

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

<intro music>

Incredible though it may seem, it is in fact possible, that the strange and terrible history of the planet Brontitall, where Arthur Dent, Ford Prefect, and Zaphod Beeblebrox are even now falling out of the sky onto curious and aggravating birds, admiring surprising large statues of unexpected people (i.e. Arthur Dent), exchanging hostile words with alien soldiers with inexplicable limps, and generally having a fairly peculiar time of it, may yet admit of some form of explanation.

Furthermore it is possible that this explanation will have more than a little to do with the mysterious "somethings" or "whatchamacallits" of which the bird people refuse to speak. On top of which, it is also possible that Lintilla the archaeologist (who may possibly turn out to have an almost impossibly strange life story) may play a major part in the uncovering of this explanation.

It is even possible that pigs will fly—or that everyone will live happily ever after.

In an infinite Universe everything, even the Hitch Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy, is possible.

Lintilla: Tell me how you got here.

Arthur: Impossible.

Lintilla: What do you mean?

Arthur: Well it's something called the Infinite Improbability Drive—don't ask me how it works or I'll start to whimper.

Lintilla: But a ship?

Arthur: Oh yes a *ship*. It's parked in a cup fifteen miles above us—please don't ask me about that either.

Lintilla: Is there anything you are prepared to talk about?

Arthur: Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness?

Lintilla: What?

Arthur: I know—all non-starters really.

Lintilla: Can you reach your ship?

Arthur: From here? No.

Lintilla: hunnnnnnh.

Arthur: What's the matter, you want me to go?

Lintilla: No. It's just that our ship was found by the soldiers and disabled—we've no means of getting off the planet.

Arthur: Well, I can't be much help. How many are you?

Lintilla: Three of us are here. Lintilla.

Arthur: What?

Lintilla: Name.

Arthur: Oh! Arthur. What's yours?

Lintilla: I just said, Lintilla.

Arthur: Oh yes, sorry. I thought you— never mind. Hello.

Lintilla: Come! You can help us. We've a lot of digging to do and automatic drills broken down.

Arthur: I don't think you **can** dig your way off a planet, can you?

Lintilla: No. I said we're archaeologists.

Arthur: Ah.! You don't look as if you're in good condition for digging with your arm in a sling. Is it broken?

Lintilla: Oh no. It's just a pseudo-fracture.

Arthur: Huh?

Lintilla: Pseudo-fracture. It's artificially induced. All the pain, swelling, and de-mobility of a fracture without the inconvenience of a fracture itself.

Arthur: Oh. Is that good?

Lintilla: Good?

Arthur: Yes, particularly?

Lintilla: Well, you wouldn't want me to have a broken arm would you?

Arthur: Well no, of course not. I mean I hardly know you.

Lintilla: Right. But the effect is useful.

Arthur: Is it?

Lintilla: Yes, of course it is. Crisis Psychology: the benefits of working under extreme pressure—nothing more useless than a bored archaeologist. Come on, this tunnel leads to the work face. See this device?

Arthur: Looks like a watch.

Lintilla: It's a crisis inducer. Set it to mark nine and—Hurry! They're after us!

Arthur: Who?

Lintilla: No one! Come on! Through the tunnel! They're coming!

Arthur: What!???

Lintilla: They're coming!

Arthur: Well, if you say so.

<running>

The major problem which the medical profession in the most advanced sectors of the galaxy had to tackle—after cures had been found for all the major diseases, and instant repair systems had been invented for all physical injuries and disablements except some of the more advanced forms of death—was that of employment.

Planets full of bronzed, healthy, clean-limbed individuals merrily prancing through their lives meant that the only doctors still in business were the psychiatrists—simply because no one had discovered a cure for the universe as a whole, or rather, the only one that did exist had been abolished by the medical doctors. Then it was noticed, that like most forms of medical treatment, total cures had a lot of unpleasant side effects. Boredom, listlessness, lack of—well anything very much, and with these conditions came the realization that nothing turned, say, a slightly talented musician, into a towering genius faster than the problem of encroaching deafness. And nothing turned a perfectly normal, healthy individual into a great political or military leader better than irreversible brain damage.

*Suddenly everything changed. Previously best-selling books such as How I survived an Hour with a Sprained Finger were swept away in a flood of titles such as How I scaled the North Face of the Mega-perna with a Perfectly Healthy Finger but Everything Else Sprained, Broken, or Bitten Off by a Pack of Mad Yaks. And so doctors were back in business—recreating all the diseases and injuries they had abolished—in popular, easy-to-use forms. Thus, given the right and instantly available types of disability, even something as simple as turning on the 3D TV could become a major challenge. And when all the programs on all the channels actually **were** made by actors with cleft palettes, speaking lines by dyslexic writers, filmed by blind cameramen, instead of merely **seeming** like that, it somehow made the whole thing more worthwhile.*

Meanwhile, Ford Prefect and Zaphod Beeblebrox, who have fortuitously landed on the back of a huge alien bird, are again finding that the most worthwhile thing in Ford's possession is something he acquired from the Salisbury branch of Mark's and Spencer's, shortly before the planet Earth was demolished.

Ford: Take us down to the ground you stupid bird.

Bird 2: **No.** <squawk> I'm just gonna circle round here for awhile, then sooner or later you'll have to let go and continue your journey. I'm sorry—but there it is.!

Ford: Zaphod, hold on, I'm gonna crawl out along its neck.

Zaphod: You're gonna what?

Ford: Crawl along its neck—with my towel.

Zaphod: Are you crazy? Miles up on a mad bird you're gonna drive behind the ears?!

Ford: You watch.

Zaphod: *WATCH!??* I'm gonna pray man. Know any good religions?

Ford: You watch. Here I go.

<AAAAAAACCCCCCKKKKKKK! (loud squawk)>

Bird 2: Hey... hey here... no...

Ford: Zaphod, how am I doing?

<WA-AH-ACKKK! (prolonged squawk)>

Zaphod: What?!

Ford: How far have I got?

Zaphod: How do I know man I've got my eyes closed! Don't you know how far you've got?

Ford: No... I've got my eyes closed.

Zaphod: Terrific!

Bird 2: Get off my neck.!

Ford: No.

Bird 2: Get off my— <WAWK!> What are you doing?

Ford: I'm wrapping my towel round your eyes you bird.

Bird 2: I can't see where I'm flying.!

Ford: You don't need to if you fly downwards—just follow the force of gravity, it's very simple.

<whah-whah-whah-wa-whah-wa-wa-wa-wa-wa-wa>

<awckkk, awckkk, awckkk>

<running>

Ford: Great idea wasn't it?

<awckkk, awckkk, awckkk>

<running>

Zaphod: yeah, Keep Running.

<aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAWWCCCK>

<running>

Ford: With the towel—great little number, wasn't it?

<Aaaaaaaaawwck>
<running>
Zaphod: yeah, Watch IT!

<awwccck, awwccck, aawwck>
<running>
Ford: Just follow the force of gravity, I said.

<waawwccck, wwaawwcccccCCKKKKKKK...>
<running>
Ford: It's simplicity that always works you know.

<...**CKKKKK!**>
<running and dodging>
Zaphod: Here comes another!

<awwwcck>
<running>
Zaphod: Would ya just- keep running man!

<aawwwccckkk, aawwwccckkk, aawwwccckkkk>
<running>
Ford: I am running.! And it's the simplest ideas that take the greatest intelligence you know.

<waaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaawwwwWWWWW...>
Ford: I mean, forget Marvin...I'm the one you know...

<...WWWCCCC...>
<running>
Zaphod: Watch it!

<...CCCCCKKKKKKKK!>
<running>
Ford: ...the intelligent one.

<awwccck, awwccck, WAWK, awwccck, awwccckkk, aawwwwwwckk>
<running>
Ford: When I go to bed at night, I don't need to read a book—I just glance through my brain for half an hour.

<aaawwwkk, aawwck>
<running>
Zaphod: RUN! We've gotta find shelter!

<aawwck, Awck, Awwk, awwckk>
<running>
Ford: There's something in the distance ...can't quite make it out.

<AaaaaaaaawwwwwwwccCCKKKKKKKKKKK**CK**>
<running>
Zaphod: Head for it. Keep Running man. Wa-OH-oh-a!

<awwck, Awwck, awcck, awwck>
<running>
Zaphod: How many birds you reckon?

<Awwck, Awwck, awcck>
<running>
Ford: Couple 'a dozen.

<awk, Awcck, awk, awk>
<running>
Zaphod: *Keep Running!*

<awwk, auwcckk, Awwwk>
<running>
Ford: Well they can't keep it up indefinitely.

<aawwkk, awwk>
<running>
Zaphod: Ugh, uh...

<awwkk, Auwwkkk, Awkkkkk, awcckkk>
<running>
Ford: I mean they'll have to go and eat something you know?

<Awwkkk, awkkkk>
<running>
Zaphod: Yes.

<awcckk, awwcckk, auwwcck, awwwcckk>
<running>
Ford: I mean, looking at it purely from the biological angle.

<awck>
<running>
Zaphod: Right.

<Awwkk, Awcckk, Awcckk, awcckk, awcckk, awkkk, awckkk, Awck, awck, aaaaaawwwwwccccc...>
<lots of running>
Ford: And then they'll have to put their feet up for a couple of hours whiles they go through all the digestion bit.

<...cccCCCC...>
<running>
Ford: And then...

<...CCKKKKKKKKKK!!!>
<running>
Zaphod: Keep running.!

<awcckk, awwcckk, awk, awwcckk>
<running>
Ford: ...yes... probably gonna need a new towel at some stage...

<awk, auwwcckk>
<CKSTZZ>
<running>
Zaphod: agh, Ugh...

<wwwWAAAAAAGGGGGGGGGGGHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH>

<CGGHHHHHHHHHHHHHHK!!!.... waaaaaaaagghhh>

Chronologically speaking the immediately preceding noise, the

<wwwWAAAAAAGGGGGGGGGGGHHHHHHHHHHHHHH>

<CGGHHHHHHHHHHHHHHK!!!.... waaaaaaaagghhh>

noise, does not, in fact, belong in this position. It has not been heard by Ford Prefect or Zaphod Beeblebrox and neither have they witnessed the event that caused it. It is included at this moment partly to point out certain causal relationships between events past and events to come, and partly to create a sense of mystery and wonder: A) as to what it could possibly be, B) as to the nature of these past and future events, and C) as to whether these alleged causal relationships will become important—or indeed apparent. For the moment, suffice it to say that the

<wwwWAAAAAAGGGGGGGGGGGHHHHHHHHHHHHHH>

<CGGHHHHHHHHHHHHHHK!!!.... waaaaaaaagghhh>

event has taken place, and that Arthur Dent will very soon encounter one of its consequences. This is the sound of him emerging from the tunnel.

Arthur: huh, ugh, huh-uh. How did you manage that? You got here minutes ahead of me.! And with an imaginary broken arm.

Lintilla: Well that's the whole point—you always overcompensate for your disabilities. I'm thinking of having my whole body surgically removed. Right, crisis over, I've turned off our pursuers.

Arthur: What? Oh, yes, good. Well, look tell me—

Lintilla: Lintilla!

Arthur: Yes you told me your name thanks, the point is—

Lintilla: Lintilla, where have you been, you've been hours.!

Arthur: hmmm, who's this?

Lintilla: I ran into some foot soldiers and had to stay hidden. I found this.

Lintilla: Who is it?

Lintilla: He says his name's Arthur, but I think he's harmless. He can help us dig.

Arthur: Excuse me, Who is this?

Lintilla: This is Lintilla.

Arthur: But I thought you—

Lintilla: Where's Lintilla?

Arthur: Who?

Lintilla: Over there at the workface—most extraordinary thing has happened.

Arthur: Yes very probably but why a—

Lintilla: Hello?! Is that you Lintilla?

Arthur: Excuse me. Can I get a word in edgeways?

Lintilla: What do you want?

Arthur: Why are there three of you?

Lintilla: Well, why is there only one of you?

Lintilla: Well, why is there only one of you?

Lintilla: Well, why is there only one of you?

Arthur: Uh... Could I have notice of that question?

Lintilla: It's very strange. We were making hardly any progress at all without the drill, then just when I turned my back there was an extraordinary noise.

Lintilla: What sort of noise?

Lintilla: A sort of, "WAAGHHHHH, PGHHHH!" noise. When I looked back a whole shaft had opened up.

Lintilla: Really?

Lintilla: Really?

Lintilla: It's exposed all the archaeological seams—we're almost home and dry.

Lintilla: But that's...that's...impossible.

Lintilla: Well, I don't know about impossible, it's very improbable.

Arthur: But why are you exactly the same as each other?

Lintilla: Well, you're exactly the same as yourself, aren't you?

Arthur: This is true.

Lintilla: Well then.

Lintilla: Well then.

Lintilla: Well then.

Arthur: But unhelpful.

Lintilla: We're clones.

Arthur: Ah.! Clones.!—I've heard of that. You mean there was one of you to begin with and then exact copies were made and now there are three of you.

Lintilla: Yes

Lintilla: Yes.

Lintilla: Yes, except that there are now nearly five hundred and seventy-eight thousand million of us.

Arthur: Hmmm?

Lintilla: It's all right, the others aren't here at the moment. Can we get on with the work?

Arthur: That's rather a lot isn't it?

The problem of the five hundred and seventy-eight thousand million Lintilla clones is very simple to explain, rather harder to solve. Cloning machines have, of course, been around for a long time and have proved very useful for reproducing particularly talented or attractive or—in response to pressure from the Sirius Cybernetics Marketing Lobby—particularly gullible people, and this was all very fine and splendid and only occasionally, terribly confusing.

And then one particular cloning machine got badly out of sync with itself. Asked to produce six copies of a wonderfully talented and attractive girl called “Lintilla” for a Bratis-Vogen escort agency, whilst another machine was busy creating five hundred lonely business executives in order to keep the laws of supply and demand operating profitably, the machine went to work. Unfortunately, it malfunctioned in such a way that it got halfway through creating each new Lintilla before the previous one was actually completed. Which meant, quite simply, that it was impossible ever to turn it off—without committing murder.

This problem taxed the minds, first of the cloning engineers, then of the priests, then of the letters page of the Sidereal Record Straightener, and finally of the lawyers, who experimented vainly with ways of redefining murder, reevaluating it, and in the end, even respelling it, in the hope that no one would notice.

A solution has now been found, but since it is not a particularly pleasant one, it will only be revealed if it becomes absolutely necessary.

Meanwhile, Arthur Dent is about to discover the terrifying truth about the “somethings” or “whachamacallits” of which the bird people refuse to speak.

Lintilla: You see? These different strata in the rock face of the shaft represent the successive pages of this planet's history.

Arthur: Oh yes. Isn't that interesting.

Lintilla: Interesting? It's frightening.!

Arthur: Is it? Well, actually it just looks like a slice of layer cake to me.

Lintilla: Well why did you say it looked interesting?

Arthur: Oh, well, I'm quite interested in layer cake.

Lintilla: Look at it. Doesn't anything strike you?

Arthur: Well it's... it's rock isn't it?

Lintilla: Down here we have layer after layer—the remains of early settlements, one on top of another. Then more layers, thicker ones—the remains of cities, each built on the ruins of the previous one. We're talking about thousands of years you see.! And then suddenly above this level, what?

Arthur: Uhh—more rock?

Lintilla: What's special about it?

Arthur: Uhhh. Well it's all smooth with no layers.

Lintilla: Yes—no further building, no one actually living on the planet, or at least on its surface. So this previous layer is the significant one. And do you know what it consists of?

Arthur: Rock?

Lintilla: No.

Arthur: Uhh, stone?

Lintilla: No.

Arthur: Umm, some different sort of rock the name of which temporarily escapes me?

Lintilla: No.! Feel it. Scratch it.

Arthur: Oh yes—It's slightly sort of soft and crumbly.

Lintilla: What's it like?

Arthur: Uhhhh... I know.! It's um—

Lintilla: Yes?!

Arthur: What's the name of that soft crumbly sort of rock?

Lintilla: But it **isn't** rock.

Arthur: Well what is it then?

Lintilla: Shoes.

Arthur: What?!!

Lintilla: Shoes. Billions of them! An entire archaeological layer of compressed shoes.

Arthur: Shoes?!? How can you tell?

Lintilla: We knew all along, we just needed confirmation.

Arthur: Why shoes?

<PA-TTZZZZZOOOOOOOOooooo>

Hig Hurtenflirst: Because fella, shoes are the economic future of this Galaxy.

Arthur: What?

Hig Hurtenflirst: Stand up, both of ya.

Arthur: Who are you?!

Hig Hurtenflirst: I only happen to be Hig Hurtenflirst. I only happen to be the *risingest* young executive in the Dolmansaxlil Shoe Corporation. I only happen to have masterminded the entire rationalization of this planet to total shoe orientation. I only happen to be sitting on top of the biggest development deal in the entire history of footwear and I only happen to be *very deeply disturbed* at finding my planet riddled with subversives bent on undermining the *whole structure* of the Dolmansaxlil operation—and thus the very economic future of the Galaxy itself. And I only happen to think that I would be very well advised to have both of you weirdoes and the other two chicks revoked on the spot. Does that answer your question?

Arthur: Uh. I can't remember what I asked you now.

There is, of course, also the question of the

<wwwWAAAAAAGGGGGGGGGGGHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH>

<CGGHHHHHHHHHHHHHHK!!!.... waaaaaaaagghhh>

noise, which, as has been suggested, was in someway connected with the sudden and fortuitous appearance of a deep shaft in the ground. Further noises are now to be heard at the very bottom of this shaft, which may go some way towards explaining the previous noise. This is what the new noise sounds like:

<ba-WOOOOOOoooooo, dwob, dwob, dwob>

<ughhhhhhhhhhhHHHOHHHHHHHHHHhhhhhhhhhhohhhh>

After awhile it develops along these lines:

<do-hmm-ha-hmmm>

<do>
<ptfffffft>

<ptfffffft>

<ohhhh>

And then continues thus:

<ptfffffft>

Marvin: Act. I ache therefore I am. Or in my case: I am, therefore I ache. Oh look: I appear to be lying at the bottom of a very deep, dark hole. That seems a familiar concept, what does it remind me of? Ahhh. I remember: life. Perhaps if I lie here and ignore it, it'll go away again. Or then again, perhaps not. To be perfectly frank with myself, if it didn't go away as a result of me falling fifteen miles through the air and a

further mile through solid rock, I'm probably stuck with it for good. Why don't I just lie here anyway.? Why don't I climb out.? Why don't I just go "zutel-wortle?." Does it matter.? Even if it does matter, does it matter that it matters? Zutel-wortle, zutel-wortle, zutel-wortle...

And so on.

Meanwhile, at the top of the shaft, mere nanoseconds have passed since Arthur said, "I can't remember what I asked you now."

Hig Hurtenflirst: You.!

Lintilla: Me?

Hig Hurtenflirst: Why do those other two chicks we picked up look exactly like you?

Lintilla: It's a long story.

Hig Hurtenflirst: Quick precede then.

Lintilla: Because.

Hig Hurtenflirst: That's neat. Now listen, I could just have you revoked.

Arthur: Revoked?

Hig Hurtenflirst: Yeah. K-I-L-L-E-D, Revoked. But instead, I think I'll suddenly take a liking to ya both.

Arthur: Oh. Don't we get any way in the matter?

Hig Hurtenflirst: Foot Warrior!

Foot Warrior: Sir?

Hig Hurtenflirst: I've decided to take these two back to my office and like them.

Foot Warrior: Sir.

Hig Hurtenflirst: I think I'd like them on the wall best. See to it. We'll go in my business buggy.

Foot Warrior: At once sir.

Hig Hurtenflirst: And don't limp.!

Foot Warrior: No sir. I'll try not to sir.

Hig Hurtenflirst: Don't just try, cut it right out!

Foot Warrior: Yes sir.

Hig Hurtenflirst: Now you're limping with your other foot!

Foot Warrior: Yeah. Yes sir.

Hig Hurtenflirst: Don't limp with either foot!

Foot Warrior: Right sir.

<kbplgggggg-clunk>

Hig Hurtenflirst: You two prisoners.!

Arthur: Who us?

Lintilla: Who us?

Hig Hurtenflirst: Pick up the foot warrior and bring him back with you.

Foot Warrior: Thank you sir.

<ckkghh>

Hig Hurtenflirst: Welcome to my office, the nerve center of the operation here. Since you were so keen to find out the truth about us, you shall see it in comfort. Foot Warrior!

Foot Warrior: Sir?

Hig Hurtenflirst: Show them the film.

Foot Warrior: Uhh, yes sir. Awh, ohh!

<kbplgggggg-clunk>

Hig Hurtenflirst: You two.!. Carry him to the projector scope.

Arthur: What's the matter with him?

Hig Hurtenflirst: His feet are the wrong size for his shoes.

Arthur: Ahh.

Foot Warrior: Thank you. Thank you so much.

<BA-baba_{ba}ba (film music intro)>

Commentator: *This is a Dolmansaxlil Galactic Shoe Corporation film.*

Adventures in Aggressive Marketing

Take a planet. Any planet. Take, for instance, the planet Bartrax or Hurtringfirm. Or Farth ...

Commentator: *...Or Kievoliv or Azlaan. Or any...*

Arthur: Earth? That's where I come from, but it's been demolished.!

Commentator: *...of the many planets we have currently declared marketing on.*

Lintilla: In which case it escaped a very nasty fate

Arthur: What, worse than being demolished?

Lintilla: Much.!. You watch.

Commentator: *We will see what can really be achieved by looking at the planet Brontitall.*

<laugh track>

Hig Hurtenflirst: That's my baby.! They're very proud of me back at central office.

Commentator: *Mere Centuries ago, a happy, prosperous, busy planet all right. Ha-ha-ha-ha-ha, oh yes. Not a care in their world:*

People of Brontitall: hello. Hello. Hello. Hello. Hello! Hello.
Hello Hello!
Hello!
Hello!
Hello!

Bronthos: Morning. Ah. Happy?

Man: Oh Terribly Happy today! Thank you, yes. And you Bronthos?

Bronthos: Oh *indeed* so yes.

Man: ha-ha-ha-ha-ha

Bronthos: Oh, are you, busy?

Man: Oh yes, yes, yes. And healthy and bright eyes, clear skin, feety good nick. Isn't life a wonderful thing?

Bronthos: Ah-oh yes, super.!

Commentator: *Oh, yes. Only one, tiny little thing wrong here—they're not making money for the Dolmansaxlil Shoe Corporation.*

Crowd: So?

Commentator: *So, on the far side of their moon, we set up a Dolmansaxlil Shoe Shop Intensifier Ray. And suddenly the people are gripped by an insane, irrational desire to build...*

<dodododooo^{dooo}>

Commentator: *Shoe Shops! Hunk! In every road, on every street corner, in every city shopping precinct, shoe shop after shoe shop.*

Arthur: Oxford Street.!

Lintilla: What?

Arthur: Oxford Street! They just showed a picture of Oxford Street!

Lintilla: Shhh.

Commentator: *And then we really put the screws on them. Ha-ho-ho, yes!*

Some Random Guy For No Apparent Reason: Fashion.

Commentator: *Every year the shoes in the shop are either much too wide, or much too thin—or in extreme cases even joined together at the heel. Ho-oohhhh, yes, how we laughed up on the backside of their moon. How we cried with laughter when every last shop on the planet was turned into a shoe shop. How we coughed and spluttered with mirth when the people tried to revolt and we had to send in the foot warriors.*

People of Brontital: Ahhh-heyyy-ahhhh-heyyyyy-hhhhhhhhhhhhhhh

Foot Warrior: Do not panic! Lay Down your arms. We just want you to relax and enjoy your shoes.

<gunfire>

People of Brontital: Hey-ahhhhhhhhhh-heyyyy-ahhhhhh

Foot Warrior: They are very stylish and fashion-conscious. Be Cool. Step out in style. Relax and Enjoy your shoes.

<heavy gunfire>

People: Heyahhhhhhhhhhhhh!

Foot Warrior: Relax and Enjoy your shoes. Relax and enjoy your shoes.

<TFFTwahhoooooooooooooOooooo>

Hig Hurtenflirst: Hey-what's happening? Why are the lights going out? Foot Warrior!

Foot Warrior: Sir?

Hig Hurtenflirst: Go to the emergency power supply.

Foot Warrior: Can't sir. I think I've got gangrene in the feet.

Hig Hurtenflirst: Well then just seize the prisoners.

Foot Warrior: Sir. Wahh Ooo ogh <(kbpiggggg-clunk)>

Hig Hurtenflirst: Prisoners.

Lintilla: Yes?

Arthur: Yes?

Hig Hurtenflirst: Seize each other.

<dadadadadadadadwooo-dadadadadadadadwooo-dadadadadadadadwooo (laser gun fire)>

Hig Hurtenflirst: Now, wa-what's going on out here?!

<dadadadadadadadwooo-dadadadadadadadwooo-dadadadadadadadwooo (laser gun fire)>

<Ckgrhhhhhhh-CRUNCH>

Hig Hurtenflirst: ha-who's that breaking down the door?!

<pa-tfffft>

<dadadadadadadadwooo-dadadadadadadadwooo-dadadadadadadadwooo (laser gun fire)>

<pa-tfffft>

<dadadadadadadadwooo-dadadadadadadadwooo-dadadadadadadadwooo (laser gun fire)>

Arthur: Marvin!

<dadadadadadadadwooo-dadadadadadadadwooo-dadadadadadadadwooo (laser gun fire)>

Marvin: I suppose you'll want to be rescued now.

<dadadadadadadadwooo-dadadadadadadadwooo-dadadadadadadadwooo (laser gun fire)>

Hig Hurtenflirst: Oh yes, please!

<dadadadadadadadwooo-dadadadadadadadwooo-dadadadadadadadwooo (laser gun fire)>

Arthur: Not you! Come on Lintilla, let's get out of here.

<dadadadadadadadwooo-dadadadadadadadwooo-dadadadadadadadwooo (laser gun fire)>

<pa-tfffffft>

<pa-tfffffft>

Marvin: Well, come on then, if you're coming.

<dadadadadadadadwooo-dadadadadadadadwooo-dadadadadadadadwooo (laser gun fire)>

Lintilla: Wait! I've just got to turn on my crisis inducer. There. Ah. C'mon, they're after us!

<dadadadadadadadwooo-dadadadadadadadwooo-dadadadadadadadwooo (laser gun fire)>

Foot Warrior: Halt!

Lintilla: Down the corridor!

Foot Warrior: I command you to halt!

Arthur: This way?

Lintilla: Yes!

Arthur: That's up the corridor.

Lintilla: *All right UP the bloody corridor! C'mon!*

<dadadadadadadadwooo-dadadadadadadadwooo-dadadadadadadadwooo (laser gun fire)>

Arthur: Oh *that* way. I thought you were pointing down to the—

Lintilla: *Come ON!*

And so everything points to shoes as being the mysterious "somethings" or "whachamacallits" of which the bird people would not speak.

And the curious fact is that the Shoe Shop Intensifier Ray mentioned mere seconds ago is, in actuality, a phony—designed to make Dolmansaxlil Executives feel they're doing something excitingly aggressive when, in fact, all they need to do is wait.

The Shoe Event Horizon is now a firmly established and rather sad economic phenomenon, which in future times will be taught as part of the basic middle school "Life, the Universe, and Everything" syllabus. Here is a typical computer class from the Bratis-Vogen Mega-lycée Unidate N11VCK168:

Compu-teach: Good morning lifeform.

Pupil: Hi teach.

Compu-teach: Are you sitting comfortably?

Pupil: Yes.

Compu-teach: Then stand up.! Harsh, economic truths, class seventeen. You are standing up?

Pupil: Yes.

Compu-teach: Good. Posit: you are living in an exciting, go-ahead civilization. Where are you looking?

Pupil: Up.

Compu-teach: What do you see?

Pupil: The open sky. The stars. An infinite horizon.

Compu-teach: Correct! You may press the button.

Pupil: Thank you. <da-ltel-ltel-ltel-ltl-ltl-la> Wow. That feels nice.

Compu-teach: Posit: you are living in a stagnant, declining civilization. Where are you looking?

Pupil: Down.

Compu-teach: What do you see?

Pupil: My shoes.

Compu-teach: Correct! What do you do to cheer yourself up?

Pupil: Uhm... press the button?

Compu-teach: Incorrect.! Think again. Your world is a depressing place; you are looking at your shoes. How do you cheer yourself up?

Pupil: I buy a new pair.

Compu-teach: Correct!

Pupil: Can I press the button?

Compu-teach: All right.

<da-ltel-ltel-ltel-ltl-ltl-la>

Pupil: Wa-ho. So nice.

Compu-teach: Now, imagine everyone does the same thing. What happens?

Pupil: Everyone feels nice?

Compu-teach: Ah, forget the button! Concentrate.! Everyone buys new shoes. What happens?

Pupil: More shoes.

Compu-teach: And?

Pupil: More shoe shops.

Compu-teach: Correct.

Pupil: Can I—?

Compu-teach: No, no.

Pupil: Oh-oooo.

Compu-teach: And in order to support all these extra shoe shops, what must happen?

Pupil: Everyone... must keep buying shoes.

Compu-teach: And how is that arranged?

Pupil: Manufacturers dictate more and more different fashions and make shoes so badly that they either hurt the feet or fall apart.

Compu-teach: So that?

Pupil: Everyone has to buy more shoes.

Compu-teach: Until?

Pupil: Until... everyone gets fed up with lousy, rotten shoes.

Compu-teach: And then what?

Pupil: Why can't I press the button?

Compu-teach: *And then what?!!* Come on!

Pupil: Massive capital investment by the manufacturers to try and make people buy the shoes.

Compu-teach: Which means?

Pupil: More shoe shops.

Compu-teach: And then we reach what point?

Pupil: The point where I press the button again.

Compu-teach: Oh, all right.

<da-ltel-ltel-ltel-ltl-ltl-la>

Pupil: Wa-hoo, Ahhhh... so nice, that's really nice.!

Compu-teach: And then we reach what point?!

Pupil: The *Shoe Event Horizon*! The whole economy overbalances; shoe shops outnumber every kind of shop.! It becomes economically impossible to build anything other than shoe shops, and **bingo**, I get to press the button again!

<da-ltel-ltel-ltel-ltl-ltl-la>

Pupil: WOOO!

Compu-teach: Wait for permission.! Now, what's the final stage?

Pupil: Umm. Every shop in the world ends up as a shoe shop.

Compu-teach: Full of?

Pupil: Shoes that no one can wear.

Compu-teach: Result.

Pupil: Famine, collapse, and ruin. Any survivors eventually evolve into... birds and never put their feet on the ground again.

Compu-teach: Excellent! End of Lesson. You may press the button.

<da-ltel-ltel-ltel-ltl-ltl-la>

Pupil: Woo-ha-ha. YEE-he-hehooo. Ah-ha. Oh, that's nice. Thank you teach, Goodbye.

Compu-teach: Uh, uh, aren't you forgetting something?

Pupil: What?

Compu-teach: Press the other button.

Pupil: Oh, right.

<du-ltul-ltul-ltul-ltul-ltul-lo du-ltul-ltul-ltul-ltul-ltul-lo >

Compu-teach: Oh-ho-ho. Ooooo, oooooaaaa. Oooo-hooo-weeee-ha-hah

And so forth.

Meanwhile, at the Dolmansaxlil Base, the excitement is, of course, mounting.

<panting>

Arthur: You did a good job finding us Marvin. Where have you been?

<pa-tfffffft>

<pa-tfffffft>

Marvin: In a deep dark hole. I climbed out because I started to like it too much.

<dadadadadadadadadwooo-dadadadadadadadadwooo-dadadadadadadadadwooo (laser gun fire)>

Arthur: Come on, keep moving.! We must find a way out of here.

<dadadadadadadadwooo-dadadadadadadadwooo-dadadadadadadadwooo (laser gun fire)>
Foot Warrior: Halt!
Lintilla: Right.!

Foot Warrior: I command you to halt!
<dadadadadadadadwooo-dadadadadadadadwooo-dadadadadadadadwooo (laser gun fire)>

*Whilst a mere mile or so to the east, Zaphod Beeblebrox and Ford Prefect are very keen to find their way **into** somewhere—namely, some sort of shelter from the continuing revenge of the bird people. They find it in the form of a derelict building, which is vast, very low, and very, very old.*

<panting>

Ford: The door! <pant> Open it.

<Kvghhghhhchrghcgrghcghhgrhgrhchrnnnnnn...>
Zaphod: Ugh. Force it man.! Force it.!

<...nnnnnnnnnnntca-cnk-cnk-thwa-wa-wa-wa>

Ford: Ogh. Okay, get in.!

<vwaghhhhchrhghhrrhhh>

Zaphod: Hey. Hey look at this. Look what we found man.!

Ford: *Amazing!*

Zaphod: It-it's a derelict spaceport.

Ford: Looks like no one's been in for centuries. All these amazing old ships...

Zaphod: yeah.

Ford: ...Just rust and wreckage.

Zaphod: yeah. Spooky man. Like, um... what are those things eggs come out of?

Ford: Birds.

Zaphod: No, no, after that.

Ford: Eh?

Zaphod: What do they come out of the birds in?

Ford: Eggshells.?

Zaphod: Ah, that's it.! Just like huge, broken eggshells. And all the dust man, and the huge cobwebs.

Spider: ahhhhhhhhhhhhHHHHHHHHH!

Ford: And where you get huge cobwebs you get—

Zaphod: Yeah look out man.!

<thud>

Spider: **“Scuse me.** <scurries off>

Zaphod: One huge spider.

Ford: Polite though.

Zaphod: Trans-Stellar Space Lines. Must’ve been real groovy ships once, but now—

Ford: One look and they’d fall apart. I mean look at that one.

<Ght-ghhreeaaaaeeeeaeakkekkkkkkkkk-Cka-ckghghghghhhh>

Zaphod: It fell apart man.!

Ford: Hey, but look at that one. Th-the big one over there. It’s covered with muck and dust but it looks like it’s still in one piece.

Zaphod: Yeah, an-and it’s still connected to its supply lines. Hey man, feel this supply line.

Ford: Hey its—

Zaphod: yeah.

Ford: weird.

Zaphod: Ya know what I’m thinking?

Ford: No.

Zaphod: Well neither do I. It’s frightening isn’t it.

Ford: Let’s take a look.

Zaphod: Ford.

Ford: yeah.

Zaphod: Is this ship—?

Ford: Feels like it’s on power. Just a very slight vibration.

Zaphod: But it must’ve been here for centuries. Hey man, pass me those four bits of tubing.

Ford: What, these?

Zaphod: Yeah. I’m gonna make me a stethoscope and take a listen to this baby. There. And there. Like that.

Ford: Ya hear anything?

Zaphod: Hey!... yeah.! Yeah I can hear...something...

Ford: What is it?

Zaphod: ohhhho, Ford.! I don't **believe** what I just heard.!

Ford: Here, let me listen.!

Zaphod: Okay. But you better keep your head screwed on kid!

*What has Zaphod heard in the space liner? And is it really as horrifying as all that? Will it lead him directly to the discovery of his goal despite his singular lack of exertion in that direction? Will it become absolutely necessary to reveal the unpleasant solution to the problem of Lintilla's clones? Will everything tie up neatly or will it be just like life: quite interesting in parts, but no substitute for the real thing. What **is** the real thing? Some of these questions may possibly be answered in the next, inexplicable 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; Stephen Moore was Marvin and the Pupil; David Tate was Eddie, the Compu-teach, and the Commentator; John Baddeley was Bird Two and the Foot Warrior; Rula Lenska was Lintilla and her clones; and Mark Smith only happened to be Hig Hurtenflirst. 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. Many sentences contained in that program were of a very dangerous length and were performed by highly trained vocal practitioners. On no account should inexperienced life forms attempt to imitate them without proper medical, jaw, and lung supervision.