LANGUAGE FOCUS: Linking devices of contrast

Gulliver narrator
I'm Gulliver. This is the story of my life in the strange land of Brobdingnag, where I was but the size of a mouse among giants.

My master, the farmer who found me, saw me as a way to make money. Every day I was made to perform for the amusement of a crowd. I danced and sang for them. Until one day, I collapsed with exhaustion.

Glumdalclitch
Gulliver!

Gulliver narrator
That was my dear Glumdalclitch, the farmer's daughter, and my only true friend here.

Glumdalclitch
He's fainted! Father, I told you it was too much. He'll die.

Farmer
Don't worry dear, he's fine, aren't you Gulliver?

Gulliver
I'm... I'm OK.

Sladral
Excuse me. I'm here on official business.

Gulliver narrator
Although I was exhausted, I looked up to see a finely dressed man.

Sladral
Will the little man live?

Farmer
Oh, he's as right as rain.
Sladral
Good. The Queen has heard of this Gulliver, and would like to see him for herself.

Farmer
Oh, of course my lord. But… well I'm like a father to him. I couldn't…

Sladral
We'll pay you, of course. One thousand gold pieces? And the girl – she will come with us too and live in the palace.

Gulliver narrator
Of course, the greedy farmer agreed without any hesitation. Before I knew it, we were on our way to the palace. I felt relieved.

[sfx: Large court, horns playing]

Sladral
Your Majesty. May I present, Mr Gulliver. Oh, and his maid, Glumdalclitch.

Glumdalclitch
Your Majesty.

Queen
Yes, yes, now where is this Gulliver?

Gulliver
Down here, your Majesty. It is an honour. May I kiss your royal foot?

Queen
He speaks! It's true… Mr Gulliver, you may kiss… my fingertip!

Gulliver
My lady.

Queen
He's lovely. He will dine with me tonight!

Gulliver narrator
Despite the Queen's beauty and kindness, at dinner I was quite appalled by her behaviour. At one mouthful she ate as much as 12 English farmers would eat in a meal – crunching the wing of a lark, bones and all – though it were nine times the size of a turkey.

Gulliver
Quite an appetite, your Majesty!
Gulliver narration
Not that it mattered. I was happy to rest and eat well. Everyone at court was enchanted by me!

Queen
Are you enjoying the meat, Gulliver?

Gulliver
Oh certainly, Madam. It's delicious.

Queen
Oh, have some more.

Gulliver narration
Everyone at court loved me, except that is, the Queen's dwarf.

Dwarf
Pipsqueak.

Gulliver
Pipsqueak? Me?

Gulliver narration
He had lost his position now that he was no longer the shortest man in the kingdom. And he wasn't happy.

Dwarf
Yes. Quite a big meal for a little runt. Just you wait.

Queen
Gulliver, do hurry and finish supper, I have a present for you!

Gulliver narration
It was a house made by the finest craftsman in the land. It was the perfect size for me, with little chairs and a table, and even a lock to keep out rats. Best of all, laid on my bed, shirts of the finest silk. Though Brobdingnag silk is rather rough for a man of my size.

Life passed in this way for some time. I was treated like royalty! But in spite of the fine dining and beautiful clothes, life at court was not always so smooth. Especially because of my, adventures…

Queen
Gulliver, tell them what happened today!
Gulliver
I was attacked by a large fly, your Majesty.

Sladral
Oh Gulliver, we heard you had an accident today?

Gulliver
An apple, Sir. It fell on my back. It almost broke it…

Gulliver narrator
I was getting upset. Even my dear Glumdalclitch seemed to find me funny. I had to get out of the court. I slipped away from everyone, and wandered down a vast hallway.

Dwarf
Psst.

Gulliver
Oh you. Go away, dwarf.

Dwarf
That’s no way to speak to a friend. I have just the thing to soothe you after their mockery, Gulliver. Come with me.

Gulliver narrator
I had no choice but to follow him. We arrived in a quiet study. The dwarf scooped me up.

Dwarf
Some dessert, my friend? Or should I say, a just desert for you Gulliver?!

Gulliver
Now, now. What’s this?

Gulliver narrator
It was a giant bowl of honey. Over which the dwarf held me…

Gulliver
Hey, we’re not enemies. Listen, you’re like a big brother to me…

Dwarf
In you go.

Gulliver
No, wait. Please.

[sfx: splash]
Dwarf
No one will know.

Gulliver narrator
I struggled and struggled, and tried to swim, taking mouthfuls of the sweet honey. But I had been a sailor for many years, and I made it out.

Gulliver
There! Not so easy to stop me, dwarf!

Dwarf
Oh, well done, Gulliver. Such a shame there are so many wasps at this time of year! They do so like honey…

Gulliver narrator
And off he went. From the window, I heard a buzzing sound. Ten large wasps, the size of eagles – were flying towards me!

Gulliver
Take that! And you. Come here, wasp! I’ve not finished with you.

Gulliver narrator
I fought off the wasps. And collapsed, exhausted.

Life in Brobdingnag had become very dangerous for me. But how could I escape from this land of giants? I decided I had to meet with the king.
**Vocabulary**

**as right as rain**
feeling healthy and well

**gold pieces**
gold coins

**fingertip**
the very end of a finger

**appalled**
shocked

**lark**
a small, brown bird

**enchanted**
attracted, pleased very much

**pipsqueak**
old-fashioned insult for a small person

**runt**
the smallest animal born in a group, here used as an insult

**slipped away**
quietly escaped

**soothe**
calm

**mockery**
laughing at someone in a nasty way

**just dessert** (also 'just deserts')
to get what you deserve
Questions

1. How did Sladral persuade the farmer to give him Gulliver?
   (Hint: Look up the term 'gold pieces'.)
   a) He threatened to take away his daughter. That's not right. He offered to take the farmer's daughter to the palace and the farmer did not object.
   b) He offered the farmer money. That's right. He offered the farmer 1,000 gold pieces.
   c) He said it would be an honour to meet the Queen of Brobdingnag. That's not right. What does 'gold pieces' mean?

2. Why does the Queen not see Gulliver at first?
   (Hint: He says 'down here!')
   a) Because he is in a travelling box. That's not right. Why does Gulliver say 'down here'?
   b) Because he is outside the palace waiting for permission to enter. That's not right. Sladral took him inside the palace. Why does Gulliver say 'down here'?
   c) Because he is so small. That's right. He's so small that he has to say 'down here' to attract the Queen's attention.

3. Why does the dwarf dislike Gulliver?
   (Hint: What happened to his position at court?)
   a) Because Gulliver mocks the royal family. That's not right. The royal family mock Gulliver.
   b) Because Gulliver has stolen his role as the shortest person at the palace. That's right. Well done.
   c) Because Gulliver is dangerous. That's not right. What happened to the dwarf's position at court?

Answers

1. How did Sladral persuade the farmer to give him Gulliver?
   a) He threatened to take away his daughter. That's not right. He offered to take the farmer's daughter to the palace and the farmer did not object.
   b) He offered the farmer money. That's right. He offered the farmer 1,000 gold pieces.
   c) He said it would be an honour to meet the Queen of Brobdingnag. That's not right. What does 'gold pieces' mean?

2. Why does the Queen not see Gulliver at first?
   a) Because he is in a travelling box. That's not right. Why does Gulliver say 'down here'?
   b) Because he is outside the palace waiting for permission to enter. That's not right. Sladral took him inside the palace. Why does Gulliver say 'down here'?
   c) Because he is so small. That's right. He's so small that he has to say 'down here' to attract the Queen's attention.

3. Why does the dwarf dislike Gulliver?
   a) Because Gulliver mocks the royal family. That's not right. The royal family mock Gulliver.
   b) Because Gulliver has stolen his role as the shortest person at the palace. That's right. Well done.
   c) Because Gulliver is dangerous. That's not right. What happened to the dwarf's position at court?