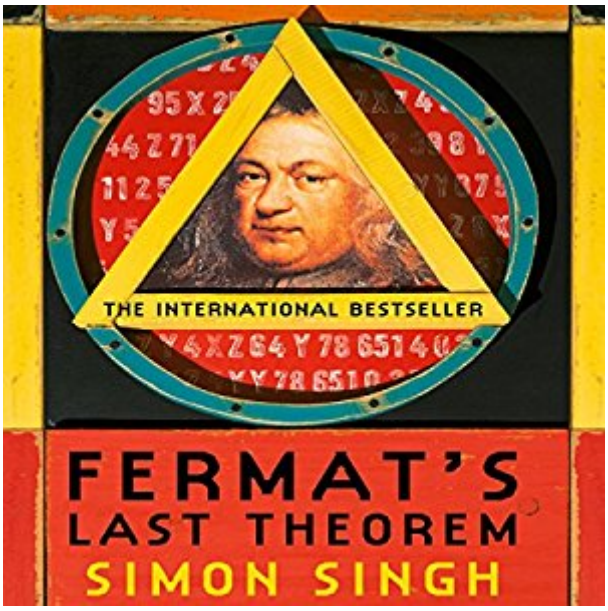
Fermat's Last Theorem: The Story Of A Riddle That Confounded The World's Greatest Minds For 358 Years



Synopsis

’I have a truly marvellous demonstration of this proposition which this margin is too narrow to contain.’ It was with these words, written in the 1630s, that Pierre de Fermat intrigued and infuriated the mathematics community. For over 350 years, proving Fermat’s Last Theorem was the most notorious unsolved mathematical problem, a puzzle whose basics most children could grasp but whose solution eluded the greatest minds in the world. In 1993, after years of secret toil, Englishman Andrew Wiles announced to an astounded audience that he had cracked Fermat’s Last Theorem. He had no idea of the nightmare that lay ahead. In Fermat’s Last Theorem Simon Singh has crafted a remarkable tale of intellectual endeavour spanning three centuries, and a moving testament to the obsession, sacrifice and extraordinary determination of Andrew Wiles: one man against all the odds.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

My first Singh book was "Big Bang" which was also excellent. He is phenomenal at weaving a massive story over a period spanning multiple millennium in a few hundred pages. He gives short bios on each major player, and tells interesting stories about their lives. His method keeps you on the edge of your seat, and what others would think would be a boring subject is indeed a page turner!Some of these mathematicians committed suicide, some were killed at an early age (Galois, mathematical genius dead at 20), others had to disguise their gender (Sophie Germain) due to discrimination. It’s very interesting to learn about each character.Altogether a highly readable book on a journey to solving Fermat’s Last Theorem.I read it in about 3 days (it’s 300 pages), and maybe 15 pages discuss math that I don’t understand (modular forms and elliptic equations), but it’s very

minimal and doesn't get in the way. It was mostly about the lives of these mathematicians and their struggles.If you are interested in learning about the lives of Pythagorus, Euclid, Euler, Gauss, Germain, Galois, Wiles, and countless others...Check it out.On a side note I would love it if Simon Singh wrote a book on the history of evolution. He is a master at simplifying very complex subjects.

An educational and sometimes engaging history of number theory's biggest problem and the many efforts it took to solve. Singh typically writes his unique histories for the casual layman (I've also read "The Code Book"), which makes them as accessible as possible. However, if you have much of any background in mathematics, you'll find a few of the explanations annoyingly simple. Just skim past those and keep on.

Fermat's Last Theorem is the greatest riddle ever challenged by mathematicians spanning different centuries and different concepts and that's how this book is all about. Fermat's Enigma is truly one of the most dramatic reading where various mathematicians in real life are on a quest to solve the world's greatest mathematical problem where n represents 3, 4, 5...no solution. It has been quite as dramatic as reading a best-selling cult classic novel you all heard about but more importantly, it has given me several purposes that mathematicians tried and tried until they succeed in solving the greatest math problem we know as Fermat's Last Enigma. Of course, there has been some downfall faced by mathematicians, especially the men behind the Taniyama-Shimura conjecture, but this book I read is all drama without the fuss and thanks to such wondrous sources, I am more than welcomed to recommend reading this fascinating book to almost everyone who has a deep interests in mathematics. Solving Fermat's Last Theorem literally holds a very special place in the history mathematics and no matter how many mathematicians sacrificed themselves to solve this problem, only one had triumphantly solved it with the help of his trusted people in his life. Students, like us, are truly fascinated about what sort of mysteries lurking around the history of mathematics but this Fermat's Last Theorem we all read about in this book really hits the spot, literally.

I first came across "Fermat's Enigma" years ago while completing a Masters degree. I was doing research for a History of Mathematics class when this book grabbed my attention while sitting on the library book shelves. I checked it out, started reading and just found myself totally engrossed in the story, almost from the get go, and finished it in two days.The story of the solving of Fermat's Last Theorem contains almost all of the features that draw us to read books in the first place. What is super-interesting is this: though the story takes place within the mathematics field, it contained

elements of fraud, murder, suicide...all in the pursuit of a seemingly elusive proof, based on an equation that, at first glance, seems so simple. And because almost all of us are familiar with the Pythagorean Theorem from our school days, the fact that over 350 years and hundreds of different mathematicians were needed to come up with the elusive answer just makes the story that much more fascinating.I now teach college mathematics and recently, noticed that one of my students was reading "Fermat's Enigma." It brought back fond memories and I desired to check it out again from the library to give the book another read. This time, it was not available...so I did what the student did: ordered my own copy from . It arrived today and I'm excited about having an entire weekend to once again visit the cast of characters and the engrossing saga that evolved over the centuries.Fantastic read! And highly recommended!