviews (361 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #37,394 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #37 in Books > Science & Math > Mathematics > History #342 in Books > Textbooks > Science & Mathematics > Mathematics

Customer Reviews

For if you are to approach this book as a work that will lead you to an understanding of a theorem that took 350 years to solve, you might miss a great tale. As others have stated, High School Math will suffice, and for those who may be a bit rusty in Math in any event, the book is still very much worthwhile. The book mentions that some of the Math is understood by perhaps 5 people in the world. If high-level Math concepts were required to enjoy this book, the Author could just have made half a dozen copies. A notation in a margin started 350 years of effort to solve, or rather prove a theorem that Pierre de Fermat described thusly "I have discovered a truly marvelous proof, which this margin is too narrow to contain". I recently read a comment by Stephen Jay Gould that Mr. Fermat may not have known the proof. His suggestion was that no amount of space allotted by any margin would allow for the proof. I certainly am not qualified to question either individual, but the

space eventually used for the proof 356 years later by Professor Andrew Wiles of Princeton may answer the query for you. Math is often put forth to show something that is universally true, a discipline that transcends language, Nations, and their Cultures. Math "is" and always will be, it allows for no opinion, it works or it does not. This book exposes the reader to a lifetime fascination for Professor Wiles, as well as the 7 years of near isolation it took to solve the mystery. If I understood the text, there were actually requirements needed for the proof that the mechanics for expressing those thoughts with Math did not exist, for Professor Wiles or anyone else.

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