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Gulliver's Travels

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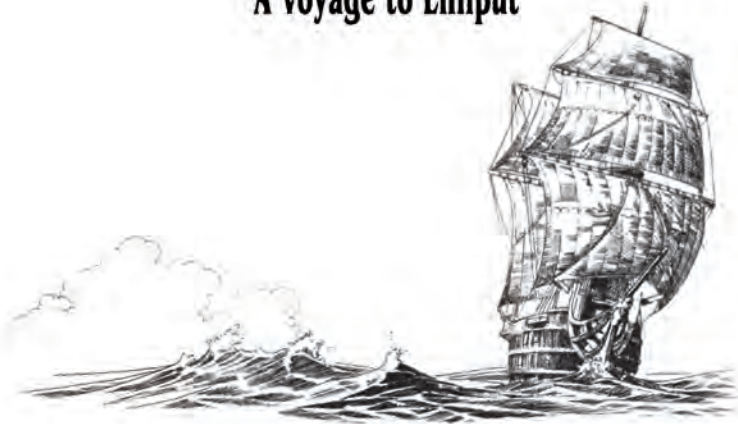
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A voyage to Lilliput



I was born in Nottinghamshire and was the third of five sons. My father was not a rich man, but he was able to send me to Cambridge University, where I studied for three years. When I left college, I continued my studies and became a doctor. But I always wanted to travel, and so I made several voyages as a ship's doctor. When I married my wife Mary, however, I planned to stay at home for a while. But after a few years I discovered I was not earning enough money from my patients. I decided to go to sea again, and this time I joined a ship sailing to the islands in the South Pacific Ocean. We started our journey from Bristol on May 4th, 1699.

At first our voyage went well. We sailed across the Atlantic, round the coast of Africa and into the Indian

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Ocean. But before we could reach the Pacific, a violent storm hit us and drove us to the north-west of Tasmania. The wind drove our ship on to a rock, which broke the ship in half. Some of the sailors and I managed to get a boat into the water, and we rowed away to look for land. But when we were too tired to row any more, a great wave hit our small boat, and we all fell into the sea. I do not know what happened to my companions, but I suppose they were all drowned.

The wind and waves pushed me along as I struggled to keep my head above water. I became very tired and soon felt I could not swim any more. Luckily, just then my feet

A voyage to Lilliput

touched the ground. I walked out of the sea and on to a beach, where there was no sign of any people or houses. I was so exhausted that I lay down and went to sleep.

When I woke up next morning, and tried to get up, I could not move. I was lying on my back and my whole body, my arms and legs were strongly fastened to the ground. Even my hair, which was long and thick, was tied to the ground. The sun began to grow hot, and I was very uncomfortable. Soon I felt something alive moving along my leg and up my body to my face, and when I looked down, I saw a very small human being, only fifteen centimetres tall. He had a bow and arrow in his hands, and there were forty more of these little men following him. I was so surprised that I gave a great shout. They all jumped back, very frightened, and some hurt themselves by falling off my body. Meanwhile, I was struggling to unfasten myself, but just as I managed to pull my left arm free of the ropes, I felt a hundred arrows land on my free hand, and more arrows on my face and body. This was very painful, and made me cry aloud. I lay quietly, to see what would happen next.

When they saw I was no longer struggling, they quickly built a platform next to my head, and an official climbed up there to speak to me. Although I could not understand his language, I understood that they would be friendly towards me – if I did not try to harm them. By now I was extremely hungry, so I used sign language to beg the official for food. He seemed to understand me, because immediately ladders

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were put against my sides and little men climbed up with baskets of food and drink. They were surprised at how much I could eat and drink. In just one mouthful I ate three of their meat dishes and three of their loaves of bread. I drank two of their barrels of wine, and was still thirsty, because that was only half a litre. While they were bringing me food, I wondered whether to pick up a handful of the little men and throw them to their death. But I was afraid they would shoot at me again, and anyway I was grateful for their kindness in giving me food and drink, so I did not move.

After some time, another official climbed up to the platform and spoke to me. From his signs I understood that they were going to move me. The King of this country (which was called Lilliput) had ordered his people to carry me to the capital city, about a kilometre away. I made signs to ask whether I could be untied, but the official politely refused.

While I was eating, a platform had been prepared to carry me. The people of Lilliput, known as the Lilliputians, are very intelligent and clever with their hands. For me, five hundred men built a special wooden platform with twenty-two wheels. Nine hundred of the strongest men worked for about three hours to lift me on to the platform, and one thousand five hundred of the King's largest horses (each eleven and a half centimetres high) pulled me to the capital. I did not know about any of this, because they had put a sleeping powder in my wine, and I was in a deep sleep.

The King had decided I would stay in the largest available

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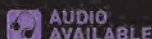
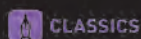
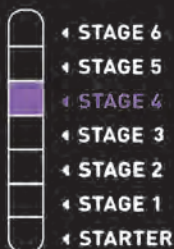
Little men climbed up with baskets of food and drink.

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'Soon I felt something alive moving along my leg and up my body to my face, and when I looked down, I saw a very small human being, only fifteen centimetres tall . . . I was so surprised that I gave a great shout.'

But that is only the first of many surprises which Gulliver has on his travels. He visits a land of giants and a flying island, meets ghosts from the past and horses which talk . . .
 (Word count 15,325)



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