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The Man Who Tasted Shapes

M.D. Richard E. Cytowic

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In 1980, Richard Cytowic was having dinner at a friend's house, when his host exclaimed, "Oh, dear, there aren't enough points on the chicken." With that casual comment began Cytowic's journey into the condition known as synesthesia.The ten people in one million who are synesthetes are born into a world where one sensation (such as sound) conjures up one or more others (such as taste or color). Although scientists have known about synesthesia for two hundred years, until now the condition has remained a mystery. Extensive experiments with more than forty synesthetes led Richard Cytowic to an explanation of synesthesia--and to a new conception of the organization of the mind, one that emphasized the primacy of emotion over reason.Because there were not enough points on chicken served at a dinner almost two decades ago, Cytowic came to explore a deeper reality that he believes exists in all individuals, but usually below the surface of awareness. In this medical detective adventure, he reveals the brain to be an active explorer, not just a passive receiver, and offers a new view of what it means to be human--a view that turns upside down conventional ideas about reason, emotion, and who we are.* Not for sale in the United Kingdom and Eire

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