



# Nonplussed!: Mathematical Proof of Implausible Ideas

*Julian Havil*

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Math--the application of reasonable logic to reasonable assumptions--usually produces reasonable results. But sometimes math generates astonishing paradoxes--conclusions that seem completely unreasonable or just plain impossible but that are nevertheless demonstrably true. Did you know that a losing sports team can become a winning one by adding worse players than its opponents? Or that the thirteenth of the month is more likely to be a Friday than any other day? Or that cones can roll unaided uphill? In *Nonplussed!*--a delightfully eclectic collection of paradoxes from many different areas of math--popular-math writer Julian Havil reveals the math that shows the truth of these and many other unbelievable ideas.

*Nonplussed!* pays special attention to problems from probability and statistics, areas where intuition can easily be wrong. These problems include the vagaries of tennis scoring, what can be deduced from tossing a needle, and disadvantageous games that form winning combinations. Other chapters address everything from the historically important Torricelli's Trumpet to the mind-warping implications of objects that live on high dimensions. Readers learn about the colorful history and people associated with many of these problems in addition to their mathematical proofs.

*Nonplussed!* will appeal to anyone with a calculus background who enjoys popular math books or puzzles.

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