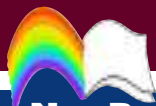


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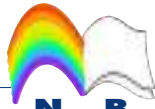
R A I N B O W S

Gulliver's Travels

Jonathan Swift



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R A I N B O W S

Jonathan Swift

Gulliver's Travels

Adaptation, dossiers and activities
by Rossana Aimo



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Gulliver's Travels

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

• Jonathan Swift	4
BEFORE READING	6
Chapter 1 – Lilliput, a strange island	7
AFTER READING	12
• Extension:	15
BEFORE READING	17
Chapter 2 – Life on Lilliput	18
AFTER READING	23
• Extension: <i>Famous British ships</i>	26
BEFORE READING	28
Chapter 3 – Brobdingnag	29
AFTER READING	34
• Extension: <i>Utopias</i>	37
BEFORE READING	41
Chapter 4 – Life at court	42
AFTER READING	45
• Extension: <i>Life in the 18th century</i>	48
BEFORE READING	49
Chapter 5 – The flying island	50
AFTER READING	55
• Extension: <i>Imaginary places in legend and fiction</i>	58
BEFORE READING	60
Chapter 6 – The land of horses	61
AFTER READING	66
• Extension: <i>Gulliver at the cinema</i>	69
• SUMMING-UP ACTIVITIES	71
• GLOSSARY	75

The author Jonathan Swift



Life

Jonathan Swift (1667-1745) is one of the greatest satirists¹ of the English language. He was born in Dublin, but both his parents were English. He never knew his father, who died the same year his son was born.

In 1682, he attended² Dublin University (Trinity College), receiving his B.A.³ in 1686. Because of the troubles in Ireland after the Glorious Revolution⁴, he and his family had to leave for England in 1688. There, his mother helped him get a position as secretary and personal assistant to Sir William Temple, an English diplomat, at Moor Park⁵. When Swift lived at Moor Park, he met Esther Johnson, then 8 years old, the daughter of one of the servants. Swift was her tutor and called her “Stella”, and the two had a close⁶ relationship for the rest of Esther’s life.

In 1694, Swift left Temple and went to Ireland where he became a priest of the Anglican Church⁷, but he soon returned to England to work with Temple again.

When Sir William died, Swift had problems finding a job. So he returned to Ireland, but made frequent visits to London, where he worked a lot to help Ireland. He was a pacifist and hated cruelty, imperialism and war.

Swift became politically active in these years and from 1707 to 1709 and again in 1710, he was in London. He had Whig⁸

1. *satirist*: a writer who uses humour to criticize people.
2. *attended*: went regularly to.
3. *B.A. (Bachelor of Arts)*: a first University degree.
4. *Glorious Revolution (1688)*: the overthrow of King James II.
5. *Moor Park*: large impressive house about 40 miles from London.
6. *close*: near.
7. *Anglican Church*: the Church of England.
8. *Whig*: a British party that opposed the Tories.

preferences, and Steele and Addison⁹ were his close friends, but later he joined the Tories.

All his life Swift suffered from a strange form of vertigo¹⁰, and his illness¹¹ got worse in 1738. He died in Ireland in 1745 and was buried near Esther Johnson in St. Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin. Part of his fortune (twelve thousand pounds) was left to build a hospital for the mentally ill, which still exists as a psychiatric hospital.

Works

Swift wrote a large number of works. Many were attacks on political and religious ideas. Among his most famous early works is *A Tale of a Tub*, a satire on corruption, and *The Battle of the Books* (1704). After his final return to England, he began to work on his most famous novel, *Gulliver's Travels*. First published in November 1726, it was a great success. Everyone read it: politicians, adults and also children. There were three printings¹², and another in early 1727. French, German, and Dutch translations appeared the same year.



Gulliver in Lilliput (illustration by T. Morten, 1864).

9. *Steele and Addison*: the founders of the publication *The Spectator* (1711-1712).

10. *vertigo*: the feeling of losing your balance.

11. *illness*: disease, sickness.

12. *printing*: producing books.



BEFORE READING

1 What do you already know?

- a. Gulliver is a
 novelist doctor sailor
- b. Lilliput is
 an island a ship a travel book
- c. The Lilliputians are
 giants very little people pets

2 Make predictions. Which words will you find in the first chapter?
 Tick them.

- storm sailor snow ice
 water captain wind fish

3 Match the illustrations with the words.

- a. bow and arrow f. wheel
 b. rope g. handkerchief
 c. ladder h. pistol and bullets
 d. chains i. needle
 e. padlock j. basket



Gulliver's Travels

Lilliput, a strange island


Chapter 1

My name is Lemuel Gulliver. When I was fourteen years old, my father sent me to Emanuel College in Cambridge to study to become a doctor. Then I worked in London, but life was difficult there because I couldn't earn¹ enough money for my wife and myself. So I decided to make voyages as a ship's doctor.

One day I accepted a good offer from Captain William Prichard, captain of the *Antelope*, who was organizing a voyage to the South Sea. We left from Bristol on May 4, 1699 and our voyage was quiet at first, but on our way to the East Indies a strong wind pushed us in the wrong direction. The wind was very violent and our ship hit something in the water and broke! Six of the crew² (I was one of them) put a small boat into the sea and we rowed³ for some time, but a sudden⁴ wind overturned⁵ our boat! We fell into the water! I swam for a long time. I was exhausted, but then I put my feet down and I could stand! I came to a beach, continued walking for about half a mile and then fell asleep on the grass⁶ because I was so tired.

I woke up some hours later; it was daylight and I tried to stand up, but I couldn't move! My arms, legs, hair and hands were tied⁷ to the ground. It was hot and I was very uncomfortable. Suddenly I felt something moving on my face and body! I saw a very small man, about fifteen centimetres tall, walking on my face. He had a bow and an arrow in his hands and behind him I could see forty or more other little men. I shouted⁸ with surprise and they all jumped back⁹ because they were frightened¹⁰! Then I tried to free my left arm of the

1. *earn*: get money for what you do.
2. *crew*: people working on a ship.
3. *rowed*: made the boat move across water.
4. *sudden*: unexpected.
5. *overturned*: turned (our boat) upside down.

6. *grass*: 
7. *tied*: fixed with ropes.
8. *shouted*: made a loud noise with my voice.
9. *jumped back*: went back with a jump.
10. *frightened*: feeling afraid.

ropes but I felt a lot of arrows hit my face and body. They were painful, like many needles. So I decided to be quiet and the tiny¹¹ people didn't shoot any more arrows. After some time they put two or three ladders on the left side of my body. Hundreds of those small people climbed¹² my body and walked towards my mouth! They had baskets full of meat in their hands and I ate it with a lot of bread, because I was very hungry. We didn't speak the same language and so they couldn't understand me, but I made a sign that I wanted to drink and after a while they brought something that tasted like¹³ wine.

Then I heard noises around me. I turned my head and I saw that some little men were cutting down lots of trees. They were building a platform with wheels to carry me. Hundreds of strong men worked for about three hours to put me on it and then one thousand five hundred horses pulled me to the capital city of Lilliput.



11. *tiny*: extremely small.

12. *climbed*: went up.

13. *tasted like*: had the particular flavour of.

Lilliput, a strange island

I slept during that long journey. I woke up when we stopped outside the city, where there was a big church, one of the largest buildings in the country. Its door was small and I could only get inside on my hands and knees. When I was inside, they tied me up again: they used ninety-one chains and thirty-six padlocks! The chains were long, so I could walk around but couldn't go away.

When I stood up, I looked around and was surprised to see that the country of Lilliput was as small as a garden! The tallest trees were just about two metres high and the town on my left was like the scene in a theatre.

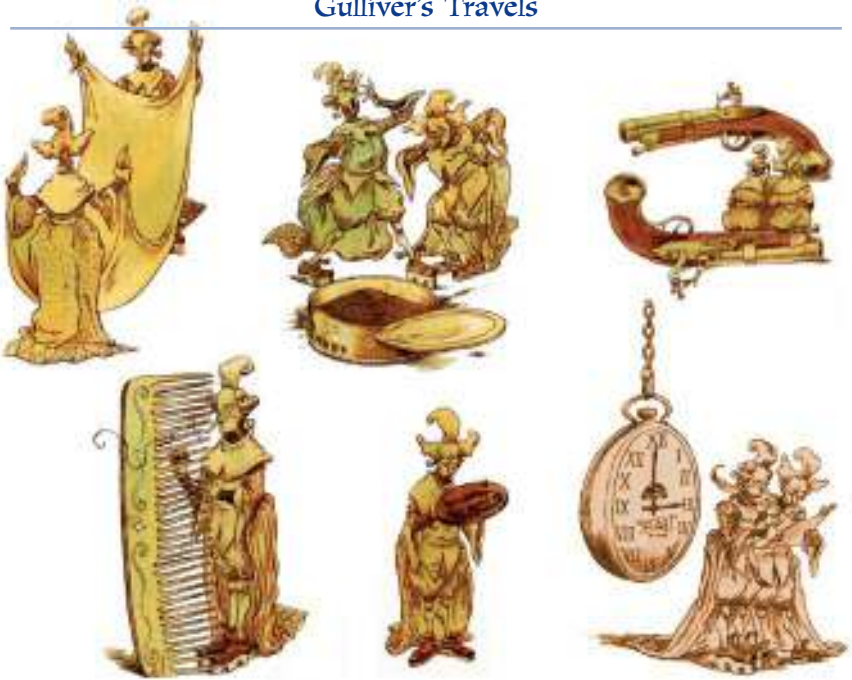
After some time, the King came to the church and ordered his cooks¹⁴ to give me food and drink. He spoke to me and I answered him but we couldn't understand each other. He ordered his people to make me a bed using six hundred Lilliputian beds. He told his men to bring me food and drink



Gulliver (actor Jack Black) in the 2011 film version.

14. cook:





Illustrations by C. Riddell (2004).

every day and to teach me their language. In about a month I began to speak the language of Lilliput and I could talk to the King when he visited me. Every time, I told him that I didn't want to be a prisoner and I asked him to let me go, but he always answered that I had to be patient.

One day, he ordered his soldiers to look inside my pockets and to make notes on everything they could find in them. I put the soldiers first in one pocket and then I moved them to the others. As they searched¹⁵, they wrote about all the things they found in their notebooks. Their report said:

“In the right pocket of the Great Man-Mountain we found only a large piece of cloth¹⁶. In the left pocket we saw a large silver box, but we couldn't open it. In another pocket we found a big object with twenty pieces of metal on it: we think the Man-Mountain uses it to comb¹⁷ his hair. In his trouser pockets we saw a long chain that went into another pocket. The man-Mountain pulled it out¹⁸ and we saw a round machine on the end of the chain. It made a loud noise.”

15. *searched*: looked for something.

16. *cloth*: material, especially for making clothes.

17. *comb*: make hair tidy and straight.

18. *pulled it out*: extracted it.