



Prime Mystery: The Life and Mathematics of Sophie Germain

Dora E. Musielak

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Discovered by Lagrange, Sophie Germain (1776-1831) stood right between Gauss and Legendre, and both publicly recognized her scientific efforts. Unlike her female predecessors and contemporaries, Sophie Germain was an impressive mathematician and made lasting contributions to both number theory and the theories of vibration and elasticity. She was able to walk with ease across the bridge between the fields of pure mathematics and engineering physics. Though isolated and snubbed by her peers, she almost single-handedly changed the notion of the woman scholar. Sophie Germain was the first woman to win the prize of mathematics from the French Academy of Sciences. She is also the first and only woman who contributed to the proof of Fermat's Last Theorem. *Prime Mystery: The Life and Mathematics of Sophie Germain* paints a rich portrait of the brilliant and complex woman, including the mathematics she developed, her associations with Gauss, Legendre, and other leading researchers, and the tumultuous times in which she lived. In *Prime Mystery*, author Dora Musielak has done the impossible. She has chronicled Sophie Germain's brilliance through her life and work in mathematics, in a way that is simultaneously informative, comprehensive, and accurate.

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