



GULLIVER'S TRAVELS

by Jonathan Swift



Gulliver's Travels
By Jonathan Swift
free adaptation by Josh Lonsdale

'The chief end I propose to myself in all my labours is to vex the world, rather than divert it.'

Therapy

Two chairs on stage.

Gulliver *is sat on one, his hood drawn up.*

A Therapist enters –

Therapist Gulliver?

Gulliver *nods.*

Therapist It's nice to meet you.

The Therapist takes the other seat.

Therapist So, what brings you here today?

Beat.

Gulliver I don't like people.

Therapist What people?

Gulliver People. Human beings.

Therapist So, all people?

Gulliver Yes.

Therapist What do you dislike about them?

Gulliver Everything. Their smell, their looks, the faces they pull, the way they sound, all the noise they make, and how predictable they are, how stupid they are, the way they treat one another, how they destroy whatever they touch – I hate them.

Therapist Hate is a strong word.

Gulliver Not strong enough.

Therapist So how do you handle being around people?

Gulliver I don't.

I just spend my time as best as I can avoiding everyone. I lock myself away in my room and keep myself to myself.

Therapist If I may ask a question that may seem insensitive, do you hate yourself?

Gulliver What?

Therapist Well, you said you hate people and, well, you're a person. Do you hate yourself?

Pause.

Gulliver I don't know myself anymore.

Therapist Do you have any friends?

Gulliver I used to, but now it's hard to even be around them.

Therapist Do you hate them?

Gulliver No, I - ... that's why I'm here.

Because ... if I don't try, I may just lose them.

Therapist They're important to you.

Gulliver They probably are.

Therapist So, when did all of this start?

Gulliver I guess, when I left them.

Therapist You left them?

Gulliver Yes, I went on some ... travels.

Therapist And these travels – they're the reason you feel the way you do today?

Gulliver Yes.

Therapist Well, all travels have beginnings. So, why don't you start from there?

In Gulliver's head, the sea-shanty of 'Drunken Sailor' (attached to bottom of scene) plays -

Gulliver I needed money. So I left home to chase adventure, leaving my wife and family behind.

Therapist I didn't realise you had a wife and a family.

Gulliver I took on work sailing across the seas - as a doctor.

Therapist So you are a sailor *and* a doctor?

Gulliver It was an early morning. We set out from the docks of England.

He stands, looks out to the audience.

Therapist Gulliver, who are you talking to?

Gulliver They think I can't see them.

Therapist *follows his eye-line, confused.*

Therapist Who are you talking about?

Gulliver Them, out there, right in front of us. Grinning apes with barely a brain between them.

Therapist I don't see ... Gulliver, can you look at me? Gulliver –

These 'grinning apes' - who are they?

Gulliver But why should I tell you any of this? You wouldn't understand, nobody would understand – *what* difference would it make?

The room lurches, Gulliver stumbles to one side.

Gulliver All of you out there, watching on but doing nothing as always. Grinning brainless apes –

The room lurches; Gulliver is thrown off his balance again.

The song grows louder, sailors bark orders across the ship deck, bracing themselves to deal with the storm.

Gulliver All of my words and warnings would fall on deaf ears!

Gulliver stumbles violently another time; the shipmates also stumble with him, upstage.

Gulliver You'll turn the other way – I could show you everything I've seen, and yet you're still all blind!

Again, Gulliver and the crew are thrown across the stage –

Gulliver You are the most despicable race of vermin that nature ever suffered to crawl upon the surface of the Earth !

The ship sends Gulliver crashing to the ground, rendering him unconscious –

'DRUNKEN SAILOR' SONG

What will we do with the drunken sailor?
What will we do with the drunken sailor?
What will we do with the drunken sailor?

Early in the morning!

Lock him in the brig until he's sober,
Lock him in the brig until he's sober,
Lock him in the brig until he's sober,
Early in the morning!

Throw him in to bed with the captain's daughter,
Throw him in to bed with the captain's daughter,
Throw him in to bed with the captain's daughter,
Early in the morning!

(X3)

LILLIPUT

Shipwrecked

Two members of the Lilliputian government, Skyresh & Reldresal climb up on to Gulliver's chest, and inspect him. Fascinated, terrified ...

Skyresh It's some sort of whale, some great monster of the deep that's taken human form.

Reldresal It is no whale – it's some kind of ... man.

Skyresh A *man*? This thing is an abomination. We should kill it now whilst it sleeps.

Reldresal There will be no killing.

Skyresh Then what shall we do with this 'man?' – Hm?

Reldresal In accordance with our health and safety regulations, we capture him and call the President.

Skyresh Reldresal, you are not in charge here.

Reldresal And neither are you, Skyresh.

Skyresh A quick spear through the nose and I'll pluck out its brain. Practically painless, and most humane.

Gulliver snores, his chest rises, causing the two to stumble.

And look at all this meat! We can chop him up and feed him to the poor for dinner –

Reldresal Are you insane?

Skyresh All those in favour say aye. Aye. The Ayes have it.

Reldresal We are not voting –

Skyresh It's a modest proposal. The poor are always hungry, this whale's flesh would surely solve the problem.

Reldresal That's not a whale – it's a man; a man-mountain but a man nonetheless! We should –

Skyresh Kill it before it wakes up!

Gulliver scratches his chest, the Lilliputians dodge his hand.

Skyresh *twists and turns the spear in Gulliver's nostril before pulling it out –*

Skyresh I'm doing it now! Almost there, almost to the brain...

Gulliver Ah – ah –

Reldresal Oh no!

Gulliver Chooooo !!

Skyresh Ugh - salty.

Reldresal My mother made this suit!

Gulliver Oh my – I'm hallucinating – I'm going mad –

Reldresal Oh great man-mountain, we mean you no harm –

Gulliver Tiny talking people tiny talking people.

Reldresal We come in peace. Don't eat us.

Skyresh She was gonna kill you.

Reldresal What? No -

Gulliver Could you one of you tell me where I am?

Reldresal Quick - run for your lives!

*They both escape, **Gulliver** chases after -*

Gulliver No wait, I'm not here to hurt you; I'm only an Englishman from England, all I want are some directions!

Skyresh and Reldresal *run away, terrified. Gulliver follows after them.*
Exeunt offstage.

*In the following sequence, **Skyresh and Reldresal** enter, fleeing for their lives.*
*On the screen we see the feet of **Gulliver** chasing them.*

Skyresh & Reldresal *utilise sticks as a prop to play out a mime sequence.*
At first, they spar with one another -

Skyresh Why are we fighting?

Reldresal I don't know!

Both Aaaaah!

Skyresh *passes his stick to **Reldresal**, and then the two run on the spot.*

Reldresal *breaks into skiing*
Skyresh skates on the ice.

They skid to a stop, and then ride motor/quad bikes.

All of a sudden, the sticks become broomsticks. A Harry Potter soundtrack plays, and the scene becomes a game of Quidditch.

At some point, the two of them meet, and they become a gondolier and a tourist.

Skyresh *as the tourist points his selfie stick, whilst **Reldresal** rows his passenger through the Venetian canals as 'Volare' plays in the background.*

Then, the gondola transforms into a rowing boat.

Then, a motorboat.

Skyresh *fishes, and hooks a big one - as he pulls it on board, the motion brings him behind **Reldresal**. He holds his stick up in the air and -*

*Spins it in a circle; becoming the rotor of a helicopter. Mission Impossible plays. **Reldresal** pilots the plane, until eventually the rotor begins to fail -*

Both of them jump from the plane, using their sticks as umbrellas, touching to the ground like clones of Mary Poppins; they dance for a moment.

Gulliver's *feet tap-dance.*

*The dance transforms into them shooting up in the sky to meet **Gulliver**.*

*The camera rises from **Gulliver's** feet to his face.*

Reldresal *Man-Mountain, we have to face you.*

Gulliver *Like I said, I'm just a simple man from England -*

Reldresal *We will take force if necessary.*

Gulliver *I only want some directions.*

Skyresh *doesn't give him a chance, he uses a stick as a bamboo shoot to blow a tranquilizer dart towards him.*

*A direct hit: **Gulliver** collapses to the ground with an almighty crash.*

Skyresh We should call the President.

He exits with the spears.

Reldresal *calls the President twice, failing to get a response, she calls on the phone, and is placed on hold.*

Off-stage, the trumpet goes through a 'hold' jingle.

*This happens twice, then **Skyresh** comes on stage, lost to his trumpeteering perfection.*

Reldresal We need to call the President - properly.

Skyresh *plays the royal tune down the trumpet -*

President Lords Reldresal and Skyresh, what news?

Skyresh Turn around, but I warn you, you're not going to like what you see

*She turns and see **Reldresal**.*

President Yes I look at her every day; it never gets easier.

Skyresh No, not Reldresal, the other way.

*The **President** beholds **Gulliver**.*

President A giant? How did this happen? Didn't we already build a wall?

Skyresh Yeah, as it turns out, that doesn't really work.

Reldresal The giant just walked over it.

Skyresh Well, you know, he's a giant.

Reldresal Walls are a terrible idea.

President Then we need a higher wall!

Skyresh Listen, your President, the man mountain is so large he could destroy us all in an instant. He says he comes from England, which -- where is that? For all we know, he could be a war machine of our enemy – The Empire of Blefuscu.

They all hiss in disgust.

Skyresh The government must understand that if we keep this giant around, then our city of Lilliput is in danger.

Reldresal The giant has a name: Gulliver. He has the right to live, and to be accepted in our country, or allowed to go home. He might have a family.

Skyresh We all have families - the only difference is that he could kill our families with a footstep.

Reldresal He must feel lost and alone, we must protect him as we would protect our own families. He's human after all.

Skyresh We don't know that he's human - he is nothing like us.

Reldresal This is a delicate situation, your President, and it needs a delicate solution. We cannot let fear rule our minds at a time like this!

Skyresh In a time of fear like this anyone can cry about it, but it takes men to provide the solutions.

Reldresal Men? And what exactly does he mean by that?

Skyresh You know what I mean

Reldresal You're saying that women cannot fix this problem?

Skyresh That's not what I mean!

Reldresal 'It takes men' – he's a sexist!

President Both of you shut up! I will tolerate no more of this childish behaviour. Skyresh, tell me simply, how do you propose to deal with this Gulliver situation?

Skyresh We put the Man Mountain to sleep.

Reldresal A nice way of saying 'kill him.'

Skyresh I am not some villain, Reldresal, only realistic – and the reality is this: By my calculations, the giant would consume as much food and water as 1,724 of our people in one day. Now I will not stand here and let our people starve before taking action. The choice is simple, your President, save our people or save the giant.

President In order for one to live, the other must die.

Skyresh Exactly.

Reldresal And once you've killed Gulliver, Skyresh, how would you eliminate his body?

Skyresh I beg your pardon?

Reldresal Gulliver will leave behind a corpse the size of a mountain. A mountain of rotting flesh, bones, organs, and skin – it will certainly mean sickness and disease will spread throughout our city!

President Enough!

Skyresh, you tell me that if we keep the Man-Mountain alive, our people will starve and then die.

Reldresal, you tell me that if we kill the Man-Mountain, our people will suffer from the plague and then die.

But where both of you see a curse, I see a gift. Now leave me alone. I want to speak to the giant alone.

Skyresh Are you sure?

Reldresal Are you going to be safe?

President Leave me.

Skyresh and Reldresal exit. The President wakes Gulliver up.

President Giant, Mr. Giant, Mr. Man-Mountain.

Gulliver waking up Not Brexit!

President What?

Gulliver Where am I? Who are you?

President You are in Mildendo, the capital of this great country of Lilliput. You are currently speaking to the President.

Gulliver My name is Gulliver, Mrs. President

President A pleasure to make your acquaintance.

Gulliver Likewise.

President Tell me, Gulliver – how is everything for you here?

Gulliver What is this place?

President We've placed you in the only place we could fit you. This is the Old Temple, it has been abandoned for years.

Gulliver Abandoned – why?

President Oh ... I don't know. There was a little massacre.

Gulliver A little ... massacre?

President Yes – little. I mean, a massacre to us must look to you like rats fighting over cheese.

Gulliver Well, I suppose so.

President So you agree then?

Gulliver What?

President Is that what we are to you – rats?

Gulliver I don't think you're rats, I didn't say that.

President Have you come to exterminate us?

Gulliver I haven't come to exterminate anybody. I was just agreeing with you, that you're little...

President We are not little; we are of normal, natural proportion. It's your size that is abnormal.

Gulliver I didn't mean...

President Have you come to steal our jobs? To steal our food? To make all of our people become like you?

Gulliver I haven't come to exterminate anybody. I don't want to steal anyone's job.

President Then why are you here?

Gulliver Because I was shipwrecked!

President Oh yes, you all come on ships and you're all shipwrecked! La pacchia è finita

Gulliver I'm here because I was captured by your men. Because I have nowhere else to go. I am the only survivor of my crew, enslaved by your own people and brought here. I am not your enemy.

President Gulliver, tell me, at which end do you crack your egg?

Gulliver Sorry?

President Do you crack your eggs at the big end or at the little end?

Gulliver At the little end.

President Good. Then you could be our ally.

Gulliver What do you mean?

President Gulliver, I will set you free.

Gulliver Thank you Mrs. President.

President. As long as you agree to some conditions.

Gulliver What are these conditions?

President First – you shall not leave us without our permission.

Second – you shall not come into the city without our permission.

Third – you shall not trample anybody, nor pick anyone up without their consent.

Four - you should contribute to society, by delivering messages, and helping our builders

Gulliver Help around, watch where I walk – seems reasonable.

President And finally, you shall be our ally against our enemies in the island of Blefuscu.

Gulliver Wait – what was that last one?

President Blefuscu doesn't stand a chance with you on our side.
You can help us to make Lilliput great again!

Gulliver So, I am to be your weapon?

President Weapon is a bad term. I prefer to think of you as a great weight, with which the balance will be reset.

Gulliver And why are you at war?

President Because they crack their eggs on the big end

Beat.

Gulliver Is this a joke?

President (*mournfully*) If only it were.

When my grandfather was a young boy, going to eat his egg, he cracked it on the big end – and he cut his finger.

Whereupon my grandfather's father saw the pain caused to his son by this primitive practice of egg-cracking, and published a new law – from now on, we would be civilised, and crack our eggs on the smaller end.

Gulliver Sorry, what exactly do you mean by this egg-cracking metaphor?

President There is no metaphor. They refuse to crack their eggs as the law and the religion requires.

Gulliver What does your religion require?

President That all true believers shall crack their eggs at the convenient end. The Big-Endians reject our interpretation. At least eleven thousand have died rather than submit. So much bloodshed.

Beat.

Gulliver *can't help himself; he bursts out laughing.*

Gulliver Good – no, really – very good. For a moment, you almost had me.

The President stare back at him, dead serious.

Gulliver The acting as well, superb. I got chills.

President Gulliver? What are you saying?

Gulliver You can't be serious. I mean, that's ridiculous.

President Gulliver.

Gulliver You are serious.

President Deadly so.

Beat.

Gulliver Look, I didn't mean to offend –

President We have been very patient having you here, giant. We would feed you, and at great cost; people are starving. We do not ask for much, only your help.

Gulliver I am a doctor, not a soldier. I heal wounds, not inflict them.

President I cannot pretend to understand how you see us. Tiny, insect-like, inconsequential it seems—

Gulliver Not at all.

President As strange as this world is to you, as miniature as we might seem, the flesh and blood of my people still means something. We are talking about saving the lives of innocent women and children here.

Gulliver With all respect, Mrs. President, it sounds to me like we are talking about *taking* the lives of women and children. I am sure those of Blefuscu also love and cherish their people.

President They made their choice.

Now, you have to make yours. Will you win your freedom?

Gulliver If the price of freedom is so dear, then let me tell you plainly – I will never be an instrument of bringing death or slavery to any people.

At the end of his line, Gulliver finds himself back in therapy, recounting the story.

Therapy

Therapist And how did this President of ... Lilliput, react, when you said this?

Gulliver Let's just they say things got less than friendly. Those people in power, no matter how small they seem, never get used to hearing people telling them no so often.

Therapist Well it all sounds quite intense.

Gulliver It was - of course, my refusal to fight in their war meant that I wasn't exactly welcome any longer. I had to escape.

Therapist You left this Lilliput behind?

Gulliver As I said, I'm a doctor - not a soldier. I'm trained to help people, hurting them would make me a very bad doctor indeed.

Therapist And this place, these people, they're the reason you think you've given up on human beings?

Gulliver I haven't given up. If I'd given up, I wouldn't be here.

Therapist Well that's good then. Because as a doctor, it's your job to look after people - including yourself.

Gulliver How can I look after anyone anymore? When all they are is liars and cheaters? In Lilliput, they lied to each other, they lied to their people, they lied to me - out of fear, in the pursuit of power.

Human beings are built on lies.

Therapist Sometimes lying can be a good thing.

Gulliver You know *why* we lie? Because we need to disguise the truth. That we're selfish and greedy and completely obsessed with thoughts of ourselves and ourselves alone.

Therapist That's a bleak view of humanity, Gulliver.

Gulliver After I escaped Lilliput, I returned home. It was nice to find normality again. But, I only stayed for a few months with my family, before I found myself leaving for adventure again.

And why do you think I did that?

Therapist You tell me.

Gulliver If I told you I left them because, once again, I needed the money - would you believe me?

Therapist Well, I -

Gulliver Because that's the lie. I'm a liar too.

The truth is I left because I was bored, because I was selfish for adventure. The calm became too loud and I was bored by staying at home with my family.

I couldn't bear to face the normal and dull reality.

That's the truth. You see sometimes we lie because the truth is ugly.

Certainly, that's what my next adventure taught me.

Therapist And where was it that you went for this second adventure?

Gulliver To a place where everyone was self-obsessed. And whilst these people were normalized -

Therapist *takes out his phone, takes aim and films* **Gulliver**.

Gulliver They were even stranger than those of Lilliput -

Gulliver *turns to face the Therapist, discovers the filming* -

Therapist Hey, keep going, this is great. They were stranger, you said - how?

Gulliver They were distracted, cold, not able to show interest in anything other than their screens.

Therapist *mouthes the word 'amazing', and pushes the phone up to his face -*

Therapist How did that make you feel?

Gulliver Removed, alone, unimportant -

*The following speech goes on by the first **Therapist**, as he is replaced by another -*

Therapist Yeah yeah - (*he walks away, talking into his phone*) - oh man, let's get real for a second, man, take a breath, fair warning, it's gonna get real emotional up in here, you hear me? Emotions, man, they're like all ... feelings, you know?

This is my life, right? Every day I got people like him telling me they problems and I'm like, yo, it's a lot. That's why I'm so thankful for you guys, 'cause it's your subs and likes that keep me going, y'all are my family, and I love you.

That's why I have a big announcement to share with y'all in this video, and like this news is huge, and it's not, like, easy for me to say, but I'm a big believer in the universe and everything you put it there, like, coming ten times bigger. I think Jesus said that. But yo check it: my big announcement is this: I'm moving to a new channel, and I need y'all to follow me there at RickyBeesLyfe, and that's Lyfe with a Y ...

*The second **Therapist** records **Gulliver** through the phone.*

Therapist 2 Please go on.

Gulliver Nobody is interested in anyone but themselves, no one is able to have any real conversation, it isn't long before their things come out, they've lost real human contact -

*Second **Therapist** leaves, replaced by the third -*

Therapist 2 You hear that? What we're talking about real human contact. This way I am able

to touch you and you can touch me - through this we make contact. We are all connected, you can feel it all over, wherever you are, you can hear my voice peaceful cocoon, that's right, you're my peaceful cocoons and happiness is a great big cocoon ...

Hello beautiful souls, welcome to my new direct here. Soon I will also post my new video in my channel. Hashtag Namaste. As you can see we're here today with this amazing beautiful soul, called Gulliver. He's now very confused and needs our support... Hello Jessica! Welcome.. oh hi guys.. I'm so happy and my heart is filled with joy and lightness right now. So why not.. Let's share a hashtag all together: #happiness #lightness #joy #havingaheartfilledwithhappinessandlightnessandjoy.

Therapist 3 Please go on.

Gulliver I was saying that everyone just seems to have some short attention span, it makes you feel so -

Therapist 3 Exactly. What are you doing with your life, when you could be making so much money in just one week, with these easy ten tricks no-one knows about...

*Their chatter begins too much, **Gulliver** retreats into himself - eventually, he gets up and his chair falls back.*

*They freeze. Gulliver tries to get back to make them speak again, but **YouTuber 2** just starts and stops, **YouTuber 3** starts buffering and **YouTuber 1** becomes aggressive about him touching his phone*

Gulliver - Where am I? What is this place?

All You can get all the answers you are looking for, if you just follow us, follow us, follow us

Gulliver OK, I'll follow you. (*turns to **YouTuber 2***) Who are you?

Gulliver *starts watching **YouTuber 2's** content.*

YouTuber 2 Have you ever felt sick and tired of using words to communicate with people? Why are we still putting walls between our minds, with all these words and stickers and gifs and emojis? Let the communication become free from all of that. Let's start using THINGS! THINGS need no language, THINGS bring no misunderstanding. THINGS are the future of sharing!

Bring all your things with you, at all times, and you will improve your communications and relationships and sense of self-worth. For example, do you want to say “vintage bamboo backpack”, but you don’t have one? Well, you can buy one right here, just by swiping up: if you subscribe now and use the promotional code BAMBOO in the description of the video in the channel you and then check your email you will get right away a special discount for an optional person that will help you to keep all your THINGS close to you at all time. You know what I’m saying! Thank you peaceful cocoon thanks for all your beautiful comments. Hashtag namaste!!!!

Gulliver *stops the content and starts watching YouTuber 3’s content.*

Gulliver Could you tell me where I am /

YouTuber 3 She was unemployed and now she earns 20k dollars tax free every week, from home. Do you know how? She makes sweaters. How do you make sweaters? Wool? No. Cotton? No. You can do it with something everyone has in their home. What is that you ask? Spiders. Spiders cost zero and provide webs, which you can knit and make unique organic sweaters. Of any color. How can you get different colors? You want yellow? You make the spider eat lemons. You want green? You make them eat salad. You want whitish web color? You give them nothing. You have money sitting in your home and you don’t even know it. You miss you 100% of the shots you don’t take. Stop watching this. Stop watching this now. But not before having subscribed to my channel and maybe provided a donation for my kickstarter campaign? And of course come back next week for my next videos: how to extract sunlight from cucumbers, and how to make money out of just what you have in the toilet, or how to reconstruct food directly from /

Gulliver *turns to YouTuber 1*

Gulliver And what do you do exactly?

YouTuber 1 Yo I'm glad you asked, I'm like the idea guy. I'm like challenging a lot of mainstream ideas one by one and doing it on YouTube in a sick way. For example, color: who says we can only see it with our eyes? Check it. Close your eyes. Give my your hand. Don't worry. I won't hurt you. Feel it. What color is my shirt?

YouTuber 1 *puts Gulliver’s hand on his shirt.*

Gulliver Red?

YouTuber 1 See? Isn't that crazy? You knew the color because—

Gulliver Well yeah, I just saw it before.

YouTuber 1 Because you just saw it before! Exactly. Now give me your ear.

Gulliver reluctantly *does, and YouTuber 1 lifts his shirt to reveal an undershirt. He places Gulliver's head on his stomach.*

YouTuber 1 Listen to that. Do you hear that? What color do you hear?

Gulliver Red?

YouTuber 1 No.

Gulliver Orange?

YouTuber 1 No.

Gulliver Yellow?

YouTuber 1 No.

Gulliver Green?

YouTuber 1 No, but close.

Gulliver Blue?

YouTuber 1 YES! See? Crazy, right? You heard that. We can hear color. How did you do that?

Gulliver Well, I was eliminating all colors one by one. I was just going to get it eventually.

YouTuber 1 You were just going to get it eventually. Exactly!

Gulliver Well /

YouTuber 1 Now, let's take one last step, let's try with taste. Stick your tongue out.

YouTuber 1 *takes off his shoe and moves it to Gulliver's face. Gulliver backs away.*

Gulliver Thanks, but I'm good. I think I understand. Yeah, no. I'm not going to lick your shoe. What the hell is this place?

YouTuber 3 This is the Academy

Gulliver What?

YouTuber 2 The Royal Academy of Lagado

YouTuber 1 We are in a floating island over the world

YouTuber 3 Where all the great minds of our generation gather to share ideas and new contents

YouTuber 1 And follow each other

Gulliver How did I get here?

YouTuber 1 Maybe you stepped on a link somewhere, maybe some friends introduced you

YouTuber 2 What does it matter is that you are here now

Gulliver How long have you been living here?

YouTuber 1 I came here very young.

YouTuber 2 I was born here.

YouTuber 3 I came here only three months ago: which shows it's never too late

Gulliver What do you do here?

YouTuber 1 We create original content.

YouTuber 2 We do projects.

YouTuber 3 We create identities.

Gulliver This is not very clear. Why would someone want to do this?

As the conversation goes on, the set transforms into the likes of a panel show.

YouTuber 2 The Academy offers the opportunity to be connected with everybody

YouTuber 3 You can know anything you want whenever you want to

YouTuber 1 You don't have to remember anything anymore

YouTuber 2 I wouldn't want to live anywhere else

YouTuber 3 You are completely free to do whatever you want

YouTuber 1 You don't have to pay attention

YouTuber 2 To be with whoever you want

YouTuber 1 Also time is different, which I really appreciate

YouTuber 3 You never waste time, there is no night or day, what time is it, right?

YouTuber 2 I can't remember the last time I slept which I am thankful for

YouTuber 1 I really appreciate always having something to look at

YouTuber 2 I was born to be here.

YouTuber 1 I cannot listen to a person for more than 30 seconds.

YouTuber 2 You can express your inner self to as many people as you can

YouTuber 3 If I am angry, I am not afraid anymore to say the meanest things to people.

YouTuber 1 I'm telling people how to do my taxes, I don't know how to do my taxes

YouTuber 2 Sharing is caring

YouTuber 1 To be validated

YouTuber 2 To be heard

YouTuber 3 To be seen

Gulliver What kind of role model do you think you can be for the ones watching you? Who are your role models in the first place?

YouTuber 1 My role model was Joe, because he didn't use the academy. He actually disconnected.

Gulliver He's your role model because he said no to the system?

YouTuber 1 Yeah, he left this place so now, people are following me.

Beat.

YouTuber 1 Wait, I don't know if he's more a role model or I'm just glad that he left

YouTuber 2 Do you know eggs?

YouTuber 3 I love eggs.

Gulliver I'm not sure this relevant.

YouTuber 2 How do you eat eggs? How do you crack them?

YouTuber 3 Any way I like.

YouTuber 2 You're incredible. That's because eggs have the right to be cracked in any way they want. Kiss your egg. Love your egg.

I think my role model would be an egg.

YouTuber 3 My role model is Leonardo da Vinci.

YouTuber 1 The actor?

YouTuber 3 Not that one, the other one, the old one.

Gulliver A sensible role model. His work will stand the test of time. As time goes, I'm curious - I imagine you're drawn to this type of work, because once it's out there, it cannot die.

In a sense, you're immortal.

YouTuber 2 Immortal?

Gulliver Yes, you're immortal - you cannot die.

By publishing your work or thoughts online, you're making yourselves immortal.

YouTuber 3 I hadn't ever thought of that.

Gulliver You must have - everyone dreams of being immortal.

YouTuber 1 What good is there in being immortal?

Gulliver Are you serious? Imagine all the possibilities if you were immortal – there would be no limitations!

They stare at him, blankly.

Gulliver Oh come on, as long as I have known it – everlasting life has been the universal desire of all human beings. In this world, whoever has one foot in the grave is certain to hold the other back as strongly as they can.

Dying sucks. That's a sad fact of human existence.

And to live forever – well, you could read every book in existence.

YouTuber 1 You read books?

Gulliver Yes.

The YouTubers look at each other; mouths open, impressed.

YouTuber 3 Like real paper books?

Gulliver Yes.

YouTuber 2 Vintage.

Gulliver We all know that sooner or later Death will come knocking at our door,
There's a clock counting down and barely enough time to explore,
So just imagine the peace of mind knowing you are immortal,
Endless life would be like opening a portal,
To a treasure chest of knowledge and the key to happiness,
I'd graduate from every college, unlock my subconsciousness,
Even if takes a few or so hundred years,
I'd eventually overcome and defeat all of my fears,
Age is not an object, time is not a subject,

I wouldn't feel bad about procrastination,
I'd witness the birth of the robot nation,
I'd master every science, and master every art,
I'd teach humans how to love, and share a beating heart,
I'd learn every language and create my own religion,
I'd watch as we evolved, witness all human invention,
I'd travel down every road, watch the sun explode,
I'd live in every country and watch great cities rise and fall,
I'd record an honest history, good, bad, ugly - warts and all,
To helping all of us human beings, no matter how large or tall,
I'd be a traveller from the past and a messenger to the future,
With all my lessons from the past, I'd cure, heal and suture,
I'd be the doctor to the human disease and teach all of man my instructions,
To learn from me and do all they please and end all world corruptions,

If I was immortal, I could save the world.

If I was immortal, I could save the world.

I could save the world.

I could save the world.

He repeats this, but unfortunately, they don't listen.

*The second travel ends, and we return to the **Therapist's** office.*

Therapy

Gulliver I could save the world.

Therapist And you don't believe that anymore?

Gulliver I'm not immortal.

Therapist Well maybe that's the problem, you live your life knowing it must come to an end.
Maybe you should start living as an immortal.

As you so delicately put it - you could be the doctor to the human disease.

Gulliver What if we're past the point of saving ourselves?

Therapist I don't believe that. Do you?

Beat.

Therapist You have a choice, Gulliver - you can look at the ugly truth and throw your hands up in despair, and give up.

But really, I don't think that is you.

Take your own advice. You're a doctor - you heal wounds, you don't inflict them.

Gulliver That's so strange - I've heard that before.

Therapist Where??

Gulliver In the land of the Houyhnhnms -

Therapist I'm sorry, where's this?

Gulliver My last travel.

After I left those people at the academy, I returned home and planned to stay for good.

But again, I was barely there. I left no sooner than I arrived.

If I had ever known what happiness really was, I would have known the days spent with my family were the happiest days of my life.

Beat.

Therapist You feel as though you've passed a point of no return?

Gulliver Yes.

Therapist It's not uncommon for people to fantasise over a time machine.

Gulliver I don't fantasise.

Therapist I'm not saying you do. I'm just pointing out – too long to return to an age of

innocence, that's an understandable thing.

Gulliver Innocent is just another word for blind.

Therapist I don't believe you're so cynical Gulliver. Like you just said, you could save the world.

Now, please, tell me about this travel.

Music plays in Gulliver's ears, something primal ...

Gulliver. The last place I ever visited on my travels was the one place where I wish I could have stayed.

The therapy scene dissolves, and Gulliver is drawn back to the land of the Houyhnhnms.

HOUYHNHMS

Gulliver *is alone, centred on stage.*

He looks around, absorbing the new space.

The ground is uneven, bumpy, with mounds in places.

Leaves crackle, a running stream trickles under his feet.

Crickets play, birds chirp, frogs and their cousins croak.

A clean white mountain mist descends and hangs in the forest.

There is something about this place, it is untouched – nature has returned.

Gulliver *closes his eyes, inhales the fresh air, and a dreamy soundtrack stirs between his ears.*

He is enveloped in bliss, his tense muscles melt away from the bone.

After a short while, the silhouette of a small figure appears behind him.

She is humanoid, and yet she has a distinctly equine head.

She pauses for a moment, lifts a stick to her lips, and the flute instrumental of 'Drunken Sailor' sharply plays.

Gulliver *turns, confused – but she's already tottered out of view.*

Gulliver Hello?

Gulliver takes a moment, shrugs, and goes to close his eyes.

The little horse-headed girl appears again, plays the flute once more.

Gulliver turns, and this time catches her shadow silhouetted in the background, he sneaks up to meet her just as she disappears again –

Gulliver Hey, wait -

Finally, the little horse girl appears on stage, stick in her hand.

She plays one last short burst, skipping as she does –

Gulliver remains hidden, and watches.

Her feet press on one of the mounds in the ground, soil spills, and she freezes – her song cut short.

Without warning, she drops her stick and flees.

Gulliver Wait – you forgot your ...

Gulliver picks up the sticks, tries a note, and isn't very good.

He stops - from the mound she's stepped on, a small golden light shines on his face.

He crouches low, squints into the light, and with the stick slowly removes more and more soil.

He reaches his hand into the earth, and pulls out – to his amazement – a stone glinting exactly like a coin.

He laughs, and pockets the stone.

Puts his hand back into the hole for more,

*Just as another hand reaches out of the hole and grabs his arm – **Gulliver** screams, as the arm tries to pull him in.*

*After a struggle, **Gulliver** manages to free himself, stumbling backwards.*

The soil spills, and a creature unfolds from the earth.

Naked and simian, dirty, and hairy – it snarls and bares its teeth, its feet and hands clawed, it makes towards him on all fours. It cries out to him – and lunges –

Gulliver yelps, tumbling backwards – with both hands he holds the stick above him, on which the beast rests, clawing at his face. It screams –

Yahoo Gra-my-maw-naw!

It gnashes its teeth, chewing on the stick.

*Using all his might, **Gulliver** uses the stick to push the creature over him.*

*The creature jumps up on to all fours with prodigious ability, **Gulliver** barely has a chance to recover before it lunges –*

Gulliver *hits it in the jaw with the end of the stick.*

A crack like a snooker ball potting another –

The beast curls into a ball and whimpers.

Gulliver Look, I'm terribly sorry ... but that's hardly the way to introduce yourself, now, is it?

Yahoo Gimme-ma-maw-nee.

Gulliver I beg your pardon, I'm having difficulty understanding –

*In the same approximation of a gorilla, the creature stands up on its hind legs, puffs out its chest and beats its fists against them. With a tremendous roar, it marks its final attack – and launches itself at **Gulliver**.*

Gulliver *is too slow to raise his stick, and the creature easily casts it aside.*

*They crash to the ground, **Gulliver** using his bare hands to hold the jaws from snapping shut around his neck.*

Time sticks, and the violence plays out in slow-motion.

*Just as the creature is close to ripping out **Gulliver's** throat – it immobilises, petrified.*

In the next beat, it jumps away from Gulliver and exits, bounding into the dark of the forest.

Gulliver Aha! Yes, you better run away – yeah, you know it; not so tough now are you? Not once I've introduced you to - (*flexing his muscles*) – these swans.

He parades his biceps; a silly victory dance.

Gulliver Oh yeah, which way is to the beach? Which way to the beach?

A twig snaps.

The reason for the creature's sudden exit; a great figure, a dappled-grey, with a Horse's head, enters.

*They stand, spell-bound, staring at each other.
Then, the Horse circles him slowly, taking him in.*

In wonder, the Gray steps forward, gazing at him.

Gulliver *Hey boy.*

*Gulliver lifts his hand to stroke the Gray's neck.
The **Gray** observes; neighs, and with his hoof, removes Gulliver's hand.*

*Another Horse, **Brown**, enters –
He stares at **Gulliver**, in shock and amazement.*

Gulliver *ping pongs between the two, as the conversation turns a little frantic –
It is incomprehensible, except for one word which is repeated constantly: Yahoo.*

Gulliver *Gentle horses – men, Gentlemen.*

*If you are sorcerers, as I have good reason to believe, and you can understand my language –
then please, listen, I come in peace.*

*Now, perhaps if one of you allowed me to ride on your back, you could take me somewhere for
a drink and some rest – or at least give me some good directions.*

The Horses watch in silence, then turn to each other and continue their conversation.

Gulliver *tries a different tactic, and echoes –*

Gulliver *Yahoo. Yahoo. Yahoo there. Yahoo.*

Gray *neighs at him.*

Gulliver *neighs back.*

Brown *neighs.*

Gulliver *neighs back.*

They both neigh.

Gulliver *neighs back harder.*

The Horse-people stop, one last quick discussion.

Gray Stranger, you are to come with me.

The space transforms, three horses sit opposite him, ready to question.

*The horses talk between themselves, **Gray, Brown and Black.***

*They eventually address **Gulliver.***

Gray Welcome stranger.

Gulliver Hello. Where am I ?

Brown You are in the land of the Houyhnhnms.

Black An undisturbed land.

Gray Until recently.

Gulliver Disturbed? Disturbed by what exactly?

Gray Disturbed by the very creature we saved you from.

Brown The very creature of your own flesh and blood.

Gulliver My own flesh and blood - well that's just rude.

Brown You wear coverings over your body to hide what you are - is that not correct?

Gulliver Well, I've not thought of it like that -

Brown If these beasts are not one of your kind, then what are you?

Gulliver Well, I'm an Englishman - polite and well-mannered as best I can be. I in no way

resemble that wild wicked creature in the forest - and if i may be frank, I find it incredibly rude you would call me so.

Black Look here, this Yahoo happens to be intelligent. It speaks so well, and it can say a thing is not when the thing seems to be. If you are not a Yahoo, then what are you?

Gulliver What on Earth is a Yahoo?

Brown A Yahoo is what we speak of - this wild violent creature.

Gray We don't know where they came from.

Some say they came from mud and slime heated by the sun, others claim from the ooze and froth of the sea. No one truly knows.

What is certain, is that we heard them first. The forest moaned as its trees were plucked from their beds, splintered and torn apart. The Yahoos came riding in beasts with cold metal exoskeletons; hungry beasts with great trunks that dug into the ground and engulfed the earth beneath our feet.

Beware the Yahoo, it's true what you may have heard. They do not fear fire. They use it.

Brown Anything they touch is destroyed. They smell, cause noise, burn entire forests down - lay ruin to all they see and desire. They are hungry always, and greedy too - they do not share with any other creature, especially themselves - you could give food enough for fifty to two of them, and they'd still fight between one another to steal it all for themselves.

Black We find them digging in the forest, searching for gold shining stones - for some reason, they are incredibly important to them and they will one another over these stones.

They circle him.

Gray It seems you are not a normal Yahoo. You stand up on two legs -

Gulliver Well my mother always taught me good manners.

Brown You're clean, Yahoos are not clean.

Black Your voice is low, pleasant -

Gulliver Well, thank you very much.

They stomp and whinny in delight. Gulliver is in shock.

Gray You cover your body. They don't do that. You even seem intelligent.

Gulliver Why, thank you, my wife would disagree.

Gray Your wife? What's a wife?

Gulliver A wife is a woman I choose to marry.

Black Marry? What's marry?

Gulliver As in to marry. Marriage, It's when you officially choose to spend the rest of your life with someone.

Black Officially?

Gulliver Yes, as witnessed by the law and by God.

Brown By the law? What is law?

Gray By God? What is God?

Gulliver Oh my, I can see this will be a long conversation. God is the creator of everything, we make sure to behave ourselves in this life so we might join him in heaven.

The law is ... well, in a way, similar to God. The Law is set of rules. Rules that we all agree to obey, for the better of everyone living together in the best peace we can hope to achieve.

Gray Why do you need rules?

Gulliver Well without rules, people might misbehave. Do ... bad things.

Gray Bad things?

Gulliver Yes, bad things - you'll get in trouble if you steal, if you cheat people, murder, if you are responsible for war crimes. There's a lot of different things.

Gray Steal?

Brown Cheat?

Black. Murder?

Gray War?

All. What is war?

Gulliver Well, if your land is being invaded by someone else. You would go to war to defend that line. Or if the king of queen desires to take the land and expand their realms.

Gray. Why would you want to expand your land?

Gulliver Well there's many different reasons really. Sometimes our ruler just wants more land, or more taxes, or if that land doesn't agree with our religious teachings, then we'll certainly have to take over that land.

Gray What IS war?

Gulliver Well, war is when you battle one another. You fight one another to the death.

Gray So you are Yahoos. Fighting one another to death.

Of all species, only Yahoos do this.

Gulliver Yes, well ... yes, we reserve a special hate for one another.

A raw and improvised speech in which **Gulliver** goes through all the atrocities he can go through as they come to him, paling in shock as he comes to realise what human beings are truly capable of.

Eventually, at the end of his speech, the horses speak.

Black And why do you do all of that?

Gulliver Because we can. Because there's nothing or nobody to stop us.

Gray We do not stop you? Why do our kind let you do this?

Beat.

Gulliver Please, I'm done answering questions.

Black Aha - there are none of our kind in your lands?

Gulliver Yes, we have some of your kind.

Brown Do you fight them??

Gulliver No, we don't fight them.

Brown As to be excepted. There are many of these in your land??

Gulliver Yes, in every city and town.

Brown They are the mayors, ministers, leaders.

Gulliver No.

Brown Kings then.

Gulliver No they're not kings.

Gray Then what are we in your lands?

A long pause.

Gulliver You are slaves.

We ride on their backs and whip them into work, on our farms or on our battlefields. They don't have a choice. We train them from an early age, they are kept locked up in stables. When

they're young, we castrate them and break their spirits so they won't fight back.

We use them until they fall dead.

And when they're dead, we don't have to waste anything.

We can eat them. We use their skin as clothes to cover our naked bodies we seem so ashamed of.

Because the ugly naked truth is the best thing we're good at hiding.

Beat.

Gray What is truth?

Gulliver Please no more.

Black If what you say is true, then there is no hope. All you seem interested in doing is hurting one another.

Gulliver That's not the truth. I trained to be doctor, that means healing wounds -not inflict them.

Gray What is truth??

Black. Then you should be with Yahoos. You're a doctor - heal wounds, don't inflict them. Save your world.

Gray What is true??

Gulliver Not fictional. Not a lie.

Gray. A lie??

Gulliver A lie. Come on, a lie.

If I say the floor is red, when it's not. That's a lie.

Brown The floor is not red.

Gulliver Exactly. It's a lie.

Black Why would you say that??

Gulliver To trick you. A joke.

Brown To trick us?

Gulliver Yes or to take advantage. A lie can be used for a trick.

Or you might lie to someone so you can cheat them.

Or you want to protect them.

Black So it is to say the thing that is not a thing.

Gulliver Exactly. This is a lie.

Gray. It seems like a bad thing.

Gulliver Sometimes it is. Sometimes it's good.

You can comfort someone, protect them. If someone is sick and is feeling very bad. Even if it looks like everything could be bad, you might lie to reassure them, to make them feel better. It can be a good thing. We lie all the time to look after each other.

We lie in order to sell things, even if they're broken things.

We even lie for fun - sometimes we pay to see people lie.

Sometimes people will stand on a stage and they'll lie and everyone will pay to come and watch them lie and pretend together that something is something that it's not.

You could be pretending to be horses right now, pretending that we are in your land, I could not be Gulliver, I could just be an actor on a stage saying the lines of a character right now in front of an audience, and the whole thing is that they know I'm lying, but they're happy to believe in the lie.

Sometimes you lie to make yourself look at things in a different way.

You lie to speak the truth, in a way that lasts,

Sometimes telling the truth through an elaborate series of lies to make it stick.

We might be lying just to say something that is real.

We're so trapped in the everyday world where we can't avoid some things that are true, that sometimes it's nice to escape and dream together. You can come to the theatre, and you can pretend to fly. We can pretend we have no language barrier and we can communicate perfectly well. You can read a book, a collective of continuous lying.

At this point, Gulliver turns to the audience with the rest and addresses them directly.

Gulliver We lie in order to create theatre.

Ale. We lie so that we can pretend to fly.

Mitch Lies can be good, you just have to be careful with them.

Giulia We lie so that we might better see things clearly.

Gulliver We lie so we can tell the truth.

All We lie so that we can tell the truth.

A moment standing out into this audience.

*A musical interlude,
the cast take their final bow .*

END