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# The Fermat Diary

C. J. Mozzochi



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This book concentrates on the final chapter of the story of perhaps the most famous mathematics problem of our time: Fermat's Last Theorem. The full story begins in 1637, with Pierre de Fermat's enigmatic marginal note in his copy of Diophantus's Arithmetica. It ends with the spectacular solution by Andrew Wiles some 350 years later. The Fermat Diary provides a record in pictures and words of the dramatic time from June 1993 to August 1995, including the period when Wiles completed the last stages of the proof and concluding with the mathematical world's celebration of Wiles' result at Boston University.

This diary takes us through the process of discovery as reported by those who worked on the great puzzle: Gerhard Frey who conjectured that Shimura-Taniyama implies Fermat; Ken Ribet who followed a difficult and speculative plan of attack suggested by Jean-Pierre Serre and established the statement by Frey; and Andrew Wiles who announced a proof of enough of the Shimura-Taniyama conjecture to settle Fermat's Last Theorem, only to announce months later that there was a gap in the proof. Finally, we are brought to the historic event on September 19, 1994, when Wiles, with the collaboration of Richard Taylor, dramatically closed the gap. The book follows the much-in-demand Wiles through his travels and lectures, finishing with the Instructional Conference on Number Theory and Arithmetic Geometry at Boston University.

There are many important names in the recent history of Fermat's Last Theorem. This book puts faces and personalities to those names. Mozzochi also uncovers the details of certain key pieces of the story. For instance, we learn in Frey's own words the story of his conjecture, about his informal discussion and later lecture at Oberwolfach and his letter containing the actual statement. We learn from Faltings about his crucial role in the weeks before Wiles made his final announcement. An appendix contains the Introduction of Wiles' Annals paper in which he describes the evolution of his solution and gives a broad overview of his methods. Shimura explains his position concerning the evolution of the Shimura-Taniyama conjecture. Mozzochi also conveys the atmosphere of the mathematical community---and the Princeton Mathematics Department in particular---during this important period in mathematics.

This eyewitness account and wonderful collection of photographs capture the marvel and unfolding drama of this great mathematical and human story.

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