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Number theory is one of the few areas of mathematics where problems of substantial interest can be fully described to someone with minimal mathematical background. Solving such problems sometimes requires difficult and deep methods. But this is not a universal phenomenon; many engaging problems can be successfully attacked with little more than one's mathematical bare hands. In this case one says that the problem can be solved in an elementary way. Such elementary methods and the problems to which they apply are the subject of this book.

Not Always Buried Deep is designed to be read and enjoyed by those who wish to explore elementary methods in modern number theory. The heart of the book is a thorough introduction to elementary prime number theory, including Dirichlet's theorem on primes in arithmetic progressions, the Brun sieve, and the Erdős-Selberg proof of the prime number theorem. Rather than trying to present a comprehensive treatise, Pollack focuses on topics that are particularly attractive and accessible. Other topics covered include Gauss's theory of cyclotomy and its applications to rational reciprocity laws, Hilbert's solution to Waring's problem, and modern work on perfect numbers.

The nature of the material means that little is required in terms of prerequisites: The reader is expected to have prior familiarity with number theory at the level of an undergraduate course and a first course in modern algebra (covering groups, rings, and fields). The exposition is complemented by over 200 exercises and 400 references.