

..... 13. The Adventures of Gulliver

Gulliver's Travels is an interesting book written by a well-known English writer, Jonathan Swift, in which he describes the voyages of Gulliver to various lands like Lilliput and Brobdingnag. Though the character of Gulliver and these strange-sounding lands are imaginary, Gulliver's experiences and adventures are written so well that they seem real and true to life.



Gulliver, the story tells us, worked as a surgeon on ships. As such, he made several voyages. In May 1699, he sailed on the ship 'The Antelope'. On the return journey, in November, a violent storm sank his ship and Gulliver swam to save his life. Late in the evening, he found himself marooned on a strange land. Weak and exhausted, he slept for about nine hours. It was daylight when he awoke.

Let us read what happened next in his own words.

Gulliver Meets the Lilliputians

'I tried to get up from the ground, but I could not move! I was lying on my back. Then I found that my arms and feet were held down to the ground with strings. My hair, which was long, was held down in the same way. Thousands of strings had been passed across my body, so that I could not move any part of me, but could only lie there on my back looking up at the sky.

In a little time, I felt something alive moving on my foot. Then it came over

my body and up to my face. Turning my eyes down as much as I could, I saw a man. He was not half a foot high. By his dress, he seemed to be a soldier. Then there came forty more, following the first.

I was so much surprised that I gave a great cry. Then they all ran back in great fear; and (as I was told later) some of them were hurt in jumping down from my side on to the ground.'



Gulliver Attempts to Pull Free

‘After pulling very hard I got one arm up from the ground. I also raised my head; this gave me great pain for many of the hairs were pulled out. I put out my hand to catch some of the little men; but they ran away before I could close my hand on them. Then I heard a noise, and felt a pricking in my hand like that of a thousand needles. I found that they were shooting arrows at me. I was afraid for my eyes. I put my hand over my face. After this, I thought that the wisest thing

to do was to lie quiet till night. I thought that then, my hand being free, I could quickly set free the rest of my body.

Soon a platform was raised and an important-looking man gave a long speech. From his gestures, I guessed that he was trying to tell me that they would not harm me, if I did as they told. I too, replied with gestures that I would remain quiet. I also told them that I was hungry.’

Gulliver Eats a Giant Meal

‘At once, a hundred men climbed up on to my body and marched up to my mouth, carrying food. The bread was as small as bullets. So I ate two or three loaves at a time and cries of surprise rose from the Lilliputians that I should eat so quickly and so much. The Lilliputians were no longer afraid of me. They danced upon my body and ran to and fro. I could have caught at least forty of them with my hands and thrown them down. But I remembered

my promise to remain quiet. Indeed, I was surprised at their bravery for I must have seemed the greatest giant in the world.

Later, I was taken to the city where the king lived. A great cart was made by joining many carts. Nine hundred men worked for three hours to put me on to the cart which was drawn by fifteen hundred of the king’s finest horses. The city was just half a mile away but the journey took almost a full day.’



Gulliver's New Home

'The king came out to meet me; he came near and looked at me, but it was not thought safe for him to climb up on me.

At the place where the cart stopped there was an old church. It was the largest building in the whole country. For certain reasons, it had not been used as a church for many years. It had now been made ready for me to use as my house. The great door on the north was four feet high and two feet wide. So, I

could go into it by going down on my hand. One of my feet was set in a great ring on the end of many strong strings so that I could not get away, but could only walk some distance outside my door. The country outside looked like a garden.

After some days, the king and his people were convinced that I would not harm them. So, after I agreed to keep certain 'orders' of the king, I was allowed to move around.'

Gulliver Visits the City and the Queen

'As soon as I was set free I asked if I might see the city. The king was pleased to let me do this. Orders were given to all the people to remain in their houses. I then stepped over the wall, and went very carefully, along the two largest streets. All the windows were full of faces looking out at me, and large numbers of people were standing

on the tops of the houses. The king's house was just at the place where two great streets met. There was a beautiful garden on all sides of it. Lying down in the garden I put my eye to the windows. The rooms inside were very beautiful. In one room, I saw the queen and some of the young princes. They were greatly pleased by my visit.'



Things to do :

1. Answer the following questions in short.

- (1) How was Gulliver tied down on the seashore?
- (2) What did the important-looking man tell Gulliver?
- (3) How was Gulliver taken to the city?
- (4) Describe Gulliver's home in Lilliput.
- (5) Describe Gulliver's walk around the city.

2. Activities

- (1) Tell any one of the stories orally imagining you are Gulliver.
- (2) Write any one of these stories, not as told by Gulliver, but by some other person.
- (3) Imagine that you are in a land of tiny people like Lilliput. Write about some of the interesting things you might see there, including animals, houses, plants, vehicles, etc. Find an interesting name for this land.
- (4) If you were to grow very tiny like a Lilliputian, what are the things you would like to do ? Write about any three of these things.

3. Language Study (See pages 84-88.)

- (1) Read the highlighted words. They are **adverbs**.

- * I was pulling **hard**.
- * They ran **away**.
- * **Later**, I was taken to the city.
- * I went very **carefully**.
- * They were **greatly** pleased.

- (2) Find suitable adverbs for each of the following verbs. (At least 3 each.)

- * walk * speak * push * study * sing * work

- (3) Find the opposites of the following adverbs.

- * hard * quickly * fast * tidily * unknowingly
- * early * often * never * honestly * shamefully
