

The Monty Hall Problem: The Remarkable Story of Math's Most Contentious Brain Teaser

Jason Rosenhouse

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the monty hall problem

THE REMARKABLE STORY OF MATH'S MOST
CONTENTIOUS BRAIN TEASER



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Jason Rosenhouse : The Monty Hall Problem: The Remarkable Story of Math's Most Contentious Brain Teaser before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Monty Hall Problem: The Remarkable Story of Math's Most Contentious Brain Teaser:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. great storytelling and a fascinating story By Nathan Slaughter The writing is phenomenal - Rosenhouse tells a fun story. If you like to read stories about scientists, mathematicians, and

old philosophical debates then this should be perfect for you. I don't want to spoil this for you, so I'll step carefully here. Once you have seen the solution you'll probably realize that the answer is simple. But so many smart people continue fighting to be right even when the answer is simple and provable. I like to tell people about the Monty Hall problem and see what answer they come up with. And it's really fun to see how they're still baffled so often when you show them the answer. The best part is that some of the most befuddled people are the ones you'd think would already know. If you haven't ever seen the solution before then Rosenhouse really should get the first crack at telling you, because he tells a great story. Unlike Malcolm Gladwell and the Freakonomics guys, he's telling the story of something that's truly counter-intuitive. And he does it very well.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.
Picking the Right Door By Jon K. Rosenhouse
Probability can be one of the most counter-intuitive concepts our brains struggle with. This book by mathematician Jason Rosenhouse explores one of the most famous brain twisters of modern times and along the way walks the reader through the basic ideas of calculating chance in a lucid and entertaining manner. Not everyone will be comfortable with all chapters (the author admits this), but with its exploration of history, sociology, and psychology of the Monty Hall problem, there is enough in this book to satisfy everyone. Plus you probably can use it to win a few bar bets.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Variants for the enthusiastic reader By David J. Aldous
This book is not aimed at someone with a casual interest in the basic version of the problem. The mathematician author has clearly enjoyed examining and explaining numerous variants -- to quote a reviewer elsewhere "progressive versions, Bayesian treatments of the problems, computer simulations, quantum versions, information-theoretic representations, common cognitive fallacies associated with the problem, and much more". So the book is aimed at a reader who enjoys brain-teaser style logic puzzles, is capable of following (sometimes heavy) undergraduate math, and is willing to follow a trail around very diverse topics. If that sounds appealing to you then you will enjoy the book.

Mathematicians call it the Monty Hall Problem, and it is one of the most interesting mathematical brain teasers of recent times. Imagine that you face three doors, behind one of which is a prize. You choose one but do not open it. The host--call him Monty Hall--opens a different door, always choosing one he knows to be empty. Left with two doors, will you do better by sticking with your first choice, or by switching to the other remaining door? In this light-hearted yet ultimately serious book, Jason Rosenhouse explores the history of this fascinating puzzle. Using a minimum of mathematics (and none at all for much of the book), he shows how the problem has fascinated philosophers, psychologists, and many others, and examines the many variations that have appeared over the years. As Rosenhouse demonstrates, the Monty Hall Problem illuminates fundamental mathematical issues and has abiding philosophical implications. Perhaps most important, he writes, the problem opens a window on our cognitive difficulties in reasoning about uncertainty.

"Excellent survey...If one wants to see "The Full Monty," this is definitely the book to buy. Highly recommended." -- Choice
"Those intrigued by the original Monty Hall problem will find that this book is a superb source of variants of the problem, pays careful attention to the hidden assumptions behind the problems, and is written in a witty accessible style that never lapses into flippancy. This is a model of how to accessibly introduce mathematical material at an elementary level that is not a mere popularization of the material. A virtue of the book is that it goes beyond mere exposition to make some serious contributions to the discussion, including a proof that the strategy of switching at the last minute in the progressive version is uniquely optimal and a discussion of some philosophical treatments on the topic." -- Mathematical Sciences
"...a masterful job of tracing the problem back to its origin...much more comprehensive and wide-ranging than the many articles on the subject that have dribbled out...Rosenhouse offers readers much to think about concerning the perplexing question of whether to stick or switch." -- Science
"Rosenhouse is both entertaining and precise in his writing. He carefully makes the point that conditional probability is difficult to intuitively process, often because what is being conditioned on is not clear. The book is both informative and an entertaining journey for both those schooled in probability and those with little background in probability." -- The American Statistician
"Overall, this book is an excellent example of how a problem that is understandable by all can be used to introduce key concepts in mathematics and probability. If you are already familiar with the problem, this book will make you think more deeply about the nature of chance, and what Rosenhouse describes as "the perils of intuition". If Monty Hall is new to you, then you have a choice: stick or switch? You may be surprised." -- Tom Fanshawe, Lancaster
About the Author
Jason Rosenhouse is an Associate Professor of Mathematics at James Madison University in Virginia.