The Hitch Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy, by Douglas Adams. Starring Peter Jones, as THE BOOK.

Reason not withstanding, the universe continues unabated. Its history is terribly long and awfully difficult to understand, even in its simpler moments which are, roughly speaking, the beginning and the end. The wave harmonic theory of historical perception, in its simplest form, states that history is an illusion caused by the passage of time, and that time is an illusion caused by the passage of history. It also states that one's perception of these illusions is conditioned by three important factors: who you are; where you are; and when you last had lunch with Zaphod Beeblebrox.

Zaphod Beeblebrox's last meal was taken at the Restaurant at the End of the Universe, since when he has been catapulted through time in a Haggunenon spaceship, eaten by a carbon copy of the Ravenous Bugblatter Beast of Traal, received strange and unedifying instructions from hisself in his sleep and in consequence made his way to the office building of <u>The Hitch Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy</u> which was **then** unaccountably attacked by a squadron of Frogstar fighters, hauled, in its entirety off the surface of the planet, and is now carrying Zaphod and his mysterious new friend Roosta in the general direction of the even more mysterious Frogstar. He is, therefore, not unnaturally, feeling a little peckish.

Zaphod: Hey, Roosta, is there anything to eat in this situation?

Roosta: Here Zaphod. Suck this.

Zaphod: You want me to suck you towel?

Roosta: The yellow stripes are high in protein, the green ones have vitamin B and C complexes and the little pink flowers contain wheat germ extract.

Zaphod: What are the brown stains?

Roosta: Barbeque Sauce.

<Ftet, Ftet, Ftet (Zaphod Sucking Towel)>

Zaphod: EEEEUWWWWCK! It tastes as bad as it looks!

Roosta: Yes. When I've had to suck that end a bit, I usually need to suck the other end too.

Zaphod: Why? What's in that?

Roosta: Anti-depressants.

Much has been written on the subject of towels, most of which stresses the many practical functions they can serve for the modern hitchhiker. Two seminal books are: Woydel Zing's compendious tome "Bath Sheets in Space" which is far too large to carry, but sits magnificently on fashionable coffee tables, and Frap Gadz's handbook, "Heavily Modified Face Flannels," an altogether terser work for masochists.

However, only The Hitch Hiker's Guide explains that the towel has a far more important **psychological** value; in that anyone who can hitch the length and breadth of the galaxy, rough it, slum it, struggle against mind-boggling odds, win through, and still know where his towel is, is clearly a man to be reckoned with.

Hence a phrase which has passed into hitchhiking slang as in, "Hey you! Sass that hoopy Ford Prefect? There's a frood who really knows where his towel is!" (sass means know, be aware of, meet, have sex with; hoopy means really together guy; and frood means really **amazingly** together guy).

Meanwhile, important questions are beginning to frame themselves in Zaphod Beeblebrox's mind.

Zaphod: Hey, uh, Roosta, where did you say this building was flying to?

Roosta: The Frogstar. The most totally evil place in the galaxy.

Zaphod: Do they have, uh, food there?

Roosta: Food?! Have you the faintest idea what's going to happen to you at the Frogstar??

Zaphod: They're gonna feed me?

Roosta: They're going to feed you all right!

Zaphod: Great.!

- Roosta: They're going to feed you into the Total Perspective Vortex!
- Zaphod: The Total Perspective Vortex? Hey what's that man?
- Roosta: Only the most savage psychic torture a sentient being can undergo!
- Zaphod: So no food, huh?
- Roosta: The treatment lasts one second, but the effects last your lifetime.

Zaphod: You ever had a Pan-Galactic Gargle Blaster?

Roosta: This is **worse**.

Zaphod: Phreeoooow!

<br/>boyng, boyng, boynghghghghwuhwuhwuhwuh>

Frogstar Prison Relation Officer: Ah! Hel-lo there. You must be Zaphod Beeblebrox, yes?

Zaphod: Uh, yeah. Uh, hey, who are you?

Frogstar Prison Relation Officer: Oh, uh, I'm the Frogstar Prisoner Relations Officer and I'm just popping by—

Zaphod: How did you get here?

Frogstar Prison Relation Officer: Oh the usual thing-worked my way up the ranks-

Zaphod: No. No, no. I mean, how did you get *here*. You just, uh, popped out of nowhere like a large drinks bill.

Frogstar Prison Relation Officer: I know. Disconcerting isn't it? Look, I just popped along to see how you were getting on. Enjoying the trip?

Zaphod: No, not at all.

Frogstar Prison Relation Officer: Oh. Well, it will soon be over. We should be arriving at the Frogstar in an hour or so. It is, as you may know, the most totally evil place in the galaxy. Even I find it pretty horrifying and I'm one of the most evil people on it.

Zaphod: Oh yeah.?

Frogstar Prison Relation Officer: Oh yes! Oh quite staggeringly nasty. Anyway, enough with me, how about you? Is there anything in particular you want?

Roosta: Be Careful.

Zaphod: What?

Roosta: This guy is *evil*; he's from the **Frogstar**.

Zaphod: Ease up man.! He's just asked me if there's anything I wanted.!

Frogstar Prison Relation Officer: Come on Mr. Beeblebrox, uh, Zaphod. Hu-hu-hu. What would you like? What would you really like?

Zaphod: A steak.! A BIG, JUICY Steak.

Frogstar Prison Relation Officer: A Steak? Ha-ha.

Zaphod: Yeah.

Frogstar Prison Relation Officer: Mmm. Delicious.

Zaphod: And uh—

Frogstar Prison Relation Officer: Some wine?

Zaphod: Algolian Claris.

Frogstar Prison Relation Officer: The ninety-one?

Zaphod: The ninety-four.

Frogstar Prison Relation Officer: Oh Excellent Choice! Anything else?

Zaphod: That'll do me just fine.

Frogstar Prison Relation Officer: Hu-hu-hu. Right. Turn the fire hoses on him!

Zaphod: Hey, uh, what?

Frogstar Prison Relation Officer: Enjoy your trip! Bye Now!

<PSHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH(fire hose water)>

<PSHHHHHHHhhhhh>

<br/>boyng, boyng, boynghghghghghwuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuh>

Roosta: Don't say that I didn't warn you Beeblebrox.

Zaphod: Well what- the .... HELL was the point of all that?

Roosta: They're just **playing** with you! Softening you up. I **told** you: *they're going to put you into the Total Perspective Vortex*!!

Zaphod: What is this thing ?? What does it DO?

Roosta: The principle is very simple.

Though the principle on which the Total Perspective Vortex works is indeed very simple, it will not, for the moment, be revealed. The purpose of this deliberate withholding of vital information is to occasion sensations of suspense, fear, and anxiety, within the legal limits laid down by the Galactic Statute of Narrative Practice.

These sensations can be emphasized further by referencing to this recording of a man being put in the Vortex:

<vvvVVVVVV<sup>vvvvvVVVVVVT</sup>> Man: WUE-AHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!! <dungk>

And this one:

<vvvVVVVVV<sup>vvvvvVVVVVVT</sup>> Man 2: EEE-EUW-WAHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!! <dungk>

And this one:

Provided that equal emphasis is given to the fact that one man in the entire history of the cosmos did survive its effects unharmed.

To establish the identity of this man, and see how he achieved it, it is now necessary to travel two million years backwards in time, to where Ford Prefect and Arthur Dent are stranded in the primeval past of the utterly insignificant planet Earth. They are faced with a problem: in that a spaceship, which has apparently traveled back in time to rescue them, can not materialize until they have worked out a way of sending a message forward in time to summon it. This is clearly a terribly convoluted temporal paradox of mindmangling complexity.

Arthur: Perhaps we could wave your towel at it.

Ford: You know what your trouble is Arthur? You've got as much grasp of multi-temporal causality as a concussed bee.

Arthur: oh. You don't think it would work?

Ford: NO. That ship hovering there is only a *potential* ship, the possibility of one.

Arthur: We could still wave at it.

Ford: Yeah, very friendly but chronologically inept. Listen, we have to send a message forward in time

Arthur: Yes.

Ford: ...to where that spaceship is *going* to be.

Arthur: We don't know where.

Ford: No.

Arthur: We don't know when.

Ford: No.

Arthur: And anyway, we haven't got a time machine.

Ford: No.

Arthur: So?

Ford: You're right.

Arthur: What?

Ford: We might just as well wave a towel at it.

Arthur: Right. HELLO!

Ford: HELLOO! Arthur: HEL-LOOOO!

Arthur: SPACESHIP! Ford: OVER HERE! Ford: JUST DOWN HERE!

Arthur: COO-EEEE! Ford: COO-EEEE!

Ford: COO-EEE! Arthur: COO—

Arthur: Ford! It's coming down! Look it's coming down to us!

Ford: I don't believe it. It's impossible

Arthur: But it's happening.

Ford: Hey, I don't like the look of that.

Arthur: What?

Ford: It's wobbling. I think it's gonna crash. FIRE YOUR RETROROCKETS YOU IDIOT!

<BFFFFFCH (retrorocket fire)>

Ford: TOO HARD!! MUCH TOO HARD! Run Arthur! Run for your life! Make for the hill!

Arthur: What hill?

Ford: Well there was a hill there a moment ago.

Arthur: What that rather nice one with all the daffodils?

Ford: Damn the daffodils, the whole hill's gone!

Arthur: The ground's heaving beneath us!

Ford: That ship's causing a bloody earthquake.

Arthur: Look the hill's come back!

<PFFFFCHFFHCHGH>

Arthur: It's erupting! It must be on a volcanic fault!

Ford: WATCH OUTTTTTTTTTTTT!!

## 

<ka-ka-pwwww>

<ka-pwwww>

<ka-pwww>

## <kpwww>

Arthur: Well. We did it.

Ford: Yeah.

Arthur: We flagged down a logically nonexistent spaceship with a towel.

Ford: Yeah, great.!

Arthur: Marvelous.!

Ford: Wonderful.!

Arthur: Terrific.!

Ford: Tell me Arthur...

Arthur: Yes?

Ford: This boulder were stuck under... how big would you say it was? Roughly.

Arthur: Hmm. 'Bout the size of Coventry Cathedral.

Ford: Do you think we could move it? ... Ha. just asking. Can you feel my rock sack anywhere?

Arthur: Ummmmm. Hmm. Here.

Ford: Ya see, it's in these sorts of situations that it's really good to have a guide to help you.

Arthur: What?

Ford: The Hitch Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy. It tells you what to do in any eventuality.

Arthur: What, even being stuck in a crack in the ground beneath a giant boulder which you can't move with no hope of rescue?

Ford: Yeah. It'll have something. Watch.

What to do if you find yourself stuck in a crack in the ground underneath a giant boulder you can't move with no hope of rescue:

Consider how lucky you are that life has been good to you so far.

Alternatively, if life hasn't been good to you so far, which, given your current circumstances seems more likely, consider how lucky you are that it won't be troubling you much longer.

Ford: It's time I did something about that book.

Arthur: Shame we lost the towel.

Ford: What happened to it?

Arthur: It blew away in the wind. Fell in the river and a stream of lava rolled over it.

Ford: Hah, it'll give the archaeologists something to think about, "PREHISTORIC TOWEL DISCOVERED IN LAVA FLOW. WAS GARDER MARKS AND SPENCERS SALES ASSISTANT" ... What are you doing Arthur?

Arthur: Feeling the rock above my head. It seems to be humming.

Ford: Humming?

Arthur: Why should a rock hum?

Ford: Perhaps it feels good about being a rock

Arthur: No. I mean it's vibrating... as if it's got an engine in it.

Ford: You're crazy. A rock with an engine in it?!

Arthur: Who would want a motorized rock?

Ford: Another motorized rock?

<creeeekkkk>

Arthur: Look Ford, it's cracking. ... There's a hatchway opening underneath it.

<creeeeekkkk-cracccckkk>

Ford: Wow, this is one strange rock.!

Arthur: Look at the light streaming out. Did you ever see anything like that before?

Ford: Not when I've been in a legal state of mind.

Arthur: Look! A figure silhouetted against the light. Coming down the ramp.! Walking towards us.

Ford: Staggering towards us!

Arthur: It's hard to see... so much light.

Ford: He's in a bad way.

Arthur: He's stumbling towards a crack in the ground! Look he's going to fall!

Ford: LOOK OUT!

Zaphod: Hey, uh, AH-AH-AHHHHHHHHHHHHHHWWWW!!!!!

Ford: Zarquon.! You know who I think that is?

Arthur: The faces look familiar.

Ford: Yeah.

Arthur: It's Zaphod.! What's he doing coming out of a rock??

Ford: Well who says he needs a reason? Well come on, we've gotta help him.

Arthur: ZAPHOD!

Zaphod: hmmmm

Arthur: ZAPHOD, YOU SEEM TO HAVE FALLEN DOWN A THIRTY FOOT HOLE!

Ford: I think he knows that.

Arthur: Is he all right?

Ford: Well what does it look like? ZAPHOD!

Zaphod: Ngggh.

Ford: ZAPHOD, WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU??

Zaphod: My heads hurt...

Ford: CAN YOU TELL ME WHAT HAPPENED?

Zaphod: They took me to the Frogstar.

Ford: THE FROGSTAR?!!!

Arthur: What's the frogstar-?

Ford: Shhhhh!

Zaphod: I've been in the Total Perspective Vortex.

Ford: Oh no!

Zaphod: Yeah.

Arthur: What' the Total-

Ford: Quiet!

Zaphod: Ford, I'm very ill.

Ford: Well, if you've been in that thing ... !!!!!

Zaphod: Very ill. Very, very ill.

Arthur: What's the Vortex?

Ford: The Vortex is the worst thing that can happen to anyone.

Zaphod: Oh no, The Vortex was ok, but afterwards...

Ford: *AFTER*WARDS!?? AFTER THE VORTEX??

Zaphod: YEAH! Well I had to celebrate didn't I!??? I've been drunk for a week! Awh, my heads are killing me. Will you help me up?

Eddie: ...our prayers and— Zaphod: Yeah, OK, okay, okay.

Zaphod: Well guys, you must be so amazingly glad to see me you can't even find words to tell me what a cool frood I am.

Arthur: What a what?

Zaphod: I know how you feel—I'm so great I get tongue-tied talking to myself. Hey! It's good to see Ford!

Ford: Hey!

Zaphod: ...and, uh, monkeyman.

Arthur: Listen, I come from an ancient and distinguished race.

Ford: Of Hairdressers.

Arthur: Thank you Ford.

Ford: Heyyyyy, Zaphod!

Zaphod: Hey, Ford! Put it there!

Ford: Hey!

<clap>

Zaphod: yeah, and there!

Ford: Hey!

<clap>

Zaphod: And there!

Ford: Hey!

<clap>

Zaphod: And there!

Ford: Ho!

<clap>

Zaphod: Woah!

Ford: But look, how did you escape from the Haggunennon?

Zaphod: Simple, I got lucky!

Arthur: How did you get this ship back?

Zaphod: I got lucky.

Ford: But how did you find us?

Zaphod: I got your towel.

Arthur: What?

Zaphod: Mailed by meteorite. Hey, that was a really neat trick! How did you do it?!!!

Arthur: Do what?

Zaphod: Get the towel fossilized, so when the planet blows up two million years later, it gets hurled off into space and picked up by the Improbability Drive.!

Ford: Hey?

Zaphod: How did you work it all out!??

Arthur: We didn't. I just dropped the towel.

Zaphod: Ohhh. So you got lucky too.! That's cool. Hey man we are going to need a lot of luck where we are going **next**.

Arthur: Where's that?

Zaphod: I'll tell you when you've asked me what happened on the Frogstar.

Arthur: What's the Frogstar?

Zaphod: I thought you'd never ask.

Many stories are told of Zaphod Beeblebrox's journey to the Frogstar. Ten percent of them are ninety-five percent true, fourteen percent of them are sixty-five percent true, thirty-five percent of them are only five percent true, and all the rest of them are... told by Zaphod Beeblebrox.

Only one wholly accurate account exists—and that is locked in a trunk in the attic of Zaphod's favorite mother, Mrs. Alice Beeblebrox, of 10<sup>8</sup> astralpresent, Zoofroozelchester, Betelgeuse 5. Though countless people have tried cajolery, bribery, or threats to get hold of it, she has carefully guarded it from all eyes for many years. Waiting for what she calls... the right price.

But one fairly well documented episode is referred to by Beeblebroxologists as the "Hey Roosta, I've just had this really hoopy idea" incident.

Zaphod: Hey Roosta, I've just had this really hoopy idea. We're in this wrecked building right?

Roosta: Right.

Zaphod: And the building's in this really amazing force-bubble right?

Roosta: Right.

Zaphod: And the force-bubble's flying through interstellar space right?

Roosta: Right

Zaphod: And there are seven Frogstar fighters towing us at about hyperspeed twelve to the Frogstar right?

Roosta: It had better be a good idea Beeblebrox.

Zaphod: Oh it's a smash! You wanna hear it?

Roosta: Ok.

Zaphod: Let's go to a discotheque.

Roosta: Are you crazy?

Zaphod: What's the matter? Don't you like discotheques? Look I've got this free invite some cat was giving out in the street. Here it is.

Roosta: Ahhh!! I'm with you Beeblebrox. You reckon we could slide this plastic invite into a door lock, breakout of the building, climb into one of the Frogstar fighters and then maybe overpower all the guards with this *terrifying*, small,... plastic card.

Zaphod: Look at the card will you?

Roosta: "Wormhole disco. Loudest noise on Betelgeuse. Free body debit for one night only." What's a body debit?

Zaphod: Oh you have been roughing it for too long Roosta. You missed out on progressive consumerism. Look, an old style credit card, you press the panel on the card, it makes an instant debit on your bank account and an instant credit to the shop's account, right?

Roosta: I prefer hard cash. If you can't scratch a window with it I don't accept it.

Zaphod: Yeah, yeah, yeah, but get this: body debit means you press this card and it debits all your molecules from where you're standing and your body goes into credit *somewhere else*!

Roosta: In the disco!

Zaphod: Right!

Roosta: Escape!

Zaphod: Yah.!

Roosta: It 'ad better be a good disco.

Zaphod: Listen, if it was a good disco they wouldn't have to give away body debit cards. Right Roosta, we are going to grove our way out of here!

<bum, bum, bu-bum, bum, bum, bum, wannnnn>

<LOUD MUSIC> Zaphod: WE DID IT!

<LOUD MUSIC> Roosta: WHAT DID YOU SAY?

<LOUD MUSIC> Zaphod: I SAID WE DID IT!

<LOUD MUSIC> Roosta: WHAT DID YOU SAY?

<LOUD MUSIC> Zaphod: WHAT?

<LOUD MUSIC> Roosta: I SAID, WHAT DID YOU SAY?

<LOUD MUSIC> Zaphod: I CAN'T HEAR.

<LOUD MUSIC> Roosta: WHAT?

<LOUD MUSIC> Zaphod: WHAT?!

<LOUD MUSIC> Roosta: WHAT?

<LOUD MUSIC> Zaphod: WHAT??

<LOUD MUSIC> Dancers: Hi there baby Want to dance?

Hi there baby you want to dance?

<LOUD MUSIC> Zaphod: NO. DO I LOOK LIKE I WANT TO DANCE?

<LOUD MUSIC> Dancer: You look like it to me.

<LOUD MUSIC> Zaphod: I MUST'VE GOT MY WRONG BODY ON. <LOUD MUSIC> Dancer: Suit yourself then.

<LOUD MUSIC> Dancers: Hi there baby, you want to dance?

Hi there baby, you want to dance?

<LOUD MUSIC> Roosta: BEEBLEBROX! ALL THESE DANCERS, THEY'RE ROBOTS!

<LOUD MUSIC> Zaphod: THEY'RE JUST TO MAKE THE PLACE LOOK CROWDED—GIVE IT SOME ATMOSPHERE

<LOUD MUSIC> Roosta: BUT THERE AREN'T ANY REAL PEOPLE HERE AT ALL.

<LOUD MUSIC> Zaphod: SO WHAT'S NEW?

<LOUD MUSIC> Roosta: EUAHHHHH!

<LOUD MUSIC> Zaphod: WHAT'S UP?

<TSZZzzzzzt>

<LOUD MUSIC> Roosta: I'VE JUST WALKED PAST THIS NOZZLE IN THE WALL... IT'S SPRAYING THE SMELL OF HOT SWEAT OVER EVERYTHING.

<TSZZzzzzzzt>

<LOUD MUSIC> Zaphod: EUWWWWWAH! YEAH OKAY! LET'S GET OUT OF HERE. CAN YOU SEE A DOOR?

<LOUD MUSIC> Roosta: YEAH. IT'S RIGHT IN THE FAR CORNER.

<LOUD MUSIC> Zaphod: LET'S GO.

<LOUD MUSIC>

Android Dancers: You cannot go you must have a good time you must have a good time

you must have a good time you must have a good time must have a good time

you must have a good time

<LOUD MUSIC> Zaphod: I'M TRYING TO HAVE A GOOD TIME, I'M TRYING TO **GO**  <LOUD MUSIC> Android Dancers: Turn up the music Turn up the music

Turn up the music

Turn up the music

<LOUD MUSIC> Zaphod: WAHHHHHHH!

<LOUD MUSIC>

Andriod Dancers: You must have a good time

You must have a good time. dance dance

<LOUD MUSIC> Android Dancer: They are passing out, spray them with adrenaline.

<LOUD MUSIC> Zaphod: No, no, no, no Roosta: No, no, no, no

<LOUD MUSIC> Android Dancers: Make the lights flash faster.

Make the lights flash faster.

Flash Faster

Flash Faster

Flash faster

<LOUD MUSIC> Zaphod: LET'S GO! <Vmmm TCHEEE> Android Dancers: Make the light/ flo/h f o / t e r Make the lights flash fast— <LOUd mu<sub>sic</sub> dies> • • •

Android Female: Organic Lifeforms have no sense of fun.

<ta-tick, tck>

Android Female: hmm.

<tick>

Zaphod: That must be the worst good time I ever had. Still we're free.

Frogstar Prison Relation Officer: Ah! There you are! Splendid!

Zaphod: You! Hey man, how did you get to be here?

Frogstar Prison Relation Officer: Me? I came the simple way: down the stairs.

Zaphod: Down the stairs! ???? TO URSA MINOR ??? Hey you must be unbelievably fit.

Frogstar Prison Relation Officer: Ah, I'm afraid you're not on Ursa Minor. We didn't let you out of the building. This has all been a little in flight entertainment.

Zaphod: You call that entertainment?

Frogstar Prison Relation Officer: Not for you, for me. Heh, heh, heh, heh, hee. Well I'm afraid I must leave you now.

Zaphod: Awh, and just when I was really getting to dislike you.

Frogstar Prison Relation Officer: I feel very privileged to have been able to bring a little unnecessary unpleasantness into your life, Mr. Beeblebrox, sir.

Zaphod: Fine.

Frogstar Prison Relation Officer: Oh, I wonder if you'd like to sign an autograph for me?

Zaphod: An Autograph??? You must be several light-years out of your skull baby!

Frogstar Prison Relation Officer: Look, I have a photo of you here; if you could just see your way to—

Zaphod: Ah, Come on! Go suck a neutron star will you!

Frogstar Prison Relation Officer: Oh, please, have a look at this.

Zaphod: Hey, hey-hey-hey-hey. That's quite a nice picture.

Frogstar Prison Relation Officer: Yes.

Zaphod: Let's, here, yeah, ok, okay, uh, hmm, with, uhhh, deep... anger and resentment, Zaphod Beeblebrox. Ok?

Frogstar Prison Relation Officer: Thank you. It's not for my daughter you understand, it's for me. I have to put it in the Frogstar record office, attached to a statement saying that you went into the Vortex of your own free will.

Zaphod: Baby, I think there's some problem with your respiration.

Frogstar Prison Relation Officer: Oh? What?

Zaphod: You're breathing.

Frogstar Prison Relation Officer: Oh that's not a problem.

Zaphod: It is from where I'm standing. Here, let me tie a knot in your neck!

Frogstar Prison Relation Officer: Guahhhh! If you try an' strangle me Beeblebrox you'll regret it!

Zaphod: Yeah, yeah! Not half as much as you will!

<br/>boyng, boyng, boynghghghghghwuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuh>

Zaphod: Yea, AWH! Roosta, did ya see that? The guy vanished whilst I had my hands 'round his neck! AW-OHH! I think I've broken my thumb on my other thumb. Roosta? Roosta! Where are you?

Gargravarr: Beeblebrox. You are on your own now. You have arrived on the Frogstar.

<Frogstar (echo)>

Zaphod: Hey, what? Who are you?

Gargravarr: I am Gargravarr. I am the custodian of the Total Perspective Vortex.

<Vortex (echo)>

Zaphod: Oh. Uh, HI.

Gargravarr: Hello

<oh (echo)>

Zaphod: Hey, uh, why can't I see you? Why aren't you here?

Gargravarr: I am here

<am here (echo)>

Gargravarr: At least my mind is. My body wanted to come but it's a bit busy at the moment: things to do, people to see, you know how it is with bodies.

Zaphod: I thought I did.

Gargravarr: I hope it's gone in for surgery. The way it's been living recently it must be on its last elbows.

Zaphod: Elbows? You mean its last legs.

Gargravarr: I know what I mean.

Zaphod: Hey, wild.

Gargravarr: So you're to be put into the Vortex yes?

<into the Vortex yes? (echo)>

Zaphod: Oh, well, uh, this cat's in no hurry you know. I can just slouch about, taking a look at the local scenery.

Gargravarr: Have you seen the local scenery?

Zaphod: Uh, no.

Zaphod: Ah. Ok. Well I'll just slouch about then.

Gargravarr: No. The Vortex is ready for you now. You must come. Follow me.

Zaphod: Uh, yeah. How am I meant to do that?

Gargravarr: I'll hum for you. hmhmhmhmhmhmhmhum Just follow behind. hmhmhm

Zaphod: Okay. Anything for a weird life.

The Universe, as has been observed before, is an unsettling big place. The fact which, for the sake of a quiet life, most people tend to ignore. Many would happily move to somewhere rather smaller of their own devising, and this is what most beings, in fact, do.

For instance, in one corner of the Eastern Galactic Arm lies the great forest planet Oglaroon. The entire "intelligent" population of which lives permanently in one fairly small and crowded nut tree. In which tree they're born, live, fall in love, carve tiny, speculative articles in the bark on the meaning of life, the futility of death, and the importance of birth control, fight a few—very minor—wars, and eventually die strapped to the underside of some of the less accessible outer branches.

In fact, the only Oglaroonians who ever leave their tree at all are those who are hurled out for the heinous crime of wondering whether any of the other trees might be capable of supporting life at all, or indeed be anything other than illusions brought on by eating too many Oglanuts.

Exotic though this behavior may seem, there is no lifeform in the Galaxy not in some way guilty of the same thing. Which is why the Total Perspective Vortex is as horrific as it undoubtedly is. For when you are put in the Vortex, you are given just one, momentary glimpse of the size of the entire unimaginable infinity of creation along with a tiny little marker saying, "You are here"

Gargravarr: hmhmhmhmhmhm

Zaphod: Hey man, what was that?

Gargravarr: Man being put in the Vortex I'm afraid. We're very close to it now.

Zaphod: Hey, it sounds really bad. Couldn't we maybe go to a party or something, for a while... think it over?

Gargravarr: For all I know I'm probably at one. My body that is. He goes to a lot of parties without me... says I only get in the way. Hey ho

Zaphod: I can see why it wouldn't want to come here. This place is the dismalest. Looks like a bomb's hit it you know.

Gargravarr: Several have—it's a very unpopular place. The Vortex is in the heaviest steel bunker ahead of you.

Man: RAHAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH

Zaphod: The Universe does that to a guy?

Gargravarr: The whole infinite Universe. The Infinite sums. The Infinite distances between them, and yourself—an invisible dot on an invisible dot. Infinitely small.

<Infinitely small (echo)>

< Infinitely small (another echo)>

Zaphod: Hey I'm Zaphod Beeblebrox man! You know?

Gargravarr: That is precisely the point.

Gargravarr: Enter.

Zaphod: Hey. What, now?

Gargravarr: Now.

<Zaphod Walking>

Zaphod: It doesn't look like any kind of a Vortex to me.

Gargravarr: It isn't. It's just the lift. Enter.

<Bah-Wuuuuuuuuuuahhhhhh-CLCK-CLCK>

<Va-oooomnmnmnmnmnmnmnmnmnmnmnmnmnmmmmmmm...> Zaphod: I've got to get myself in the right frame of mind.

<...mnmnmnmnmnmnmnmmmmmmmmnmnmnmnmmmmm...> Gargravarr: There is no right frame of mind.

<...mnmnmnmnmnmnmnmmmmmmmmmnmmnmmmmmmm...> Zaphod: You really know how to make a guy feel inadequate <...mnmnmnmnmnmnmnmnmmmm> Gargravarr: I don't, the Vortex does.

<Bah-Wuuuuuuuuuahhhhhh-CLCK-CLCK> Gargravarr: There. The Vortex. The Total Perspective Vortex. ENTER BEEBLEBROX. ENTER THE VORTEX

<ENTER THE VORTEX (echo)>

Zaphod: Okay, okay.

<vheeeeEEEEEOUOUOUEUUEOUOOUEOUOUouoouooooo>

The Vortex derives its picture of the whole Universe on the principle of extrapolated matter analyses.

To explain—since every piece of matter in the Universe is in someway affected by every other piece of matter in the Universe, it is, in theory, possible to extrapolate the whole of creation—every galaxy, every sun, every planet, their orbits, their composition, and their economic and social history, from, say—one small piece of fairy cake.

The man who invented the Total Perspective Vortex did so, basically, in order to annoy his wife.

Trin Tragula, for that was his name, was a dreamer, a speculative thinker, or, as his wife would have it, an idiot. And she would nag him incessantly about the utterly inordinate amount of time he would spend staring out into space, or mulling over the mechanics of safety pins, or doing spectrographic analyses of pieces of fairy cake. "Have some sense of proportion," she would say, thirty-eight times a day.

And so he built the Total Perspective Vortex—just to show her.

And in one end he plugged the whole of reality, as extrapolated from a fairy cake, and in the other end he plugged his wife—so that when he turned it on she saw in one instant the whole infinity of creation and herself in relation to it.

To Trin Tragula's horror, the shock annihilated her brain. But to his satisfaction, he realized he had conclusively proved that if life is going to exist in a Universe this size, the one thing it cannot afford to have, is a sense of proportion.

And it is into this Vortex that Zaphod Beeblebrox has been put, and from which, a few seconds later, he emerges.

<Bah-Wuuuuuuuuuahhhhhh-CLCK-CLCK>

Zaphod: Hi.

Gargravarr: Beeblebrox!! You're...!

Zaphod: Fine, fine. Could I have a drink please?

Gargravarr: You've been in the Vortex?!!

Zaphod: You saw me kid.

Gargravarr: And you saw the whole infinity of creation?!!

Zaphod: The lot baby—it's a real neat place you know, heh-heh.

Gargravarr: And you saw yourself in relation to it all?!!

Zaphod: Yah, yeah, yeah.

Gargravarr: And what did you experience?!!

Zaphod: It just told me what I knew all the time: I'm a really great guy! Didn't I tell ya baby, I am **Zaphod Beeblebrox**!!!

Is it really true that Zaphod Beeblebrox's ego is as large as the Universe? Does this actually have any bearing on anything else in the story, or, indeed, on anything else at all? Has everyone totally forgotten about the increasingly mysterious Zarniwoop, last heard of taking an intergalactic cruise in his office? Is it worth hanging on to find out the answers to these exasperating questions? Find out in the next, unedifying episode of The Hitch Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy.

In that episode of The Hitch Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy, Peter Jones was THE BOOK. Simon Jones was Arthur Dent; Geoffrey McGivern was Ford Prefect; Mark Wing-Davey was Zaphod Beeblebrox; Alan Ford was Roosta; David Tate was Eddie and the Frogstar Prison Relation Officer; and Valentine Dyall was Gargravarr. Radio-Phonic sound and music was by Paddy Kingsland of the BBC Radio-Phonic Workshop. The program was written by Douglas Adams and produced by Geoffrey Perkins. Information about package Holidays on the Frogstar can be found in the leaflet, "Sun, Sand, and Suffering on the Most Totally Evil Place in the Galaxy."

Zaphod: Hey man, is that a piece of fairy cake? My stomach's just completely out to lunch. Mmmn. Yeah. Mmm.