



Gulliver's Travels

Martin Rowson

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A modern illustrated retelling of Swift's classic, of which Will Self says "Hunter S. Thompson once observed that satire was no longer possible because reality had become too twisted, but Rowson gives the handle a few more cranks and lo! a masterpiece is resurrected."

On November 5, 1699, the Merchant Ship *Antelope* foundered on a rock at the Latitude of 30 degrees 2 minutes south. The only survivor of the crew was Lemuel Gulliver, who some hours later awoke, bound by hundreds of tiny ropes, lying on a beach in the Empire of Lilliput. On August 31, 1997, Gulliver's direct (although unwitting) descendent was being driven through an underpass, when his vehicle was struck from behind. Rendered unconscious, he was next aware of being thrown from a helicopter into a shallow sea. The next morning, he found himself bound by hundreds of tiny ropes, lying on a beach, and surrounded by tiny figures welcoming him to a modern Lilliput. This is only the beginning of his adventures, as he finds himself visiting the same places as his famous forebear, only three centuries later. Thus the Modern Gulliver learns how history has unfolded for the Lilliputians, discovering the secrets of the "New" Lilliput's economic boom and accidentally precipitating its crash. He finds out how the giants of Brobdingnag were inspired to transform their way of life by his ancestor's example, impressed by their encounter with one of "the most pernicious Race of little odious vermin that Nature ever suffered to crawl upon the surface of the Earth." Then, after witnessing the diplomatic initiatives of the floating island of Laputa, the immortal Struldbruggs, and other medical miracles in Luggnagg, he's finally shown exactly what the Houyhnhnms now do with their surplus Yahoos. Jonathan Swift's classic satire about little people, big people, mad scientists, and rational horses is one of the greatest—yet most compassionate—indictments of humanity ever written. Martin Rowson's caustic and provocative update is both an homage to the original and an entirely up-to-date indictment of the enduring human idiocies that enraged Swift so magnificently and memorably 300 years ago.

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Jesse Mansell:

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