



# The Unfinished Game: Pascal, Fermat, and the Seventeenth-Century Letter that Made the World Modern

*Keith Devlin*

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In the early seventeenth century, the outcome of something as simple as a dice roll was consigned to the realm of unknowable chance. Mathematicians largely agreed that it was impossible to predict the probability of an occurrence. Then, in 1654, Blaise Pascal wrote to Pierre de Fermat explaining that he had discovered how to calculate risk. The two collaborated to develop what is now known as probability theory—a concept that allows us to think rationally about decisions and events.

In *The Unfinished Game*, Keith Devlin masterfully chronicles Pascal and Fermat's mathematical breakthrough, connecting a centuries-old discovery with its remarkable impact on the modern world.

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