

Flathead Mountain

He took from a pocket a bright tin can having a pretty red label on it which said: Concentrated Brains, Extra Quality."

-- Glinda of Oz

Flathead Mountain features a flat headland at its peak, which is where the Flathead people live. The Flatheads are similar to most people of Oz, with one notable difference. Their heads appear to be cut off just above the eyebrows. Since this is where most people keep their brains, it would be easy to think of the Flatheads as being stupid. And it would be almost right.

However Lurline, the Fairy Queen who enchanted Oz into a fairyland, discovered the Flatheads and took pity on them. She and her band of fairies gave each and every Flathead a can of brains to carry with them which would allow them to think like everyone else. Shortly thereafter, a trio of Magical Adepts came and taught the Flatheads how to use the brains they had been given. They taught the arts of mining and metalcraft, allowing the Flatheads to use the metals in their mountain for a variety of purposes. This includes clothing made of metal discs, much like medieval scale mail. It is suggested that this metal clothing is so crafted that it will never wear out. Most buildings are crafted of stone, though there is mention of a bronze prison.

For most of their history, the Flatheads got along quite well with their neighbors, the Skeezer. The three Adepts who ruled the Flatheads built a new home for the Skeezer in the middle of Skeezer Lake. An immense glass dome covered the city, and an enchanted pedestal allows the city to lower itself to the bottom of the lake.

But for Coe-ee-oh, the Skeezer Queen, this magical aid was not enough. She wanted the Adepts' magic for herself. So she invited the three sorceresses to a sumptuous banquet. While the Adepts feasted, Queen Coe-ee-oh made off with their magical tomes and implements. To prevent the sorceresses from retaliating, she transformed them into fish, intending for them to drown in the air. But the Adepts warned her that if they died, all the magic that she had stolen would be for naught. Coe-ee-oh then hurried to release the three fish into Skeezer Lake.

Without the Adepts to lead them, one of the Flatheads proclaimed himself Supreme Dictator (or Su-Dic, for short). When one of the other Flatheads objected to this, the Su-Dic took his can of brains. After an argument with his wife, the Su-Dic took her can of brains as well. The Su-Dic's wife then proceeded to steal the canned brains of four other people. This expanded intellect allowed both the Su-Dic and his wife to become potent users of magic.

No one else objected to Su-Dic's rulership for fear of losing their brains. He also appeased his people by making every Flathead citizen a Dictator of some sort. The post of Supreme Dictator is elected every year from among his fellow Dictators. However, the law states that the current Supreme Dictator is the one who counts the votes, allowing him to declare himself the winner of every election.

The Su-Dic had no desire to see the Adepts return. Not only would their return remove him from his position of power, but their destruction would weaken Coe-ee-oh, who had become the enemy of the Flatheads. To this end, Rora, the Su-Dic's wife, crafted a magical poison to kill every fish in the lake. She was intercepted by Queen Coe-ee-oh and transformed into a Golden Pig, the poison spilled uselessly on the ground.

This very nearly led to a war between the Flatheads and the Skeezer. However, on the eve of the invasion Queen Coe-ee-oh was transformed into a Diamond Swan by another batch of magical poison, causing her to lose interest in anything except the beauty of her new form. The three Adepts were restored to their original forms by the cleverness of Ervic the Skeezer and the magic of Red Reera the Yookoohoo. Once the Flatheads saw this, they embraced the Adepts and turned on the Su-Dic.

Glinda the Good then took it upon herself to install the canned brains into the tops of every Flathead's skull. This caused their heads to become rounded, like everyone else's. Since they were no longer flat-headed, they have since renamed themselves Mountaineers.

Playing a Flathead

Since every Flathead has the same amount of brains allotted to them, their Brains skill should not vary significantly. Even their Scholars probably only have a Brains skill of 3, 4 at most. Only the Su-Dic and his wife, with their multiple cans of brains, had the intellect to comprehend the arcane mysteries of magic. Because of this, there are likely few Crafted People from Flathead Mountain. The amount of brains needed to assemble the enchantment of animation or create a mechanical man like Tik-Tok were instead being put to use plotting against the Skeezers. Every Flathead was a Dictator of something, so it's possible that a few of them might put on enough airs to qualify for the Noble template.

A Narrator may choose to require that Flathead characters take a special trait of "Canned Brains". This is a disadvantage that grants 1 skill point. This represents the fact that a Flathead may lose their can of brains through accident or misadventure and then be unable to think.

Adventure Hooks

A can of brains has been discovered in Oz. But if all the Flatheads are Mountaineers, who can this belong to?

[Box-out]

No more Flatheads?

By the end of the story, the Flatheads are no more, with everyone having their canned brains installed in their heads. But what if you want the Flatheads to appear in a story for your players? Here are a few options to consider:

- 1) The heroes arrive before the story takes place. Perhaps they are sent to consult the three Adepts and find the Su-Dic in their stead. Or they may come looking for indestructible metal clothing and the Su-Dic demands help with one of his plots in exchange.
- 2) The heroes are part of the story. You may wish to adapt the story into an adventure that your players can participate in. Or the heroes are minor characters in the story, or simply travelers caught up in the events as they are happening.
- 3) There are other Flatheads. Perhaps some of the Flatheads were proud of their unique nature and declined having their brains put into their heads. Since Ozma and Glinda would never intentionally make someone unhappy, they would let the Flathead keep his canned brains. They may decide to remain among the Mountaineers, or start their own community elsewhere. Also, it is possible that another community of Flatheads already exists somewhere else in Oz. It may be that they are related to the Hammerheads who live in the Quadling Country.

[End box-out]

Skeezzer Lake

Bordered by a green lawn was a great lake fully a mile from shore to shore, the waters of which were exquisitely blue and sparkling, with little wavelets breaking its smooth surface where the breezes touched it. In the center of this lake appeared a lovely island, not of great extent but almost entirely covered by a huge round building with glass walls and a high glass dome which glittered brilliantly in the sunshine. Between the glass building and the edge of the island was no grass, flowers or shrubbery, but only an expanse of highly polished white marble.

-- Glinda of Oz

The immense structure in the middle of Skeezzer Lake is a gift from the three Adepts who ruled over the Flatheads, neighbors and friends to the Skeezers. The magical mechanisms of this island allow it to safely sink to the bottom of the lake while keeping the Skeezers safe and dry beneath the dome. The

structure also features a bridge that may be extended to the shore while the city is on the surface, as well as a fleet of submersible boats which can be deployed when the city is below the water.

The Skeezer were originally ruled by a young woman named Coo-ee-oh, though since no one in Oz ages, her true age cannot be determined. Even though she was the queen of her people, she desired more power. Specifically, she desired the magical power exhibited by the Adepts.

So one day, she invited the sorceresses to a great banquet. As the women feasted, Coo-ee-oh made off with all of their tools of magic so that she could learn their secrets. Her first act of magic was to transform the Adepts into fish, intending them to drown in the air. But one of them choked out a warning that if any of them should be destroyed, Coo-ee-oh would immediately lose all that she had gained and more. Fearing for her newfound power, she rushed them into the surrounding lake.

The Flatheads floundered for a while after this, until a Supreme Dictator rose from among them. The Su-Dic and his wife plotted to destroy the fish of the lake, securing their positions of power and weakening their new enemy, Queen Coo-ee-oh. Their first attempt to poison the lake was thwarted by Coo-ee-oh, who used her magic to transform the Su-Dic's wife into a Golden Pig and caused the poison to be spilled uselessly on the ground.

This very nearly led to war between the Flatheads and the Skeezer. Princesses Dorothy and Ozma of Oz came from the Emerald City to broker a peace, but were trapped when Coo-ee-oh submerged the island in order to protect it from the Flathead invasion. Princess Dorothy was able to send a magical signal to the sorceress Glinda the Good, who gathered a rescue party.

Meanwhile, Queen Coo-ee-oh took a squad of her troops in a submersible boat to face the Flatheads. The Flatheads came prepared with another batch of poison and threw it directly at the Skeezer Queen. She promptly fell overboard and rose again, transformed into a Diamond Swan. With Coo-ee-oh defeated and the Skeezer Island submerged, the Flatheads declared themselves victorious and retired to their mountain.

The soldiers that accompanied their queen, realizing that they were now trapped on the surface, begged for the Su-Dic to take them prisoner. They were refused and left to their own devices. Their leader, a young Skeezer named Ervic, kept watch over them that night.

It was to Ervic that the three Adepts chose to reveal themselves. They led him to Reera the Red, a reclusive Yookoohoo who lived near the lake. Although the Adepts simply wished to learn the secret of her shapechanging magic, Ervic impressed them by tricking Red Reera into changing them back into the young women they once were.

Once restored to their proper forms, the Adepts joined the rescue party on the shore of Skeezer Lake. Taking an idea from Scraps the Patchwork Girl, the Adepts helped Glinda and the Wizard of Oz lower the water level of the lake until the top of the dome was exposed to the air. Once inside the city, all five of them studied Coo-ee-oh's tools of magic, but could not divine the magic words to make them function. It was Dorothy who suggested using the syllables of Coo-ee-oh's name to control her enchantments.

Once the Skeezer island was raised to the surface, the Adepts returned to Flathead Mountain to resume looking after their former charges. Lady Aurex was installed as the new Queen of the Skeezer and promised to obey and enforce the laws of Oz among the Skeezer.

Playing a Skeezer

Most templates are available to Skeezer. The only Skeezer known to practice magic was Coo-ee-oh, and Queen Aurex has promised Ozma that her ban on magic will be enforced along with all of the other laws of Oz. The Skeezer definitely have Nobles and Soldiers. Having been recently introduced to the rest of the land of Oz and all of its variety, it's very possible that some Skeezer will take up the Wanderer template. Former Queen Coo-ee-oh's magical power might have created a Crafted Person of some sort.

Adventure Hooks

Queen Aurex has run out of gaulau, the magical mineral that powers the sorcerous mechanisms of the island. She needs your help to get more.

The Wizard needs a diamond feather for his latest magical invention. Can the exceedingly vain Diamond Swan be persuaded to part with one of her lovely feathers?