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AudioBooks

JUNIOR
CLASSICS

Jonathan Swift

Gulliver's Travels

Retold for younger listeners by Roy McMillan

Read by Benjamin Soames



1	Part 1: A Voyage to Lilliput	5:31
2	The Lord understood me very well.	6:00
3	The emperor held frequent councils to debate...	6:03
4	One morning, about a fortnight later...	4:39
5	When the Blefusudians perceived the whole fleet moving...	4:42
6	I feel I should give some general ideas of the place...	4:52
7	When I was just preparing to pay my attendance...	5:44
8	Part 2: A Voyage to Brobdingnag	5:44
9	All the reapers sat down in a circle about me...	4:52
10	My master, thinking this might indeed be profitable...	6:42
11	I was every day furnishing the court with some ridiculous story.	6:25
12	I had now been two years in this country...	7:14
13	Part 3: A Voyage to Laputa, Balnibarbi and Luggnagg	7:07
14	Those to whom the King had entrusted me...	6:04

15	So I left and was gently placed on the ground...	4:56
16	In another room, I found someone who had a plan...	4:19
17	I arrived at the Port of Maldonada...	5:16
18	Part 4: A Voyage to the Country of the Houyhnhnms	6:28
19	I could frequently distinguish the word Yahoo...	6:07
20	The curiosity and impatience of my master...	5:17
21	Over many months and in many conversations...	5:37
22	Having lived three years in this country...	6:07
23	In the midst of all this happiness...	4:27
24	As I was looking about for somewhere else to land the canoe...	4:22
25	As soon as I entered the house...	3:47

Total time: 2:18:36

Jonathan Swift

(1667–1745)

Gulliver's Travels

Gulliver's Travels ought to be the most boring book in the world. It's 300 years old, it's about incomprehensible politics and religious differences that no one understands now, and it is deliberately trying to be clever. The reason that it's one of the best books ever (and it is) is because it is a great adventure story, is full of anger at the bad things people do to each other, and is brilliantly funny. Funny sometimes *because* of its anger: when Swift is most angry, he makes fun of the things that upset him. He makes them ridiculous, and so makes it easy to understand why they are so wrong. This kind of humour is called satire; but it's not the only kind in the book. It is sometimes funny because it is a bit rude (such as the occasion when Gulliver puts out a fire); and sometimes because it is wonderfully imaginative and absurd (such as the weird inventions

people try to make in Laputa).

This imaginative side of the book is perhaps what has kept it in print ever since it was published. Jonathan Swift wanted to write about the things that he thought were wrong with the politics of his time, but to do so in an interesting way. So he created a series of imaginary places where the hero, Lemuel Gulliver, could travel to. In each of these places, there would be a different style of politics and government, and Lemuel could talk about what style they had in the Europe of the time, and compare this to the style in the place he had landed. This is a good idea, but it has to be said it still sounds a bit dull. But with Jonathan Swift as the author, it is transformed into a science-fiction adventure story.

What would it be like to be a giant?
What would it be like to be a tiny

person in a land of giants? What would it be like if the really brainy inventors were in charge? What would it be like if governments made decisions for the benefit of everyone in the community? These are the adventures he created and the experiments he looked at. So although he might have been writing about very particular political matters in 1726, we can still understand and appreciate the story. There are some images in *Gulliver's Travels* that are so vivid they will stay with you forever, the way good fairy-tales do. That's quite an achievement in itself.

But there is another thing that makes it so good and so remarkably relevant to us. Many of the things that Swift was describing are still true. Many of his concerns are ones we still have today. Many of the things that outraged him still outrage us. This says a lot about how little human nature has changed (we still have wars, we still treat people badly, we still let tiny disagreements lead to major rows, we still let the rich get away with things the poor are not allowed to get away with); and it also says a lot about how much insight into humans Jonathan Swift had.

He was born in Dublin, and went to university there before getting a job as an assistant to a senior English politician. In this post he began meeting some of the most influential people in politics and literature, and he started writing. He composed poetry, but he had also begun to write satirical pieces about the events of the day, and most people thought he was better at that. However, he was never promoted to a more senior job as he had hoped, and finally agreed to take up a position as a priest back in Ireland. In one sense, this was a deep disappointment to him, but his work was not very demanding and he was able to become involved in some of the bigger issues of the time. In fact, part of his work required him to travel to England to discuss these bigger issues (England controlled Ireland at that time), and he maintained his literary and political friendships, being very highly thought of as a writer and thinker. For a time, he was the editor of a newspaper. But his sometimes radical opinions did not always match those of the people in power. When the queen died in 1714, the new king and his ministers did not like the

ideas of Swift and his friends, and Swift realised his time of influence was over. He was offered a job as the Dean of St Patrick's Church in Dublin, and apart from two visits, he never went back to London again.

However, he carried on writing, and produced some of his very finest works, often in support of the people rather than the government. As a result, he became something of a hero to the Irish. *Gulliver's Travels* was a huge success as soon as it came out, and is his best-known work; lots of writers, comedians and satirists still think of Swift and Gulliver as important influences on their work today.

He had several friendships with women, and one in particular (he called her Stella) was his closest friend for many years; but no one is sure whether he married her. He had always suffered from poor health, which may have influenced his writing and his general attitude. It is not easy to be cheerful if you are feeling very unwell, and if you are angry about something in the first place, your mood will be made even harsher. His last years were very unhappy and painful as his

illnesses became more pronounced, and he died in 1745 after several years of not being able to write anything.

What he had written, however, was some of the most powerful satire ever created; and the best of it, the one that is still as extraordinary and funny and exciting as it was originally, is *Gulliver's Travels*. Not bad for a 300-year-old book about politics.

Notes by Roy McMillan



Benjamin Soames trained at LAMDA. He appeared in the popular TV series *Sharpe* and toured worldwide in the acclaimed Cheek by Jowl production of Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*, directed by Declan Donnellan. He has read *The Tale of Troy*, *The Adventures of Odysseus*, *More Tales from the Greek Legends*, *Great Rulers of Ancient Rome*, *Stories from Shakespeare: The Plantagenets* and featured in *From Shakespeare – with love* for Naxos AudioBooks.

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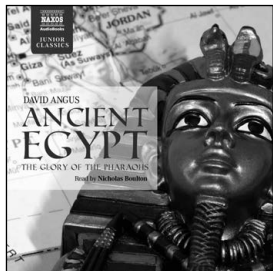
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Recorded at Motivation Sound Studios, London
Produced by Roy McMillan
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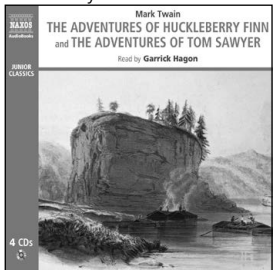
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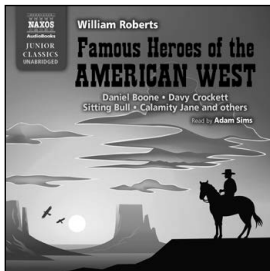
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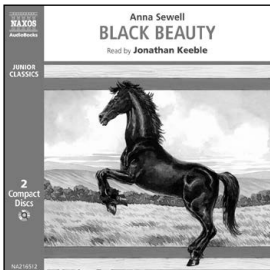
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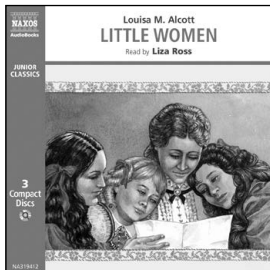


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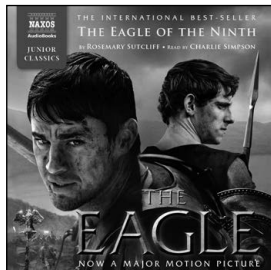


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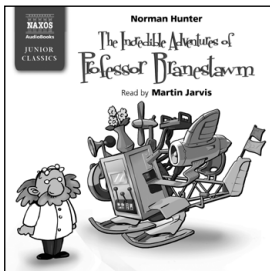
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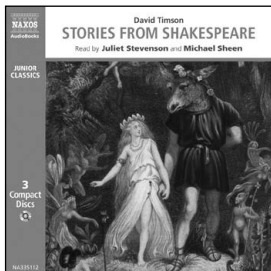
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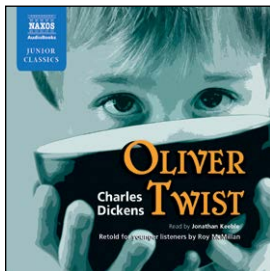
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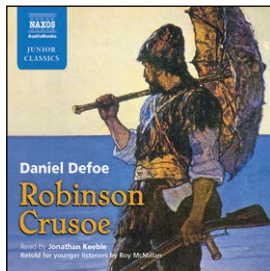
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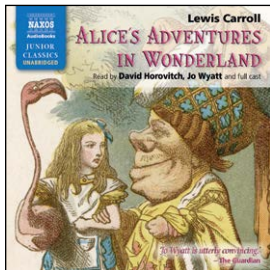
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Jonathan Swift

Gulliver's Travels

Retold for younger listeners by Roy McMillan

Read by **Benjamin Soames**

Lemuel Gulliver sets out on a series of travels, but each time he finds himself shipwrecked in new and unfamiliar lands. And how unfamiliar! In Lilliput, everyone is tiny, and it takes thousands of them to capture him; in Brobdingnag, they're huge and treat him as a sort of living toy; in Laputa, they live on a floating island inventing impossibly mad projects; and the Houyhnhnms are horses! But through all his adventures, Gulliver learns to see humans in a different way, too.

One of the world's great works of fiction, *Gulliver's Travels* keeps all its humour and satire in this new retelling.



Benjamin Soames trained at LAMDA. He has read *The Tale of Troy*, *The Adventures of Odysseus*, *More Tales from the Greek Legends*, *Great Rulers of Ancient Rome* and *Stories from Shakespeare: The Plantagenets* for Naxos AudioBooks.

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CD ISBN:
978-184-379-559-9

