



Gulliver's Travels

Jonathan Swift (1667 - 1745)

Read by:	Lizzie Driver	Format:	MP3 CD in DVD case
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George Orwell called *Gulliver's Travels* by Jonathan Swift one of the six essential works in all of literature. A biting satire on human nature, its original title, *Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World. In Four Parts. By Lemuel Gulliver, First a Surgeon, and then a Captain of Several Ships*, marks it as a parody of the traveler's tale genre popular at the time exemplified by *Robinson Crusoe*. *Gulliver's Travels* was published anonymously at first and additions and cuts were made to avoid censure by the government. It was an instant hit when it appeared; the publisher used five printers to keep up with demand, which still sold out in its first week.

The book recounts four voyages, each of great length, in which the naïve and gullible Gulliver is taken by various accidents to strange and foreign lands. He finds himself first a giant among tiny people, then a tiny person among giants. He is rescued by a flying island of feckless rationalists pursuing absurd projects, rescued, and then classed with hideous humanoid Yahoos, who are ruled by the noble Houyhnhnms, an equine race of idealists. Cast out by fate again and again, the once adventurous and optimistic Gulliver returns to England to close out his days a misanthropic recluse, choosing to spend his time at the stables instead of in the society of his fellow humans.

Jonathan Swift (November 20, 1667 – October 19, 1745) was an Anglo-Irish satirist, essayist and pamphleteer considered the foremost satirist in the English language. Born in Dublin to English immigrant parents, he was raised in the care of his uncle Godwin after his father's untimely death and his mother's return to England. He graduated from Trinity College in Dublin but was soon after forced by political troubles to flee Ireland for England, where he served as secretary to English diplomat Sir William Temple, a friend of his uncle. He received an M.A. from Oxford and was ordained as a priest in the Church of Ireland, eventually becoming chaplain of a tiny parish in Dublin, which gave him time to write. He began publishing satirical essays and traveled regularly to England, becoming friends with Alexander Pope and John Gay, who together formed the core of the Martinus Scriberlus Club. He became well known for pieces such as the *Battle of the Books* and *The Tale of The Tub*, all of which were published under pseudonyms or anonymously. He was an active member of the royalist Tory inner circle, often mediating between the prime minister and members of Parliament. The return to power of the Whigs forced him back to Ireland, where he supported Irish causes with pieces such as the biting *A Modest Proposal* and wrote the legendary *Gulliver's Travels*. He suffered a stroke in 1742, which confirmed his worst fears by rendering him unable to speak, and died in 1745.