



Of Men and Numbers: The Story of the Great Mathematicians (Dover Books on Mathematics)

Jane Muir

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While mathematics itself may be a formidable subject for many, the lives and accomplishments of history's greatest mathematicians — from Pythagoras to Cantor — offer fascinating reading.

In this delightful and informative recounting, for example, we learn how Pascal's life was abruptly changed by a family of fanatical bonesetters, how Descartes was influenced by three dreams, and how the scholarly Swiss Leonhard Euler (whose famous conjecture was finally disproved in 1959, after 177 years) almost ended up in the Russian navy.

Here, too, are Cardano, the gambler who becomes the 16th century's most fashionable doctor; Archimedes, Newton, and Gauss, often considered the three greatest mathematicians of all times; Lobatchevsky, the inventor of non-Euclidean geometry; and the tragic Galois, a founder of modern higher algebra.

In addition to a wealth of interesting and informative anecdotes, presented in a delightfully conversational style, the author offers lucid, accessible explanations of these thinkers' invaluable contributions to the edifice of modern mathematical thought and to man's understanding of himself and his universe.



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