

PART 1 A JOURNEY TO LILLIPUT

Chapter 1

I Come to Lilliput

My father lived in the north of England, but he was not very rich. I was the youngest of five brothers. I left school when I was seventeen years old. My father could not pay for me after that. I travelled on the ship *Antelope* to the South Seas. We left Bristol in May, 1699.



I travelled on the ship Antelope to the South Seas.

I will not write down everything about our journey on those seas. But I will tell you this. On our way to the East Indies, a great wind carried us the wrong way. Twelve of our men died from the hard work and bad food, and the other men were not very strong.

One morning there was heavy rain and we could not see well. In the strong winds, the ship hit something in the water, and broke. Six of us got a boat into the sea. But we were weak and the wind turned it over. We fell into the water.

The wind and the water carried me away from the other men and I never saw them again.

'I'm going to die!' I cried loudly.

But then I put my feet down. I could stand! The wind was weaker now. I walked for more than a kilometre through the water and came to an island. It was after seven at night. I travelled another half a kilometre, but there were no houses or people. Perhaps I could not see them because I was very tired. Then I sat on the ground and slept the best sleep of my life.



I woke up after about nine hours. It was daylight and I was on my back. I tried to stand up, but I could not move! I turned my head a little and looked round me. I saw thousands of strings across my body. They were everywhere — round my arms, my feet and through my long hair! I could only stay there on my back and look up at the sky.

The sun was hot, and the light hurt my eyes. I heard noises next to me, but I could see nothing. Then something moved on my foot. It moved over my body and up to my face. I looked down and I saw a man. He was smaller than my hand. Forty more little men followed him.

I cried loudly and they were afraid. They all ran away, and jumped onto the ground. Some were hurt, they told me later. They came back, and one man walked near my face. He threw up his hands and looked up at me. He called, '*Hekinah degul*'. And the other men answered, '*Hekinah? Degul hekinah!*' I could not understand their language.

I pulled very hard and I got one arm up from the ground. I tried to look at this man again. It hurt, because it pulled some hair out of my head. I put out my hand and tried to catch some little men. But they ran away. Then I heard a noise, and something hurt my hand.

'A thousand small swords!' I thought. I looked down. They were arrows! Some arrows went into my clothes and I could not feel them. But other arrows went high into the sky and came down on my face. They hurt me and I was afraid for my eyes.

I put my hand over my face. 'I'll stay quiet,' I thought. 'Then I can break the strings tonight. These people can't hurt me very much - they're too small!'

So I stayed quiet and waited. No more arrows came from the little men, but their noise got louder and louder. 'There are more people here now,' I thought.

I heard a sound near my ear. I turned my head to the noise and saw men next to me.

'They're building something from wood,' I thought. 'It's a table! Now there are four men on top of it. I understand – they want to talk to me.'

One of the men on the table was older and larger than the other three. He wore a beautiful coat. A little boy, his servant, carried the back of this coat above the ground. The older man called, '*Langro dehul san!*' Forty people came and cut the strings round my head. Now I could turn and see the people on the table better.

Then the man in the long coat began to speak. He spoke very well, and he moved his hands up and down. I began to understand him. He spoke for a long time. Of course, his words were strange to me, but I watched his hands.

'We will not hurt you,' I understood. 'But do not try to run away, or we will kill you.' I put up my hand and showed him: 'I will stay here.' Then I had an idea. I also put my hand to my mouth: 'I am hungry.'



I saw thousands of strings . . .

The man understood me. He shouted to the people on the ground. A hundred men climbed onto my body and walked up to my mouth. They carried food for me. It came from the king, they told me later.

'What food is this?' I thought. They're giving me very small animals!

Then I ate a lot of bread. The people watched me with wide eyes because I ate very quickly. A lot of men came with a very big cup of milk. I drank it and called for another cup. I drank the second cup and asked for a third cup.

'There is no more milk in the country,' they showed me with their hands. But they were happy, because I ate and drank their food. They danced up and down on my body and cried, '*Hekinah degul!*'

After my meal, a very important person came to me. He brought a letter from the king. Servants in very fine clothes followed him. He walked up to my face and put the letter near my eyes. Then he spoke, and often turned to the north-west. Their city and their king were there, about a kilometre away, I learned later.

'The king wants to see me,' I understood.

I spoke to this man and showed him: 'Take these strings off me.'

But he moved his head: 'No. We have to carry you with the strings round you. But we will give you food and drink. We will not hurt you.'

I remembered their arrows. 'I don't want to feel them again,' I thought. 'They can carry me.'

The great man went away. After that the people made a loud noise, and they shouted, '*Peplom selan.*' Then they came to my head and cut the other strings. Now I could turn my head more than before. I was happy about that.

I began to feel very tired, and I slept for about nine hours. (There was something in my food, they told me later.)

The people brought some wood and pulled me onto it. Nine hundred men worked for three hours before I was on the wood. I was asleep. Fifteen hundred of the king's largest horses arrived.

After four hours we began our journey. The horses pulled me on my wood, and we travelled for a long time. At night we slept. One thousand men with arrows watched me, so I stayed quiet!

The next day, at daylight, we moved again. In the middle of the day, we were about 150 metres from the city. The king came out. He walked round me and looked up at me carefully.

'Do not climb up onto this man's body!' his men told him. 'It is too dangerous.'

We stopped in front of an old church. This was my house now! The great north door was more than a metre high and nearly a metre wide, so I could go into it on my hands. They put a string round one of my feet and tied it to the wall of the church. I could only walk about a metre away from the outside of my door.