

A Letter to Niccolò Fontana de Brescia

Jessica Huey

Student, Cal State Fullerton

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarship.claremont.edu/jhm>



Part of the [Arts and Humanities Commons](#), and the [Mathematics Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Jessica Huey, "A Letter to Niccolò Fontana de Brescia," *Journal of Humanistic Mathematics*, Volume 10 Issue 1 (January 2020), pages 541-543. DOI: 10.5642/jhummath.202001.31. Available at: <https://scholarship.claremont.edu/jhm/vol10/iss1/31>

©2020 by the authors. This work is licensed under a Creative Commons License.

JHM is an open access bi-annual journal sponsored by the Claremont Center for the Mathematical Sciences and published by the Claremont Colleges Library | ISSN 2159-8118 | <http://scholarship.claremont.edu/jhm/>

The editorial staff of JHM works hard to make sure the scholarship disseminated in JHM is accurate and upholds professional ethical guidelines. However the views and opinions expressed in each published manuscript belong exclusively to the individual contributor(s). The publisher and the editors do not endorse or accept responsibility for them. See <https://scholarship.claremont.edu/jhm/policies.html> for more information.

A Letter to Niccolò Fontana de Brescia

Jessica Huey

jhuey@csu.fullerton.edu

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?