

EXCERPT from the play,
GOBLINS IN FLATLAND

by Donald Eugene Smith

A SYNOPSIS

In the guise of a parlor game, Lady Wilde acts out the story of "Flatland" by Edwin Abbott Abbott-

LADY WILDE

Wait! This silly author has forgot to mention my guests. Starting clockwise, we have my son, Oscar Wilde. Then Christina and Dante Rossetti. It paints a world of two dimensions, with interesting similarities to Britain of the late 1900's.

I confess, it is actually a ruse.
I wish to discourage Christina from marrying-

Thank you, Lady Wilde. If I can now continue-
I am sharing some the story. Parts are re-written from the novel.
I have simplified and added the verses that I am sharing.

Imagine what life would be like if the world had two or one or no dimensions.

EXCERPT

DANTE

I call my world, Flatland. Not because we call it so.
But to make its nature clearer to you.
Who are privileged to live in space.

Imagine a vast sheet of paper with straight lines, triangles,
squares and circles.
The inhabitants can move freely about on the surface.
But have not the will or the power to rise above; or to sink
below.

OSCAR

I can explain it better, square! After all.
It is my system of government.
Am I not, Pantocyclus. Auh, humm.

(VERSE)

IT'S A GLORY
AND A WONDER
TO BE FLAT

WHAT A WONDER
AND A GLORY
TO BE RULER
AND BE FLAT

THIS SHEET AS
THIN AS PAPER
IS OUR ONLY
HA-BI-TAT

LADY WILDE, OSCAR, CHRISTINA, DANTE

IT'S A WONDER
AND A GLORY
TO BE FLAT

LADY WILDE

HE CALLS HIS
COUNTRY FLATLAND
SINCE IT'S FLAT

HIS TALLEST TREES
WON'T REACH YOUR KNEES
THEY LOOK MORE
LIKE A SPLAT

OSCAR

THEY SIGNIFY THAT
THOUGH I TRY TO
SWELL, UNTIL
I'M FAT

CHRISTINA

WE'LL EVERMORE
STAY ON THIS
FLOOR, THAT'S FLAT

DANTE

I LIVE WITH
OTHER FIGURES,
WHO ARE FLAT

WITH SIMPLE BRAINS
THAT NEVER CHANGE
AND WHAT THEY
THINK STAYS PAT

OSCAR

WE NUMBER
FROM THE COARSEST
TO THE BEST
ARIST-O-CRAT

LADY WILDE, OSCAR, CHRISTINA, DANTE
AND EACH AND
EVERY ONE OF
US IS FLAT

DANTE

A most poetic ode to flatness, sire.

CHRISTINA

To the perfect majesty of width and breath.

DANTE

Honorable is the law of compensation that decrees.
Intelligence shall increase, as our sides become numerous and equal.

LADY WILDE

In every stable social system, the citizens need the hope of advancement.

OSCAR

That is true. And my system has such a device.

DANTE

It is a law of nature, that every male child shall have one more side than his father.
From a triangle, comes a square. A pentagon. Then an octagon.

OSCAR

On and on. For generations.
Until our sides are so imperceptible; that we become a circle.
Like myself. Perfection. And destined to be king.

DANTE

The octagons and pentagons become our scientists and scholars.
The squares are tradesmen; such as myself.

OSCAR

But the sharper points of the triangles make them dangerous to society. They are only fit for the king's militia.

CHRISTINA

But what about the women of flatland, sire? What shape are we?

DANTE

In flatland, our women are only a line. They have no sides.
No shape.

OSCAR

Thus. By the laws of compensation, they cannot advance.
A women stays a women.

LADY WILDE

Now behold, a land of one dimension only. Lineland.

OSCAR

But I see before me a multitude of small straight lines.
Is it a world of women?

DANTE

I am no woman, sir! I am the monarch!

(VERSE)

I DWELL WITHIN
A NATION
THAT IS STRAIGHT

AND FROM THE VERY
CENTER OF THIS
VECTOR
I RELATE

TO KIDS OF MINE
ARRANGED IN LINE
FROM OLD TO
YOUNGEST DATE

AND EVERY SINGLE
ONE OF US
IS STRAIGHT

LADY WILDE

IT MIGHT SEEM
MOST CONFINING
TO BE STRAIGHT

CHRISTINA

BUT IT HELPS WITH
OUR DEFINING
UNDERLINING
WHY WE'RE STRAIGHT

LADY WILDE

TRY AS WE MIGHT

CHRISTINA

I'M LEFT

LADY WILDE
I'M RIGHT

LADY WILDE, CHRISTINA
THERE'S NOTHING
TO DEBATE

DANTE
NO SERPENTINING
OR ENTWINING,
STRAIGHT

I'M SURE YOU
MUST BE ASKING
HOW WE MATE

SINCE I'M STUCK HERE
IT MIGHT SEEM
CLEARLY HARD TO
CONSUMMATE

OUR VOICES
THREE IN
HARMONY
THAT'S HOW WE
PROCREATE

AH!

CHRISTINA

AHH!

LADY WILDE

AHHH!

LADY WILDE, CHRISTINA

OH!

DANTE
THESE ARE THE
FACTS I'M GIVING
TO YOU
STRAIGHT

LADY WILDE

Look now, sire.
Look down past the two directions of Lineland.
To the lowest depth of existence and the realm of Pointland.

The abyss of no dimensions. Behold yourself.
A miserable little creature who fills his space.
And what he fills; he is.
And nothing you can say will startle him out of his complacency!

OSCAR

(VERSE.)

SNIP OFF A PIECE
OF LINE LAND
AND YOU'LL SEE

A GENTLEMAN AND
SCHOLAR WITH THE
FINEST PEDIGREE

A CLUTCH OF FRIENDS
THAT NEVER ENDS AND
ALWAYS WILL AGREE

SINCE EVERY SINGLE
ONE OF THEM
IS ME

I SPEAK BEFORE
MY PUBLIC THAT
IS ME

THERE'S NOT A SOUND
I'M SO PROFOUND
LET EVERY ONE AGREE

NO POLLS TO TOTE
THERE'S JUST ONE VOTE
IN MY MONOPOLY

LET'S TAKE A SPIN
AND SEE WHO'LL WIN
IT'S ME!

END OF EXCERPT

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