

The Age of the Young Woman

Klaus Puhlmann

Three friends, Alvin, Peter and Leigh, met for coffee in a sidewalk café. They were enjoying their coffee, cake and company. The weather was beautiful and many people were out for a walk. As they were reminiscing about the years gone by, a young, beautiful woman walked past their table. All three had their eyes fixed on her.

Leigh said, "How old do you think she is? I believe she is 23 years old."

"No," Alvin said, "she is younger. She is 22 years old."

Peter shook his head and said, "You are both wrong. She is older than that. I say she is 26 years old."

Unfortunately, they were in no position to determine her age. Neither of them dared to follow her and ask for her age. One week later, Leigh attended a party at one of his colleague's place where he noticed that same young, beautiful woman in attendance. He recognized her at once. In the course of the evening, he asked several guests if they knew how old she was. One of the guests in attendance knew her age and responded to Leigh's question with a number. "Just imagine," Leigh said, "none of us had guessed her age correctly. One of us was out by one year, another one was out by two years and the third one was out by three years."

Do you know the age of this young woman?

Michael Stifel (1487–1567)

The sum of two numbers is 19; the sum of their squares is 205. What are the two numbers?
