

PART ONE
BASIC THEORY

Groningen,
January 1, 1697

AN ANNOUNCEMENT

“I, Johann Bernoulli, greet the most clever mathematicians in the world. Nothing is more attractive to intelligent people than an honest, challenging problem whose possible solution will bestow fame and remain as a lasting monument. Following the example set by Pascal, Fermat, etc., I hope to earn the gratitude of the entire scientific community by placing before the finest mathematicians of our time a problem which will test their methods and the strength of their intellect. If someone communicates to me the solution of the proposed problem, I shall then publicly declare him worthy of praise.”