

Math Diversion Problem 594

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When I give this talk to a physics audience, I
remove the quotes from my ‘Theorem’.
— Brian Greene

The YouTube video is found at:

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tmjI6P96bVU>
Title: Can you solve this Integration Problem
Presenter: Ankit Physics Gurukul

1 The Problem

Given the relation:

$$t^{\sqrt{t}} = \sqrt{t^t}, \quad (1)$$

solve for the values of t .

2 The Solution

The first step is to get rid of the square root on the RHS:

$$t^{2\sqrt{t}} = t^t. \quad (2)$$

Next, we take the natural logarithm across this equation.

$$2\sqrt{t} \ln t = t \ln t. \quad (3)$$

Clearly, $t = 1$ satisfies this equation but also (1), so it’s a solution. Are there any more?

On dividing through by $\ln t$ and simplifying, we get

$$t^2 - 4t = 0, \quad (4)$$

with obvious solutions $t = 0$ and $t = 4$. That latter solution also works in (1), but the former does not.