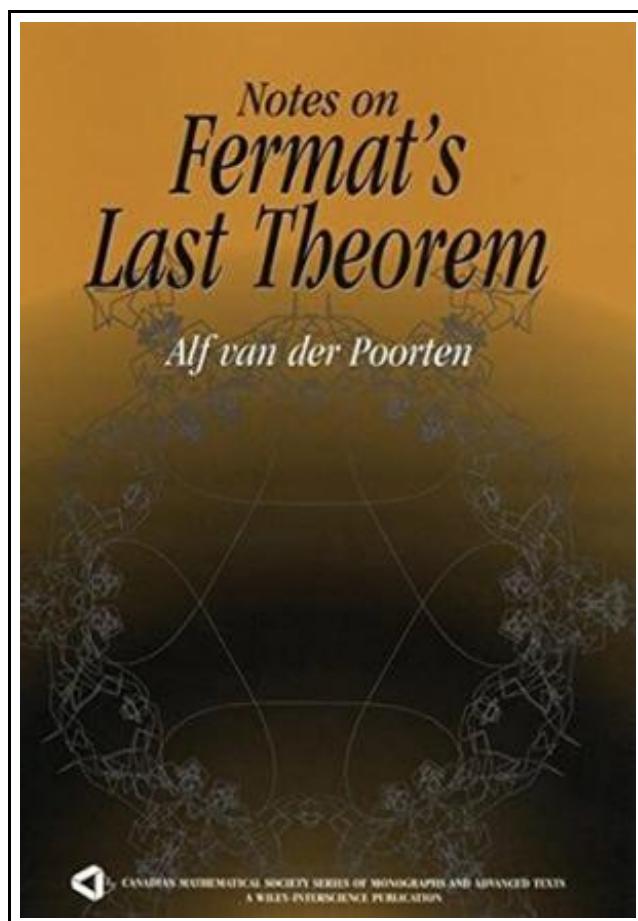


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Wiley-Interscience. Hardcover. Book Condition: New. Hardcover. 240 pages. Dimensions: 9.4in. x 6.1in. x 0.9in. Around 1637, the French jurist Pierre de Fermat scribbled in the margin of his copy of the book *Arithmetica* what came to be known as Fermat's Last Theorem, the most famous question in mathematical history. Stating that it is impossible to split a cube into two cubes, or a fourth power into two fourth powers, or any higher power into two like powers, but not leaving behind the marvelous proof he claimed to have had, Fermat prompted three and a half centuries of mathematical inquiry which culminated only recently with the proof of the theorem by Andrew Wiles. This book offers the first serious treatment of Fermat's Last Theorem since Wiles' proof. It is based on a series of lectures given by the author to celebrate Wiles' achievement, with each chapter explaining a separate area of number theory as it pertains to Fermat's Last Theorem. Together, they provide a concise history of the theorem as well as a brief discussion of Wiles' proof and its implications. Requiring little more than one year of university mathematics and some interest in formulas, this overview provides many useful tips and cites numerous references for those who desire more mathematical detail. The book's most distinctive feature is its easy-to-read, humorous style, complete with examples, anecdotes, and some of the lesser-known mathematics underlying the newly discovered proof. In the author's own words, the book deals with serious mathematics without being too serious about it. Alf van der Poorten demystifies mathematical research, offers an intuitive approach to the subject—loosely suggesting various definitions and unexplained facts—and invites the reader to fill in the missing links in some of the mathematical claims. Entertaining, controversial, even outrageous, this book not only tells us why, in all...

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