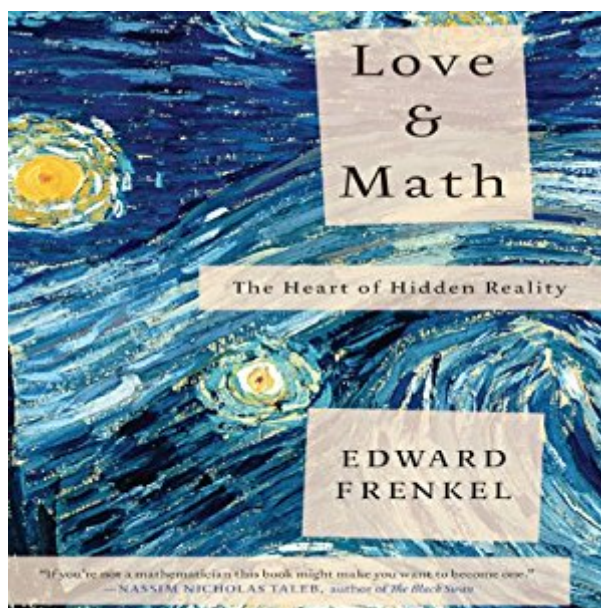The book was found

Love And Math: The Heart Of Hidden Reality

Synopsis

What if you had to take an art class in which you were only taught how to paint a fence? What if you were never shown the paintings of van Gogh and Picasso, weren't even told they existed? Alas, this is how math is taught, and so for most of us it becomes the intellectual equivalent of watching paint dry. In Love and Math, renowned mathematician Edward Frenkel reveals a side of math we've never seen, suffused with all the beauty and elegance of a work of art. In this heartfelt and passionate audiobook, Frenkel shows that mathematics, far from occupying a specialist niche, goes to the heart of all matter, uniting us across cultures, time, and space. Love and Math tells two intertwined stories: of the wonders of mathematics and of one young man's journey learning and living it. Having braved a discriminatory educational system to become one of the twenty-first century's leading mathematicians, Frenkel now works on one of the biggest ideas to come out of math in the last 50 years: the Langlands Program. Considered by many to be a Grand Unified Theory of mathematics, the Langlands Program enables researchers to translate findings from one field to another so that they can solve problems, such as Fermat's last theorem, that had seemed intractable before. At its core, Love and Math is a story about accessing a new way of thinking, which can enrich our lives and empower us to better understand the world and our place in it. It is an invitation to discover the magic hidden universe of mathematics.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

First of all, let's be honest and not mislead the general reader - this book covers a lot of highly

advanced math. The author, Edward Frenkel, likely does as well as anyone could to outline the math in a way that a non-specialist audience can usefully grasp if they put in considerable effort and re-reading, but even then the reader needs to be comfortable with math at least at the undergrad level (calculus, differential equations, linear algebra, etc.). Don't expect to really 'understand' what Frenkel is talking about unless you have considerably greater math background, say grad school level and prior familiarity with the particular areas of math Frenkel covers.Being an engineer, I fall into the former category and came to this book already loving math, and I found the math in this book to often be quite tough going (especially in the second half of the book), though I did get a rough sense of what he was talking about (and I followed the advice to keep going in the tougher parts rather than getting bogged down). True, I could re-read the whole book to get a better understanding, but realistically it would make more sense to bone up on the prerequisite math using other books and then return to this book in a few years (yes, that long). Because I feel that the accessibility of this book for the general reader has been overstated by the book's endorsers and overestimated by the author, I'm deducting a star.That said, I did enjoy this book greatly and am glad that I read it. Besides the exposure to high-level math and the associated research and discovery process (at both the individual and collaborative levels), I found this window into Russian culture fascinating, and frankly I was rather surprised to see that the culture matches many of the stereotypes quite well (Frenkel relates many memorable stories in this regard). I was also inspired to see Frenkel's passion for math, his perseverance against serious adversity, and his resulting remarkable achievements, which he describes with considerable humility, all things considered. In that regard, I was also awed, yet again, to see the reach of some human minds (alas, not mine!) into the wondrous parallel universe of Platonic objective truth which we call 'mathematics' (or more precisely, perhaps we should give a different name to that universe, since 'mathematics' only reflects what we've discovered and mapped so far).Summing up, I can definitely recommend this book to anyone who already loves math and has decent mathematical 'maturity' in the sense of being able to handle math at a relatively abstract level. Those who don't have at least that background could mostly skip the math in the book and instead focus on the memoir aspect. Whether that would be worthwhile depends on the specific interests of the reader, and I only can say that I and apparently many other readers greatly enjoyed that aspect.

After reading just half the book, I have found it to be engaging and fascinating. Edward Frenkel has found a way to bring the reader into his scholarly world of advanced mathematical research through his personal story. As a brilliant young student in Russia, he faced and overcame great obstacles to

become a major figure in modern mathematics. Giving much credit to his supportive mentors and teachers, he explains how he came to fall in love with mathematics, and what it is really like to be a professional mathematician. Along the way he explains some of the deepest mathematical concepts as well as possible to a general audience, bringing them to the frontiers of current knowledge where the mysteries still to be understood call to the brave explorers who dare to venture into the unknown. His personal history is a snapshot of important recent and current events involving many of the top mathematicians and physicists in the world, showing clearly how deeply personal and emotional research really is for the people doing it. I remember meeting Edward when he was a young fresh Ph.D., and I have followed his research career with interest. He does not know that I am writing this brief review of his book, and I am getting nothing in return!

Have spent a lot of time trying to figure out why I didn't connect with math the way I should have. Then I saw Frankel's book and wondered it I might find the answer there. I DID!!!! Right at the start he said 'what if your introduction to art was just having to draw a garage." We connected immediately. That's exactly what my introduction to art was: we had to walk through the field behind the school, sit down, and draw the garage on the other side of the fence. AWFUL! As I read through (this was a while ago), he began to explain a point using a round table. I thought, Phooey! this is the kind of stupid stuff I always got in geometry. But I found myself thinking about what Frankel said over the next few days, went back and reread the section, and I got it! Fantastic. Then I remembered my CalcII prof, a strange yet fascinating guy. One day he walked into class, drew a backward L on the board and marked point A on the horizontal line and B on the vertical. His question: what was the shortest distance between the two points. The class groaned & tuned out. Two of us listened fascinated while he 'proved' it was a line composed of tiny incremental steps. A great lesson in thinking. Wish I could have had him for more classes. Thank you Edward Frankel for getting me thinking again.

I expected this book to be yet another popular mathematics book explaining some fascinating mathematical subject at a level that most readers can partially understand. But this book is different. It does try to communicate the ideas in the Langlands Program, but for most readers, including me (a mathematically trained computer scientist), that material remains inaccessible. That is OK. The real subject of this book is the love and passion of mathematicians and the wonder of the profound connection between mathematics and the natural world. I appreciate the fact that the author does not strain to simplify the deepest material down to my level. I get great pleasure out of getting the

flavor of material that is over my head, and understanding in that indirect way how vastly more mathematics is known to the specialists than I will ever know, and yet how much more there is that none of them even knows.

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