Contents

Foreword		xi
Translator's l	Note	xv
Preface to the	e English Edition	xix
Preface to the	e German Edition	xxi
Acknowledgm	nents	xxiii
Introduction		xxv
Chapter 1.	You Can't Beat the Odds	1
Chapter 2.	Magical Mathematics: The Integers	5
Chapter 3.	How Old Is the Captain?	8
Chapter 4.	Vertiginously Large Prime Numbers	11
Chapter 5.	Loss Plus Loss Equals Win	14
Chapter 6.	When It Comes to Large Numbers, Intuition Fails	17
Chapter 7.	The Key for Encryption Is in the Telephone Book	22

v

Chapter 8.	The Village Barber Who Shaves Himself	27
Chapter 9.	Quit While You're Ahead?	31
Chapter 10.	Can a Monkey Create Great Literature?	34
Chapter 11.	The Birthday Paradox	37
Chapter 12.	Horror Vacui	42
Chapter 13.	Sufficient Difficulties with the Logic of Mathematics Are in Fact a Necessity	45
Chapter 14.	To Change or Not to Change? The Monty Hall Problem	48
Chapter 15.	In Hilbert's Hotel There Is Always a Vacancy	58
Chapter 16.	That Fascinating Number Pi	61
Chapter 17.	How Random Events Become Calculable Quantities	64
Chapter 18.	A One-Million-Dollar Prize: How Are the Prime Numbers Distributed?	68
Chapter 19.	The Five-Dimensional Cake	72
Chapter 20.	One Night Stand	76
Chapter 21.	Fly Me to the Moon	80
Chapter 22.	Using Residues	83
Chapter 23.	Top Secret!	86
Chapter 24.	Magical Mathematics: Order amidst Chaos	92
Chapter 25.	How Does One Approach Genius?	96
Chapter 26.	On Semitones and Twelfth Roots	101
Chapter 27.	Why Am I Always Standing in the Wrong Line?	105

Contents

1

Chapter 28.	Zero: An Undeservedly Underrated Number	109
Chapter 29.	I Love to Count!	112
Chapter 30.	Genius Autodidact: The Indian Mathematician Ramanujan	118
Chapter 31.	I Hate Mathematics Because	121
Chapter 32.	The Traveling Salesman: A Modern Odyssey	124
Chapter 33.	Squaring the Circle	127
Chapter 34.	A Step into the Infinite	134
Chapter 35.	Mathematics in Your CD Player	139
Chapter 36.	The Logarithm: A Dying Breed	142
Chapter 37.	Prizeworthy Mathematics	145
Chapter 38.	Why Axioms of All Things?	148
Chapter 39.	Proof by Computer?	151
Chapter 40.	The Lottery: The Small Prizes	155
Chapter 41.	Formulas = Concentrated Thought	158
Chapter 42.	Endless Growth	161
Chapter 43.	How Do Quanta Compute?	165
Chapter 44.	Extremes!	169
Chapter 45.	Infinitely Small?	172
Chapter 46.	Mathematical Observations at the Fire Department	176
Chapter 47.	The First Mathematical Proof Is 2,500 Years Old	179
Chapter 48.	There Is Transcendence in Mathematics, Though It Has Nothing to Do with Mysticism	183

vii

Chapter 49.	Is Every Even Number the Sum of Two Primes?	188
Chapter 50.	Why We Invert Conditional Probabilities Incorrectly	192
Chapter 51.	Millionaire or Billionaire?	196
Chapter 52.	Mathematics and Chess	199
Chapter 53.	"The Book of Nature Is Written in the Language of Mathematics"	202
Chapter 54.	The Search for Mersenne Primes	206
Chapter 55.	Berlin, Eighteenth Century: A Beautiful Formula Is Discovered	210
Chapter 56.	The First Really Complicated Number	213
Chapter 57.	P = NP: In Mathematics, Is Luck Sometimes Unnecessary?	216
Chapter 58.	Happy 32nd Birthday!	219
Chapter 59.	Buffon's Needle	222
Chapter 60.	Running Hot and Cold: Controlled Cooling Solves Optimization Problems	226
Chapter 61.	Who Didn't Pay?	230
Chapter 62.	What Can Statistics Tell Us?	233
Chapter 63.	Arbitrage	236
Chapter 64.	Farewell to Risk: Options	239
Chapter 65.	Is Mathematics a Reflection of the World?	242
Chapter 66.	Mathematics That You Can Hear	246
Chapter 67.	Chance as Composer	251

Chapter 68.	Do Dice Have a Guilty Conscience?	255
Chapter 69.	Strawberry Ice Cream Can Kill You!	258
Chapter 70.	Prosperity for All	261
Chapter 71.	No Risk, Thank You!	264
Chapter 72.	A Nobel Prize in Mathematics?	268
Chapter 73.	Chance as Reckoner: Monte Carlo Methods	272
Chapter 74.	Fuzzy Logic	276
Chapter 75.	Secret Messages in the Bible?	279
Chapter 76.	How Knotted Can a Knot Be?	283
Chapter 77.	How Much Mathematics Does a Person Need?	287
Chapter 78.	Big, Bigger, Biggest	290
Chapter 79.	It Is Probably Correct	293
Chapter 80.	Is the World a Crooked Place?	296
Chapter 81.	Is There a Mathematical Bureau of Standards?	299
Chapter 82.	The Butterfly That Fluttered By	303
Chapter 83.	Guaranteed to Make You Rich	307
Chapter 84.	Don't Trust Anyone over Thirty	310
Chapter 85.	Equality in Mathematics	312
Chapter 86.	Magical Invariants	314
Chapter 87.	Mathematics Goes to the Movies	318
Chapter 88.	The Lazy Eight: Infinity	320
Chapter 89.	Books Need Bigger Margins!	323
Chapter 90.	Visualizing Internal Organs with Mathematics	327

Chapter 91.	A Brain in the Computer	330
Chapter 92.	Cogito, Ergo Sum	335
Chapter 93.	Does the World Have a Hole?	339
Chapter 94.	Complex Numbers Are Not So Complex as Their Name Suggests	342
Chapter 95.	M. C. Escher and Infinity	347
Chapter 96.	A One at the Beginning Is Much More Likely Than a Two	351
Chapter 97.	The Leipzig Town Hall and the Sunflower	354
Chapter 98.	Information Optimally Packaged	360
Chapter 99.	Four Colors Suffice!	364
Chapter 100.	Mathematics Makes Billionaires	369
Further Reading		373
Index		377