

0. A GENIUS AT WORK - Story Preface

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When John Nash was a student at Princeton University, he spent most of his time at Fine Hall (where the Mathematics Department is located). This image provides a view of Fine Hall. It is online via [University of Bristol's School of Mathematics](#).

Professor Lefschetz recruited only brilliant students to study at [Princeton's Fine Hall](#) (the location of the math department). His aim was to help them become the best mathematicians in the world.

Exhorting his students to be independent thinkers, Lefschetz thought originality was "above everything." John Nash completely agreed. He was a loner who loved the theory of games and worked-out math problems in his head, often whistling Bach as he walked around the [Princeton campus](#).

Not content with the merely difficult, [Nash worked](#) on math problems which seemingly had no solution. Most of his contemporaries at [Princeton](#) thought he was "immensely strange" and "arrogant."

One of his graduate students at [M.I.T.](#), where the young professor was a "C.L.E. Moore Instructor," disagreed with those descriptions. Alicia Larde, a beautiful physics student from El Salvador, [fell in love](#) with Nash:

He was very, very good looking, very intelligent...It was a little bit of a hero worship thing.

John and Alicia married in 1957, while Nash (on sabbatical from M.I.T.) spent a year at Princeton's [Institute for Advanced Study](#). (He had been awarded an Alfred P. Sloan grant.)



Dr. Nash recalls this time of his life:

While I was on the academic sabbatical of 1956-1957 I also entered into marriage. Alicia had graduated as a physics major from M.I.T. where we had met and she had a job in the New York City area in 1956-1957. She had been born in El Salvador but came at an early age to the U.S. and she and her parents had long been U.S. citizens, her father being an M.D. and ultimately employed at a hospital operated by the federal government in Maryland.

The following year, Alicia was pregnant with John Charles Martin Nash. Months after that, their world fell apart. John Nash, the genius mathematician, had become John Nash, a paranoid schizophrenic.

He was 30 years old.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/A-GENIUS-AT-WORK-A-Beautiful-Mind>

See [Learning Tasks for this story online at:](#)

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Media Stream



Photo of Nash at Work

Image online, courtesy the [University of Saint Andrews](#), Scotland.

This photo is also included in a book called *I Have a Photographic Memory*, by P R Halmos, published by the American Mathematical Society (Providence, 1987).

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Photo-of-Nash-at-Work>



John and Alicia Nash - Wedding Photo

Image online via the Nash Family.

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Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Image online, Courtesy [Massachusetts Institute of Technology](#).

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