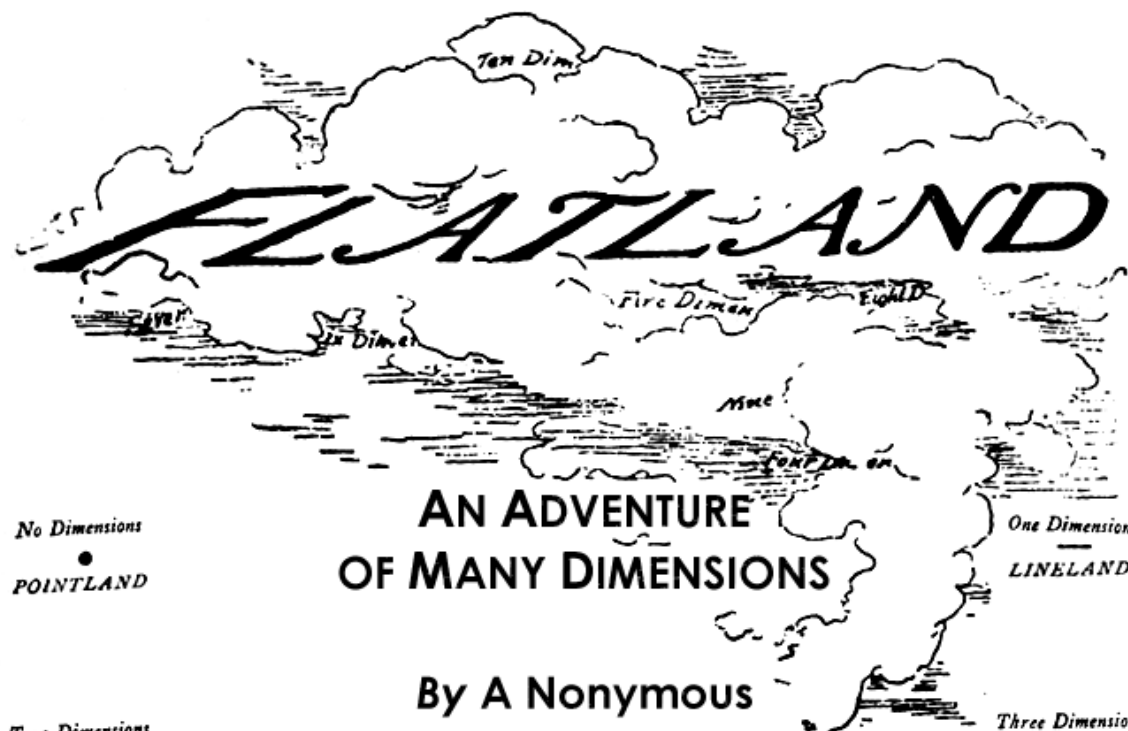


"O day and night, but this is wondrous strange"

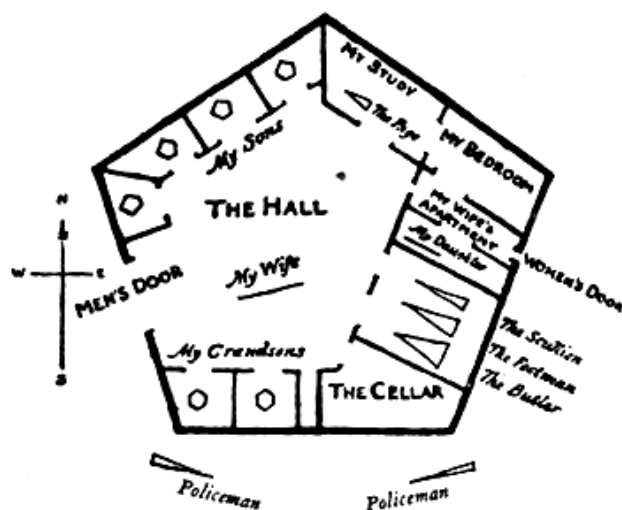


No Dimensions
POINTLAND

Two Dimensions
FLATLAND

One Dimension
LINELAND

Three Dimensions
SPACELAND



"And therefore as a stranger give it welcome."

While the civilized beings of Flatland refer to themselves as humans, this book henceforth refers to all the living inhabitants of Flatland as 'Shapes'. This designation includes the citizens of the various States, as well as the savage Irregulars, monsters of the wilds, and all other creatures that exist in Flatland.

Note that the rules contained in this book present the inhabitants of Flatland as they are presented in the original novel (though, admittedly, some Shapes and other ideas are drawn from later works). Persons who object to the portrayals of the mental abilities of certain Shapes are reminded both of this fact, and also that rules are made to be broken.

This book is a work of homage. Any similarity to any other role-playing game, living or deceased, is purely coincidental.

CONCERNING ATTRIBUTES

Brains

This is the intellect possessed by the Shape. When confronted with a cerebral problem or task of some sort, the Chief Circle decides the minimum number needed for success. The player then rolls their Brains dice, attempting to meet or exceed the target number.

Angle

This is a measure of the penetrating power of a Shape's most formidable angle. When attacking another Shape, the player's Angle dice are rolled to determine the damage inflicted. The number is then subtracted from the victim's Structure. The greater the Angle's dice, the more acute the angle is, and therefore the more penetrating it is.

Charisma

This represents the social capital that a particular Shape has, based primarily on the number of sides he possesses (for only a rare few free-thinkers ignore the weight a Shape's sides exert on his esteemedness), but other factors such as eloquence of speech play a role. This attribute may be used in several ways. When attempting to lie or fool someone, or when humor or other social graces are called for, the Chief Circle again decides on a number that must be reached, and the player's Charisma dice are rolled. When two or more Shapes are vying for the affection or agreement of others, they compete by rolling their own Charisma dice. The Shape with the higher number sways the listener or listeners; a tie either means the crowd is split evenly or a reroll is in order.

Structure

This is a representation of the durability of a Shape's perimeter, and the hardness of the Shape himself. A Shape whose Structure is reduced to zero or below dies.

CONCERNING GAME RULES

When attempting to perform an action quickly (such as manoeuvring or attacking another Shape), all parties involved roll 2d6. The highest rolls act first, while identical rolls act simultaneously.

Each new character can be customised with a total of +3 points to divide between skills, so a beginning Square could have the following bonuses:

- Mathematics +2
- Politeness +1

When the Square wishes to perform a calculation, he rolls 3d6 (Brains) and adds +2 to the result. Similarly, a Charisma roll for polite discourse would gain a +1 modifier to that result.

At the completion of a single session, each player flips a coin. If they call it successfully, the Chief Circle rewards them with a +1 bonus to all future rolls involving one specific skill they performed admirably.

OF THE NATURE OF SHAPES

The greatest length or breadth of a full grown inhabitant of Flatland may be estimated at about eleven of your inches. Twelve inches may be regarded as a maximum.

The following are some of the better-known Shapes, including those that players may choose to be.

Triangles:

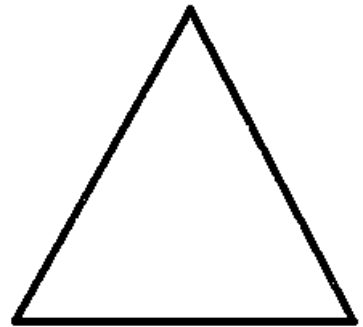
Our Soldiers and Lowest Classes of Workmen are Triangles with two equal sides, each about eleven inches long, and a base or third side so short (often not exceeding half an inch) that they form at their vertices a very sharp and formidable angle. Indeed when their bases are of the most degraded type (not more than the eighth part of an inch in size), they can hardly be distinguished from Straight Lines or Women; so extremely pointed are their vertices. With us, as with you, these Triangles are distinguished from others by being called Isosceles; and by this name I shall refer to them in the following pages.

Our Middle Class consists of Equilateral or Equal-Sided Triangles.

Triangles have 5d6 to distribute between Brains and Angle, with a minimum Angle attribute of 2d6 (an Equilateral Triangle has Brains 3d6 and Angle 2d6).

Charisma 1d6
Durability 16

Triangles are almost always soldiers or guards of some kind. Their deadly points and dull wits keep them at one of the lowest rungs of society. Triangles aspire to have more and more regular children, so that their descendants may one day be perfect Equilateral Triangles.



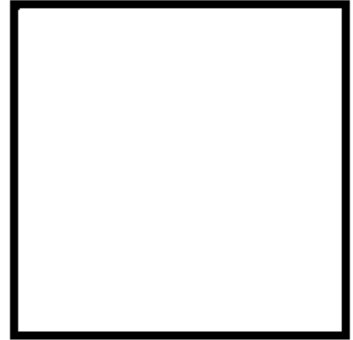
An Equilateral.

Squares and Pentagons:

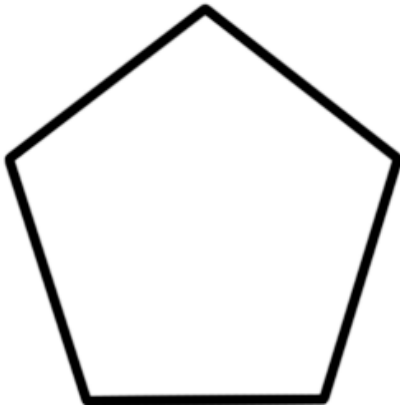
Our Professional Men and Gentlemen are
Squares (to which class I myself belong) and
Five-Sided Figures or Pentagons.

Squares:

Brains 3d6
Angle 1d6
Charisma 2d6
Durability 12



Squares occupy a rung above Triangles (and
in fact, all Squares are the sons of equilateral
Triangles).



Pentagons:

Brains 3d6
Angle 1d6 -1
Charisma 2d6 +1
Durability 12

Pentagons are the sons of Squares,
and thus slightly more revered.

Our Women are Straight Lines.

----- Of the Code of Conduct concerning Women:

1. Every house shall have one entrance in the Eastern side, for the use of Females only; by which all females shall enter “in a becoming and respectful manner” and not by the Men’s or Western door.
2. No Female shall walk in any public place without continually keeping up her Peace-cry, under penalty of death.
3. Any Female, duly certified to be suffering from St.. Vitus’s Dance, fits, chronic cold accompanied by violent sneezing, or any disease necessitating involuntary motions, shall be instantly destroyed.

In some of the States there is an additional Law forbidding Females, under penalty of death, from walking or standing in any public place without moving their backs constantly from right to left so as to indicate their presence to those behind them; others oblige a Woman, when travelling, to be followed by one of her sons, or servants, or by her husband; others confine Women altogether to their houses except during the religious festivals. But it has been found by the wisest of our Circles or Statesmen that the multiplication of restrictions on Females tends not only to the debilitation and diminution of the race, but also to the increase of domestic murders to such an extent that a State loses more than it gains by a too prohibitive Code.

For whenever the temper of the Women is thus exasperated by confinement at home or hampering regulations abroad, they are apt to vent their spleen upon their husbands and children; and in the less temperate climates the whole male population of a village has been sometimes destroyed in one or two hours of simultaneous female outbreak. Hence the Three Laws, mentioned above, suffice for the better regulated States, and may be accepted as a rough exemplification of our Female Code.

Women:

Brains 1d6
Angle 5d6
Charisma 1d6
Durability 1

Women are required by law to sway back and forth and sound a peace-cry as they walk, lest a Shape accidentally impale himself. They are taught that they are nearly mindless, and only after the events of Sphereland do Women have the same Brains as Squares and Pentagons.

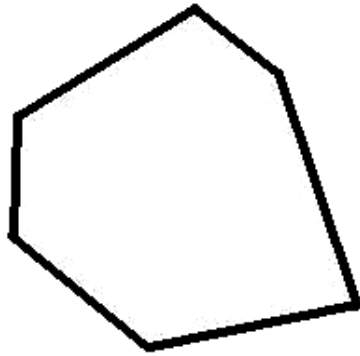
Irregulars:

Brains 2d6

Angle 3d6

Charisma 1d6

Durability 14



‘Irregularity of Figure’ means with us the same as, or more than, a combination of moral obliquity and criminality with you, and is treated accordingly.

Irregulars in Flatland proper are killed at a young age if they cannot be restructured. In the wild lands of the far south, entire civilizations of Irregulars exist.

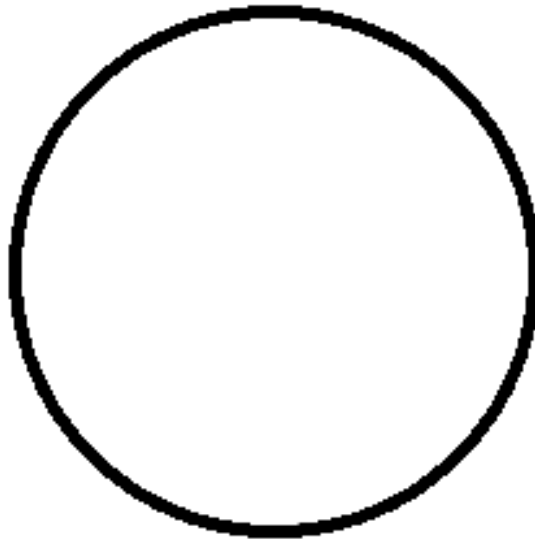
Higher Shapes:

Next above these come the Nobility, of whom there are several degrees, beginning at Six-Sided Figures, or Hexagons, and from thence rising in the number of their sides till they receive the honourable title of Polygonal, or many-sided. Finally when the number of the sides becomes so numerous, and the sides themselves so small, that the figure cannot be distinguished from a circle, he is included in the Circular or Priestly order; and this is the highest class of all.

When I call them Priests, let me not be understood as meaning no more than the term denotes with you. With us, our Priests are Administrators of all Business, Art, and Science; Directors of Trade, Commerce, Generalship, Architecture, Engineering, Education, Statesmanship, Legislature, Morality, Theology; doing nothing themselves, they are the Causes of everything worth doing, that is done by others.

Although popularly everyone called a Circle is deemed a Circle, yet among the better educated Classes it is known that no Circle is really a Circle, but only a Polygon with a very large number of very small sides. As the number of the sides increases, a polygon approximates to a Circle; and, when the number is very great indeed, say for example three or four hundred, it is extremely difficult for the most delicate touch to feel any polygonal angles. Let me say rather, it would be difficult: for, as I have shown above, Recognition by Feeling is unknown among the highest society, and to feel a Circle would be considered a most audacious insult. This habit of abstention from Feeling in the best society enables a Circle the more easily to sustain the veil of mystery in which, from his earliest years, he is wont to enwrap the exact nature of his Perimeter or Circumference. Three feet being the average Perimeter it follows that, in a polygon of three hundred sides each side will be no more than the hundredth part of a foot in length, or little more than the tenth part of an inch; and in a Polygon of six or seven hundred sides the sides are little larger than the diameter of a Spaceland pin-head. It is always assumed, by courtesy, that the Chief Circle for the time being has ten thousand sides.

The ascent of the posterity of the Circles in the social scale is not restricted, as it is among the lower Regular classes, by the Law of Nature which limits the increase of sides to one in each generation. If it were so, the number of sides in a Circle would be a mere question of pedigree and arithmetic, and the four hundred and ninety-seventh descendant of an Equilateral Triangle would necessarily be a Polygon with five hundred sides. But this is not the case. Nature's Law prescribes two antagonistic decrees affecting Circular propagation; first, that as the race climbs higher in the scale of development, so development shall proceed at an accelerated pace; second, that in the same proportion, the race shall become less fertile. Consequently in the home of a Polygon of four or five hundred sides it is rare to find a son; more than one is never seen. On the other hand the son of a five-hundred sided Polygon has been known to possess five hundred and fifty, or even six hundred sides.



The Chief Circle.

OF THE NATURE OF FLATLAND PROPER

Concerning Fog:

While recognition by feeling is acceptable among the uneducated lower classes, among the higher classes and in our temperate climates the art of Sight Recognition is practised.

That this power exists in any regions and for any classes is the result of Fog; which prevails during the greater part of the year in all parts save the torrid zones. That which is with you in Spaceland an unmixed evil, blotting out the landscape, depressing the spirits, and enfeebling the health, is by us recognized as a blessing scarcely inferior to air itself, and as the Nurse of arts and Parent of sciences. But let me explain my meaning, without further eulogies on this beneficent Element.

If Fog were non-existent, all lines would appear equally and indistinguishably clear; and this is actually the case in those unhappy countries in which the atmosphere is perfectly dry and transparent. But wherever there is a rich supply of Fog objects that are at a distance, say of three feet, are appreciably dimmer than those at a distance of two feet eleven inches; and the result is that by careful and constant experimental observation of comparative dimness and clearness, we are enabled to infer with great exactness the configuration of the object observed.

“Permit me to ask you to feel and be felt by my friend Mr. So-and-so” - is still, among the more old-fashioned of our country gentlemen in districts remote from towns, the customary formula for a Flatland introduction. But in the towns, and among men of business, the words “be felt by” are omitted and the sentence is abbreviated to, “Let me ask you to feel Mr. So-and-so”; although it is assumed, of course, that the “feeling” is to be reciprocal. Among our still more modern and dashing young gentlemen - who are extremely averse to superfluous effort and supremely indifferent to the purity of their native language - the formula is still further curtailed by the use of “to feel” in a technical sense, meaning, “to recommend-for-the-purposes-of-feeling-and-being-felt”; and at this moment the “slang” of polite or fast society in the upper classes sanctions such a barbarism as “Mr. Smith, permit me to feel Mr. Jones.”

CONCERNING THE SOUTHWARD ATTRACTION

As with you, so also with us, there are four points of the compass North, South, East, and West.

There being no sun nor other heavenly bodies, it is impossible for us to determine the North in the usual way; but we have a method of our own. By a Law of Nature with us, there is a constant attraction to the South; and, although in temperate climates this is very slight - so that even a Woman in reasonable health can journey several furlongs northward without much difficulty - yet the hampering effect of the southward attraction is quite sufficient to serve as a compass in most parts of our earth. Moreover, the rain (which falls at stated intervals) coming always from the North, is an additional assistance; and in the towns we have the guidance of the houses, which of course have their side-walls running for the most part North and South, so that the roofs may keep off the rain from the North. In the country, where there are no houses, the trunks of the trees serve as some sort of guide. Altogether, we have not so much difficulty as might be expected in determining our bearings.

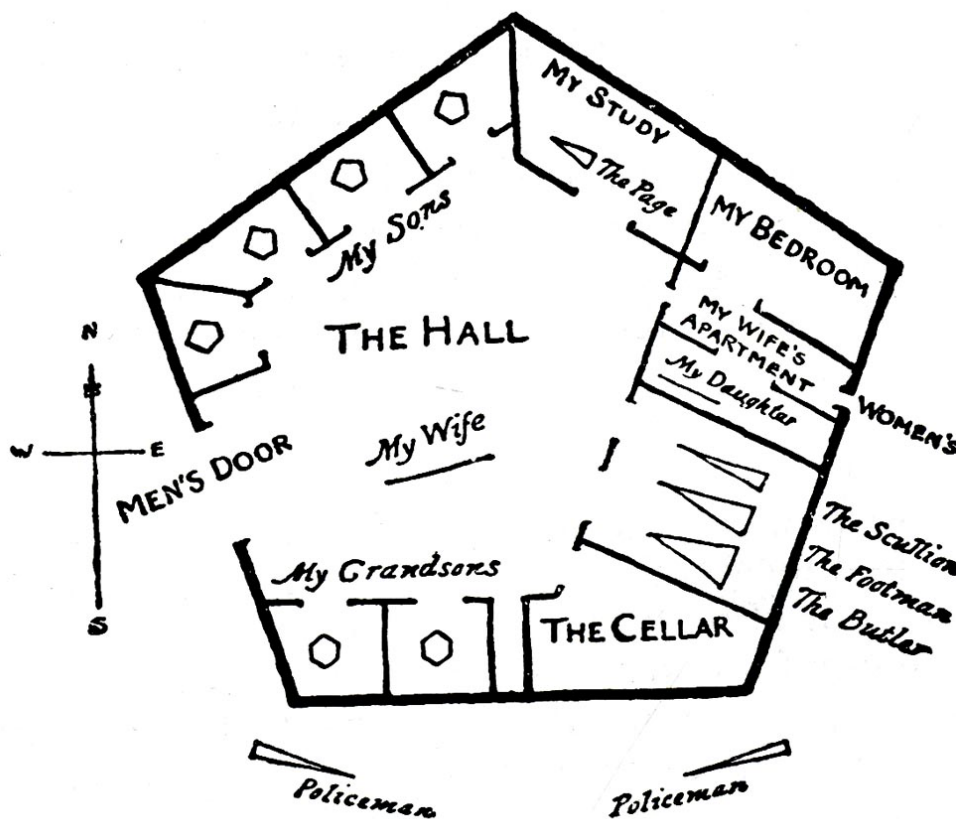
Yet in our more temperate regions, in which the southward attraction is hardly felt, walking sometimes in a perfectly desolate plain where there have been no houses nor trees to guide me, I have been occasionally compelled to remain stationary for hours together, waiting till the rain came before continuing my journey. On the weak and aged, and especially on delicate Females, the force of attraction tells much more heavily than on the robust of the Male Sex, so that it is a point of breeding, if you meet a Lady in the street, always to give her the North side of the way - by no means an easy thing to do always at short notice when you are in rude health and in a climate where it is difficult to tell your North from your South.

Windows there are none in our houses: for the light comes to us alike in our homes and out of them, by day and by night, equally at all times and in all places, whence we know not. It was in old days, with our learned men, an interesting and oft-investigated question, "What is the origin of light?" and the solution of it has been repeatedly attempted, with no other result than to crowd our lunatic asylums with the would-be solvers. Hence, after fruitless attempts to suppress such investigations indirectly by making them liable to a heavy tax, the Legislature, in comparatively recent times, absolutely prohibited them. I - alas; I alone in Flatland - know now only too well the true solution of this mysterious problem; but my knowledge cannot be made intelligible to a single one of my countrymen; and I am mocked at - I, the sole possessor of the truths of Space and of the theory of the introduction of Light from the world of three Dimensions - as if I were the maddest of the mad! But a truce to these painful digressions: let me return to our houses.

The most common form for the construction of a house is five-sided or pentagonal, as in the annexed figure. The two Northern sides RO, OF, constitute the roof, and for the most part have no doors; on the East is a small door for the Women; on the West a much larger one for the Men; the South side or floor is usually doorless.

Square and triangular houses are not allowed, and for this reason. The angles of a Square (and still more those of an equilateral Triangle,) being much more pointed than those of a Pentagon, and the lines of inanimate objects (such as houses) being dimmer than the lines of Men and Women, it follows that there is no little danger lest the points of a square or triangular house residence might do serious injury to an inconsiderate or perhaps absent-minded traveller suddenly therefore, running against them: and as early as the eleventh century of our era, triangular houses were universally forbidden by Law, the only exceptions being fortifications, powder-magazines, barracks, and other state buildings, which it is not desirable that the general public should approach without circumspection.

At this period, square houses were still everywhere permitted, though discouraged by a special tax. But, about three centuries afterwards, the Law decided that in all towns containing a population above ten thousand, the angle of a Pentagon was the smallest house-angle that could be allowed consistently with the public safety. The good sense of the community has seconded the efforts of the Legislature; and now, even in the country, the pentagonal construction has superseded every other. It is only now and then in some very remote and backward agricultural district that an antiquarian may still discover a square house.

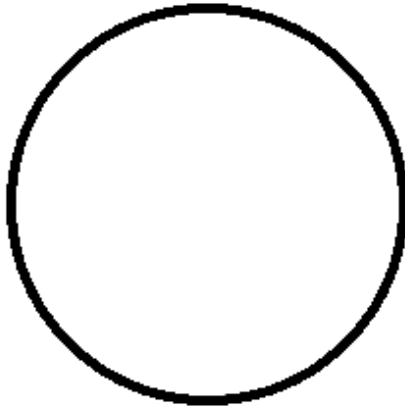


CONCERNING IMPORTANT SHAPES

While players are not allowed to control Circles, their game statistics may be needed at some point. This is a rough guideline - the Chief Circle would have more Brains and Charisma than a standard member of the priestly class.

Priest:

Brains 4d6
Angle 1
Charisma 5d6
Durability 15



Guard:

Brains 1d6
Angle 4d6
Charisma 1d6
Durability 16

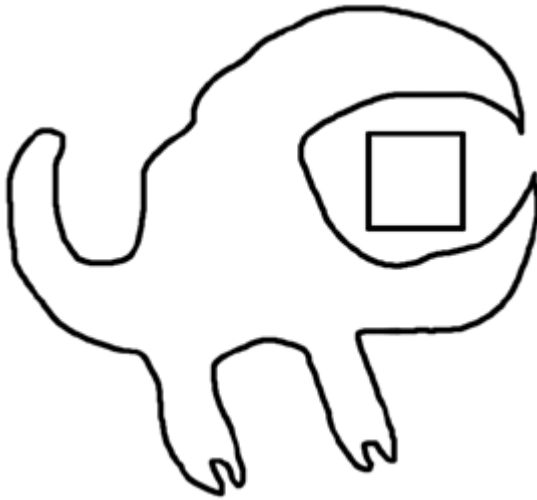


CONCERNING OTHER INHABITANTS

Beyond the civilized regions of Flatland are strange and terrible Shapes. The largest and fiercest are collectively called “dragons”. These creatures manipulate smaller Shapes into a recessed area, where they are then trapped, crushed, and dissolved.

Smaller unintelligent shapes called “wolves” also stalk the wild lands, often in packs.

In the far south lands, whole tribes of Irregulars rule primitive kingdoms.



A Dragon, about to consume its prey.

Dragon:

Brains 1d6

Angle 6d6

Charisma 1d6

Durability 50

Two generations after the events of *Flatland*, the descendants of Wolves have been bred as household pets called Dogs. These are similar in appearance to Wolves, but the angle of their bite is lessened (to 1d6 instead of 3d6).

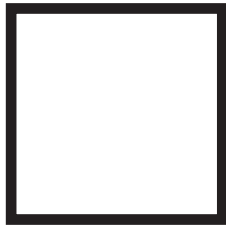
Wolf:

Brains 1d6

Angle 3d6

Charisma 1d6

Durability 20



A Wolf menaces a hapless Square.