

A Letter to Niccolò Fontana de Brescia

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A Letter to Niccolò Fontana de Brescia

Jessica Huey

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Dear Niccolò,

How are you?

I have heard much about you.

I wish I could say it was all good things,

But I cannot.

As for how I am doing,

I wish I could say it is all good things,

But I cannot.

I heard about your solution to the cubic.

How it must hurt to gain so much knowledge,

Yet not be credited for sharing it with the world.

Or, to be more accurate, when Cardano shared it with the world.

I heard about your other contributions to math,

Like arithmetic and number theory, the tetrahedron's volume, and translating Euclid's *Elements*.

How it must hurt to master math to such depth,

Yet not be honored for it.

I heard about how you got your scars,

The ones that you hide behind your beard, as well as the ones inside that no one can see.

How it must hurt to go through what you did,

And speak but not be heard.

I heard about the loneliness.

I know it hurts.

It hurts me too.

I don't want to sympathize

Because sympathy can hurt,

And it can add to the pain that may already be there.

I want to empathize

Because empathy can heal.

With understanding comes relief

And with relief comes healing.

I too have spoken and not been heard.

I too have shared and not been credited.

I too have lived and been hurt.

I hope this brings you some relief.

I hope this doesn't pain you to hear this, all these years (and centuries) later.

Your deathday happens to be in exactly a week.

I hope that by remembering you and sharing your story, this brings strength to you

As well as to others.

Someday we may meet, in the sky,

And you can tell me your story,

Yourself.

From,

Jessica

P.S. I wish I could've been at your math battles. Will you tell me about them someday?