

Gulliver's Travels

1: Voyage to Lilliput

This is not a word-for-word transcript

LANGUAGE FOCUS: Phrasal verbs

[SFX: Little voices]

Gulliver

Ooh, ouch! Hey! Help! **Get off** me!! Where am I?

Gulliver narrator

I'm lying on my back. I'm being **pricked** by lots of tiny sharp things. My arms and legs are tied to the ground – even my long hair is **fastened**.

Gulliver

I... can't... move!

Gulliver narrator

It's the strangest sight! Hundreds of tiny figures are **prodding** me with **miniature** spears. Others are fastening bits of string and hammering tiny **pegs** into the ground. The tiny figures are...

Gulliver

...humans?

Gulliver narrator

Yes little ones, no higher than six inches tall!

Gulliver

I must be dreaming!

Gulliver narrator

I shut my eyes and open them again. No... I'm not dreaming – I'm tied to the ground – I'm **well and truly** a **prisoner**.

[SFX: Waves]

My name is Gulliver. This story of my travels to distant lands may seem unbelievable, and in places, disturbing – but the lands I visited and the strange peoples I met are not imaginary, I didn't **make them up**. Please listen and remember... it is all true.

Sailor

Dr Gulliver... the men, the men are feeling sick...

Gulliver narrator

I was a ship's doctor. We'd set sail from Bristol in England in 1699 and were heading for the East Indies. I'd left my wife and two children behind. A violent storm broke out...

...in the strong winds, we were shipwrecked on a large rock close to land.

I swam, battling with huge waves.

On reaching the shore, I **pulled myself up** on some soft grass and fell asleep, exhausted.

And there, during the night I became a prisoner of the tiny people. I was so amazed when I saw the tiny human creatures prodding me that I roared and they all ran back terrified. They started to shoot arrows from their bows – onto my hands, my body... my face...

The arrows pricked me like hundreds of needles. I struggled violently and **snapped** the strings on my left arm and quickly covered my eyes to protect them.

Gulliver

No more... Stop!

Gulliver narrator

I fell back and lay still. Once they realised I wasn't going to attack them or move, they stood back and waited.

One of them, wearing fine clothes, so, clearly important, ventured forward from the crowd.

Gulliver

Ah... Sir... Now... Don't worry... I'm not going to eat you... But...

Gulliver narrator

I pointed to my mouth...

Gulliver

I'm very hungry... I need food... food!

Gulliver narrator

The one in charge nodded his head.

A few minutes later ladders were put against my body and a long line of tiny people mounted them, carrying dishes of meat, baskets of tiny loaves of bread, and small barrels of wine slung over their shoulders.

Gulliver

This is... very good...!

Gulliver narrator

I ate and drank greedily. Those tiny **morsels** of food and drink were some of the most exquisite food I have ever tasted. The tiny natives were amazed at my appetite.

With my stomach full, I promptly **nodded off**.

When I **woke up**, I was moving. I later found out that the wine I had drunk had contained a sleeping drug and whilst I was sleeping, 900 of the tiny natives had lifted me onto a machine which was being pulled by a thousand tiny horses. I was taken to the city to meet the king, who greeted me warmly...

He was a young and dignified, with strong features. He gave a long speech to me in his language, but I did not understand a word. But he pointed to the city and his people, with a sweep of his arm.

King

... Lilliput...

Gulliver narration

Some **courtiers** were also there. One had a wise and scholarly look and made friendly gestures to me. Her name, I later learnt, was Flimnap. She was the King's secretary. Another, who had a rather mean expression, drew his sword at various points and waved it in a rather threatening way in the air at me. This was Skyresh.

I was then transported to an empty, ruined temple, where I was lifted up with **pulleys** and chained to the gates. I was still a prisoner, but at least now I could, at last, stand up.

And so it was that I became a guest in the kingdom of Lilliput with its tiny inhabitants. The ruined temple became my home. The royal family came regularly to watch me from the tower. The King sent 30 **scholars** to teach me the Lilliputian language, which I learnt very quickly.

One night I couldn't sleep. I heard the whisper of voices close by. It was the King with his courtiers Flimnap and Skyresh... What Skyresh said worried me deeply...

Skyresh

I think that we should kill him...

King

Why do you say that, Skyresh?

Skyresh

He eats too much, your Majesty! It is costing us a fortune and if we continue to feed him like this, we'll have a **famine** in Lilliput.

King

How do you suggest we kill him?

Skyresh

Starve him!

Flimnap

That's **barbaric!**

Skyresh

Or we could shoot him with poisoned arrows.

King

What do you think, Flimnap?

Flimnap

He is a giant and the **decay** of his body could cause a plague which could spread throughout the kingdom.

King

That's very true... He asks for his freedom every day.

Skyresh

It's too dangerous! He could kill all of us!

Flimnap

He has so far been gentle and well behaved towards the people of Lilliput. He could be useful to us...

We can give him his freedom with certain conditions...

King

...which would be?

Flimnap

He becomes our **ally** in our war against Blefuscu and destroys their **fleet**.

King

Flimnap, you're right! We are facing a grave danger and this giant Gulliver could save us!

Gulliver narrator

I had heard enough. Lilliput was **on the brink of** war. The king would not kill me whilst I was useful to him, but what if he changed his mind? I had to escape!

Vocabulary

pricked

pierced with small holes, causing pain

fastened

attached

prodding

pushing pointed objects against something

miniature

small copy of a larger object

pegs

small hooks or stick

well and truly

completely, without doubt

prisoner

someone who is kept somewhere against their will

snapped

broken

morsels

small pieces of food

nodded off

fell asleep

courtiers

people who work in a royal court

pulleys

pieces of equipment used to lift things

scholars

people who study

famine

situation when large number of people do not have enough food to eat

barbaric

very cruel

decay

rotting, what happens to a body after death

ally

friend, in a war

fleet

group of ships

on the brink of

about to

Quiz

1. Which Lilliputian objects caused Gulliver pain?

(Hint: They were tiny versions of the real things.)

- a) Arrows
- b) Swords
- c) Needles

2. Why did Gulliver fall asleep?

(Hint: There was something in the wine.)

- a) He drank too much wine.
- b) The wine was drugged.
- c) The arrows were poisoned.

3. Who wants to kill Gulliver?

(Hint: Listen to the conversation between these three characters.)

- a) Flimnap
- b) Skyresh
- c) The King of Lilliput

Feedback

1. Which Lilliputian objects caused Gulliver pain?

- a) **Arrows. That's right. He was pricked by tiny arrows.**
- b) Swords. That's not right. Skyresh waved his sword, but didn't attack Gulliver with it.
- c) Needles. That's wrong, but the arrows felt like tiny needles.

2. Why did Gulliver fall asleep?

a) He drank too much wine. That's wrong. He drank wine but the reason he fell asleep was because it was drugged.

b) **The wine was drugged. That's right, the wine contained a sleeping drug.**

c) The arrows were poisoned. That's wrong. Though later Skyresh suggests shooting Gulliver with poisoned arrows.

3. Who wants to kill Gulliver?

(Hint: Listen to the conversation between these three characters.)

- a) Flimnap. That's wrong. Flimnap is friendly towards Gulliver.
- b) The King of Lilliput. That's wrong. In the end the King decides Gulliver can help them in the war against Lilliput.
- c) **Skyresh. That's right. Skyresh wants to kill Gulliver.**