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The Cambridge Quintet: A Work of Scientific Speculation

By John L. Casti

Basic Books (AZ). Paperback. Book Condition: New. Paperback. 208 pages. Dimensions: 8.8in. x 6.0in. x 0.7in. In this narrative tour de force, gifted scientist and author John L. Casti contemplates an imaginary evening of intellectual inquiry a sort of My Dinner with not Andre, but five of the most brilliant thinkers of the twentieth century. Imagine, if you will, one stormy summer evening in 1949, as novelist and scientist C. P. Snow, Britain's distinguished wartime science advisor and author of *The Two Cultures*, invites four singular guests to a sumptuous seven-course dinner at his alma mater, Christ's College, Cambridge, to discuss one of the emerging scientific issues of the day: Can we build a machine that could duplicate human cognitive processes? The distinguished guest list for Snow's dinner consists of physicist Erwin Schrodinger, inventor of wave mechanics; Ludwig Wittgenstein, the famous twentieth-century philosopher of language, who posited two completely contradictory theories of human thought in his lifetime; population geneticist and science popularizer J. B. S. Haldane; and Alan Turing, the mathematician and codebreaker who formulated the computing scheme that foreshadowed the logical structure of all modern computers. Capturing not only their unique personalities but also their particular stands on this fascinating issue, Casti dramatically shows what...



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