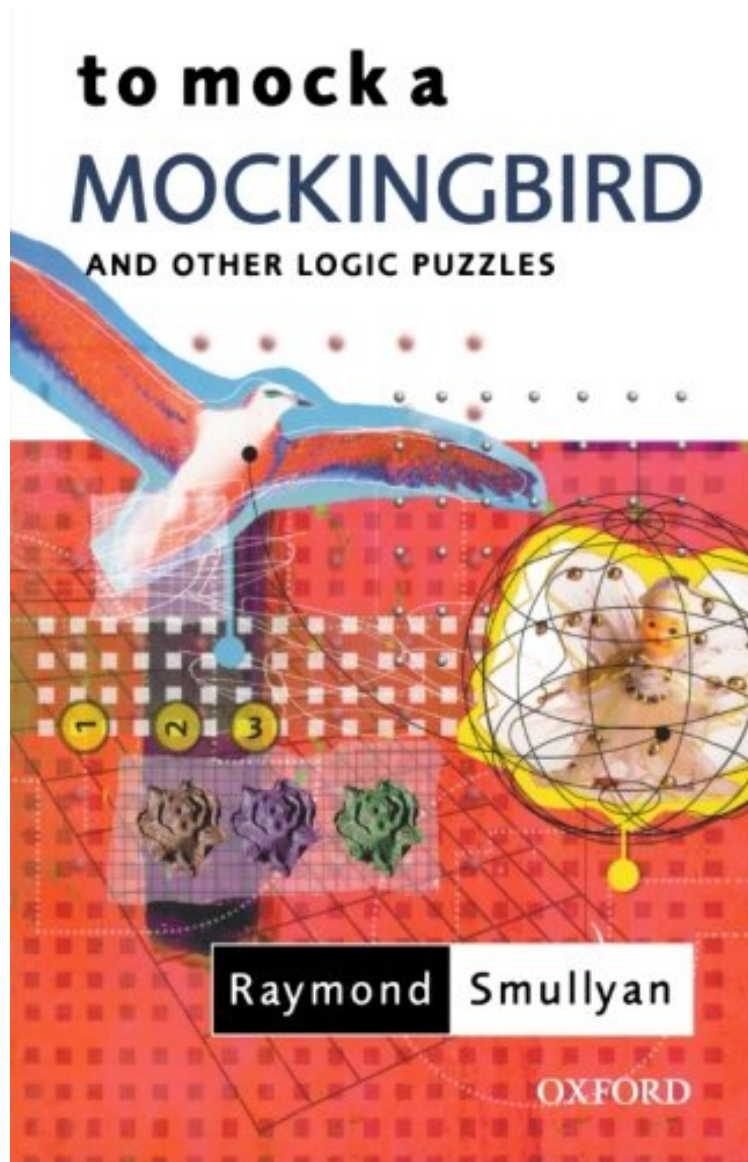


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To Mock a Mockingbird

Raymond Smullyan

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Raymond Smullyan : To Mock a Mockingbird before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised To Mock a Mockingbird:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Wonderful book, given the right audience By Michael Vanier Ray Smullyan is a logician who is most famous for his many books on puzzles, often of the Knight/Knave variety involving subtle logical reasoning. This is another puzzle book (previously very hard to find, so kudos to for putting out a Kindle edition), but it's quite different from his other books. Although the first two parts consist of logical

puzzles like in his other books, the rest of the book is an exploration of a rather esoteric area of mathematics called combinatory logic (CL). What this book really is is a course in CL taught through puzzles. Some of the puzzles are easy, but many are quite hard, and most of the problems ask you to prove some property of CL, so if writing proofs is not your thing, you probably won't enjoy this book. Smullyan very cleverly disguises his subject by treating combinators (the fundamental object of study in CL) as birds in a forest singing songs to each other (that may sound weird, but trust me, it works). CL has a number of important connections to topics in logic and computer science, and in fact I got to this book because of my interest in functional programming, where ideas from CL crop up quite frequently. Some readers without this background might find the book rather dry and abstract, but I enjoy it greatly. If you are interested in the subject, and/or if you like writing mathematical proofs, you'll probably enjoy this book too. It's also a nice painless way to get into the process of writing mathematical proofs, or to see if this is something you might like. I'm very happy I have this book, because good material on combinatory logic is hard to find, and this book is a fun read. Oh, and being Smullyan, he can't help but lead you to an exploration of Godel's incompleteness theorems by the end of the book, and he touches on many important topics in logic and computation theory along the way. Certainly this must be one of the most unusual and profound puzzle books ever written, but it's not for the faint of heart. If you manage to get through the entire book and solve most of the problems correctly, you should definitely consider a career in mathematics and/or computer science.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. THE introduction to combinatory logic By Customer I know about R. Smullyan since the publication of his book "Formal Systems" which I read in the seventies and which is a jewel in the subject. To Mock a Mockingbird is the best introduction to combinatory logic I know and moreover a phantastic introduction to functionnal programming as well. Given the importance of functional programming in such software as the Coq proof assistant (this is the software in which Georges Gonthier and Benjamin Werner formally proved the four color problem, and the language of this assistant, Gallina is a typed functional programming language), combinatory logic is gaining in importance itself. Smullyan with this book opens a door to a true and deep understanding of what is going on, and moreover, in quite entertaining manner!

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Awesome for the combinatorialist in your life! By Erica Rose Bought this for my mathematician partner for Xmas, as he's off to a ton of conferences in the next few months. He loves it, perfect for his nerdy and gorgeous brain.

In this entertaining and challenging collection of logic puzzles, Raymond Smullyan - author of *Forever Undecided* - continues to delight and astonish us with his gift for making available, in the thoroughly pleasurable form of puzzles, some of the most important mathematical thinking of our time. In the first part of the book, he transports us once again to that wonderful realm where knights, knaves, twin sisters, quadruplet brothers, gods, demons, and mortals either always tell the truth or always lie, and where truth-seekers are set a variety of fascinating problems. The section culminates in an enchanting and profound metapuzzle in which Inspector Craig of Scotland Yard gets involved in a search for the Fountain of Youth on the Island of Knights and Knaves. In the second part of *To Mock a Mockingbird*, we accompany the Inspector on a summer-long adventure into the field of combinatory logic (a branch of logic that plays an important role in computer science and artificial intelligence). His adventure, which includes enchanted forests, talking birds, bird sociologists, and a classic quest, provides for us along the way the pleasure of solving puzzles of increasing complexity until we reach the Master Forest and - thanks to Godel's famous theorem - the final revelation.

About the Author Raymond Smullyan, a well-known mathematician and logician and the author of many books, is Oscar Ewing Professor of Philosophy at Indiana University and Professor Emeritus of the City University of New York-Lehman College and Graduate Center.