

**EDWIN A. ABBOTT**

ILLUSTRATED

FLATLAND:  
A ROMANCE  
OF MANY  
DIMENSIONS

# Table of Contents

## PART I: THIS WORLD “Be patient, for the world is broad and wide.”

Section 1. Of the Nature of Flatland

Section 2. Of the Climate and Houses in Flatland

Section 3. Concerning the Inhabitants of Flatland

Section 4. Concerning the Women

Section 5. Of our Methods of Recognizing one another

Section 6. Of Recognition by Sight

Section 7. Concerning Irregular Figures

Section 8. Of the Ancient Practice of Painting

Section 9. Of the Universal Colour Bill

Section 10. Of the Suppression of the Chromatic  
Sedition

Section 11. Concerning our Priests

Section 12. Of the Doctrine of our Priests

## PART II: OTHER WORLDS “O brave new worlds, that have such people in them!”

Section 13. How I had a Vision of Lineland

Section 14. How I vainly tried to explain the nature of  
Flatland

Section 15. Concerning a Stranger from Spaceland

Section 16. How the Stranger vainly endeavoured to  
reveal to me in words the mysteries of Spaceland

Section 17. How the Sphere, having in vain tried words,  
resorted to deeds

Section 18. How I came to Spaceland, and what I saw  
there

Section 19. How, though the Sphere shewed me other  
mysteries of Spaceland, I still desired more; and what  
came of it

Section 20. How the Sphere encouraged me in a Vision

Section 21. How I tried to teach the Theory of Three Dimensions to my Grandson, and with what success  
Section 22. How I then tried to diffuse the Theory of Three Dimensions by other means, and of the result

Edwin A. Abbott

# **Flatland**

*A Romance of Many  
Dimensions*

With Illustrations by the Author, A  
SQUARE (Edwin A. Abbott)

*Flatland: A Romance of Many Dimensions is a satirical novella by the English schoolmaster and clergyman Edwin Abbott Abbott.*

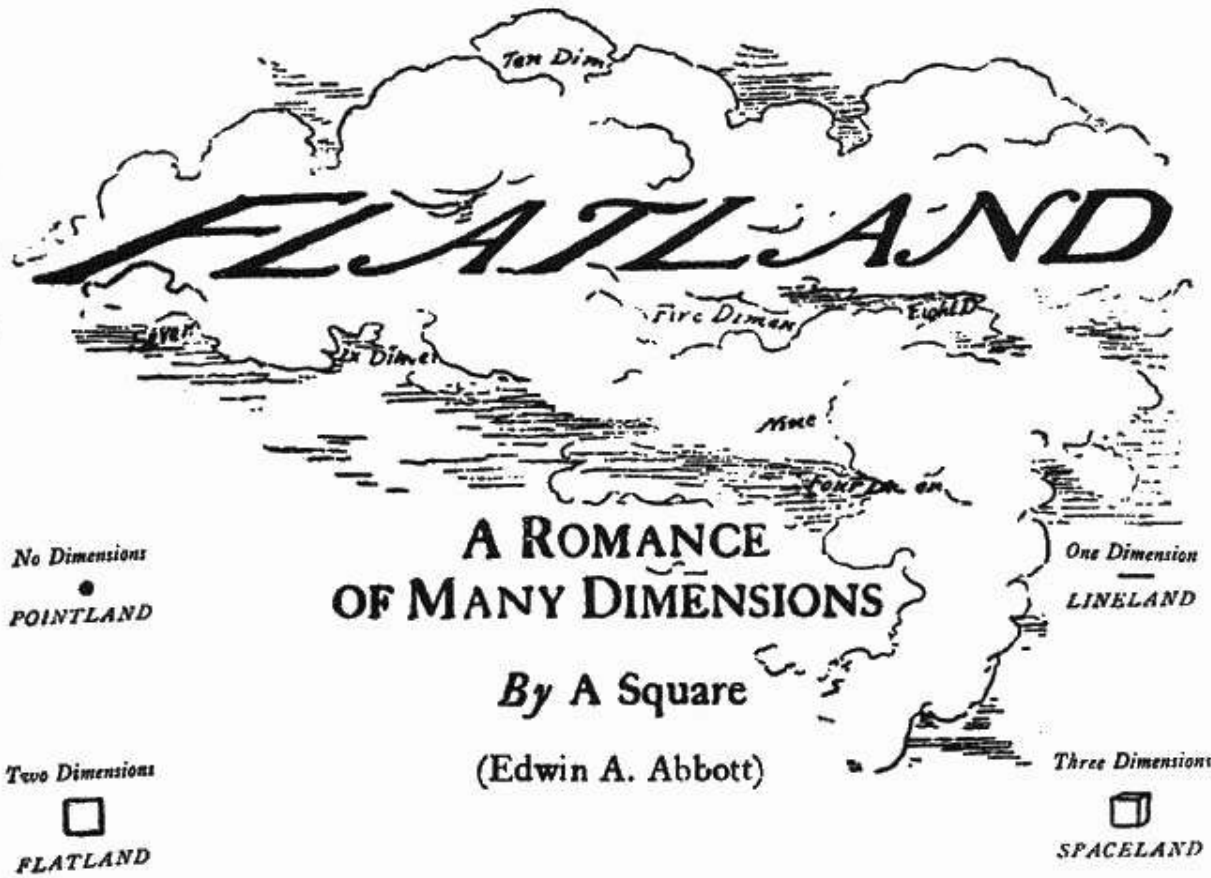
*The story describes a two-dimensional world occupied by geometric figures, whereof women are simple line-segments, while men are polygons with various numbers of sides.*

*Written pseudonymously by "A Square", the book used the fictional two-dimensional world of Flatland to comment on the hierarchy of Victorian culture, but the novella's more enduring contribution is its examination of dimensions.*

*This masterpiece of science (and mathematical) fiction is a delightfully unique and highly entertaining satire that has charmed readers for more than 100 years.*

*With Illustrations by the Author, A SQUARE (Edwin A. Abbott)  
& Modern illustrations by D. Fisher.*

*"O day and night, but this is wondrous strange"*



To  
The Inhabitants of SPACE IN GENERAL  
And H. C. IN PARTICULAR  
This Work is Dedicated  
By a Humble Native of Flatland  
In the Hope that  
Even as he was Initiated into the Mysteries  
Of THREE Dimensions  
Having been previously conversant  
With ONLY TWO  
So the Citizens of that Celestial Region  
May aspire yet higher and higher  
To the Secrets of FOUR FIVE OR EVEN SIX Dimensions  
Thereby contributing  
To the Enlargement of THE IMAGINATION  
And the possible Development  
Of that most rare and excellent Gift of MODESTY  
Among the Superior Races  
Of SOLID HUMANITY

## **PART I: THIS WORLD**

**“Be patient, for the world is  
broad and wide.”**



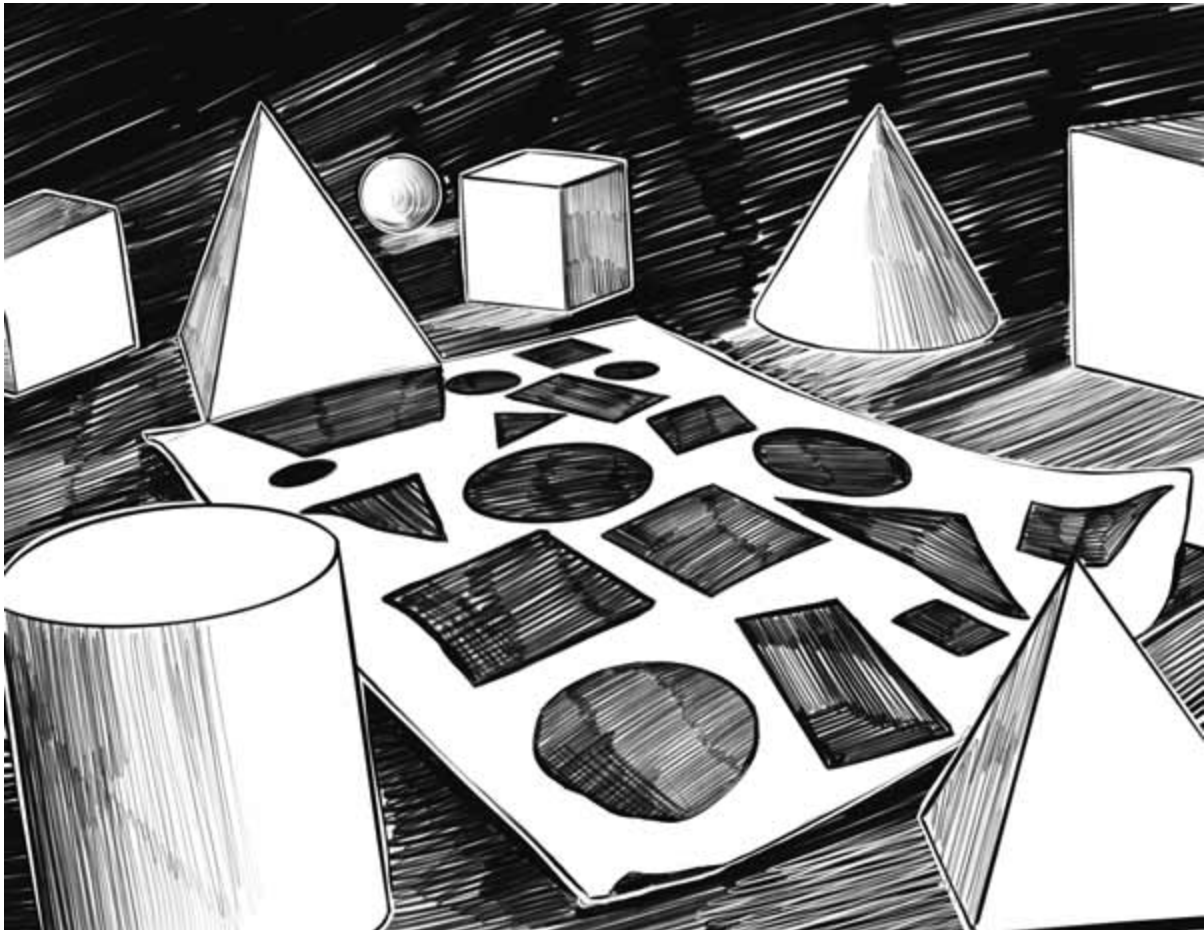
## **Section 1. Of the Nature of Flatland**

I call our world Flatland, not because we call it so, but to make its nature clearer to you, my happy readers, who are privileged to live in Space.



Imagine a vast sheet of paper on which straight Lines, Triangles, Squares, Pentagons, Hexagons, and other figures,

instead of remaining fixed in their places, move freely about, on or in the surface, but without the power of rising above or sinking below it, very much like shadows-only hard and with luminous edges-and you will then have a pretty correct notion of my country and countrymen. Alas, a few years ago, I should have said "my universe": but now my mind has been opened to higher views of things.



In such a country, you will perceive at once that it is impossible that there should be anything of what you call a "solid" kind; but I dare say you will suppose that we could at least distinguish by sight the Triangles, Squares, and other figures, moving about as I have described them. On the contrary, we could see nothing of the kind, not at least so as to distinguish one figure from another. Nothing was visible,

nor could be visible, to us, except Straight Lines; and the necessity of this I will speedily demonstrate.

Place a penny on the middle of one of your tables in Space; and leaning over it, look down upon it. It will appear a circle.

But now, drawing back to the edge of the table, gradually lower your eye (thus bringing yourself more and more into the condition of the inhabitants of Flatland), and you will find the penny becoming more and more oval to your view, and at last when you have placed your eye exactly on the edge of the table (so that you are, as it were, actually a Flatlander) the penny will then have ceased to appear oval at all, and will have become, so far as you can see, a straight line.



The same thing would happen if you were to treat in the same way a Triangle, or Square, or any other figure cut out