

Gulliver's Travels

Many of their laws and customs are very different from ours, but human nature is the same in every country. The Lilliputians, like us, have learnt bad ways – choosing officials because they are able to dance on a rope is just one example.

Now I shall return to my adventures in Lilliput. About two weeks after my first visit to the capital, I was visited by one of the King's most important officials. His name was Reldresal, and he had helped me many times since I had arrived in Lilliput.

I started the conversation. 'I'm so glad they've taken away my chains,' I told him.

'Well, my friend,' he answered, 'let me tell you something. You're only free because the King knows we're in a very dangerous situation.'

'Dangerous?' I cried. 'What do you mean?'

'Lilliput has enemies at home and abroad,' he explained. 'For six years now we've had two political groups, the High-Heels and the Low-Heels. Perhaps the High-Heels were more popular in the past, but as you can see, our present King and all his officials wear the lowest heels. The two groups hate each other, and a High-Heel will refuse to speak to a Low-Heel.'

That's the problem in Lilliput. Now, we're getting information that the people of Blefuscu are going to

attack us. Have you heard of Blefuscu? It's an island very near us, almost as large and important as Lilliput. They've been at war with us for three years, you see.'

'But how did this war start?' I asked.

'Well, you know, of course, that most people used to break their boiled eggs at the larger end. But our King's grandfather once cut a finger while breaking his egg this way, and so his father the King ordered all Lilliputians, from then on, to break the *smaller* end of their eggs. People who do that are called Small-Endians. But Lilliputians feel strongly about this and some Big-Endians have fought angrily against this law. As many as eleven thousand people have been killed because they refused to break their eggs at the smaller end. Some of the Big-Endians have escaped to join our enemies in Blefuscu. The King of Blefuscu has always wanted to defeat Lilliput in war, and now we hear that he's prepared a large number of ships, which will attack us very soon. So you see, my friend, how much our King needs your help, in order to defeat his enemies.'

I did not hesitate for a moment. 'Please tell the King,' I answered warmly, 'that I am ready to give my life to save him or his country.'

Read the extract again. Are the statements true (T), false (F), or is the information not given in the text (NG)?

- 1 The Lilliputians have a similar culture to people in Gulliver's country. _____
- 2 Many Lilliputians want to be government officials. _____
- 3 The rulers of Lilliput changed the fashion in shoes. _____
- 4 Blefuscu wants to make peace with Lilliput. _____
- 5 Some people in Lilliput disagree with a rule in the country. _____
- 6 Gulliver doesn't want to defend Lilliput. _____