The Parable of the Square Root

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There once was a number named Four. Four was very proud of being a four, and even prouder that he was related to 28, a perfect number. And yet, Four wasn't at all popular, because all other numbers thought he was a square.

One day, as Four was walking along the number line, he ran into a friend of his, Nine. Even though Nine was a little odd, Four liked him because he was a square too. Four and Nine got to talking about how square they were, trying to get to the root of their problem.

"Honestly," said Four matter-of-factly. "Some of these numbers are being so silly. How can they be so irrational?"

"I can't figure it out either" Nine agreed. "It just doesn't add up. Anyone can tell you that."

"Well, maybe not any*one*" Four corrected. "Still, I get your point. Mathematically speaking, we squares should be more likeable than all those primes."

"Well, we *are* rational, and some people may argue that a large number of rationals spend a lot of time repeating themselves . . ."

"Not I!" declared Four vehemently. "I am terminating, and proud of it!"

Just then, the fraction 1/3 went by.

"Oh, Four!" she cried, whole-heartedly. "You're sop square it's sickening. If you're so terminating, why don't you drop dead?"

Later that evening, Four was sleeping off a hangover when there was a knock at his point. There was obviously some number there to see him. He rolled over in bed and tried to pretend the number was imaginary. But no, it was definitely a real number. From his set Four could see the big R on the visitor's shirt.

"Is anyone in this set?" the visitor called.

"Null" said Four sleepily, rolling over and intending to go back to sleep.

However, it suddenly occurred to Four that this might be one of the workers that was going to put an addition on his set.

"Honestly" Four grumbled, pulling on a robe. "These Union Men think they can get away with anything."

But when Four opened his set, he discovered the real number was not alone. With him were two other numbers.

"Okay" said Four angrily. "What's your angle?"

"Not much" spoke up the tall one with the big V for Vertex on his shirt. "We are here to work on your set."

"Do you have a degree?" asked Four suspiciously.

"Inside and Out" replied the big V proudly. "We are here to fix up your domain for you and your little subsets."

"I don't have any subsets" Four replied nastily. "I live alone."

After leaving the men to work on the set, asking only that they make sure that the set was closed before leaving. four walked across the deserted plane. All of a sudden, Four felt very unique. The remark about his empty subsets had hit home, for Four was very lonely. In fact, the last person he had had one-to-one correspondence with was his mother, who had been the fraction 22/7. "And he had to stop asking her questions because she would just go on and on without any order at all." He had to admit he did miss her pie, though.

The Parable of the Square Root continued

As Four crossed the Matrix, a six deliberately asked him if he had change for a five. Naturally, Four being smaller than a five, he did not. But, rather than admit failure to a six he borrowed a ten from a column of tens marching by.

He then went past a meeting of odd numbers where his friend Nine was trying to fit in. But alas, being a square was too much for Nine to overcome, and he and his family were thrown out.

"Well" remarked Four sadly, "I see they're casting out nines again."

He walked over to his friend.

"What happened Nine?"

"Oh" said Nine, brushing off his coat, "I got in a fight with a negative nine, and they cancelled my membership."

"Well, it's your own fault" said Four haughtily. "You should never have tried to argue with your identity."

"Quite the inverse" Nine protested. "I was just trying to get along with an opposite. But" he sighed, "the total effect was a big fat zero."

Four left his friend and continued down the number line alone. things were really looking bleak. Was he being too much of a culture snob, wanting to speak to only numbers of his standing? Yet, he couldn't help thinking he should just associate with his equals, and not his so called equivalents.

Then all of a sudden he saw her. She was a cute little number with a sharp simple curve. It was love at first sight for our lonely little Four. But then, he noticed with horror that the number of his dreams was not a square. In fact, when you rooted out her capabilities, she wasn't even a rational! She was just a decimal fraction, and a non-repeating one at that. Four realized with a pang that there was an infinity of irrational denseness between them. He tried to forget he, but he couldn't. Finitely, he asked her for a date. After that, things really began to add up. Sum of the other squares made fun of him, and called him a simple number who only had part of a woman, but Four didn't mind her being a fraction. and because she was non-repeating, she never became boring or too well-defined. She on the other hand, found him a daring digit and admired his decomposition into prime factors. They were obviously an ordered pair.

One beautiful day (for is not Mathematics beautiful?) Four asked his little fraction to marry him. all the numbers were invited to the Union, whether or not they were square like Four or irrational like his bride-to-be. Four was no longer a square in a absolute value, and soon gathered around him a circle of friends.

They were married before a Cardinal Number (for the blushing little bride was very religious) and honeymooned in an empty set somewhere in an Undefined Universe.

After a while, they extended their domain with repeated addition. First they had twin primes, one named Addition and one named Subtraction. Four was hoping for squares, but at least these were rational. He was very glad, though, that they were rational, because as much as he love his little non-repeating fraction, most irrationals usually weren't too bright. Finally, his fractions gave birth to a bouncing baby number. Not only that, but the number was a male and a rational square. Four was very proud of his son and the fact that he was a natural little integer.

"There's a kid you can count on!" said Four proudly to his wife.

At the same time he was careful to pat the twin primes lovingly on the head.

"But don't you worry, little ones" he told the girls. "My love will be distributive over all of you."

"Sure, that's okay for Addition" Subtraction sobbed. "But what about me?" Also, whatever distributes over addition distributes over subtraction if the number system is not restricted unduly. this family has to belong to the real-number set.

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