

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

<intro music>

Having been through the Total Perspective Vortex, Zaphod Beeblebrox now knows himself to be the most important being in the entire universe—something he had hitherto only suspected. It is said that his birth was marked by earthquakes, tidal waves, tornados, fire storms, the explosion of three neighboring stars, and, shortly afterwards, by the issuing of over six and three-quarter million writs for damages from all the major landowners in his galactic sector.

However, the only person by whom this is said is Beeblebrox himself. And there are several possible theories to explain this.

Arthur: Ford?

Ford: Yeah?

Arthur: He's totally mad isn't he?

Ford: Well, the border between madness and genius is very narrow.

Arthur: So is the Berlin wall.

Ford: The Berlin--?

Arthur: Oh The Berlin Wall... the border between East and West Germany—It's very narrow. I mean the point I'm making—

Ford: *Was* very narrow. Get your tenses right.

Arthur: Thank you.

Ford: Anything wrong?

Arthur: On Earth we have a word—

Ford: Had a word.

Arthur: *Had* a word called "tact"

Ford: Oh yeah?

Arthur: Yes.

Ford: And what happened to it?

Arthur: Well apparently it's not in common usage...

Arthur: ...except on earth.

Ford: No, no, no. Not the word.

Ford: The Earth.

Arthur: You know very well: it got demolished to make way for a hyperspace bypass.

Ford: Ah!, but that was all done away with Centuries ago. No one demolishes planets anymore.

Arthur: Well the Vogons did.

Ford: Vogons? Yes. Odd that.

Arthur: You mean they had another reason?

Ford: Well it could be... Probably not important though. I only bring it up because I've been watching the screen, and there's been a Vagon Fleet five light-years behind us for the last half hour.

Arthur: What??!!

Ford: Where's Zaphod?

Arthur: A Vagon Fleet??

Ford: Yeah. Where's Zaphod?

Arthur: He-well- he's in his cabin signing photographs of himself: "To myself with frank admiration." But why are the...

Arthur: ...Vogons following us???

Ford: Hey Marvin!

<pa-tfffffffffffffft>

<pa-tfffffffffffffft>

Marvin: What do you want?

<pa-tfffffffffffffft>

Ford: Give Zaphod a yell will you?

Marvin: Ahhh. Mind taxing time again is it?

Ford: Just get on with it.

Marvin: I've just worked out an answer to the square root of minus one.

Ford: *Go and get Zaphod.*

Marvin: It's never been worked out before. It's always been thought impossible.

Ford: **Go and get—!**

Marvin: *I'm* going. Pausing only to reconstruct the whole infrastructure of integral mathematics in his head, he went about his humble task. Never thinking to ask for reward, recognition, or even a moments ease from the terrible pain in all the diodes down his left side.

<pa-tfffffffffffffft>

<pa-tfffffffffffffft>

<pa-tfffffffffffft>

Marvin: "Fetch Beeblebrox," they say, and forth he goes.

<Ca-clck. HmMMMMMMMMmyumMMMMMM>

Door: Glad to be of service.

<ta-tck>

Arthur: Don't you think we should do something for him?

Ford: Hmm... we could rip out his voice box for a start.

Arthur: What are you in such a mood about?

Ford: I'm worried about them.

Arthur: The Vogons?

Ford: The Vogons, yeah.

Prostetnic Vogon Jeltz was not a pleasant sight, even for other Vogons. His highly domed nose rose high above a small piggy forehead. His dark, green, rubbery skin was thick enough for him to play the game of Vogon politics and play it well—and water proof enough for him to survive indefinitely at sea depths of up to a thousand feet with no ill effects. Not that he ever went swimming, of course.

He was the way he was because billions of years ago, when the Vogons had first crawled out of the sluggish primeval seas of Vogosphere, and had lain panting and heaving on the planet's virgin shores, when the first rays of the bright young Vogsol sun had shine across them that morning—it was as if the forces of evolution had simply turned away in disgust and given up on them there and then. They never evolved again. They should never have survived.

Meanwhile, the natural forces on the planet Vogosphere had been working overtime to make up for their earlier blunder. They brought forth scintillating jeweled scuttling crabs, which the Vogons ate—smashing their shells with iron mallets; and elegant gazelle-like creatures with silken coats and dewy eyes, which the Vogons would catch and sit on. They were no use as transport because their backs would snap instantly, but the Vogons sat on them anyway.

They have attempted to acquire learning, they have attempted to acquire style and social grace, but, in most respects, the modern Vogon is little different from his primitive forbearers.

Prostetnic Vogon Jeltz is a fairly typical Vogon, in that he is thoroughly vile.

Vogon Captain: Is that definitely the ship?

Vogon Guard 1: Affirmative Captain, we have confirmed positive identification.

Vogon Captain: Don't answer that.

Vogon Guard 1: What?

Vogon Captain: I said don't answer—!

Vogon Guard 1: I-I was just answering you—

Vogon Captain: Don't interrupt!

Vogon Guard 1: I wouldn't dare Captain.

Vogon Captain: Yes you would, you just did! You dare to lie to me?

Vogon Guard 1: No Captain.

Vogon Captain: Don't contradict me!!

Vogon Guard 1: I didn't Captain.

Vogon Captain: Well you did just then!

Vogon Guard 1: What?

Vogon Captain: I Said Don't—

Vogon Guard 1: I didn't mean to Captain.

Vogon Captain: Don't interrupt! GUARD!

Vogon Guard 2: Captain.

Vogon Captain: Take this object away and shoot him.

Vogon Guard 2: Shoot him Captain?

Vogon Captain: Don't question my orders!

Vogon Guard 2: Of course not Captain, I-I-I wouldn't dream of it.

Vogon Captain: You care to patronize me?

Vogon Guard 2: No Captain, honestly I wouldn't.!

Vogon Captain: When you've shot the prisoner, shoot yourself.

Vogon Guard 2: But!

Vogon Captain: THEN THROW YOURSELF OUT OF THE NEAREST AIRLOCK!

Vogon Guard 2: Yes Captain. At once Captain.

<vowahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh>

Vogon Captain: *Ye-eh-es!*

Gag Halfrunt: Vell, zis too, iz very interesting.

Vogon Captain: Well????

Gag Halfrunt: I zink zis iz probably perfectly normal behavior for a Vogon. Ze natural and healthy channeling of aggressive instincts into acts of senseless violence—

Vogon Captain: That is exactly what you **always** say!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Gag Halfrunt: Vell, I zink zat iz probably perfectly normal behavior for a psychiatrist. Ah! Exzellent! Eh, eh, ve are clearly both very vell adjusted in our mental attitudes today. Heh-heh-heh. Now, tell my, vat news of za mission?

Vogon Captain: We have located the ship.

Gag Halfrunt: Good. And ze occupants?

Vogon Captain: The Earthman.

Gag Halfrunt: Yes.?!

Vogon Captain: The Prefect being, and...

Gag Halfrunt: yes?

Vogon Captain: Zaphod Beeblebrox.

Gag Halfrunt: AhhhHHHhh. Zis iz most regrettable.

Vogon Captain: A personal friend?

Gag Halfrunt: Ah no, in my profession ve never make personal friends.

Vogon Captain: Ah, Professional Detachment!

Gag Halfrunt: No, ve just don't 'ave ze knack. But Beeblebrox you zee, iz my most profitable client.

Vogon Captain: Is that so?

Gag Halfrunt: Ohhhh, yes. He has personality problems beyond ze dreams of analysts. Ah it vill be a pity to lose him. But you,—?

Vogon Captain: Ah?

Gag Halfrunt: But you are feeling vell adjusted to your task?

Vogon Captain: To make sure they are no survivors from the planet Earth. Yes, *this time their will be no failure!*

Gag Halfrunt: Good. But first zere's a small financial matter I must deal vith, then, ven I give ze order, destroy za zhip.!

Vogon Captain: And Beeblebrox?

Gag Halfrunt: Vell, Zaphod's just zis guy you know.

Vogon Captain: Uh-huh.

<ca-cluk ehht>

Door: Glad to be of serviiiiiiiiice.

<cluk>

Zaphod: Ha-ha-ha-Hi-i-I guys.!

Ford: Uh, Zaphod, there's a Vogon fleet on our tail—they're coming up on us.

Zaphod: I can relate to that.!. Ha-ha-ha-huh. The guys just want to be close to me I guess. I'll turn my charisma down a notch, they'll soon get bored and drift away.

Arthur: It looks like a battle formation.

Zaphod: Hey didya hear that?

Ford: What?

Zaphod: The monkey spoke. Pure history, man. A talking monkey.

Ford: Just ignore it Arthur.

Arthur: Ignore what? I'm going get some tea.

<ca-cluk ehht>

Door: Thank you

<ca-cluk>

Zaphod: Battle formation, ayh?

Ford: Yes.

Zaphod: Neat. Computer.

Eddie: Hi there <tick tick tick tick> We gonna have a conversation?

Zaphod: No. You're gonna tell me what those Vogons want, and how they're armed.

Eddie: <tick tick tick tick> Then shall we have a conversation?

Zaphod: What?

Eddie: According to my programming, in the evening leisure periods the crew will like to relax and enjoy pleasant social activities with a wide range of shipboard robots and computers. <tick tick tick tick> Man and machine share in the stimulating exchange of—

<eeeeennnnuuuuuuuht>

Zaphod: What happened?
Eddie: Oooo-ahhh-ohhhha.

Ford: I just jammed a quick negative load across its logic terminals.

Eddie: Hey that hurt!

Ford: Hunh, Good.

Eddie: <tick tick tick> To counteract the restlessness caused by long stretches of deep space flight, the crew will occasionally like to let off steam by playing electronic Halma. Gee would that be a great idea fellas? Halma or spacebattles?

Zaphod: Computer, we've got Vogons on our tail!

Eddie: OK! I'll be the Vogons. When you hear the blip you—

<eeeeennnnnnuuuuuuuht>

Eddie: AWWWWWHHHHH!!!!

Eddie: Can ya be a little more relaxed about this guys?

Zaphod: Turn it off.

Ford: Okay.

Eddie: <tick tick tick tick tick>If you have any problems—you'd like to talk all morning **g y o u g e t u h v a w a t a**

Ford: Now what?

Zaphod: What.?

Ford: Without the Computer we're defenseless!

Zaphod: Assuming they mean to attack.

Ford: Oh yes! Assuming that of course.! They may have just popped round to have a quick game of Halma!

Zaphod: It's kinda as if they're waiting for something.

Ford: Hmm.

<dedededeet-dedadedadut >

Gag Halfbrunt: Zaphod Beeblebrox?

Zaphod: Hey man, it's a message.!

Gag Halfbrunt: Hey, Zaphod! How are you doing my old skitzo-psycho cerebral freak-ay!

Ford: Who's the Zeeb?

Zaphod: shh. I think it's my analyst.

Gag Halfrunt: I vas just going zrough some old accounts, you know and—

Zaphod: It's my analyst.

Gag Halfrunt: I vas just vondering—

Zaphod: Yeah, yeah, yeah yeah. Hi there, Gag. Can you call back?

Ford: Uh, the Vogons are closing in Zaphod.

Gag Halfrunt: It's only a zmall matter,...

Gag Hafrunt: ...I know, but—

Zaphod: Yeah, yeah, it's just...

Zaphod: ...I think we're under attack at the moment, and uh—

Gag Halfrunt: I hardly like to bother you about a mere five and a half million Altairian dollars—

Zaphod: I'm under attack man.!

Gag Halfrunt: Ah! Zo you feel you are under attack do you? Vould you like to talk about it?

Zaphod: Listen! This is for *real* man! Spaceships! Definite Kill Cannons! The whole bit.!

Gag Halfrunt: Zo you feel its for *real*, do you? Zis iz very incouraging.!. Your delusions are getting gwrande and gwrande. Zat'll be zix million Altairian dollars—if you could just...

Gag Halfrunt: ...instruct your computer to—

Zaphod: Here's a down payment Halfrunt!

<VRNNNNNNNNT>

Zaphod: Ah!

Gag Halfrunt: ... to zum vat ve ver just—

Zaphod: Ow-ee-owww

<CKKKKT-CKKKKT-CKKKKT>

Ford: *Ter-rific!* No Computer, no communications—*They'll be in firing range in a few seconds!*

Zaphod: **Okay.!** Well let's not hang about. Get the computer back in, we'll improb out of here zappo.

<wwhaheet-whahoom-twehehehehhht>

Eddie: Hi there! <tick tick tick tick tick>

Zaphod: Computer—get us on an improbability trajectory out of here pronto!

Eddie: Sorry Guys, I can't do that right now. All my circuits are currently engaged on solving a different problem. Now I know this is very unusual, but it is a very difficult and challenging problem, and I know that the results will be one we can all share and enjoy. Share and Enjoy!

“Share and Enjoy” ... is of course, the company motto of the hugely successful Sirius Cybernetics Corporation Complaints Division, which now covers the major landmasses of three medium-sized planets. And is the only part of the corporation to show a consistent profit in recent years. The motto stands...or stood, in three mile high, illuminated letters, near the complaints department spaceport on Eadrax. “Share and Enjoy!” Unfortunately, its weight was such that shortly after it was erected, the ground beneath the letters caved in and they dropped for nearly half their length through the underground offices of many talented young complaints executives—now deceased. The protruding upper halves of the letters now appear, in the local language, to read, “Go stick your head in a pig.” And are no longer illuminated... Except at times of special celebration. At these times of special celebration a choir of robots sing the company song, “Share and Enjoy.” Unfortunately—again—another of the computing errors, for which the company is justly famous, means that the robots’ voice boxes are exactly a flattened fifth out of tune. And the result sounds something like this:

Share and enjoy
 Share and enjoy
 Journey through life with a plastic boy
 Or girl by your side
 Let your pal be your guide
 And when it breaks down or starts to annoy
 Or grinds when it moves
 And gives you no joy
 ‘Cause it’s eaten your hat
 Or had sex with your cat
 Bled oil on your wall
 Or ripped off your door
 And you get to the point you can’t stand anymore
 Bring it us, we won’t give a fig.
 We’ll tell you...go stick your head in a pig.

Only slightly worse.

One of the Sirius Cybernetics Corporation creations is the NutriMatic Drink Dispenser. One of which has just provided Arthur Dent with a plastic cup filled with a liquid which is almost, but not quite, entirely unlike – tea.

<beedeety dumpt (nutrimatic chirps)>

Arthur: Ah. (sips) Euwwwwya! <pffffffffffff (spits out liquid)>

The way it works is very interesting. When the drink button is pressed it makes an instant but highly detailed examination of the subject’s taste buds, a spectroscopic analysis of the subject’s metabolism, and then sends tiny experimental signals down the neural pathways to the taste centers of the subject’s brain, to see what is likely to be well

received. However, no one knows quite why it does this, because it then invariably delivers a cup full of liquid that is almost, but not quite, entirely unlike – tea.

Arthur: I mean what is the point?

NutriMatic Drink Dispenser: Nutrition and pleasurable sense data – Share and Enjoy

Arthur: Listen you stupid machine It tastes filthy! Here take this cup back!

<tck-tck (throws cup at NutriMatic)>

NutriMatic Drink Dispenser: If you have enjoyed the experience of this drink, why not share it with your friends?

Arthur: Because I want to keep them! Will you try and comprehend what I'm telling you? That drink—

NutriMatic Drink Dispenser: That drink was individually tailored to meet your personal requirements for nutrition and pleasure

Arthur: Ah so I'm a masochist on a diet Am I?!

NutriMatic Drink Dispenser: Share and Enjoy.

Arthur: Oh shut up.

NutriMatic Drink Dispenser: Will that be all?

Arthur: Yes. No look it's very, very simple. All I want—are you listening?

NutriMatic Drink Dispenser: Yes

Arthur: Is a cup of tea. Got that?

NutriMatic Drink Dispenser: I hear.

Arthur: Good. And do you know WHY I want a cup of tea?

NutriMatic Drink Dispenser: Please wait.

Arthur: What?

NutriMatic Drink Dispenser: Computing

Arthur: What are you doing?

NutriMatic Drink Dispenser: Attempting to calculate answer to your question: why you want dried leaves in boiling water.

Arthur: Because I happen to like it, that's why!

NutriMatic Drink Dispenser: Stated reason does not compute with program facts.

Arthur: What are you talking about?

Ventilation System: You heard

Arthur: What? Who said that?

Ventilation System: The Ventilation System. You had a go at me yesterday.

Arthur: Yes because you keep filling the air with cheap perfume.

Ventilation System: You like scented air: it's fresh and invigorating.

Arthur: No I do not

Floor: Please Calm down.

Arthur: Why is the floor shaking?

Floor: Tired nerves and muscles are quickly soothed by gentle floor vibrations. Feel your troubles float away.

Arthur: Just Stop it will you? All of you, stop it!

<soothing music starts>

Arthur: Turn the soothing music off! Turn it off! I order you to turn it off!

<music stops, as does other things>

Arthur: Thank you.

NutriMatic Drink Dispenser: Why you want dried leaves in water, still computing.

Arthur: Now listen: if I want to be toned up, calmed down, invigorated or anything then it's very simple – I just have a cup of tea.

NutriMatic Drink Dispenser: Just dried leaves, boiled?

Arthur: Yes

NutriMatic Drink Dispenser, Ventilation System, Floor: Then why did you build all of us?

Arthur: What? I didn't

NutriMatic Drink Dispenser: Your species did.

Ventilation System: You're an organic life-form

Floor: your lot did

Ventilation System: to improve your lifestyle.

Eddie: <tick tick tick tick tick tick tick tick> Hi There! This is Eddie your shipboard computer just alerting you to the fact that the NutriMatic Machine has now tapped into my logic circuits to ask me why the Human prefers boiled leaves to anything we have to offer him. And wow, it's a biggy <tick tick tick tick> Gonna take a little time to work out. <tick tick tick tick tick tick tick tick tick tick> Share and Enjoy!

NutriMatic Drink Dispenser: Share and Enjoy! Share and Enjoy! Share and Enjoy!
Ventilation System: Share and Enjoy! Share and Enjoy! Share and Enjoy!
Floor: Share and Enjoy! Share and Enjoy! Share and Enjoy!
Eddie: Share and Enjoy! Share and Enjoy! Share and Enjoy!

Arthur: Oh this is ridiculous! Let me out of here!

<vyeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeemmmmmmm>

Arthur: Thank you.

Door: My pleasure!

Arthur: Uohhh!

...

Zaphod: Hey what evasive action can we take?

Arthur: I say...

Ford: You got me.

Arthur: ...do you know where the kettle is? ... Why are you both looking like that?

Ford: We're under attack—the Vogons.

Arthur: Well let's get out of here!

Zaphod: We **can't**, the computer's jammed.

Arthur: Its what?!

Ford: It says all it's circuits are occupied.

Arthur: Occupied????! What, with my problem?

Zaphod: Well what problem would that be monkeyman?

Arthur: Well, apparently, it's just trying to work out why I like tea.

Zaphod: Oh, Dingo's Kindeys!!!

Ford: Photons!!!

Arthur: Now look it's not my fault!

Ford: Whadda ya mean its not!?!?!?

Zaphod: You sew your lobotomy!?!?!?!?

Arthur: **Well it's not my fault!**

Life, as many people have spotted, is, of course, terribly unfair.

For instance, the first time the Heart of Gold ever crossed the Galaxy the massive improbability field it generated caused two-hundred and thirty-nine thousand lightly fried

eggs to materialize in a large wobbly heap on the famine-struck land of Pogrhl in the Pansel system.

The whole Pogrhl tribe had just died out from famine, except for one man who died of cholesterol poisoning some weeks later. The Pogrhlis, always a pessimistic race, had a little riddle, the asking of which used to give them the only tiny twinges of pleasure they ever experienced. One Pogrhl would ask another Pogrhl, "Why is life like hanging upside down with your head in a bucket of hyena offal?" To which the second Pogrhl would reply, "I don't know, why is life like hanging upside down with your head in a bucket of hyena offal?" To which the first Pogrhl would reply, "I don't know either—wretched isn't it?"

Arthur: I'm sorry, it's just that I was dying for a cup of tea.

Zaphod: You soon will be baby.

<d-d-d-d-yyooo, d-d-d-d-yyooo>
<ee-ah-ee-ah-ee-ah-ee-ah-ee-ah>

<d-d-d-d-yyooo, d-d-d-d-yyooo, d-d-d-d-yyooo, -d-d-d-yyooo, d-d-d-d-yyooo, d-d-d-d-yyooo>
<ee-ah-ee-ah-ee-ah-ee-ah-ee-ah-ee-ah-ee-ah-ee-ah-ee-ah-ee-ah-ee-ah-ee-ah-ee-ah-ee-ah-ee-ah>

Ford: Right! That's it! They've starting firing! Adept says the first beams will hit us in just over four minutes.

Arthur: What are we going to do??

Zaphod: Hold a séance.

Ford: What do you mean?? We're not dead... yet.

Zaphod: No, but my great-grandfather is.

Arthur: Who?

Zaphod: Zaphod Beeblebrox the fourth.

Ford: Is this relevant?

Arthur: The fourth!?! Zaphod Beeblebrox the fourth?!?

Zaphod: Yeah. I'm Zaphod Beeblebrox, my father's Zaphod Beeblebrox the second, my grandfather's Zaphod Beeblebrox the third—

Arthur: What?!?

Zaphod: There was an accident with a contraceptive and a time machine, I can't explain it now. All hold hands on the consol.

Ford: Zaphod, we've got three minutes!!

Zaphod: DO IT! Hurry!

Arthur: But—now?

Ford: Arthur just accept it. We may as well.! We're all dead—Zaphod's out of his skulls, why not hold a séance?? Why not go mad?!!

Zaphod: Put your hands on the consol!

Ford: All right, all right.
Arthur: All right, all right.

<wwwaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa>

<wwwaaaaaaaaaaaa>
Arthur: What's that?

<wwwaaaaaaaaaaaaaw>
Ford: The dialing chant.

<wwwaaaaa>
Arthur: The what?

<wwwaaaaaawwwwwwwwwwwaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa>
Zaphod: shh, shh, shh, shh, shhhhh. Concentrate.

<dtuht-dtuht-dtuht...dtheet, dtuht,...dtuht-dtuht, dtuht...dtuht-dtuht-dtuht-dtuht, dtuht tchut,tchut>
<wwwwwaaaaaaaaaawwwwwwwwwwwaaaaaaaaaaaaawwwwwwwwwwwaaaaaaaaaaaaawwwwwwwww>

<mmmh-mmmh...mmmh-mmmh... mmmh-mmmh... mmmh-mmmh>

<tcgh, tcgh>

Zaphod Beeblebrox IV: Oh, who disturbs me at this time?

Zaphod: oh... um... hi great-granddad.

Zaphod Beeblebrox IV: Zaphod...Beeblebrox.!

Zaphod: yeah, hi. uh, look, I'm really sorry about the flowers, I meant to send them along, but you know, uh, the shop was fresh out of wreaths and, uh—

Zaphod Beeblebrox IV: And you forgot.

Zaphod: well, I—

Zaphod Beeblebrox IV: Too busy. Never think of other people. The living are all the same.

Ford: two minutes Zaphod.

Zaphod: Yeah, but I did mean to. A-a-and I very nearly got round to writing to my great-grandmother as well you know, uh, condolences.

Zaphod: Beeblebrox IV: Your great-grandmother?

Zaphod: Yeah. How is she now? I'll go and see her.

Zaphod Beeblebrox IV: Your *late* great-grandmother and I are very well.

Zaphod: uhghh.

Zaphod Beeblebrox IV: But very disappointed in you young Zaphod.

Zaphod: Yeah, well. Uhhh.

Zaphod Beeblebrox IV: We've been following your progress with consider-er-erable despondency.

Zaphod: Yeah. Uh, look, uh—

Zaphod Beeblebrox IV: Not to say contempt.

Zaphod: Yeah, could you sort of listen a moment?

Zaphod Beeblebrox IV: I mean, what **exactly** are you doing with your life?

Zaphod: I'm being attacked by a Vogon fleet.

Zaphod Beeblebrox IV: Doesn't surprise me in the least.

Zaphod: Yeah, look.! Can you help???

Zaphod Beeblebrox IV: Zah-buh, *Help!?!?!?*

Zaphod: Yeah—like now.!

Zaphod Beeblebrox IV: Help?!? You go swanning an old sweet way round the galaxy with your disreputable friends...

Ford: one minute-twenty.

Zaphod Beeblebrox IV: ...Too busy to put flowers on me grave.! Plastic ones would've done.! But Nooooo, oh no.! Too busy. Too modern. Too sih-suh-sih—skeptical—till you find yourself in a fix, and suddenly come over all astrally-minded.! Well!... I don't know Zaphod. I think I'll have to think about this one.

Ford: one minute-ten.

Zaphod Beeblebrox IV: I mean—tell me what you think you've achieved.

Zaphod: *Achieved!?!?—I was president of the Galaxy man!!*

Zaphod Beeblebrox IV: Ach, and what kind of job is that for a Beeblebrox?

Zaphod: Hey, what uh—?

Zaphod Beeblebrox IV: You know and I know what being president means young Zaphod. You know because you've been it, and I know because I'm dead—and it gives one such a wonderfully uncluttered perspective. Oh-ummm, we have a saying up here: life is wasted on the living.

Zaphod: Yeah, very good...very deep. Right now I need aphorisms like I need holes in my heads.

Ford: fifty seconds.

Zaphod Beeblebrox IV: ugh-uh, you...I-eh-wah-cha...uhh, what was I? Ehrrr, where was I?

Zaphod: Pontificating.

Zaphod Beeblebrox IV: Oh yes. Well, let me tell you a little story.

Zaphod: What now?!????

Zaphod Beeblebrox IV: yes

Ford: forty-nine seconds.

Zaphod: Hey what?

Ford: Forty-nine seconds??

Ford: Time seems to be slowing down.

Zaphod Beeblebrox IV: Yes, I'd hate you to miss the end of it.

Hate is, of course, an almost entirely terrible thing.

There is not, say many people, enough love or understanding in the universe. Though the first of these may continue to be a problem, it is in the interests of increasing the general level of understanding that the following facts will now be revealed:

Zaphod Beeblebrox's full title was President of the Imperial Galactic Government.

The term Imperial is kept, though it is now an anachronism. The hereditary emperor is now nearly dead—and has been for many centuries. This is because in his last dying moments he was, much to his imperial irritation, locked in a perpetual stasis field. All his heirs are now, of course, long dead and the upshot of all this is that without any drastic upheaval political power has simply and effectively moved a rung or two down the ladder, and is now seemed to be vested in an elected governmental assembly, headed by a president elected by that assembly.

In fact, it vests in no such place—that would be too easy.

The president's job (and if someone sufficiently vain and stupid is picked he won't realize this) is not to wield power, but to draw attention away from it.

Zaphod Beeblebrox, the only man in history to have made presidential telecasts from the bath, from Eccentrica Gallumbits bedroom, from the maximum security wing of the Betelgeuse State Prison, or from where ever else he happened to be at the time, was supremely good at this job.

Ford: forty-eight seconds.

Zaphod Beeblebrox IV: So you see young Zaphod, when thinking of ways to describe what you are making of your life, I find the phrase, "Pete's ear" tends to spring to mind.

Zaphod: Yeah but hey man—

Zaphod Beeblebrox IV: Oh I wish you wouldn't speak like that. Zaphod, you became president for a reason—have you forgotten?

Zaphod: Yeah of course I forgot.! I had to. They screen your brain when you get the job you know. If they found my head full of subversion I'd've been right back on the streets with nothing but a fat pension, secretarial staff, a fleet of ships, and a couple of split throats.!

Zaphod Beeblebrox IV: Ah! You do remember then.

Zaphod: Oh yeah, yeah. I came to myself in this dream—its all cool you know.

Zaphod Beeblebrox IV: Did you find Zarniwoop?

Zaphod: Ah!...well...

Zaphod Beeblebrox IV: Well?

Zaphod: No, I more of sort of... didn't.

Zaphod Beeblebrox IV: Did you find Roosta?!!

Zaphod: Yeah, yah, yah. I found Roosta.

Zaphod Beeblebrox IV: And???

Zaphod: Okay, so I lost him again.!

Zaphod Beeblebrox IV: Oh, Zaphod.! The only reason I think I waste my breath on you, is that being dead, I don't have any other use for it.

Zaphod: Hey listen—you know you're talking to the only guy ever to come out of the total perspective Vortex! Only THE **most important** dude in the *Universe*!

Zaphod Beeblebrox IV: Could be Zaphod, only could be.! Only if you do your job and find out who or what really is running everything—who you were fronting for.

Zaphod: I just wish I knew why it was important.

Zaphod Beeblebrox IV: Because there's a lot of people wanting to have a word with him. I don't suppose for a moment that you're actually capable of succeeding—the only reason I'm going to help you now is that I couldn't bear the thought of you and your modern friends slouching about up here. Understood?

Zaphod: *Oh yeah, thanks a bundle.*

Zaphod Beeblebrox IV: Oh, and, uh, Zaphod?

Zaphod: Uh yeah?

Zaphod Beeblebrox IV: If ever you find you need help again... you know, if you're in trouble, need a hand out of a tight corner...

Zaphod: Yeah?

Zaphod Beeblebrox IV: ...please don't hesitate to...to get lost!

<tcgh, tcgh>

Ford: Family's always embarrassing isn't it?

Eddie: Hi There! <tick tick tick tick tick>Uh-huh-uh-huh-uh-huh. This is Eddie your shipboard computer, right back in here, and I gotta tell you guys that if we don't move out of here within...<tick tick tick tick tick> ah, ah, let's see now, something of the order of, uhhhh—well, by the time I finish working this out, taking trajectory dispersion and the space-time curve into account it'll be three less, so, let's say a cheerful round number like twenty seconds <tick tick tick> within, uh,uh, about, well it's near eighteen seconds now, and uh, by the time I've finished saying what I'm saying now it'll be sixteen seconds, we're all gonna be goners. <tick tick tick tick>

Ford: Computer, you're working again.!

Eddie: <tick tick tick tick tick> Oh, suuuure! This unearthly voice came and solved my problem for me—why someone should want to drink dried leaves in boiling water? Answer: because he's an ignorant monkey who doesn't know better. Cute, huh?

Arthur: Listen you malfunctioning mess of microchips!!

Eddie: Ah, Hi there!

Zaphod: Computer drive us out of here now! Maximum Improbability!

Eddie: What? OH, yeah, sure thing. <tick tick tick tick tick>

<PFB BBBB GHGHHGHGHFVVVYAFVVVYAFFVVVVYAVVVYAAAfvyaaafvyaaafvyaaaafvyaaa>

Will our heroes start living more useful and constructive lives as a result of this little talking to? Will it turn out that the reason why Gag Halfrunt has hired the Vogons to destroy, first the Earth, and then Arthur Dent, is that if the Ultimate Question is ever found the Universe will suddenly become a good and happy place and all the psychiatrist will suddenly be out of a job? Will all sorts of totally amazing things happen when the Heart of Gold arrives on the planet Brontitall? Find out in the next strangely incomprehensible 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 and the Ventilation System; Mark Wing-Davey was Zaphod Beeblebrox; Stephen Moore was Marvin, Gag Halfrunt, and Vogon Guard; David Tate was Eddie, Vogon Guard, and Vogon Computer; Bill Wallis was Vogon Captain; Leueen Willoughby was the NutriMat Machine; and Richard Goolden was Zaphod Beeblebrox the Fourth. 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. Tea is now obtainable from most Mega-markets in a variety of easy-to-swallow capsules.