

Gulliver's Travels

8: Horrible science

This is not a word-for-word transcript

Language focus: So, such, enough, too

Scientist A

Yeeess?

Lady Monodi

We're here to look round the Academy... I'm Lady Monodi... and this is Dr Gulliver, from England.

Scientist A

England! Ahh! Land of great mathematicians and astronomers – Isaac Newton – now he is the talk of the Academy at the moment with his theory of **gravity**... Is it true that it was an apple falling on his head that gave him the idea?

Gulliver

I believe so...

Lady Monodi

I'm sure Gulliver would like to see what goes on in our Great Academy...

Gulliver narrator

I was indeed interested to see what went on in the Academy but equally, I was glad to spend more time in the company of Lady Monodi. She was a delightful companion, not ignorant as the King had described her.

Gulliver

Do you visit Lagado often?

Lady Monodi

My husband Lord Monodi spends all his time reading astronomy books and thinking... I get so bored on Laputa... You know, my husband won't even notice I'm gone.

Gulliver

Really?

Lady Monodi

Yes, I prefer it here in Lagado, even though life down here is hard and most people are very poor. It's **infinitely** preferable to a life of **abstract** thinking... Don't you think?

Gulliver narrator

I wondered if Lady Monodi was secretly making plans for me... I knew I would have to get away before I **fell for** her completely. But first, as a doctor, I was keen to see the famous Academy and meet the scientists working there.

Lady Monodi

I'm sure you won't have seen any inventions before like the ones here. They are quite **at the cutting edge** of science...

Gulliver narrator

Lady Monodi was right. I was totally unprepared for what I was to find.

Lady Monodi

Interesting experiment going on here...

Gulliver narrator

The room we entered had a huge pile of cucumbers in the middle. A woman covered in **soot** and with **scorched** hair was holding half a cucumber in her hand. The other blackened half, was on the floor.

Gulliver

And what is your project?

Scientist B

Ah... well, I am **extracting** sunbeams from cucumbers...

Gulliver

I'm sorry...? Did you say "extracting sunbeams ... from... cucumbers"?

Scientist B

Yes... That's right... So people can use them to keep warm in winter. A cucumber takes in sunlight to grow, so we should be able to extract the sunlight...

Gulliver

And have you managed to extract any yet?

Scientist B

Well...not quite yet...I think I'm getting very close to it though...

[SFX: Explosion]

Scientist B
Oh dear!

Gulliver
And how long have you been working on this project?

Scientist B
Oh, only eight years...

Gulliver
Right, I see... Well good luck!

[To himself] You'll need more than that...

Lady Monodi
Now, you will be very interested in the project in this next room. A very learned **physician** is conducting an important experiment. He is famous for curing the problem of **wind**.

Gulliver
Now that could be useful. It's something I suffer from... Perhaps he can help me?

Gulliver narrator
In the room we had just entered there was a dog in the middle of the floor and a man standing over it with some **bellows** pointing towards the dog's backside.

Gulliver
What are you doing?

Scientist C
Well, if the dog is suffering from a little bit of wind, then using the bellows gently, I draw the bad air out. If the condition is serious, like in the case of this dog... if I squeeze the bellows hard like this... air goes in and out of the dog...

Gulliver
I see... This dog looks pretty dead to me...

Scientist C
Is he? Oh dear! How unfortunate... He may recover if I just... gently squeeze the bellows so I that I can draw out air... like that... Now did I hear you say that you also suffer from wind? 'Cause if you like, I can...

Gulliver
No, I think you must have misheard me... We ought to move on!

Gulliver narrator

We hurried out, leaving the doctor trying to revive the poor dog. We visited several other laboratories, all with quite bizarre experiments that **frankly**, seemed pointless and with little chance of success.

Gulliver

And do they get funding for their experiments?

Monodi

Yes, of course.

Gulliver

But how can **so** much money be spent on these pointless, **degrading** projects...when people are living in **such** misery?

Monodi

You're not impressed then?

Gulliver

No, I'm not. These aren't creative projects. They're unhealthy and **impractical**. What's more – they're **immoral** – people are starving in the city. Monodi, I've seen **enough**. I want to go home...

Monodi

You mean back to Laputa...?

Gulliver

No... to England. Is there a ship that can take me...?

Monodi

You need to take the ferry to Glubbudrib. From there you can board a boat for Japan, and then England. I'll be sorry to see you go Gulliver.

Gulliver

You have been very kind and a great guide. But I have been away many months and I miss my country and my family.

Gulliver narrator

So, I left the beautiful Lady Monodi and sailed first to Glubbudrib, which she had forgotten to tell me, was a land of magicians. I had several adventures there, which are quite another tale... From Glubbudrib, I went to Japan and boarded a ship to England...

It was wonderful to be **reunited** with my wife and children. I knew, though, that it wouldn't be long before sea life would tempt me once again. Little did I know that even more dangerous adventures lay ahead of me.

Vocabulary

gravity

the force which attracts smaller things to bigger things

infinitely

very much

abstract

not real, only existing as an idea

fell for

fell in love with

at the cutting edge

at the most advanced point (of science or research)

soot

black powder left after burning

scorched

burned

extracting

taking out

physician

doctor

wind

the problem of having too much gas in your stomach and bowels

bellows

a tool used to blow air

frankly

honestly

degrading

making you feel you have no worth

impractical

not practical

immoral

not moral

reunited
together again

Questions

1. What is Gulliver's overall impression of the experiments?

(Hint: What do 'impractical' and 'immoral' mean?)

- a) He thinks they are clever but not useful.
- b) He thinks they are neither practical nor moral.
- c) He thinks they are dangerous.

2. Why won't Lady Monodi's husband notice she's gone?

(Hint: She explains near the start of the programme.)

- a) Because she is always away.
- b) Because he is too busy studying.
- c) Because he is busy helping the poor in Lagado.

3. Why is the first scientist excited to see Gulliver?

(Hint: What does he say about Isaac Newton?)

- a) Because Gulliver is a doctor.
- b) Because Gulliver is an expert on Isaac Newton.
- c) Because Gulliver comes from a country of great scientists.

Answers

1. What is Gulliver's overall impression of the experiments?

- a) He thinks they are clever but not useful. That's not right. He doesn't think they're clever.
- b) He thinks they are neither practical nor moral. That's right, well done.**
- c) He thinks they are dangerous. This is not Gulliver's main impression.

2. Why won't Lady Monodi's husband notice she's gone?

- a) Because she is always away. That's not right, try again.
- b) Because he is too busy studying. Well done – he is always reading and thinking.**
- c) Because he is busy helping the poor in Lagado. That's not right, try again.

3. Why is the first scientist excited to see Gulliver?

- a) Because Gulliver is a doctor. He is a doctor, but that's not the reason.
- b) Because Gulliver is an expert on Isaac Newton. This is not the reason – and Gulliver is not an expert on Isaac Newton.
- c) Because Gulliver comes from a country of great scientists. Well done, that's the right reason.**