



● ***Flatland: The Movie***

Produced by Seth Caplan
Directed by Jeffrey Travis and Dano Johnson
(Flat World Productions)

● ***Flatland: The Film***

Directed by Ladd Ehlinger Jr.
(Flatland Productions Inc.)

In 1884, Edwin Abbott Abbott published the satirical novel *Flatland: A Romance of Many Dimensions*. Narrator A Square lives in a two-dimensional world where polygonal inhabitants are oppressed or revered based on the number of their sides. When A has visions of Lineland and Pointland and finally visits three-dimensional Spaceland, his mind is opened to the possibility of infinite dimensions. Two recent adaptations of this classic story bring *Flatland* to the screen.

The sweet and seamless educational video *Flatland: The Movie* emphasizes the book's mathematical insights and the virtue of independent thinking. With Disneyesque villainous government officials, a young heroine on par with A Square, and a happy ending, this *Flatland* ditches the book's more macabre and arguably misogynistic elements for a lighter tone that will appeal to educators. Voice acting by Martin Sheen, Kristen Bell, and Michael York, with an eccentric star turn by *Arrested Development*'s Tony Hale as the King of Pointland, cements the movie's high production value.

Flatland: The Film is gutsier, with both harder hits and harder misses. Filmmaker Ladd Ehlinger Jr. doesn't shrink away from the satire: He updates the regimes with presidents and senators instead of priests. His film is also the one to briefly force us into the perspective of the Flatlanders—a necessary move if we're going to really appreciate the difficulty in transitioning between dimensions. While some elements don't work—interjected text reminding us to pay attention just feels silly—the film's quirky vibe might just win it a cult following.

The two adaptations are clearly for distinctly different audiences, but like Abbott's masterwork of satire, both successfully inspire us to, well, think outside the box.
—Maggie Wittlin