

THE BARTON SERIES

JUDGE BARTON



BY

DR FAYAD W. ALI

(Ages 8 and over)

JUDGE BARTON

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The beauty with the fine figure

The esteemed Judge Barton sat on his bench and looked at the several geometrical shapes sitting before him. They each tried to look their best and were well-groomed and delightfully colourful, some more than others. A few of the shapes were slightly nervous, while others seemed quite confident. All of the shapes, however, were anxious for the long-awaited competition to commence. Many centuries of bitter arguing and even sporadic displays of hostility would soon be settled by diplomatic and fair means. It was a bitter feud that was handed down through the generations by the shapes and their ancestors. Each shape now hoped that with their presentations, they would be able to pluck some tender chord in the judge's heart, Judge Barton being both the judge and jury. One delightful shape would finally bring great satisfaction to their ancestors.

Judge Barton-the Fair, was elected to decide on which one of them was considered to be the finest shape and then he would officially declare that one to be the eventual winner. They would be crowned with the glorious title of '**The World's Best Shape**'. The decision, though, would be based on several salient properties. Amongst these were physical beauty, geometrical performance, ability to integrate with other shapes, grace, poise and most importantly their mathematical usefulness.

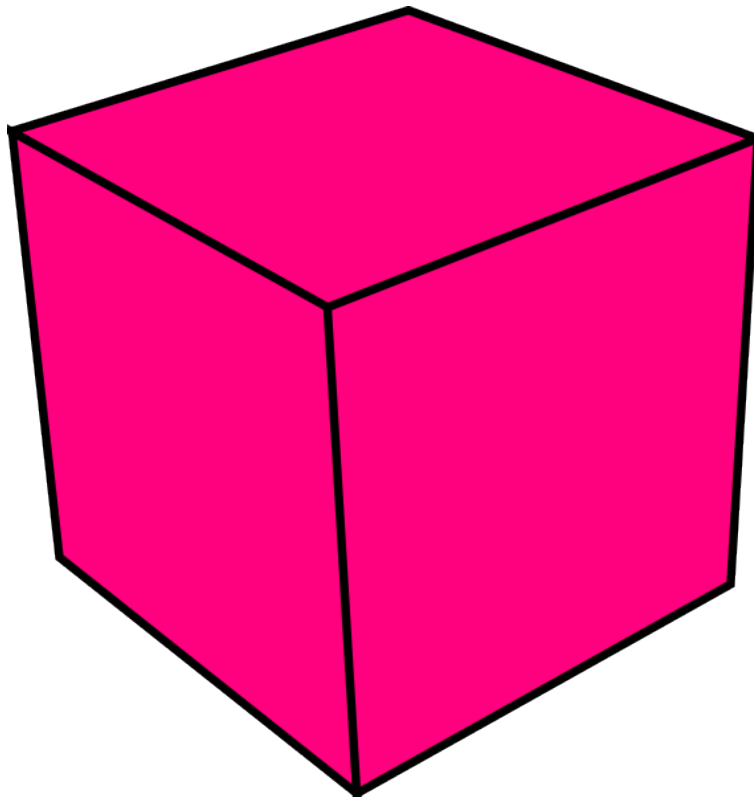
The Judge had outlined these various categories, making them abundantly clear to all the shapes and he did so just before each would make their special presentation. The young Judge Barton was very careful about his reputation. His sacred vows to be unbiased at all times were deeply etched in his mind. The importance of his final decision would likely have a tremendous impact on the world of geometry and likely affect the lives of many new, uncreated, undrawn and unformed shapes. A great weight rested upon his young shoulders. He must not falter.

Today, in the sanctity of the closed courtroom of Judge Barton, each shape would be expected to both represent and speak for itself. Then he, Judge

Barton-the Fair, the noble and the always sober, would make his final decision. He would weigh all the arguments of the presenters and then decide which one of them will be crowned with the coveted title of, '**The World's Best Shape.**'

Moreover, the decision would be a very critical one, as these were shapes that have lived long, resided in many lands, spoke many tongues and contributed to mathematics and especially geometry all over the world. The title would, therefore, be declared as a 'World title' and could even have a direct impact, on the 'World of Mathematics'. Perhaps this decision might even alter how the peoples of the world would view all shapes in the future, realised Judge Barton.

The contesting shapes were now ready, as the unsmiling Judge Barton called on the Cube to present first.



The Cube promptly rose from its chair and approached the judge's bench. There was some applause heard as the Cube neared the podium.

The cube bowed gently before the Judge and then faced its opponents as it began.

“Your Honour, fellow shapes, I am a cube,” began the Cube, in a soft voice.

“I am here to prove to all that I am the best shape in all of mathematics and I will now present my arguments.”

The Cube paused for a brief moment, looked about and then continued. There was total silence as it spoke.

“I was born many centuries ago with **6 faces**, **12 edges**, and **8 corners**,” it started.

“Each one of my corners is also called **a vertex**, the plural of which is **vertices**. I am well known and respected throughout our wet, blue world, and I might add, well-loved by all with whom I have encountered. At this point, I would like to add emphatically, Your Honour, all my edges are of the same length. As a result of this characteristic, all of my six faces are exactly the same. We may use the term congruent to describe my faces.”

The Cube paused for a moment, glanced mockingly at the Cuboid sitting nearby and then it spoke boldly and with a smile of an almost Olympian loftiness. It smirked at the Cuboid who stood surprised, maybe even a bit shocked.

“No one in this world can call me two-faced or three-faced, like some similar shapes I know,” said the Cube, with a slight toss of its pointed vertices.

“Regardless of how you may look at me, I am always the same; be it from the top, bottom, sideways, front or back. I have never changed myself or allowed myself to be altered all through the centuries, Your Honour, and I surely never will.”

The Cube smiled and glided around a bit, gaining confidence as it orated in fine style.

Judge Barton, listened closely to the Cube and secretly felt that the presentation of the Cube was rather sound so far. So jauntily did the Cube

speak, that the other shapes seemed almost paralysed into admiration. They sat with their vertices open and agape. All sat or stood galvanised.

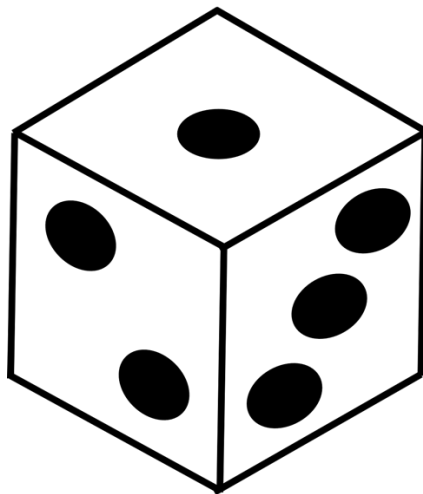
“Your Honour,” continued the Cube, “I can sit or be placed on any of my six faces and I shall have no problem. No one will ever see a difference in me, if and when this occurs. And, Sir, unless you were watching very closely or observing my actions, you would never know that I was ever moved or flipped or even turned over.”

The Cube smiled with the Judge and then cast, a somewhat boastful look, at the other shapes, all of whom were looking carefully and listening intently to the presentation.

“The Cube speaks with a lot of conviction,” whispered the Hourglass to the Prism.

The prism grunted in a clear display of envy.

“So,” continued the Cube, “it is because of my unique property and because of the great and noble qualities that I possess, the peoples all over the world have used me for a die and whose plural is dice. And, your Honour, this is done in numerous games of chance.”



The Cube smiled coyly.

“Could you, Your Honour, imagine a World without dice?” the Cube asked boldly and rhetorically.

The Cube looked at the Judge and then proceeded to stare most brazenly at the other shapes.

“I ask you now, Your Honour, to realise my true worth, my great and unchanging qualities and to always remember, Sir, that no matter how small or how large that I may become, these qualities that I possess, ever since my birth, will never be undone or altered. Every cube in this entire world is an enlargement or a reduction in the size of a cube like me, cut from the same cloth as the saying goes. Maybe we may have different colours, but the fact is we were forged in the same furnace and we are all similar, which means being of the same shape but differing in size.”

The Cube paused for a brief moment before speaking again.

“In conclusion, Your Honour, I beg your indulgence in allowing me to recite a small poem,” said the Cube.

All the other shapes sat upright, frozen into deeper interest. The Judge just nodded and gave the Cube consent to continue. The Cube bowed low and then it began with a sterling oration.

I AM A CUBE

I am a cube, my sides the same

Whether I'm big or small

You'll find me in most every game

As dice, I'm tossed by all

Times side by side by side again

My volume can be found

Now measure me, and you'll attain

The same lengths all around

Look at a face from any side

Identical I'll be

And I declare with sterling pride

No better shape you'll see

“Thank you, Sir Judge,” said the Cube, and it bowed again, somersaulted, then, stood erect as it landed smoothly on one of its six sides. No one could tell on which of its six sides it had landed and which one of its six sides now faced the audience or which one faced the Judge. The Cube hoped that this final act in its performance would enhance its delivery. The purpose was clear and likely from the response of the listeners and the looks that were cast, it did.

“Fine feathers do make fine birds,” it said sweetly, making a final bow.

The other shapes clapped loudly as the Cube went proudly, though slightly out of breath, back to its seat, intoxicated with how its performance was received by the others.

A very good presentation, filled with rather convincing points, thought Judge Barton. However, I must listen to the rest of the shapes. Meanwhile, I shall reserve my opinion until I listen to the presentations of the others.