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"Numbers Man"

Lawrence Mark Lesser
University of Texas, El Paso

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more clearly than in the reaction of Lobachevski's colleagues to his paper. A dejected Lobachevski felt that they understood nothing about what he said and wondered whether all his effort had been wasted.

As mentioned, the book ends at this point, with the rejection of Lobachevski's work. However, there is an epilogue quoting the message on the coat-of-arms granted to him on 29 April 1838 when he was admitted to the peerage for his outstanding services to science.

One wonders whether geniuses such as Einstein and Lobachevski, with their deep concentration for long periods of time on mathematical and scientific ideas to the exclusion of almost everything else, miss out on a lot of the good things in life. Well, don't we all,

especially those of us with mediocre minds? What could be a greater thing in life than being responsible for creations such as theirs?

One also wonders how much of this interesting book, with its great detail of events in the early and middle life of Nikolai Lobachevski, is fact, and how much is fiction. As the artist formerly known as "Fats" often said, "One never knows, do one?" one probably doesn't care too much either. It is a delightful book to read; I'm sure the essentials are essentially true, and it provides a taste of the academic and political environment under which Lobachevski lived, learned, and created.

What of the silver horse-shoe in the book's title? That's your assignment for tomorrow.

"Numbers Man"

Lawrence Mark Lesser

My father got to know my mother while tutoring her in college calculus; this poem is a "math love song" I imagine he could have written for her.

My mother fed me formula, it prob'ly was a sine
I'd grow up to adore ya, your figure and your mind.
So let's go to dinner; I'll compute the tip.
Then we'll go shopping and find the bargains quick, 'cause

One thing to count on, honey, understand
I can handle your figure; lemme be your numbers man!

Give me 4 crayons and I'll color in the map.
We'll find the fast way to Vegas and win big at blackjack,
It takes 7 shuffles to mix up the pack--
Ask me how I know and I tell you that...

One thing to count on, honey, understand
I can handle your figure; lemme be your numbers man!

Hey, I see you hesitating--do I come across as calculating?
But I can take your heart so high--I know so many ways to multiply!

I love equality, and I know the value of place.
I got love that's unbounded 'round this finite space!
Lemme tie your hair with ribbons that only have one side.
Maybe that way your bad hair day becomes a day that's prime!

I'll never say "take a number"
Lemme be your numbers man!