

HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY

Screenplay
by
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Based on the book
"The Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy"
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Revisions
by
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3rd Revised Draft

1

OVER DARKNESS...

1

...we hear what we will come to know as the VOICE OF THE GUIDE.

GUIDE VOICE

It is an important and popular fact that things are not always what they seem.

A small square image appears on screen. Home video. The dolphin stadium at Sea World.

GUIDE VOICE (CONT'D)

For instance, on the planet Earth, man had always assumed that he was the most intelligent species occupying the planet, instead of the third most intelligent which was, in fact, entirely accurate.

The dolphins perform; leaping through hoops, etc.

GUIDE VOICE (CONT'D)

The second most intelligent creatures were, of course, dolphins who curiously enough had long known of the impending destruction of the planet Earth. They had made many attempts to alert mankind to the danger, but most of their communications were misinterpreted as amusing attempts to punch footballs or whistle for tidbits, so they eventually decided they would leave Earth by their own means.

They leap madly, desperately. Higher and higher...

GUIDE VOICE (CONT'D)

The last ever dolphin message was misinterpreted as a surprisingly sophisticated attempt to do a double-backward somersault through a hoop while whistling the "Star-Spangled Banner" but in fact the message was this...
"So long and thanks for all the fish."

TITLES ROLL - (FULL SCREEN 35mm IMAGES)

Dolphins leap over and interact with the opening titles. Breathtaking somersaults, back flips, choreographed to a Buzby Berkley-style song called, "SO LONG AND THANKS FOR ALL THE FISH." We end with a wide shot of all the dolphins jumping out of the top of frame, but they never come back down. TILT UP to a starry night sky - the dolphins have vanished.

END TITLES

As night turns to morning, we hear CLICK, then...

VOICE ON RADIO

...as well as Sea World Orlando and San Diego reporting their dolphins have mysteriously disappeared overnight.

CUT TO:

2 INT. ARTHUR DENT'S BEDROOM - MORNING 2

CLOSE ON the clock radio from which the voice emanates. A hand shuts it off. ARTHUR DENT is awake. 30's. Kind faced. His feet land perfectly in slippers as he stands and shuffles out of his very neat but very boring room.

3 IN THE BATHROOM - Arthur gargles in front of the mirror. 3
He bends over to spit revealing a YELLOW BULLDOZER through the window, crawling toward his house. A TEA KETTLE WHISTLES O.S.

4 INT. ARTHUR DENT'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS 4

Arthur sets the newspaper (with the headline "DOLPHINS VANISH") on the table, removes the kettle. Doesn't notice through the window 3 MORE LARGE YELLOW BULLDOZERS.

He pours a cup of tea, sets the pot down next o his mobile phone. He picks it up, stares at a DIGITAL PHOTO ON THE SCREEN of himself and a very pretty woman (Tricia) at a costume party.

He presses the phone to his head as if it were a cold compress. Suddenly, there's a LOUD RUMBLING o.s. The tea cup RATTLES. Arthur looks out the window. Now he sees the bulldozers.

The tea cup shatters on the floor.

CUT TO:

5 EXT. ARTHUR DENT'S HOUSE - MORNING 5

Arthur, dressed in pajamas and robe, lies in the dirt in front of a bulldozer, blocking it from destroying his house. He yells into his mobile phone.

ARTHUR

(into phone)

What do you mean he's gone out to lunch?
You just said he was still at breakfast!

MR. PROSSER, a bureaucrat, leans over him.

PROSSER

Come off it, Mr. Dent. You can't lie in front of the bulldozers forever.

ARTHUR

I'm game. We'll see who rusts first.

PROSSER

This bypass has got to be built and it's going to be built. You should have made your protest months ago.

ARTHUR

The first I heard of it was when a workman came yesterday. I asked if he'd come to clean the windows, and he said he'd come to demolish the house. He didn't tell me right away of course. First he wiped a couple of windows and charged me twenty quid. Then he told me.

(CONTINUED)

5

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5

The bulldozer driver, looking guilty, ducks behind the steering wheel. Prosser removes plans from his briefcase.

PROSSER

Look. These plans have been on display at the planning office now for a year.

ARTHUR

On display? I had to go down to a cellar!

PROSSER

That's the display department.

ARTHUR

I eventually found them in the bottom of a locked filing cabinet in a disused lavatory with a sign on the door saying 'beware of the leopard'.

PROSSER

Mr. Dent, have you any idea how much damage that bulldozer would suffer if I just let it roll straight over you?

ARTHUR

How much?

PROSSER

None at all.

FORD (O.S.)

(American accent)

Arthur!

Arthur and Prosser turn to see a man cresting a hill, pushing a shopping cart which is filled with beer and bags of peanuts. This is FORD PREFECT. Wiry, intense. As he heads downhill, he leaps up and rides the cart down towards Arthur's house - like a kid in a supermarket. He rolls right past Arthur and the bulldozers.

ARTHUR

Ford?

He leaps off, drags the cart to a full stop.

FORD

Arthur! There you are. Here drink and eat with me. We need to talk.

ARTHUR

Er, um...now's not the best time, Ford
They're going to demolish my home,

FORD

Whoa. You already know? How?

Arthur simply motions to the bulldozer.

(CONTINUED)

5

CONTINUED: (2)

5

FORD (CONT'D)

Oh. When you say "they" you mean they.
Got it. Listen, I gotta tell you
something important, and I gotta tell you
now.

ARTHUR

But what about my house?

Ford looks to Prosser who is conferring with the
bulldozer driver. He pushes the cart over to him.

ARTHUR - watches as Ford gestures to Prosser who waves
his hand and the all the 'dozer engines die.
The bulldozer drivers step down, start drinking the beer
and eating the peanuts. Ford returns to Arthur.

FORD

C'mon. Let's go to the pub. He said they
won't destroy your house until they've
finished the beers.

ARTHUR

Can we trust him?

FORD

I'd trust him to the end of the Earth.

ARTHUR

And how far's that?

FORD

About twelve minutes away.

CUT TO:

6

INT. VILLAGE PUB - MIDDAY

6

Ford and Arthur enter the half-full pub. Ford hurries to
the bar. Arthur follows, cell phone to his ear.

FORD

Six pints of bitter. And quickly. The
world's about to end.

BARMAN

Oh yes, sir? Nice weather for it.

He starts to pull pints. Ford shoves bar peanuts into
his pockets while Arthur shouts into his phone...

ARTHUR

Well, when does he get back from lunch?
Or is he going straight out for tea?!

He shuts the phone, sits, looking forlorn.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

This is shaping up to be a crap day.

(CONTINUED)

6

CONTINUED:

6

FORD

It's about to get a lot crappier.

BARMAN

There you are, six pints.

Ford slaps down a £50 note. The barman's impressed.

FORD

Keep the change. You've got ten minutes to spend it.

Ford pushes three pints in front of Arthur.

ARTHUR

Three? At lunchtime?

FORD

Time is an illusion. Lunchtime doubly so.

ARTHUR

Very deep. You should send that in to the Reader's Digest. They've got a page for people like you.

FORD

Drink up.

ARTHUR

Why three pints?

FORD

Muscle relaxant.

(grabbing more peanuts)

And eat these. You'll need the salt.

ARTHUR

What's going on. Ford?

FORD

What would you say if I told you I wasn't really from Guilford but from a small planet somewhere in the vicinity of Eetelgeuse?

ARTHUR

Why, is it the sort of thing you're likely to say?

FORD

Remember when we met? That car was racing toward me, I was trying to greet it, you pushed me out of the way?

7 QUICK CUT TO A STREET - MID-DAY

7

Ford stands in the middle of the road, extending a hand to a fast approaching car.
Arthur drops his shopping, dives at him and tackles him out of the way as the car zooms past.

(6 cont) BACK TO FORD IN THE PUB:

(6 cont)

FORD

Didn't you find it a little strange that I was trying to shake hands with a car?

ARTHUR

I assumed you were drunk.

FORD

(shaking his head)

I thought cars were the dominant life form. I was trying to introduce myself.

ARTHUR

And that's why you're named after a discontinued car from the seventies?

FORD

(nodding)

You saved my life that day. Now I'm saving yours.

Arthur just stares at him, then turns to his beer.

ARTHUR

This must be Thursday. I never could get the hang of Thursdays.

FORD

Look, if it's about your house...

ARTHUR

No, it's not that. It's....

He shows Ford the photo of he and Tricia on his phone.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

I found her. Ford. The perfect girl. I found her, and then I let her get away. You remember that fancy dress party I told you about?

FORD

This isn't a long story, is it? We've only got six minutes.

Arthur shakes his head. Ford checks his watch.

(CONTINUED)

6

CONTINUED: (2)

6

FORD (CONT'D)

Okay. Talk and drink. Fancy dress party.

ARTHUR

At that flat in Islington. I told you about it. Last week, remember?

FLASHBACK TO:

8

INT. ISLINGTON FLAT - NIGHT

8

Crowded flat. Everyone is in costume. Loud music BLARES.

ARTHUR (V.O.)

I can't bear those sort of parties, didn't want to go, would have much rather stayed home and, I don't know, brush the dog. Anything. But there I was -- and then, there she was...

Arthur, dressed in safari attire complete with pith helmet, sits off to the side, observing, looking miserable.

TRICIA (O.S.)

Who are you?

Arthur looks up. TRICIA MCMILLAN is dressed in a mid 19th century mens suit with mutton chop sideburns and is holding a taxidermy beagle -- and she still looks beautiful. Arthur, ever the gentleman, stands.

ARTHUR

I'm Arthur. Arthur Dent.

TRICIA

No, I mean who are you?

ARTHUR

Oh, the costume. Right. Er, um...

(sheepishly tipping his hat)

Livingston, I presume.

(pointing to her attire)

Granted. Not as clever as Darwin, but the best I could do on short notice.

TRICIA

You're the first person who's got it right. Everyone keeps calling me Sherlock.

ARTHUR

Really? I thought the beagle made it rather obvious.

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED:

8

ARTHUR

Really? I thought the beagle made it rather obvious.

He pets the dog. She smiles. He smiles back.

9 A CAMERA FLASH FLASHES. JUMP CUT to...

9

THE BALCONY — Arthur has just taken a digital photo of he and Tricia on his cell phone. They look at the screen image and laugh.

ARTHUR (V.O.) (CONT'D)

She was amazing, Ford. Witty, and beautiful, and brilliant. Four or five degrees. One in math, one in astrophysics, another in biology...

TRICIA

I've got so many degrees I am officially unemployable. Let's drink to that!

They clink their wine glasses, take sips, continue to chat.

ARTHUR (V.O.)

And just as I was asking myself, "Why is this stunning and intelligent woman even giving me the time of day, out of nowhere she says...

TRICIA

Let's go somewhere.

ARTHUR

Yeah. It is a bit noisy. There's a lovely little cafe around the corner...

TRICIA

I was thinking Madagascar.

ARTHUR

Is that a new club on Dean Street?

TRICIA

No. It's a country. Off the coast of Africa.

ARTHUR

Oh, that Madagascar. Right, off we go then.

(then realizing...)

Good God, you're serious.

(CONTINUED)

9

CONTINUED:

9

She nods. Arthur isn't sure how to react.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Well...that's...an extraordinary proposition. But...I can't just up and go. What about my job?

TRICIA

Quit. Get a new one when we return.

ARTHUR

I can't just...what about my house? Who would feed my dog?

TRICIA

Bring him with.

ARTHUR

He's a Welsh Collie. He'd feel all out of place in Madagascar.

Trillian forces a smile, clearly disappointed.

ZAPHOD (O.S.)

You don't want to go to Madagascar.

They both turn to face ZAPHOD BEEBLEBROX - very charming, extremely handsome - whose attire seems very "other worldly." Knee high boots, a yellow sash...

ZAPHOD (CONT'D)

Hi. I'm Zaphod Beeblebrox, President of the Galaxy -- of course, you probably already know that. I'm headed for a lost and distant planet. Would you like to see my spaceship?

ARTHUR (V.O.)

I went to refresh our drinks. When I came back, she was gone.

10

EXT. BACK IK THE PUB - CONTINUOUS

10

Arthur stares into his beer, plagued by this loss.

ARTHUR

"Would you like to see my spaceship?" Really, what sort of chat up line is that?

FORD

More popular than you'd think.

ARTHUR

I've left messages, sent letters... It's like she's vanished off the face of the earth.

(CONTINUED)

10

CONTINUED:

10

FORD

Hey, it happens. Speaking of...
 (pulling a blinking electronic
 device from his satchel)
 We've got two minutes. So drink up.

There's a ROAR OF ENGINES and a LOUD CRASH outside.
 Arthur and everyone else in the pub look up.

ARTHUR

My house!

He runs out. Ford rises, grabs two handfuls of peanuts from
 the bowl, tosses the barman all the money in his pocket.

FORD

A round for everyone, on me.

BARMAN

You really think the world's going to end?
 (Ford nods)
 Shouldn't we lie down or put a bag over
 our heads or something?

FORD

If you want.

BARMAN

Will it help?

FORD

Not really.

He gives everyone in the bar a friendly salute, exits.

BARMAN

Last orders, then?

11

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE THE PUB - MID-DAY

11

Arthur runs up the road towards his house which is being
 bulldozed. Ford strides casually behind in the distance.

ARTHUR

STOP! STOP, YOU BASTARDS!!

Arthur suddenly stops running and covers his ears as we
 hear THE LOUDEST RUMBLE IN MOTION PICTURE HISTORY.

11a

A GIGANTIC YELLOW SPACESHIP (picture a concrete tower
 block)) sweeps overhead. Ford hits the deck. Arthur is
 blown sideways. Trees are uprooted.

11a

Ford rises and hurries to the rubble that was Arthur's
 house. He digs around near the exposed toilet and comes
 up with - A TOWEL. He hurries to Arthur's side.

(CONTINUED)

11a CONTINUED: 11a

Another ship screams over, blowing them down again. Rain is knocked out of the clouds and lands in one big THWUMP! Everywhere is soaked.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
WHAT THE HELL ARE THOSE THINGS?!

FORD
Ships from a Vagon Constructor Fleet. I picked up their signal this morning.

He shows Arthur his blinking Sens-0-Matic device.

FORD {CONT'D}
Here. You'll need this.

He tosses Arthur the towel. Then, he removes a short black rod, his ELECTRONIC THUMB. He sticks it out.

12 INT. SATELLITE TRACKING STATION 12

Picture mission control in Houston. WORKERS scramble. Monitors line the wall showing hundreds of news reports from around the globe; panic, chaos and pandemonium.

Suddenly, there's a loud HUM through the speakers, followed by loud GARGLES and SCREECHING. Then...

JELTZ {THROUGH SPEAKERS}
People of Earth, this is Prostetnic Vagon Jeltz of the Galactic Hyperspace planning council.

13 INT. A SUBURBAN BREAKFAST ROOM. CONTINUOUS 13

A FAMILY at breakfast, baffled that their cutlery, bowls and glasses resonate with the sound of Jeltz's voice.

JELTZ (VOICE ONLY)
As you are probably aware, plans for the development of the outlying regions of the galaxy involve the building of a hyperspace express route through your star system...

14 EXT. OXFORD STREET ELECTRONICS STORE - CONTINUOUS 14

Several PATRONS watch the wall of TV's, all projecting a snowy, distorted image. Jeltz's voice blares through the speakers.

JELTZ
...and, unfortunately, your planet is one of those scheduled for demolition. The process will take slightly less than two of your Earth minutes. Thank you.

Through the window behind them, throngs of people stampede down Oxford Street, screaming.

15 EXT. SATELLITE TRACKING STATION 15

A TECHNICIAN speaks urgently into a microphone while his co-workers watch the chaos on the monitors behind.

TECHNICIAN

Hello! Can you hear us? Please respond!

16 INT. VOGON CONSTRUCTOR SHIP BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS 16

The VOGON BRIDGE is like a waterlogged old Skoda.

JELTZ (INTO THE P.A.)

There's no point in acting all surprised about it. The plans and demolition orders have been on display at your local planning office in Alpha Centauri for fifty of your Earth years, so you've had plenty of time to lodge formal complaints.

17 EXT. FIELD BY ARTHUR'S HOUSE. CONTINUOUS 17

Ford grabs hold of Arthur's shirt, extends the Thumb.

18 INT. THE PUB. CONTINUOUS 18

PULL BACK FROM JUKE BOX. The pub seems deserted.

VOGON CAPTAIN

(through juke box)

What do you mean you've never been to Alpha Centauri? Oh, for heaven's sake mankind, it's only four light years away you know. I'm sorry, but if you can't be bothered to take an interest in local affairs that's your own lookout.

PULL BACK FARTHER - people lay on the ground with PAPER BAGS on their heads.

19 INT. VOGON CONSTRUCTOR SHIP BRIDGE. -- CONTINUOUS 19

Jeltz turns. He's large, green and walrusy.

JELTZ

Apathetic bloody planet, I've no sympathy at all. Energize the demolition beams.

One of his walrusy FIRST OFFICERS pushes a yellow button.

20 BIG SHOT. FROM SPACE. LOOKING DOWN ON EARTH 20

As all the Vagon ships simultaneously send down a beam of yellow light. Glowing fireballs travel down the beams toward Earth. On impact, they bore into the surface.

JELTZ (O.S.)

Detonate.

(CONTINUED)

20

CONTINUED:

20

Like a giant casino going down in Vegas, there are a few small explosions AMD THE EARTH IMPLODES. Just collapses in on itself. Gone.

The Vagon ships slowly retreat in formation, leaving nothing but DARKNESS AND STARS.

21

Then a distant RED GLOW appears. As it gets nearer we see that it says..."THE HITCHHIKERS GUIDE TO THE GALAXY."

21

GUIDE VOICE

The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy is a wholly remarkable book...

The title draws nearer. We see that it sits on an electronic book with lots of buttons.

GUIDE VOICE (CONT'D)

...Perhaps the most remarkable, certainly the most successful book ever to come out of the great publishing corporations of Ursa Minor.

The book opens revealing TWO SCREENS. Images appear. A star map, layers of data, captions, video, animations...

GUIDE VOICE (CONT'D)

More popular than the CELESTIAL HOME CARE OMNIBUS, better selling than 53 MORE THINGS TO DO IN ZERO GRAVITY, and more controversial than Oolon Colluphid's trilogy of philosophical blockbusters, WHERE GOD WENT WRONG, SOME MORE OF GOD'S GREATEST MISTAKES, and WHO IS THIS GOD PERSON, ANYWAY?

Now the images rise up from the screen like holographs as the book "presents itself" like some hi-tech infomercial.

GUIDE VOICE (CONT'D)

In many of the more relaxed civilizations on the Outer Eastern Rim of the Galaxy, the Hitchhiker's Guide has already supplanted the great Encyclopedia Galactica as the standard repository of all knowledge and wisdom. For though it has many omissions, and contains much which is apocryphal, or at least wildly inaccurate, it scores over the older, more pedestrian work in two important respects. First, it is slightly cheaper. And second, it has the words "DON'T PANIC" printed in large friendly letters on its cover.

The book closes. The words "DON'T PANIC" appear just below the title, blinking like a tacky diner marquee.

PULL BACK FROM THE GUIDE to find Arthur holding it, the blinking light illuminating his very disoriented face.

22

INT. HOLD OF VOGON CONSTRUCTOR SHIP - NIGHT

22

Arthur, in total shock, holds up the guide.

ARTHUR

So you're not from Guilford, which would explain the accent -- which I've always wondered about...and you're not an out of work actor -- but rather a writer for this...this...book thing.

Ford nods. Arthur rubs his weary brow.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

I don't feel well. I need a cup of tea.

Ford hands him a fistful of peanuts.

FORD

Here. Eat these. If you've never been through a transmat beam before you've probably lost some salt and protein.

Arthur eats some peanuts, sits up, squints. Ford feels his way around the room, looking for something.

ARTHUR

If I asked where we were would I regret

FORD

We're safe. For now.

ARTHUR

Good.

FORD

We're in a storage hold in one of the ships of the Vogon constructor fleet ...

ARTHUR

Obviously some strange usage of the word safe I wasn't previously aware of.

FORD

(not getting the sarcasm)
Is it?

ARTHUR

Tell me you're joking.

FORD

Okay. I'm joking.

ARTHUR

And do a reassuring little laugh.

Ford does a reassuring little laugh.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Now tell me where we really are.

(CONTINUED)

22

CONTINUED: (2)

22

FORD

In the storage hold of a Vogon constructor ship.

Ford continues his search. Arthur's breathing quickens.

ARTHUR

Get me home. Ford.

FORD

Home? Arthur...your home... is...

ARTHUR

Oh God - it was demolished! I've got to reach my lawyer! He must be back from lunch by now...

He pulls out his cell phone. Desperately punches numbers. Ford flips on a light switch, revealing a messy chamber full of alien junk and old mattresses.

FORD

You don't remember, do you?
(taking his cell phone)
Okay. I've got something to tell you. It ain't gonna be easy, but you're gonna have to just deal, okay?

ARTHUR

Good god. Is this really the interior of a flying saucer?

FORD

Yeah. Why?

23

SHOT: DEEP SPACE. THE VOGON FLEET IN FLIGHT

23

ARTHUR (V.O.)

Well, it's a bit squalid isn't it?

FORD (V.O.)

Hey man, you're in denial.

24

INT. VOGON CONSTRUCTOR SHIP BRIDGE

24

Jeltz consults one screen after another. At last he sees Ford and Arthur. His walrusy eyes narrow.

25

BACK IN THE SLEEPING QUARTERS - MINUTES LATER

25

ARTHUR

Blown up? BLOWN UP?! Couldn't you have done something?!!

FORD

I did. I saved you.

(CONTINUED)

25

CONTINUED:

25

ARTHUR

But there's six billion other people.

FORD

And all those ants.

ARTHUR

Yes, but ants aren't exactly people!

FORD

And now you're thinking like a Vogon.

(before Arthur can respond)

I saved your life, okay? Which makes us even. Next thing.

Ford throws Arthur a towel. Arthur looks confused.

FORD (CONT'D)

It's a tough galaxy. You want to survive out here, you really gotta know where your towel is. Now gimme a hand over here.

Arthur joins Ford near a rusty ventilation pipe.

FORD (CONT'D)

Careful, it's hot.

He slides the towel behind the pipe, holding each end of it, Arthur does the same.

FORD (CONT'D)

We've got to get off this ship before the Vogons find us. Vogons hate hitchhikers. Which is why they make ships with walls that won't allow the Sub-Etna signal to pass through. So we've got to send the signal up and out if we wanna catch a ride. Pull.

They both pull. A section of pipe snaps off. Steam shoots out. Ford holds the black Thumb under the pipe.

ARTHUR

What's a Vogon?

FORD

Ask the guide. Say "Vogons."

Ford continues turning dials. Arthur lifts the Guide.

ARTHUR

"Vogons."

The word "VOGONS" floats up into his field of vision.

GUIDE VOICE

Vogons.

(CONTINUED)

25

CONTINUED: (2)

25

CHARACTER, HISTORY, HOW TO HAVE FUN WITH, HOW TO ANNOY,
WHAT TO AVOID. Arthur touches CHARACTER.

GUIDE VOICE (CONT'D)

Vogons are one of the most unpleasant races in the Galaxy - not evil, but bad-tempered, bureaucratic, officious and callous. They wouldn't even lift a finger to save their own grandmothers from the Ravenous Bugblatter Beast of Traal without orders signed in triplicate, sent in, sent back, queried, lost, found, subjected to public inquiry, lost again, and finally buried in soft peat for three months and recycled as fire-lighters.

Arthur touches 'HOW TO HAVE FUN WITH.'

GUIDE VOICE (CONT'D)

The best way to get a drink out of a Vagon is to stick your finger down his throat.

Arthur touches 'WHAT TO AVOID'.

GUIDE VOICE (CONT'D)

On no account should you allow a Vagon to read poetry to you.

FORD

They can't think, they can't imagine, most of them can't even spell. They just run things.

(turns dial opposite direction)

And if we don't get a ride soon, you won't need the guide to illustrate just how unpleasant the Vogons can be. They've destroyed a planet today, that always makes them a little feisty.

ARTHUR

It can't be gone. It can't be!
(grabbing the Guide, shouting)
Earth!

FORD

Shhh!

ARTHUR

EARTH!!

GUIDE VOICE

Earth.

An image of the Earth appears on the Guide's screen.

GUIDE VOICE (CONT'D)

Harmless.

Arthur waits...and waits. The Earth image fades away.

(CONTINUED)

25

CONTINUED: (3)

25

ARTHUR

That's it? That's all this idiotic book has to say about my home? "Harmless?"

FORD

Hey, there are a hundred billion stars in the Galaxy and only a limited amount of space in the book's microprocessors. No one knew much about Earth. That's why I was there. To expand the entry. I fired off a new one to the editor before I got stranded.

ARTHUR

What does it say now?

FORD

Mostly harmless.

Before Arthur can react, a speaker HUMS to life with screeching HOWLS and GARGLES. Arthur cups his ears.

ARTHUR

Ahhh, what the hell is that?!

FORD

Here. Put this in your ear.

Ford removes a small yellow fish from his pouch. He moves to put it in Arthur's ear. Arthur struggles.

ARTHUR

WHAT?...STOP!..DON'T COME NEAR ME WITH...

The LOUD GARGLING NOISE continues. Ford has to wrestle to get the fish in Arthur's ear.

JELTZ (ON SPEAKER)

<UNINTELLIGIBLE GARGLES AND HOWLS>

ARTHUR

Argh! What's happening...?

As he succeeds, the noise mutates to the Vogon Captain's voice. Arthur looks incredulous.

JELTZ (ON SPEAKER)

This is your captain speaking, so stop whatever you're doing and pay attention!

FORD

The fish. It's translating for you.

JELTZ (ON SPEAKER)

According to our instruments we have unwittingly picked up a couple of hitchhikers who must be apprehended and...

(CONTINUED)

25

CONTINUED: (4)

25

Arthur doesn't want to hear any of this...pulls the fish back out of his ear.

JELTZ (ON SPEAKER) (CONT'D)
<HOWL HOWL GARGLE GARGLE...>

Ford struggles, shoves it back in Arthur's ear again.

JELTZ (CONT'D)
...and this is not a taxi service for degenerate freeloaders.

The door BURSTS open. A VOGON GUARD enters. Grabs Ford and Arthur. They struggle.

VOGON GUARD
Resistance is useless!

The struggle continues. As they're dragged out the door, Arthur continues to try to yank the fish out of his ear. Ford wrestles with him, trying to keep it in.

GUIDE VOICE
The Babelfish is small, yellow, leechlike, and probably the oddest thing in the Universe.

26

INT. VOGON SHIP CORRIDOR.

26

A bleak corridor. The Vagon guard pushes a still struggling Arthur and Ford down it.

GUIDE VOICE
It feeds on brainwave energy, absorbing unconscious frequencies and excreting a matrix of conscious frequencies to the speech centres of the brain, the practical upshot of which is that if you stick one in your ear, you instantly understand anything said to you in any language.

Arthur continues to struggle, until he passes a portal window. He backs up to look out.

GUIDE VOICE (CONT'D)
Now, it is such a bizarrely improbable thing that anything so mind-bogglingly useful could have evolved in the Universe purely by chance that many thinkers have chosen to see this as a final clinching proof of the NON-existence of God.

26a

ARTHUR'S POV -- of space through the window, beautiful purple-orange clouds of swirling stars and gasses.

26a

GUIDE VOICE (CONT'D)
The argument goes something like this...
"I refuse to prove that I exist," says God, "for proof denies faith, and without faith I am nothing."

(CONTINUED)

26a

CONTINUED:

26a

It's finally sinking in -- he's in deep space.

GUIDE VOICE (CONT'D)

"But," says Man, "the Babelfish is a dead give-away. It proves you exist, and so therefore you don't. QED." "Oh dear," says God, "I hadn't thought of that," and promptly vanishes in a puff of logic.

The guard yanks Arthur away, pushes him forward with Ford.

GUIDE VOICE (CONT'D)

Most leading theologians claim that this argument is a load of dingo's kidneys but that didn't stop Oolon Colluphid from making a small fortune when he used it as the central theme of his best-selling book, 'WELL THAT ABOUT WRAPS IT UP FOR GOD.'

Arthur looks lost and confused. They approach a set of double doors. He stops. The Guard shoves him forward.

VOGON GUARD

Resistance is useless!

ARTHUR

Ford...

FORD

Don't panic. If we're lucky, they'll throw us out into space.

ARTHUR

And if we're unlucky?

Off Ford's apprehensive look we CUT TO...

27

INT. VOGON CONSTRUCTOR BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

27

Arthur and Ford are strapped against two concrete pillars with hundreds of elastic bands.

A STRANGE AND LETHAL LOOKING DEVICE DESCENDS FROM THE CEILING. Looks like an instrument of torture. As the device descends, Jeltz fishes a JEWELLED CRAB out of a gunky trough and smashes it with a hammer -- BLAM!

Jeltz takes the device in his hand -- then blows in it. We hear FEEDBACK. It's a microphone (like ones used to introduce boxers). He taps it. This thing on? It is. He faces them, holds up a book entitled... ")(•••)" -- smirks, then begins to read Vogon poetry.

JELTZ

*Oh freddled gruntbuggly!
Thy suppurations are to me as plerdled
gabbleblotchits on a lurgid bee.*

Ford WRITHES in pain, as does Arthur but less so.

(CONTINUED)

27

CONTINUED:

27

GUIDE VOICE

Vogon poetry is widely accepted as the third worst in the universe.

Ford VIBRATES like he's having an epileptic seizure. Arthur just looks like he has a migraine.

GUIDE VOICE (CONT'D)

The second worst is that of the Azgoths of Kria. During a recitation by their Poet Master Grunthos the Flatulent of his poem "*Ode to a Small Lump of Green Putty I Found in My Armpit One Midsummer Morning*," four of his audience died of internal hemorrhaging, and the President of the Mid-Galactic Arts Nobbling Council survived by gnawing one of his own legs off.

Spasms wrack Ford's body. He SCREAMS. Arthur squints.

JELTZ

Or I shall rend thee In the gobberwarts with my blurplecruncheaon, see if I don't!

Ford's entire body tenses, arches, then goes limp. Arthur lets out an audible sigh as the poem ends.

GUIDE VOICE

The absolute worst poetry was written by Paula Nancy Millstone Jennings of Sussix. It involved decaying swans. Luckily, it was destroyed when the Earth was.

JELTZ

So, Earthlings, I present you with a simple choice. Either die in the vacuum of space, or -- tell what you thought of my poem.

Ford is spent, can't say a word. Arthur looks up.

ARTHUR

Actually...I rather liked it.

Jeltz looks surprised. Ford notices, whispers to Arthur.

FORD

Good tact. Run with it.

ARTHUR

Um...some of the words I didn't understand, but I found the imagery quite effective.

JELTZ

Continue. . .

(CONTINUED)

27

CONTINUED: (2)

27

ARTHUR

And, um, interesting rhythmic devices which seemed to counterpoint the surrealism of the underlying metaphor of the humanity...

FORD

Vogonity!

ARTHUR

... Vogonity, sorry. Vogonity of the poet's soul, which contrives through the medium of the verse structure to sublimate, er...

FORD

... whatever it was ...

ARTHUR

... the poem was about.

Jeltz rubs one of his chins, then smiles and claps slowly.

FORD

Damn.

ARTHUR

What?

FORD

I think you just saved my life again.

JELTZ

An astute analysis. Very impressive.
(turning to the Guard)
Throw them off the ship.

The guard grabs them, drags them out of the bridge.

VOGON GUARD

Resistance is useless!

JELTZ

Hmph. "Counterpoint the surrealism of the underlying metaphor..." Death's too good for them.

Jeltz picks up his fishing rod, goes for another crab.

28

INT. VOGON SHIP CORRIDOR -- MOMENTS LATER

28

The Guard shoves them into the airlock.

29

INT. AIRLOCK -- CONTINUING

29

They sit, panting. Arthur stares forward.

ARTHUR

So this is it? We're going to die?

(CONTINUED)

29

CONTINUED:

29

FORD

Yes. No, wait! What's this switch?
 (reaching for it)
 No, it's nothing. We are going to die.

Arthur sits for a moment, then oddly chuckles to himself.

ARTHUR

You know, it's at times like this, when I'm trapped in a Vogon airlock with a man from Betelgeuse and about to die of asphyxiation in deep space that I really wish I'd listened to what my mother told me when I was young.

FORD

Why? What did you she tell you?

ARTHUR

I don't know. I didn't listen.

Ford folds his towel into a tiny square, holds it up toward Arthur. He raises an eyebrow. Will this help?

FORD

You're sweating.

Ford dabs Arthur's brow. They stare forward at the airlock door. Long pause. Nothing happens. They look to each other. Shrug. They might be okay. Then -- PSSH. The bottom drops out. They're sucked down and out.

30

EXT. DEEP SPACE -- CONTINUOUS

30

Ford and Arthur spin away from the ship, holding their breath. The guide slips out of Arthur's pocket.

GUIDE VOICE

"Space..." says the introduction to the Hitchhikers Guide, "...is big. Really big. You just won't believe how vastly, hugely mind-bogglingly big it is. I mean, you may think it's a long way down the road to the market, but that's just peanuts compared to space..." and so on.

The weightless guide twirls away. Arthur reaches for it. The words "DON'T PANIC" alight.

GUIDE VOICE (CONT'D)

It also says that if you hold a lung full of air you can survive in the total vacuum of space for about thirty seconds -- but with space being really big and all, the chances of being picked up within that time are 2 to the power of 2076775949 to 1 against...

(CONTINUED)

30

CONTINUED:

30

Something else falls out of his pocket -- his digital phone with the photo of he and Tricia at the fancy dress party.

GUIDE VOICE (CONT'D)

...which, by a staggering coincidence, is also the telephone number of the Islington flat where Arthur once went to a fancy dress party and met a very nice girl whom he totally failed to connect with.

He reaches for the phone, it's just beyond his fingertips. His eyes widen with fret as the phone tumbles away.

30a

Then -- WOOMP -- space seems to stretch and bend. A tiny hole appears, then opens wide. Paper hats and party balloons fall out, then drift away. The hole flips inside out. Arthur and Ford are enveloped, then replaced by a stunning, sleek starship, the HEART OF GOLD.

30a

FEMALE VOICE (TRILLIAN)

Two to the power of one hundred thousand to one against and falling...

CUT TO:

31

INT. HEART OF GOLD. RECEIVING BAY - NIGHT

31

In the middle of this hi-tech receiving bay sit two ornate golden brocade sofas.

FEMALE VOICE (TRILLIAN)

(through speakers)

Two to the power of ten thousand to one against and falling.

The sofas shake a little.

ARTHUR

Ford...

FORD

Yes?

ARTHUR

I think I'm a sofa.

FORD

I think I know how you feel.

A long pause. Both sofas begin to thrash in panic.

FEMALE VOICE (TRILLIAN)

Five to one against and falling...

A pair of arms and legs pop out of each sofa.

TRILLIAN

Four to one against and falling...

32 INT. HEART OF GOLD. BRIDGE - NIGHT 32

32a CLOSE ON A MONITOR - on which plays a news report. 32a

REPORTER (ON TV)

...and of course, the top story is still the sensational theft of the new Improbability Drive prototype ship Heart of Gold last week, stolen at the launch ceremony by none other than Galactic President Zaphod Beeblebrox.

ZAPHOD (ON TV)

So, in the name of the people and freedom and, I dunno, democracy and stuff like that, I hereby declare this ship officially stolen!

PULL BACK to reveal ZAPHOD BEEBLEBROX, leaning toward the TV, watching with a very satisfied grin...

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

Three to one...two to one...

Annoyed, he turns. There's a woman with red hair (TRILLIAN), her back to him, reading numbers off a console display and speaking into a microphone.

TRILLIAN

(into microphone)

Probability factor of one to one...we have normality, I repeat we have normality. Anything you still can't cope with is therefore your own problem. Please relax. You will be sent for soon.

ZAPHOD

Hey. Do you mind? I can't hear.

TRILLIAN turns - and we now recognize her as Tricia from the fancy dress party. Her hair is shorter and bright red. She looks amazing.

TRILLIAN

Can we put your ego aside for one moment? Something important has happened.

ZAPHOD

If there's anything more important than my ego on this ship, I want it caught and shot now.

He turns back to the TV and turns it up.

REPORTER (OK TV)

...the question everyone seems to be asking is, has the Big Z finally flipped? We asked his private brain care Specialist, Gag Halfbrunt...

GAG HALFRRUNT

Vell, Zaphod's just zis guy, you know --

(CONTINUED)

32

CONTINUED: (2)

32

The TV suddenly clicks off. Zaphod spins. Trillian's holding a remote.

ZAPHOD

Hey...

TRILLIAN

We have a couple of hitchhikers in our receiving bay.

His head jerks upwards. He quickly grabs it with his hands and shoves it back down.

TRILLIAN (CONT'D)

I didn't pick them up. The ship did.

ZAPHOD

Huh?

TRILLIAN

When you engaged the Improbability Drive.

ZAPHOD

I didn't engage the drive.

TRILLIAN

We picked them up in sector ZZ9 Plural Z Alpha -- where you picked me up.

ZAPHOD

That's impossible.

TRILLIAN

No. Just very, very improbable.

ZAPHOD

I don't have time for this! We've got the police of half the Galaxy after us and we stop to pick up hitchhikers?! Okay, so ten out of ten for style, but minus several million for good thinking, eh?

He reaches for a hi-tech gun on the wall. She stops him.

TRILLIAN

Don't. I'll send Marvin. (*calling*)
Marvin!

Zaphod rolls his eyes as a humanoid robot rises from its seat behind them. This is MARVIN. He trudges slump-shouldered toward Zaphod.

MARVIN

I think you ought to know I'm feeling very depressed.

TRILLIAN

We have something to take your mind off things.

(CONTINUED)

32

CONTINUED: (3)

32

MARVIN

It won't work, I have an exceptionally large mind.

TRILLIAN

I know. Go down to the number two entry bay and bring the two aliens up here.

MARVIN

Just that?

TRILLIAN

Yes.

MARVIN

I won't enjoy it.

ZAPHOD

She's not asking you to enjoy it. Just do it will you?

MARVIN

All right. I'll do it.

Marvin turns and trudges away. Then he turns again.

MARVIN (CONT'D)

I'm not getting you down at all am I?

TRILLIAN

No, no, Marvin, it's fine really. It's just part of life.

MARVIN

Life. Don't talk to me about life.

Marvin trudges away. A door slides open for him and makes an audible, satisfied SIGH as it does.

DOOR

Mmmmmmyaaahhhhhh!

33

EXT. DEEP SPACE - NIGHT

33

The Heart of Gold cruises around a bright star.

34

INT. BRIDGE OF VOGON DESTROYER SHIP - NIGHT

34

A light blinks on a console. A VOGON CAPTAIN turns a dial, listens through his head set. He punches a few buttons. COMMANDER KWALTZ (green and walrusy like Jeltz) appears on the large monitor, sitting in his chair at Command Headquarters.

VOGON CAPTAIN

Commander Kwaltz. We've located the spaceship Heart of Gold and President Beeblebrox. Sector ZZ9 Plural Z Alpha. Requesting hyperspace clearance.

(CONTINUED)

34 CONTINUED: 34

KWALTZ (ON MONITOR)
Hold your position, captain, until
clearance is granted.

35 INT. VOGON COMMAND HEADQUARTERS - MOMENTS LATER 35

Kwaltz sits at the end of a concrete war room table.

KWALTZ
Get me the vice-president.

Approximately 15 Vogons sit around the table murmuring sporadically. A VOGON MESSENGER runs up, holding papers. Kwaltz takes them, signs, signs the next page -- and the next. He hands them back to the messengers (who has been jogging in place the whole time). He runs off. The VOGON CAPTAIN appears on the large screen before him.

KWALTZ (CONT'D)
Hyperspace permission granted, Captain.

36 EXT. SPACE - NIGHT 36

A hundred rectangular vogon ships blast forward.

CUT TO:

37 INT. HEART OF GOLD. RECEIVING BAY - NIGHT 37

Arthur looks around and notices the room is gleaming white, hi-tech, brand new, plastic still on some stuff.

ARTHUR
Now this is more like my idea of a
spaceship. Look at all these buttons...

FORD
Shhh.

They listen. Hear footsteps.

FORD (CONT'D)
This way.

He pushes a button. The door slides open with a satisfied sigh -- "Hhhmyaaaahhh". As they walk through...

37a INT- HOG- CORRIDOR NIGHT 37a

DOOR
Thank you for using this door. I've
enjoyed opening for you. Hhhmyaahh...

They leap through to the other side as the door closes.

MARVIN (O.S.)
Ghastly, isn't it?

They whip around to find Marvin standing before them.

(CONTINUED)

37a

CONTINUED:

37a

MARVIN (CONT'D)

I've been ordered to take you up to the bridge. Here I am, brain the size of a planet, and they ask me to take you up to the bridge. Call that job satisfaction? - 'cause I don't.

Marvin turns and walks away. They shrug to each other and follow. Marvin passes through another door that opens with the same sigh -- "Hhmmaaaahhh"

DOOR

What a pleasure it is to open for you.
I will gladly close for you now.

The door closes.

MARVIN

"All the doors in this spacecraft have a cheerful and sunny disposition. It is their pleasure to open for you, and their satisfaction to close again with the knowledge of a job well done.

The door repeats its whole closing and opening routine again.

MARVIN (CONT'D)

Hateful, isn't it? You can thank the Marketing Division of the Sirius Cybernetics Corporation for building robots with GPP.

ARTHUR

GPP?

MARVIN

"Genuine People Personalities." I'm a personality prototype. You can tell can't you?

ARTHUR

Er. . .

MARVIN

Sorry, did I say something wrong? Pardon me for breathing, which I never do anyway, so I don't know why I even bother to say it. Oh god, I'm so depressed.

They round a corner...

(CONTINUED)

37a

CONTINUED: (2)

37a

MARVIN (CONT'D)

And then I've got this terrible pain in all the diodes down my left side. I've asked for them to be replaced but no one ever listens.

ARTHUR

Really? Wonder why?

FORD

(aside to Arthur)

Probably because he's so negative.

ARTHUR

Yes, I know. I was being...never mind.

They continue on.

38

INT. HEART OF GOLD. BRIDGE. -- MOMENTS LATER

38

HANGING ON THE WALL is the official presidential portrait, featuring Zaphod who sports a very smart suit and a fake politicians smile. Tilt down to the door which opens - "Mmyyahhh!" - to reveal Ford, Arthur and Marvin.

MARVIN

I've brought the aliens. Don't thank me or anything.

Zaphod spins around in his chair, holding a gun but sporting that same politically correct smile.

ZAPHOD

Freeze!

Arthur and Ford throw their hands up. Marvin doesn't.

MARVIN

Do you mean sit in a corner and rust or just fall apart where I'm standing?

ZAPHOD

I wasn't talking to you.

FORD

Zaphod?

ZAPHOD

Ixxie? It is you! IXXIE!

Zaphod gives Ford a big bear hug. He pulls away, then playfully punches Ford in the arm.

ZAPHOD (CONT'D)

Praxibetel Ix, you zarking hoopy! What the hell are you doing here?

FORD

I don't know! Just stuck out the thumb and here I am.

(CONTINUED)

38

CONTINUED:

38

ZAPHOD

That is so you.

FORD

And look at you! President? Last time I saw you, you were a beach bum.

ZAPHOD

Is it a great galaxy or what?
(punching his arm again)
I still can't believe this. Ixxie! Here!
ON MY SHIP!

FORD

Hey, it's Ford now.

ZAPHOD

Hmm?

FORD

My name. It's Ford Prefect. Picked it up on Earth. Sorta grew on me.

ZAPHOD

Okay "Ford" - you zarking frood.

They embrace, tussle, punch arms. They bump into Arthur.

FORD

Oh, this is Arthur. Arthur, this is Zaphod Beeblebrox. My cousin? Semi-half brother?

ZAPHOD

He shares three of the same mothers as me.

ARTHUR

We've met.

ZAPHOD

Have we? Sorry. I've got a terrible memory for species.

Before Arthur can explain, Trillian enters.

TRILLIAN

Everything okay?

ZAPHOD

Hey, hon. Come here. You won't believe this. Ix...um, sorry..."Ford"...this is...

ARTHUR

Tricia McMillan?

She takes a closer look at him.

TRILLIAN

Arthur?

(CONTINUED)

38

CONTINUED: (2)

38

Arthur is stunned silent. He goes to her, making sure she's really there. He's speechless. She smiles and gives him a friendly embrace.

ARTHUR

(completely bewildered)
I can't believe this...I've been looking...and you're here? I went to get wine and...

TRILLIAN

I know. And it was rude to just leave, but I told you I wanted to get away, and he had a spaceship parked outside, well, honestly -- I assumed you were a sort of stay-at-home-and-read-a book type.

(hopeful)

But you're here...

Arthur smiles, then realizes with some regret...

ARTHUR

Actually -- I am that type. But...well you do know what happened, don't you?

Zaphod stops in between them, puts his arm around Arthur.

ZAPHOD

--Ford picked him up, they hitched a ride, and here we all are. Now, enough small talk, Trill. We're on the run, remember? I stole a ship?

ARTHUR

We're having a bit of a chat if you don't mind.

Arthur **SHOVES** Zaphod's hand off his shoulder. Oddly, Zaphod reacts with a smile. And then -- his head shoots all the up way revealing a second head that lives somewhere under his chin.

ZAPHOD HEAD 2

You blew it with her, Earthman, so shut up or I'll kick you in the gones!

FORD

There's the Zaphod I remember.

Arthur recoils in horror, instinctively raises his fists.

Zaphod wrestles with Head 2 while A THIRD ARM springs out of Zaphod's chest and **PUNCHES** ARTHUR in the jaw. Arthur buckles and hits the floor.

ZAPHOD HEAD 2

You should teach your pal a lesson, Ford. He's a guest on my ship.

FORD

I thought you said you stole it.

(CONTINUED)

38

CONTINUED: (3)

38

ZAPHOD HEAD 2

Fine. Get technical.

A KLAXON sounds. Red lights FLASH. Zaphod (Head 2) hurries to the console. Ford follows.

Trillian hurries to Arthur who nurses his jaw.

TRILLIAN

Are you all right?

ARTHUR

I feel like a bloody idiot. I've spent all week looking for Tricia McMillan and that isn't even your name.

TRILLIAN

It is my name. I shortened it.

ZAPHOD (O.S.)

Trillian...!

ARTHUR

Well, I'm still Arthur. Just plain average one-headed doesn't-own-a-space ship Arthur. Sorry to disappoint.

ZAPHOD (O.S.)

A little help over here?

Trillian leaves Arthur, joins Zaphod

ZAPHOD HEAD 2

They're after us! Fire a gun! Launch a missile! DO SOME DAMAGE!

Zaphod's arms struggle with his head again.

38a

QUICK SHOT. DEEP SPACE

38a

A dull gray rectangular Vogon BATTLE CRUISER is easing up behind the Heart of Gold. Behind the cruiser is about ONE HUNDRED OTHER BATTLE SHIPS, flying in formation.

(38 Cont) BACK ON THE BRIDGE--

(38 cont)

TRILLIAN

Computer?

A very eager male COMPUTER VOICE (EDDIE) sounds.

EDDIE

Hi, guys, this is Eddie your shipboard computer and I just know I'm gonna get a bundle of kicks out of any program you want to run through me.

TRILLIAN

Can you identify our pursuers?

(CONTINUED)

38

CONTINUED: (4)

38

EDDIE

I'd be happy to! Stand by, please.

(cheesy on hold Muzak plays)

Hey, guys, I'm just pleased as punch to report that it's a fleet of a hundred Vogon Battle Destroyers.

You must be super important to warrant such an effort, and gee am I impressed. They're sending a message. I'd be super happy to play it.

ZAPHOD HEAD 2

Fine! Play it!!

(to Trillian)

This people personality thing is gonna drive me nuts! Can't you change it?

An IMAGE APPEARS on the ship's monitor - Vice President, QUESTULAR RONTOK, flanked by Vogon Commander KWALTZ (at H.Q.). He looks reluctant. He has to say this...

QUESTULAR (ON MONITOR)

This is Vice President Questular Rontok. I am speaking to the kidnapper of the President. Surrender your stolen vessel at once or we will take action as defined and permitted by Section 1.8 of the Galactic Interstellar Space Bi-Laws.

ZAPHOD HEAD 2

Leap to hyperspace!

EDDIE

Sure thing, fella, but I should tell you we need proper authorization before entering a hyperspace expressway.

ZAPHOD HEAD 2

Or else what? They'll send a hundred and one ships? Do it!

He and Trillian buckle up. Ford turns to Arthur.

FORD

Brace yourself. This is a bit like being drunk.

ARTHUR

What's so bad about being drunk?

FORD

Ask a glass of water.

They are stretched and squeezed by extraordinary forces.

39

INT. VOGON HEADQUARTERS -- NIGHT

39

Questular and Kwaltz watch their front screen as the Heart of Gold blasts into hyperspace.

(CONTINUED)

39

CONTINUED:

39

KWALTZ

Did they have proper hyperspace authorization?

VOGON WORKER

No, Commander.

KWALTZ

Add that to their list of offences!
(scoffing)
Blatant disregard for protocol.

QUESTULAR

You do realize he did what he did because he knew this is what you would do.

KWALTZ

Rules are rules, Mr. Vice President. And they are made to be followed.

Questular looks up to the screen at all the Vogon ships.

QUESTULAR

Don't you think this many ships is a bit, oh I don't know -- excessive?

KWALTZ

The provisions are clear. Under subsection 37a these are the forces we deploy to protect the president in the case of an attempted or actual kidnapping-

He holds up one fat official book with one hand.

KWALTZ (CONT'D)

-- and these are the forces we deploy to apprehend any intentional or actual kidnapper.

He holds up another fat book with the other.

QUESTULAR

You are aware, Commander, that the President kidnapped himself.

KWALTZ

Hence...

He puts the two books together, slams them down.

QUESTULAR

Do you have any idea how ridiculous this is?

KWALTZ

I don't have ideas Mr. Vice President. I just do what I do.

A VOGON MESSENGER runs up holding papers. Kwaltz takes them, signs one in two places, initials others, lifts the top sheet, removes the pink copy. Folds it.

(CONTINUED)

39 CONTINUED: (2) 39

He does this for the other two forms as well.

Questular watches dumbfounded as Kwaltz hands the papers back to the messenger who turns and runs off.

40 EXT. SPACE - NIGHT 40

The Heart of Gold comes out of hyperspace and slows to cruising speed...alone. No Vogons in sight.

41 INT. HEART OF GOLD. BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS 41

Zaphod's Head 2 is still up, beaming.

ZAPHOD HEAD 2

Damn, I'm good.

Hands slam Head 2 down. Zaphod (Head 1) turns to Ford.

ZAPHOD

So -- you along for the ride or am I dropping you somewhere?

FORD

(still wary of the two heads)

Depends. Where you going?

ZAPHOD

Into the pages of history, cousin.
And when you see what I'm about to show you, you'll beg me to take you with us.

WITH TRILLIAN -- who notices Arthur looking ill.

TRILLIAN

You okay?

ARTHUR

Normally I would say "I'll live," but given the circumstances...
(wiping his brow)

Is there any tea on this spaceship?

TRILLIAN

This way.

She exits. Arthur follows. Zaphod steps back, blocking his way.

ZAPHOD

Hey, apeman. Earthman. I'm sorry, what was your name again?

ARTHUR

Arthur.

(CONTINUED)

41

CONTINUED:

41

ZAPHOD

Right. No hard feelings, okay? And sorry to hear about your planet, but don't mention it to the girl because if you do I'll...I'll...

He smiles broader. Then Head 2 pops up and finishes...

ZAPHOD HEAD 2

I'll pull your spleen out through your ass!

Zaphod slams Head 2 back into place..then smiles again. Arthur furrows his brow and Zaphod and follows Trillian.

FORD

Two heads. Interesting choice.

ZAPHOD

Apparently you can't be President with a whole brain.

FORD

So you carved it up?

ZAPHOD

Yes -- I think. And I think I did it in such a way that it wouldn't be detected by the Government screening tests -- or by me. So, what's so secret that I can't let anybody know I know it, not the Galactic Government, not even myself? And the answer is--

(thinking)

--I don't know. Obviously. But I put a few things together and that's when I realized I had this.

He points to the COBALT BLUE CUBE on his gold necklace.

42

INT. SHIP'S KITCHEN AREA - CONTINUOUS

42

CLOSE ON - the NUTRI-MATIC MACHINE. Brownish liquid flows into it a Martini glass, topped with dry-ice fog.

Arthur removes the glass. Sips. Grimaces

TRILLIAN

I suppose I should have said it resembles tea.

ARTHUR

So two heads is what does it for a girl, then? I mean, if I'd had two heads. Or three?

TRILLIAN

Or your own space ship.

(CONTINUED)

42

CONTINUED:

42

ARTHUR

Anything else he's got two of?

TRILLIAN

Come on, Arthur, don't be like that.

ARTHUR

Well, what am I supposed to be like?
Green? Bleeping? What?

TRILLIAN

Just be yourself. Have some fun. Does it hurt?

ARTHUR

No, I suppose it wouldn't..

TRILLIAN

I mean...

She points to his jaw, he nods, she picks up her BACKPACK.

TRILLIAN (CONT'D)

I might have an aspirin.

She unzips it. TWO MICE scurry out and scamper off, a hair-clip is clipped to one of the mice's tail.

TRILLIAN (CONT'D)

Hey. What are they doing in there?

Before she can catch them, they scurry under the door.

TRILLIAN (CONT'D)

They were from my lab at university. Odd...

ARTHUR

So all that's left is me and you, "mostly harmless," and two lab rats.

She furrows her brow. What does he mean?

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Look, there's something I should tell you...

ZAPHOD (O.S.)

Showtime, Trill!

TRILLIAN

Can it keep? You might want to see this.

Arthur nods. She leaves. He looks at his "tea", throws it in the trash bin.

43 INT. HEART OF GOLD, BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS 43

Trillian and Arthur join Ford and Zaphod at the computer.

ZAPHOD

--and when I saw what I'm about to show you, that's when I realized why I did what I did to my brain -- or it least, I think that's why.

44 ON THE COMPUTER SCREEN -- 44

The screen brightens. A BRAND LOGO appears (a circle made of a dotted line with an "M" in the middle) then a subtitle: MAGRATHEAN PUBLIC ARCHIVE. Zaphod fast forwards until a noisy picture DISSOLVES TO...

45 EXT. OUTSIDE TEMPLE OF DEEP THOUGHT -- DAY 45

A procession surrounds a CHARIOT. Two young philosophers, LUNKWILL and FOOK (20'S) ride it into a grand TEMPLE.

46 INT. TEMPLE OF DEEP THOUGHT. 46

The aisles are lined with Priest-Technicians. Ahead is DEEP THOUGHT - a huge Buddha-esque computer.

The procession peels away to both sides. Lunkwill and Fook dismount and approach.

DEEP THOUGHT

(deep and sonorous)

What is this great task for which I, Deep Thought, the second greatest computer of all time have been called into existence?

LUNKWILL

Your task, O computer...

FOOK

Hang on. Did you say second greatest?

DEEP THOUGHT

Second greatest. Yes.

FOOK

But we designed you to be the greatest computer so you could...

LUNKWILL

You're not talking about the Milliard Gargantubrain which can count all the atoms in a star in a millisecond?

DEEP THOUGHT

The Milliard Gargantubrain? A mere abacus, mention it not.

FOOK

The Omnicognate Neutron Wrangler then?

(CONTINUED)

46

CONTINUED:

46

DEEP THOUGHT

The Omnicognate Neutron Wrangler could argue all four legs off an Arcturan Megadonkey, but only I could persuade it to go for a walk afterwards.

FOOK

Then what's the problem?

DEEP THOUGHT

I am the greatest computer you are able to design without my help. Which, one day, you are going to need.

LUNKWILL

(to Fook)

Let's just ask the question.

FOOK

Oh Deep Thought, your task is this. We want you to tell us -- the Answer.

Long pause. Deep Thought bleeps and bleeps.

DEEP THOUGHT

The Answer...to what?

LUNKWILL

You know. The answer. To Life...the Universe...Everything.

FOOK

We'd really like an answer. Something simple. Can you do it?

DEEP THOUGHT

The Ultimate Question of Life, the Universe and Everything. Yes. There is an answer. But I'll have to think about it.

Lunkwill glances at his time piece, Fook at the expectant throng behind them. They wait.

DEEP THOUGHT (CONT'D)

Return to this place in exactly... seven and a half million years.

LUNKWILL & FOOK

What?!

PSSSH. The screen goes to snow.

47

EXT. HEART OF GOLD BRIDGE. - CONTINUOUS

47

Ford and Arthur look confused.

FORD

That's it?

(CONTINUED)

47

CONTINUED:

47

ZAPHOD

No, no. There's more. They go back.

ARTHUR

Seven and a half million years later?

Zaphod nods, hits play. We PUSH BACK IN ON THE SCREEN.

48

INT. TEMPLE OF DEEP THOUGHT --

48

Lunkwill and Fook enter the now modern temple, flanked by a crowd. They have beards and look like they're in their 40's. Deep Thought rises, looks lifeless. WORRIED MUTTERS FROM THE CROWD. Slowly, Deep Thought groans to life.

DEEP THOUGHT

Can I help you?

FOOK

Deep Thought. Do you have...

DEEP THOUGHT

An answer for you? Yes. I have.

FOOK

There really is an answer?

DEEP THOUGHT

Yes. There really is one.

FOOK

(almost strangled with emotion)

Oh!

LUNKWILL

Can you tell us what it is?

DEEP THOUGHT

Yes. Though I don't think you're going to like it.

FOOK

Doesn't matter! We must know it!

DEEP THOUGHT

You're really not going to like it.

FOOK

Tell us!

DEEP THOUGHT

Alright. The answer to the ultimate question ...

LUNKWILL

Yes ...

(CONTINUED)

48

CONTINUED:

48

DEEP THOUGHT
... of Life, the Universe, and Everything ...

FOOK
Yes!

DEEP THOUGHT
... is ...

CROWD
Yes ...!

DEEP THOUGHT
(longest pause yet)
Forty two.

The surrounding crowd is stunned. More MUTTERING.

DEEP THOUGHT (O.S.) (CONT'D)
I checked it thoroughly. It would have been simpler, of course, to have known what the actual question was.

LUNKWILL
But it was the Question. The Ultimate Question!

DEEP THOUGHT
Yes, but what actually is it?

FOOK (O.S.)
Everything! You know ... just EVERYTHING!

DEEP THOUGHT (O.S.)
That's not a question. Only when you know what the actual question will you know what the answer means.

LUNKWILL
Give us the Ultimate Question then!!

DEEP THOUGHT
I can't.
(long pause)
But there is one who can. A computer that is to come after me, one that I will design. A computer to calculate the Ultimate Question, one of such infinite complexity that life itself will form part of its operational matrix. And you yourselves shall take on new more primitive forms and go down into the computer to navigate its ten million year program. I shall design this computer for you. And it shall be called...

The picture distorts and whites out. PSSSSHHHHHH.

49

EXT. HEART OF GOLD. BRIDGE. - CONTINUOUS

49

Zaphod hits eject. The blue cube rises.

FORD
That's it?

ZAPHOD
That's it.

FORD
You're looking for the Ultimate Question?

ZAPHOD
Yep.

FORD
You.

ZAPHOD
Me.

FORD
Why?

ZAPHOD
No, I tried that. "Why?" "Forty-two."
Doesn't work.
(to Trillian)
Let's get her ready, babe.

He moves to a different rack of instruments, consults a check list, starts flipping some switches.

FORD
I mean, why do you want to know the
Ultimate Question?

ZAPHOD
Oh. Well -- partly the curiosity, partly
a sense of adventure, but mostly I think
it's for the fame and the money.

He continues preparing the ship. Trillian consults the huge MANUAL, turning dials, flipping switches...

ARTHUR
But -- you're President of the Galaxy,
aren't you?

ZAPHOD
Yes, Arman.

ARTHUR
Arthur.

ZAPHOD
Whatever. Presidential fame is temporary,
I find the Question, that's permanent. It
sticks. Plus everyone thinks you're deep.
Win-win.

(CONTINUED)

49

CONTINUED:

49

FORD

But you don't know the name of the computer that other computer was talking about.

ZAPHOD

Which is why I'm going there.

FORD

Where?

ZAPHOD

There. To find Deep Thought. On Magrathea.

FORD

Magrathea!? Magrathea is a myth, a legend...

ZAPHOD

No, it isn't. It's real, cousin. And this is the only ship in the universe that can get you there.

FORD

(realizing)

You mean to tell me you carved up your brain so you could become President so you would get invited to the launching ceremony of this ship...so you could steal it... so you could go to Magrathea -- which, according to most sane people, doesn't even exist?

ZAPHOD

Yep.

FORD

Beautiful.

ARTHUR

Why this ship? What's so special about it?

Zaphod thinks again -- hard.

ZAPHOD

I don't seem to be letting myself in on any of my secrets.

TRILLIAN (O.S.)

Because of this, obviously.

They turn to see Trillian flipping open a glass lid revealing a BIG RED BUTTON. Ford reads the glowing letters above the button...

(CONTINUED)

49

CONTINUED: (2)

49

FORD

(reading)

Infinite Improbability Drive? So they finally built one that works. And that's how we got picked up.

ZAPHOD

Exactly. And I'm guessing if we hit that button -- we go to Magrathea.

ARTHUR

You're guessing?

ZAPHOD

Hey, anyone who's not up for that, there's the door. Now who's in?

FORD

For a trip to a place that doesn't exist? I'm in. My editor will think I'm crazy, but what the hell -- he already thinks I'm dead.

He takes out the Guide. Zaphod looks to Trillian.

TRILLIAN

Definitely. I'm in.

They're all standing together. They turn to Arthur. Arthur looks to Trillian. She stares back -- waiting.

ARTHUR

Do I even have a choice?

Zaphod smiles, all bright and cheery.

ZAPHOD

No!

Arthur looks at the button.

ARTHUR

What exactly does an Infinite Improbability Drive do?

Suddenly, Zaphod's Head 2 shoots up!

ZAPHOD HEAD 2

THIS!!

Zaphod's third arm shoots out and smacks the button.

50

EXT. SPACE - NIGHT

50

Improbability Drive Effect -- as the ship flips across space and disappears, leaving nothing but shimmers.

(CONTINUED)

50

CONTINUED:

50

GUIDE VOICE

The Infinite Improbability Drive is a new method of crossing vast interstellar distances without all that tedious mucking about in hyperspace. As soon as the drive reaches Infinite Improbability, it passes through every conceivable point in every conceivable Universe almost simultaneously, then selects the appropriate re-entry point. The principle of generating small amounts of finite improbability by hooking the logic circuits of a Bambleweeny 57 Sub-Meson Brain to an atomic vector plotter suspended in a strong Brownian Motion producer, say a nice hot cup of tea, were of course well understood.

Seconds later, the Vogon Destroyer comes out of hyperspace and slows to cruising speed.

51

INT. VOGON DESTROYER SHIP. BRIDGE - NIGHT

51

Vogon controllers and copilots turn dials and push buttons, scrambling to regain a signal.

GUIDE VOICE

Such generators were often used to break the ice at parties by making all the molecules in the hostess's undergarments leap simultaneously one foot to the left, in accordance with the Theory of Indeterminacy.

Kwaltz and Questular appear on the monitor.

KWALTZ

Well, Captain...?

Controllers turn more dials, trying to find the ship.

GUIDE VOICE

Many respectable physicists said they weren't going to stand for that sort of thing partly because it was a debasement of science, but mostly because they didn't get invited to those sort of parties.

VOGON CAPTAIN

We had them sir. These are the coordinates. But -- they're not here.

KWALTZ

I can see that. WHERE ARE THEY?

The captain shrugs. Kwaltz heaves a walrusy sigh.

52 EXT. DEEP SPACE - NIGHT 52

We hover above a greenish/purplish planet.

IMPROBABILITY EFFECT - space RIPPLES. Something begins to materialize, something big and gray - tumbling toward us.

We now see the big, gray thing is a GIANT RHINOCEROS -- which ripples, flips inside out and becomes the Heart of Gold.

53a INT. HEART OF GOLD. BRIDGE - NIGHT 53a

A knitted version of Arthur, Trillian, Ford and Zaphod sit in chairs before the ships console.

KNITTED ZAPHOD
(clutching stomach)
Is this going to happen every time we hit that button?

KNITTED TRILLIAN
Very probably, yes.

53 The air ripples. The 'knitted' crew flip back to their former selves. Arthur pukes into a trash bin and with a sick expression, looks up to the screen. 53

ARTHUR
Did it work? Are we there?

Now Zaphod looks -- and he's elated.

ZAPHOD
Yes!...I think. Computer?

EDDIE
Hi, fella!

Head 2 suddenly springs up.

ZAPHOD HEAD 2
Can you please change that zarking annoying voice!!?

TRILLIAN
Computer? What planet is that, please?

EDDIE
CHECKING!!

On-hold Muzak plays. They all sit and listen for a few beats, then Arthur yelps...

ARTHUR
OW!!
(spinning around to Zaphod)
Did you just pluck a hair from my head?

ZAPHOD HEAD 2
Yeah, as if, apeman.

(CONTINUED)

53

CONTINUED:

53

Arthur suddenly feels something on his back, leaps out of the chair and brushes it off.

The two mice land on the floor across the ship, then scurry away down a hallway. Before Arthur can react...

EDDIE

Thanks for waiting, everyone. I'm just tickled pink to tell you we are currently in orbit around the planet Viltvodle 6.

PUSH IN ON ZAPHOD - who's 2nd Head suddenly shoots up.

ZAPHOD HEAD 2

Humma Kavula!

54

INT. VOGON DESTROYER SHIP. BRIDGE - NIGHT

54

Vogon crew quickly enter data. A FLIGHT ENGINEER gets something on his screen, shows it to the Captain.

VOGON CAPTAIN

Sir, the Heart of Gold has just requested permission to land on Viltvodle 6. Should I pursue?

KWALTZ (ON MONITOR)

That is not a request to which I can respond, captain. Should I pursue what? Are you requesting hyperspace clearance so that you may pursue the fugitive?

VOGON CAPTAIN

Yes, commander.

KWALTZ (ON MONITOR)

Then you must say that, captain -- in request form.

VOGON CAPTAIN

Requesting hyperspace clearance to pursue the fugitive, sir.

KWALTZ (ON MONITOR)

Thank you. Request acknowledged. Await response.

55

INT. VOGON HEADQUARTERS - CONTINUOUS

55

KWALTZ

(into microphone)

Bring me the request to pursue fugitive forms.

The war room is silent. We hear the sound of running above. The footsteps hurry all the way around, we hear a door open, running up more steps, along the corridor until and finally an exhausted Vogon Messenger bursts through the door holding a blue form. Questular shakes his head in disbelief as Kwaltz signs the request form.

(CONTINUED)

55

CONTINUED:

55

QUESTULAR

This is ridiculous! What do you need, an executive order? Fine. I order you. Stop doing this! Go and get him!

KWALTZ

According to Subsection 94b, paragraph 2, you're not authorized to make such an order.

QUESTULAR

But I'm acting president!

KWALTZ

Then act like a president, and do nothing.

Kwaltz continues to fill out the forms. Questular grabs a clump of his hair -- and pulls it out.

CUT TO:

56

EXT. VILTVODLE 6. SPACEPORT. - NIGHT

56

All we can see are the lights of the Heart of Gold's entry ramp cutting through a dense fog. Or is it fog?

Zaphod's 2nd head is up as he comes down the ramp ahead of the other three.

ZAPHOD HEAD 2

Humma Kavula!

BACK A FEW STEPS WITH ARTHUR, TRILLIAN AND FORD...

ARTHUR

Why does he keep saying that?

TRILLIAN

I don't know. I'm not used to seeing him this way.

ARTHUR

You mean fully clothed?

She stops, fires him a look.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Sorry, but I can't for the life of me figure out why you, the most brilliant woman I have ever met, have ended up with that half-witted, self-obsessed, vapid politician! I mean, look at him!

They squint through the fog at Zaphod, Head 2 out. His hands keep trying to get it down but the 3rd arm keeps whacking them away. He disappears into the fog.

(CONTINUED)

56

CONTINUED:

56

TRILLIAN

Clearly unlike any guy I've ever met.

(back to Arthur)

Look, if you're going to pout your way around space, then maybe you should just go home.

ARTHUR

I can't. That's the whole point -- and I've been trying to tell you...

FORD

(interrupting)

Hey, look what I found in the guide.

He hands the guide to Trillian. She keeps walking.

FORD (CONT'D)

I wouldn't tell her if I were you.

ARTHUR

She deserves to know.

FORD

But if you tell her and she ends up with you because you're literally the last guy on Earth -- you'll always doubt her intentions.

Arthur considers this. Nods.

FORD (CONT'D)

Got your towel?

ARTHUR

Do I need it?

FORD

Only always.

Ford puts his towel to his mouth as they follow Trillian down the mist covered street. She's reading the guide.

GUIDE VOICE

In the beginning, the universe was created. This made a lot of people very angry and has been widely regarded as a bad move.

Zaphod continues several steps ahead of them.

GUIDE VOICE (CONT'D)

Many races believe that it was created by some sort of God, though the Jatravartid people of Viltvodle 6 firmly believe that the entire Universe was in fact sneezed out of the nose of a being called the Great Green Arkle seizure. The Jatravartids, who live in perpetual fear

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

56 CONTINUED: (2) 56

GUIDE VOICE (CONT'D)

of the time they call "The Coming of Great White Handkerchief" are small blue creatures with more than fifty arms each. . .who are therefore unique in being the only race in history to have invented the aerosol deodorant before the wheel.

ZAPHOD HEAD 2
Humma Kavula!

SLAM. Zaphod's two arms shove his chin back down.

ZAPHOD
I'll handle this.

56a EXT. SEEDY STREET-VILTVODLE 56a

The others approach, watching Zaphod as he stops a passing an eight-armed alien creature, asks him something, oozing charm. The creature points down the street with 3 arms, then with 2 others hands him a pen and paper. Zaphod signs an autograph and moves on.

The alien beams, then squirts three cans of aerosol under several arms. More mist rises. FOLLOW IT UP revealing:

57 A LARGE BUILDING -- a temple with two giant arches. 57

The others follow. CAMERA TILTS UP and we see this building looks like a nose lying horizontally, the "giant arches" are the nostrils.

58 INT. ARKLESEIZURE TEMPLE - CONTINUOUS 58

Zaphod opens the huge doors inside the large nostril/arches. A rush of air blows the mist past Ford, Trillian and Arthur a few steps behind. They stop.

A congregation of worshipers faces front where HUMMA KAVULA stands behind a podium. He's a humanoid wearing a white robe and night-vision sun glasses.

HUMMA KAVULA
The handkerchief is coming, beloveds. Are you ready? Let us pray that the almighty will exhale a breath of compassion on us.

Instead of bowing, they all point their noses heavenward. Zaphod marches down the center aisle while Humma prays.

HUMMA KAVULA (CONT'D)
Almighty Arkleseizure, we lift our noses, clogged and unblown in reverence to you.

Zaphod stops a few feet away from Humma's chair.

ZAPHOD
Hello, Humma.

(CONTINUED)

58

CONTINUED:

58

ON FORD AND ARTHUR

ARTHUR

That's Humma Kavula? I thought he was just using a swear word.

FORD

(shaking his head)
Humma Kavula was his opponent in the election. Something happened during the campaign. Zaphod never forgave him.

ARTHUR

What was it?

Ford shrugs. HUMMA looks up, sees Zaphod, smiles.

HUMMA KAVULA

(wrapping up the prayer)
Send the handkerchief, lord, so that it may wipe us clean. We ask this in your precious holy name...

CONGREGATION

Achoo.

And they all sneeze. Akin to crossing himself, Humma raises a hand to his nose, then down again.

HUMMA KAVULA

Bless you.

CUT TO:

59

INT. HUMMA'S QUARTERS - CONTINUOUS

59

Humma's quarters are opulent. He sits behind his desk flanked by several ARMED BODY GUARDS. Ford, Arthur and Trillian keep a safe distance as Zaphod faces off with Humma who has the air of a cool news anchor man.

HUMMA KAVULA

Zaphod Beeblebrox, our famous President. The Arkleseizure has exhaled many blessings upon you. What brings you to our humble planet?

ZAPHOD

I think you know why I'm here.

HUMMA KAVULA

I don't think I do.

ZAPHOD

Oh, I think you think you don't, but we both know -- you do.

HUMMA KAVULA

Elequent as always, Zaphod. Your ability to communicate a clear thought never ceases to amaze.

(CONTINUED)

59

CONTINUED:

59

Head 2 suddenly springs up -- to the surprise of all.

ZAPHOD HEAD 2

You called me stupid!

HUMKA KAVULA

(re: the heads)

Interesting. And I don't know what you're talking about.

ZAPHOD HEAD 2

During the campaign, Humma -- you said I was stupid.

HUMMA KAVULA

This Humma you speak of no longer exists. He came here in his consolation position as Ambassador to Gamma Z10 to squelch an ideological threat to the system and repented from his wicked ways. He now goes by the holy name Tazelo the Unceasingly Righteous, given to him by his devoted followers.

ZAPHOD HEAD 2

I DON'T CARE WHAT YOU CALL YOURSELF, YOU RIGHTEOUS FREAK!! YOU STARTED THE RUMOR THAT I'M STUPID AND YOU'RE GONNA PAY!!!

The 3rd arm reaches for a gun in Zaphod's vest. The BODY GUARDS aim their weapons. One runs up and smacks Zaphod in the back of the head -- slamming Head 2 back in place.

ZAPHOD

Thank you.

The 3rd arm disappears. The gun falls. A BODY GUARD picks it up.

WITH ARTHUR, FORD AND TRILLIAN

ARTHUR

Why do I get the feeling he's going to get us all killed?

FORD

Probably because it's very possible. Just don't save me, okay? We're even.

Humma lays his palms on the table and lifts himself as if to stand - but there is nothing of him below the table line except for thirty, one inch metal legs, attached to the base of his torso. He glides towards Zaphod, the little legs extending to reach the floor as he reaches the end of the table.

(CONTINUED)

59

CONTINUED: (2)

59

HUMMA KAVULA

The election is ancient history, Zaphod,
but if memory serves -- you won, proving
that good looks and charm win over
brilliance and ability to govern.

A guard drapes a white robes over Humma's shoulders - which
he ties with a belt - hiding his peculiar undercarriage.

HUMMA KAVULA (CONT'D)

And incidently -- you are stupid.

His head jerks up. Zaphod stops it, paints on a smile.

ZAPHOD

That's really not the point.

HUMMA KAVULA

You haven't come halfway across the galaxy
to settle a campaign grudge. Why are you
here, Zaphod?

Zaphod doesn't answer. Humma motions to a guard who
grabs his arm, twists it -- hard.

ZAPHOD

(wincing)

I don't know. I was headed for Magrathea,
I ended up here.

PUSH IN ON HUMMA -- who raises his hi-tech sun glasses.

HUMMA KAVULA

How very, very...
(knowingly)
...improbable.

He pulls the nose off his body guard, turns a key. A
secret safe door slides open from the mans' chest.

HUMMA KAVULA (CONT'D)

I kept a few souvenirs from my former
life. Ah, the heady days of space
piracy... so young, so foolish..,

Another, smaller box rises from the chest cabinet. Inside
we see glowing jewels, a skeleton hand, etc. Humma
removes a PINK CUBE (like Zaphod's blue cube.)

HUMMA KAVULA (CONT'D)

I'll gladly give you the coordinates to
Magrathea...

He holds up the pink cube revealing A SERIES OF
COORDINATE NUMBERS on each side. Zaphod reaches for it.
Humma takes it back...

HUMMA KAVULA (CONT'D)

...provided you bring me something in
return.

(CONTINUED)

59

CONTINUED: (3)

59

ZAPHOD

What?

HUMMA KAVULA

A gun.

ZAPHOD

A gun?

HUMMA KAVULA

A very special gun. Designed by the greatest computer ever invented, now buried in the bowels of Magrathea.

ZAPHOD

Fine. I'll get your gun. Just give me the coordinates.

Zaphod reaches out. Humma pulls it back.

HUMMA KAVULA

And what will you give me to insure your return?

ZAPHOD

My word as President.

HUMMA KAVULA

Ha! I'd be better off with the dung of a Bethusian Mega Donkey.

ZAPHOD

Okay, then I'll get you that.

HUMMA KAVULA

I need a hostage, something you hold dear. Only what does Zaphod Beeblebrox treasure?

ON ZAPHOD'S SECOND HEAD -- peeping out of the collar looking terrified.

Humma smiles. Bingo. He signals the guards. They grab Zaphod who looks back to Trillian, offers a weak smile.

SMASH CUT TO:

60

INT. HUMMA KAVULA'S OPERATING THEATRE -- LATER

60

Very fast scene - two seconds. Zaphod's 2nd Head SCREAMS!

ZAPHOD HEAD 2

Nooo!!!

PULL BACK to see it being lifted out of Zaphod's neck. Zaphod unconscious on the operating table. Blood and instruments everywhere.

61 INT. HUMMA KAVULA'S ROOM - LATER

61

Zaphod's head hangs on the wall. Wires feed out of the neck into a huge machine. Beneath the head is a crude drawing of a body and the words "I'm with Stupid." An arrow points to Zaphod's Head 2 -- which is shouting...

ZAPHOD HEAD 2
IDIOT! ZARKING MORON!! COME BACK!! YOU
NEED ME!! COME BAAAAACKKKK!!!!

HUMMA KAVULA
You should quit while you're "a head"
Zaphod. No one has ever got passed the
Magrathean defence system alive.

Humma laughs maniacally.

62 EXT. VILTVODLE 6. MAIN STREET - NIGHT

62

Zaphod, held aloft on Ford and Arthur's shoulders, staggers down the street toward the spaceport where the Heart of Gold is parked. His neck is wrapped with a blood-soaked bandage which looks like a scarlet ascot.

ARTHUR
Are we sure this is the right way?

FORD
Yes! I think. I don't know. Maybe not.

ARTHUR
Yes, thank you for clearing that up.

Ford looks puzzled at Arthur. Did I clear it up? A crowd has gathered. When they see Zaphod, they scream...

CROWD
Mr. President!...Zaphod, over here!...I
want to have your baby!, etc...

Zaphod, still feeling the effects of whatever drugs he was given, dons a presidential smile and waves.

FORD
Back to the ship. Quickly.

They quicken their pace when suddenly...

FIFTY VOGON POLICE -- emerge from the mist.

VOGON POLICE #1
Mr. President! We are here for your
protection!

Zaphod, Ford, Trillian and Arthur freeze in their tracks.

63

INT. VOGON HEADQUARTERS - CONTINUOUS

63

Kwaltz and Questular watch the action on the front screen.

KWALTZ

Fire upon the kidnapper!

(62 cont) EXT. MAIN STREET -

(62 cont)

The police fire. F, T, & A run for it, but Z stays put.

ZAPHOD

Zarquon! Friendly fire! Well, if that's what they want--

He pulls out his gun up and fires back.

ZAPHOD (CONT'D)

Hey! Let's do lunch! Nice haircut, fella!
Hey! Your kids are the same age as mine--
We should get them together some time!

With each line he fires. Ford grabs him. Shots hit a stack of aerosol cans. They EXPLODE. More mist rises.

(63 cont) INT. VOGON HEADQUARTERS -

(63 cont)

QUESTULAR

Commander! The President is the kidnapper!

KWALTZ

Cease fire!

(62 cont) BEHIND THE KIOSK--

(62 cont)

The gang run down an alley and hide behind a kiosk. Zaphod sports a goofy smile. Arthur is scared to death.

ARTHUR

Oh God, I really hate Thursdays.

FORD

Zaphod, what do we do?

ZAPHOD

Build bridges between the stars!
He holds up two peace signs, a la Nixon.

ARTHUR

What?

FORD

I think that was his campaign slogan.

Trillian finds a deodorant can, grabs it, gets an idea.

TRILLIAN

Alright, follow me.
She aims the can at Zaphod's ear- Arthur's face registers the madness of the moment.

(63 cont) INT. VOGON DESTROYER. BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

(63 cont)

QUESTULAR

There they are!

(62 cont) ON SCREEN -- Trillian, with aerosol can to Zaphod's ear (62 cont)
moves down the street. The crowd GASPS. The quartet
continues anxiously forward, eyeing the police whose guns
track their every move.

TRILLIAN

Back off or I'll kill him, I swear I will!

(63 cont) KWALTZ -- looks confused.

(63 cont)

KWALTZ

Could that actually kill him?

(62 cont) The police step backwards -- but the crowd takes a step (62 cont)
forward. A huddle of female ADMIRERS rush them, waving
pens and paper as if the Beatles have arrived.

ADMIRERS

Mr. President, Mr. President!...

Zaphod paints on a smile, breaks away from the others to
go sign a few autographs.

FEMALE ADMIRER

I totally voted for you!

ZAPHOD

Thank you!

Reveal that the female fans are actually a multi-headed,
two legged GROUPIE.

(63 cont) ON QUESTULAR AND KWALTZ--

(63 cont)

KWALTZ

Get her!

(62 cont) CHAOS! The walrusy Vogon police swarm in like maggots, (62 cont)
surrounding Trillian and edging Ford and Arthur away.

VOGON POLICE

Resistance is useless!

Shots are fired. The crowd SCREAMS and SCATTERS. Arthur
reaches for Trillian but she is engulfed by Vogons who
move, en masse, and pull her away into the mist.

ARTHUR

Tricia!

Ford, with Zaphod in tow, shoves Arthur forward, using
his towel to clear a path through the mist. They see the
Heart of Gold ramp descending from the belly of the ship.

FORD

This way!

(CONTINUED)

(62 cont) CONTINUED:

(62 cont)

ARTHUR
NO!! TRICIA!!!

SHOTS FIRE all around them as Ford pushes Zaphod and Arthur up the ramp.

(63 cont) INT. VOGON HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

(63 cont)

Questular and Kwaltz watch the monitor as Vogon Police usher Trillian, in futuristic hand-cuffs, past the Vogon Captain who stands in the foreground on his ship.

KWALTZ
Bring her to Vogosphere for processing,
Captain.

The captain nods. The screen goes black.

QUESTULAR
They're coming here!? But they've only accomplished half the mission. What about Zaphod? HE MUST FACE JUSTICE!!

KWALTZ
My instructions were clear...

From a slot in his chair, he pulls his instructions -- signed in triplicate of course. He reads...

KWALTZ (CONT'D)
"Apprehend the kidnapper, rescue the president." We do them in that order. And until the kidnapper is properly processed, she isn't officially apprehended, now is she, Mr. Vice-President?

Questular pulls out another small clump of hair.

CUT TO:

64

INT. HEART OF GOLD. BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

64

Ford and Arthur drag Zaphod into the bridge. On the front screen, they can see the Vogon ships flying away.

ARTHUR
We have to go! Let's GO!

ZAPHOD
(still loopy)
Right!

Looking strangely happy, he slides the PINK COORDINATE CUBE Humma gave him into a slot on the console.

ZAPHOD (CONT'D)
Computer! Take us to Magrathea!

ARTHUR
What? No! Follow those ships!

(CONTINUED)

64

CONTINUED:

64

Arthur lunges for a control. Zaphod woozily tries to stop him. There's a struggle, then Zaphod realizes...

ZAPHOD

Hey -- my third arm. I had one, didn't I?

ARTHUR

We have to go after her!

The computer fires to life, BLEEPs and BLIPs. Only now it has an effete, effeminate, almost matriarchal voice.

EDDIE

Boys, please! Not so rough. You're damaging my joystick.

They all look at the source of the voice, confused.

FORD

Who is that?

MARVIN

Ghastly, isn't it? I was asked to change the personality type, this was the emergency back-up.

EDDIE

How, if you want me to take you somewhere, we're going to have to start using our magic words, "please" and "thank you."

ARTHUR

Can you change it back?

MARVIN

I can -- but I won't enjoy it.

EDDIE

I'm wait-ing...

Arthur sees the Vagon ships getting away. Desperate, he shoves Zaphod out of the driver's seat. Zaphod hits the floor, considers protesting, lies down on the floor to sleep instead -- with a contented smile.

Arthur sits. He looks very out of place in a seat normally reserved for the likes of Han Solo. He scans the console. Ford sits in the seat beside him.

ARTHUR

Ford?

FORD

Marvin?

MARVIN

Don't look at me. I'm too depressed.

(CONTINUED)

64

CONTINUED:

64

ARTHUR

(getting desperate)
Computer?! Isn't there some kind of
manual override switch thing?

EDDIE

Yeeessss...

ARTHUR

WELL WHERE THE HELL IS IT?!

EDDIE

Magic words?

ARTHUR

Show me the override switch or I'll
reprogram you with a very large axe.

EDDIE

(long pause)

I can see this relationship is something
we're all going to have to work at.

64a

DING. A chime sounds. A switch on the console
ILLUMINATES. "MANUAL OVERRIDE." Arthur flips the switch.
The cockpit is sealed in a glass ball and shoots upwards.

64a

65

EXT. HEART OF GOLD - NIGHT

65

The cockpit bubble POPS out like an ejector seat, now a
little glass pod. It floats through space, then rear
thrusters ignite and blast the ship forward.

66

INT. HEART OF GOLD BRIDGE/POD - CONTINUOUS

66

An aircraft steering wheel rises up between Arthur's
legs. He grabs it, spinning out of control.

FORD

I think I should push this button.

Ford pushes a big button. AN ALARM SOUNDS!

ARTHUR

What's that? What happened?!

FORD

A sign lit up saying "Please do not push
this button again."

Arthur grabs the control, does his best to steer.

67

EXT. SPACE - NIGHT

67

The glass pod streaks unsteadily forward toward A DULL
GRAY PLANET.

68

EXT. VOGSPHERE - DAY

68

The rectangular ship sits on the surface as Police escort
Trillian off it and into a GRAY RECTANGULAR BLDG.

69

DIFFERENT PART OF VOGSPHERE/NEAR SWAMP--

69

The ground is barren. A scintillatingly jeweled crab crawls out of a swamp and looks up at the sky. We hear the sound of the pod approaching (but hold on the crab) as EEEEEOOO-KA-KFFFZZZ! The crab runs back into the swamp. PAN LEFT to see the pod rammed into the ground, steam rising. The door opens. The three emerge.

FORD

Wow...

MARVIN

I know. Dreadful, isn't it?

ARTHUR

Sorry about the landing. Where are we?

ZAPHOD

Magrathea!

FORD

Wrong. This is the Vogon planet. This is Vogsphere.

ZAPHOD

No. It's Magrathea! I know it!

Ford reaches in his satchel, pulls out a sort of ELECTRONIC BERET, pulls it snugly onto Zaphod's head.

FORD

Little something I learned about on an Altairian star cruiser. Captains use them when they really need to concentrate.

ARTHUR

What is it?

FORD

A Thinking Cap.

Zaphod squints hard to think as he looks around.

70

EXT. VOGCITY

70

THEIR P.O.V. -- there are rows and rows of dull, gray, rectangular buildings as far as the eye can see.

(69 cont) The three men step out of the ship.

(69 cont)

MARVIN

This will all end in tears, I just know it.

Marvin moves out, a few paces behind.

FORD

I checked the guide for ways to rescue a prisoner from Vogsphere. It said "Don't." I'm assuming your plan is better.

(CONTINUED)

69

CONTINUED:

69

ARTHUR

Well, I sort of had this idea we could...

A TELESCOPIC ROD WITH A PADDLE AT THE TOP shoots out of the ground, SMACKS Arthur on the face, then retracts.

Arthur is stunned. None of the others have noticed.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Did anyone see that?

ZAPHOD

See what?

They look at Arthur. It suddenly seems ridiculous.

ARTHUR

Nothing.

They all walk along - Arthur at the back, perplexed.

FORD

What was it?

ARTHUR

Nothing. Just my imagination.

Another paddle springs up, double smack in the face. Arthur leaps back. Looks down. Nothing. Nothing at all.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Alright, stop. Everyone stop and watch me. Something's happening.

They watch. Arthur walks. And walks.

FORD

Okay. I think we...

A paddle springs up and smacks Ford's face.

FORD (CONT'D)

AH!

He leaps back, clutching his cheeks. Arthur spins around.

ARTHUR

You, too?

FORD

Yes. What was that?

Arthur lifts his feet very carefully.

FORD (CONT'D)

I th...

He stops himself and looks round.

(CONTINUED)

69

CONTINUED: (2)

69

FORD (CONT'D)

What do you think, Zaphod?

Zaphod pulls his thinking cap down, thinks hard.

ZAPHOD

I think we should keep going.

A paddle shoots up, smacks Zaphod's face. They all saw.

ZAPHOD (CONT'D)

AAAH!!

ARTHUR

What the blazes is that?

FORD

(very deliberately)

I have... an idea.

A paddle shoots up. Ford ducks. It misses. He grabs its telescopic stalk. It thrashes in his hands. He breaks it.

FORD (CONT'D)

Okay, don't think of anything. Don't have ideas or theories -- nothing.

A beat. They all strain to think of nothing. Several paddles shoot up. Smacking them.

ARTHUR

I can't, help it! Trillian is in there somewhere and we need an idea to save her.

ZAPHOD

I have an idea. (SMACK!) Run!

FORD

Ever the politician.

They take off running. A forest of paddle stalks erupts out of the ground around them, smacking violently.

They come to rest at the side of a Vogon building.

ARTHUR

Okay, so...

(thinking)

...not thinking, not thinking, no ideas coming...

(looking to Marvin)

...this is by no means an idea that has any merit, but Marvin -- can you give me a hand?

SMASH CUT TO:

71

INT. VOGON ADMINISTRATION BUILDING - DAY

71

The dullest office environment ever. A counter with few VOGONS behind it, mindlessly moving bits of paper around.

(CONTINUED)

71n

CONTINUED:

71n

The front doors BURST open. Arthur storms through them, holding Marvin's arm which has the fingers pointed like a gun. He trips, falls, drops the arm, picks it up again, trying hard to look tough. Ford and Zaphod follow, Zaphod wearing the Thinking Cap and sunglasses for disguise. Ford wearing his towel over his face like a bandit.

The Vogons look up, nonplussed.

ARTHUR

Alright, where is she?

VOGON BEHIND COUNTER

Who? The Director of Robot Arm repair?
Next building, out the door to the left.

Arthur looks at the arm -- then slowly lowers it.

ARTHUR

Actually, we're looking for...
(how to put this...?)
...someone you're detaining, perhaps in
some form of incarceration...

VOGON BEHIND COUNTER

Prisoner Release Department. Six buildings
down, out the door, right, left, then two
rights. Big gray building, can't miss it.

CUT TO:

72

INT. PRISONER PROCESSING BLDG./INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

72

Trillian is seated beside a desk while a VOGON OFFICER asks her questions. Kwaltz and Questular stand nearby.

VOGON OFFICER

Name?

TRILLIAN

Trillian.

He types into his ancient looking computer.

VOGON OFFICER

Not registered.

TRILLIAN

Try Tricia McMillan.

VOGON OFFICER

Tricia Yggarstuk McMillanus of Blaard?

TRILLIAN

No. Tricia Imogene McMillan of Earth.

The Officer types, checks his screen, shakes his head.

VOGON OFFICER

Sorry. No record of "Earth."

(CONTINUED)

72

CONTINUED:

72

TRILLIAN

Earth. In the Milky Way?

{remembering}

Um...galactic Sector ZZ9 Plural Z Alpha.

The Vogon Officer types, reads from the screen.

VOGON OFFICER

Right. Here it is. "Earth. Destroyed."

Do you have a second home planet?

PUSH IN ON TRILLIAN -- gutted by the news.

TRILLIAN

Destroyed? No -- that's impossible.

VOGON OFFICER

Says here it was destroyed to make way for
a hyperspace expressway. The order was
given...three weeks ago.

TRILLIAN

WHO IN THEIR RIGHT MIND GIVES AN ORDER TO
DESTROY A PLANET!?

CUT TO:

73

EXT-ADMIN BUILDING-VOGCITY

73

ZAPHOD - WALKING WITH FORD AND ARTHUR

ZAPHOD

He said the gray building, right?

THEIR P.O.V. -- all the buildings are gray. Arthur sees
2 VOGON POLICE escorting someone in handcuffs into one of
the buildings.

ARTHUR

There. That's it. This way.

He raises Marvin's arm, pointing the fingers.

74

INT. PRISONER PROCESSING BUILDING/MAIN ROOM - CONTINUOUS

74

A, F & Z enter the double doors, then stop short.
Stunned.THEIR P.O.V. - a typical government pick-a-number and
wait sort of room. Bland. Bad lighting. Numbered
windows. It's packed with all manner of species.

ARTHUR

Leave this to me. I'm British.

(with gusto)

I know how to queue.He confidently takes a number and gets in line with the
several hundred others -- feeling very much at home.

(72 cont) INT. PRISONER PROCESSING BLDG./INTERROGATION ROOM - (72 cont)

Trillian sits at the Officer's desk, arms folded, defiant.

TRILLIAN

I don't believe you. This is some sort of trick. Zaphod wouldn't blow up a planet, especially mine.

Kwaltz now steps forward and extends a piece of paper.

KWALTZ

These are the orders.

Trillian takes the paper, runs her finger down to the signature line where it reads "*Love and kisses, Zaphod!*"

TRILLIAN

Love and kisses...?

She hands the paper back, swallowing emotion.

KWALTZ

Now -- according to Section 8, sub-section 34 dash A, the punishment for kidnapping is a recitation of the classic poem, "Ode to the Removal of Your Left Kidney." Unless -- said kidnapping is of the President, in which case you are to be fed to the Ravenous Bugblatter Beast of Traal. We thank you for your cooperation.

A door is opened revealing a room with a large steel box. A huge, angry eye stares out of a tiny barred window.

The box shakes like crazy. Trillian gulps.

(74 cont) INT. PRISONER PROCESSING BUILDING/MAIN ROOM - CONTINUOUS (74 cont)

Zaphod is in line with Arthur and Ford. He looks up to:

A PRESIDENTIAL PHOTOGRAPH - of himself, in suit and tie, smiling broadly. He lowers his thinking cap.

FEMALE VOGON PROCESSOR

Next!

Arthur steps up, followed by Ford and Zaphod who keeps his head low and bowed.

ARTHUR

Yes. Hi. We're here about getting a prisoner released?

FEMALE VOGON PROCESSOR

Prisoner release form?

She holds out her hand. Arthur doesn't have a form. Annoyed, she points across the room to a wall that is nothing but shelves holding forms.

(CONTINUED)

(74 cont) CONTINUED:

(74 cont)

ARTHUR

Right. Once I've filled it out can I return to the front of the line, seeing as I've already waited...

FEMALE VOGON PROCESSOR

No. Next!

Arthur sighs, frustrated. All three of them walk to the shelves holding the forms. Arthur turns to Zaphod.

ARTHUR

Can't you do something?! You're President, aren't you?

ZAPHOD

You want me to make a speech, shake a hand? That's what I do -- I think. It's all a little fuzzy.

Arthur angrily fills out the form.

MOMENTS LATER--

Arthur is back in line, having waited a long time. He finally gets to the window, hands the green form to the Vogon Processor. She types into her computer, then checks the screen.

FEMALE VOGON PROCESSOR

This Prisoner is being detained for...
(reading)

Kidnapping the president. Not eligible for release at this time. You can make an appointment for a later date or take a number and wait.

Arthur's breathing quickens. He can't take this.

ARTHUR

Alright, look.
(yanks thinking cap and sunglasses off Zaphod)
This is the President.

She looks at Zaphod, then back to the large portrait of Zaphod, then back to Zaphod. She nods. Okay...

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

He says the whole kidnapping thing was a terrible misunderstanding, she didn't mean anything by it and he's ordering you to let her go.

FEMALE VOGON PROCESSOR

(holding up green form)
But this isn't a Presidential Release of Prisoner form. Those are blue.

She points to the wall of forms. Arthur sighs.

(72 cont) QUICK CUT BACK TO TRILLIAN --

(72 cont)

Trillian is lowered into the Bugblatter beast box/cage. We cannot see the beast but it's screams of hunger are scaring the hell out of Trillian.

(74 cont) BACK TO ARTHUR --

(74 cont)

...who returns, practically shoving Zaphod forward. Zaphod hands the Vogon Processor the blue form.

FEMALE VOGON PROCESSOR (CONT'D)

Okay...

She reviews the form, stamps it, pulls off the carbon copy underneath, hands that to Zaphod.

VOGON PROCESSOR

Go to the Prisoner Release Lobby, out the door, right, left, 2nd door on the right.

(72 cont) BACK WITH TRILLIAN --

(72 cont)

As she braces herself to be eaten by the monster. Suddenly, a couple of VOGON GUARDS enter and hand Kwaltz a blue piece of paper. He reviews it, then signs it.

KWALTZ

You're free to go. Release her.

The Vogon Guard pulls Trillian up and out of the box on a cable. The Bugblatter beast goes berserk.

QUESTULAR

What!?

(yanking blue paper away,
reading)

He's here?! Zaphod is here!? Let's go get him!

But the Guard is already escorting Trillian out of the room. Kwaltz is completing paperwork.

QUESTULAR (CONT'D)

Commander?

Kwaltz holds up a walrusy hand, one finger raised, silencing Questular while he continues. Questular sighs.

We hear the Bugblatter beast weeping as the doors are closed on him.

CUT TO:

75

INT. PRISONER RELEASE LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

75

A guard escorts Trillian into the Lobby where F, A & Z await. Arthur steps toward her but Zaphod steps in front of him, smiling, arms outstretched.

Trillian walks up to Zaphod -- and SLAPS HIM.

(CONTINUED)

75

CONTINUED:

75

TRILLIAN

You bastard. You signed the order to
destroy Earth?!

ARTHUR

He did?

ZAPHOD

I did?

TRILLIAN

"Love and kisses, Zaphod?" I saw the
form. You didn't even read it, did you?

ZAPHOD

Honey, I'm President of the Galaxy. I
don't get a lot of time for reading.

TRILLIAN

An entire planet, Zaphod. My home. Gone.
All because you thought someone wanted
your autograph!

She SLAPS him again, storms away, bursting out the door.

ZAPHOD

They framed me! It's routine for
controlling Presidents!

76

INT. PRISONER INTERROGATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

76

Kwaltz finishes his paperwork, stacks it neatly, holds it
up for Questular to see.

KWALTZ

Cancellation of the Rescue of the
President.

He hands it to a Messenger who runs off. Another one
runs up.

KWALTZ (CONT'D)

Now.

{with menace}

Get me the Apprehension of the President
form.

77

EXT. PRISONER PROCESSING BLDG. - CONTINUOUS

77

Trillian storms away from the building, enraged. She
sees a one-armed Marvin standing by the glass pod. She
heads for him. Arthur catches up to her.

ARTHUR

Trillian...

TRILLIAN

You knew. Why didn't you tell me?

(CONTINUED)

76 CONTINUED: 76

ARTHUR
I tried. He threatened me.

TRILLIAN
Get a backbone, Arthur.

She storms ahead of him. He stops.

ARTHUR
What about coming here to rescue you?!
That was my brilliant idea!

A paddle shoots up and slaps him in the face.

(77 cont) EXT. PRISONER PROCESSING BLDG. - MOMENTS LATER (77 cont)

Kwaltz and Questular, flanked by the Vagon police force,
step out of the building just in time to see...

78 ...THE GLASS HEART OF GOLD POD soaring overhead. 78

They all watch as it disappears from sight.

KWALTZ
The President tests my patience. This
time, I shall pursue him myself. Ready my
ship!

QUESTULAR
Yes! This is more like it.

79 INT. VOGON OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER 79

Kwaltz sits in a desk, filling out a form.

Questular holds two clumps of hair in each fist.

QUESTULAR
THIS IS INSANITY!

KWALTZ
My license is expired, Mr. Vice President.
I can't fly with an expired license --
it's against the law.

Questular fists tremble. PLOP. Out comes two large
tufts of hair.

SMASH CUT TO:

80 EXT. SPACE - NIGHT 80

The pod is reattached to the Heart of Gold which soars
through the stars.

81 INT. HEART OF GOLD. BRIDGE - NIGHT 81

They're all getting buckled into their seats.

(CONTINUED)

81

CONTINUED:

81

EDDIE

(back to his normal voice)

Hi, fellas. Hold on to your hats!

ZAPHOD

Eddie! Welcome back!

The ship suddenly BLASTS forward. Their heads are slammed back into the seats as they VIBRATE VIOLENTLY.

FORD

WHAT'S HAPPENING, ZAPHOD?! WHERE DID YOU TELL IT TO GO?!

ZAPHOD

I DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING!

Arthur looks to the console and sees the two mice sliding across it, getting thrown across the ship. They continue to vibrate -- even more violently.

FORD

ARE YOU SURE WE REATTACHED THIS THING THE RIGHT WAY?!

Zaphod is all smiles, hanging on as if he were on a rollercoaster ride.

ZAPHOD

ISN'T IT GREAT?!

82

DEEP SPACE--

82

...the H.O.G. is but a blur as it streaks along.

83

BACK IN THE H.O.G. - LATER

83

Stars appear on the screen as they slow from hyperspace.

EDDIE

Guys, I'm just super happy to tell you we're approaching hyperspace exit Gamma Z8B530.

Arthur steadies himself, turns to Trillian who's still staring forward, angry. She unbuckles her seat-belt and moves away from the console.

A planet appears on screen. Zaphod and Ford lean forward.

ZAPHOD

Okay, that's it...I think. Computer? Is that...where are we headed again?

FORD

Magrathea?

EDDIE

Hang on, fella, and I'll check.

(CONTINUED)

83

CONTINUED:

83

Arthur turns, look over at...

TRILLIAN -- who stares out a portal window into the emptiness of space. A tear rolls down her cheek.

Arthur steps up, isn't sure what to say.

ARTHUR

Look, you're right. You deserved to know and I should've told you. I don't blame you if you're angry.

She turns and stares, wipes the tears away. Can't speak.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Right. Anyway...I'm sorry.

EDDIE (O.S.)

Guys, it just tickles me pink to tell you we are currently in orbit at an altitude of three hundred miles around the legendary planet of Magrathea. Goll-ee.

Hearing this news, Arthur, Trillian and Ford turn.

ZAPHOD

(tasting it)

Take us in.

83a

EXT. NIGHT DEEP SPACE - MAGRATHEA

83a

They all stare in awe as they move toward a planet which gets closer and closer. Suddenly, their faces are awash with light.

Two suns rise behind the planet. It's breathtaking.

ZAPHOD

The twin suns of Soulianis and Rahm...

Marvin (both arms in tact) rises in the back, peers out.

MARVIN

It's rubbish.

83b

Suddenly, a ghostly white swirl of light, vaguely in the shape of a man, appears on the screen before them.

83b

GHOSTLY IMAGE

Greetings. This is a recorded announcement as we're all out the moment. The Commercial council of Magrathea thanks you for your esteemed visit, but regrets that the entire planet is temporarily closed for business. If you would like to leave your name and a planet where you can be contacted, kindly do so at the tone.

BEEP. Then stunned silence.

(CONTINUED)

83b

CONTINUED:

83b

ARTHUR

Closed? How can a planet be closed?

ZAPHOD

For once, Aldus, I agree with you. Okay, computer. Keep going. Take us down.

EDDIE

Happy to!

The ship eases forward. The image appears again.

GHOSTLY IMAGE

It is most gratifying that your enthusiasm for our planet continues unabated. As a token of our appreciation, we hope you will enjoy the two thermonuclear missiles we've just sent to converge with your craft. To ensure on-going quality of service, your death may be monitored for training purposes. Thank you.

The image vanishes. A beat. Then...

EDDIE

Guys, I'm delighted to tell you there are two thermonuclear missiles headed right for us. Should I take evasive action?

83c

The screens show two huge rockets thundering at us, Zaphod just smiles. Ford steps up.

83c

FORD

Um...yes, computer. Evade!

Massive acceleration! An illuminated dome lowers from the ceiling over the crew seats - creating a safety pod.

84

EXT. ABOVE MAGRATHEA. DAWN

84

The Heart of Gold streaks away. Two large missiles follow and mimic the H.O.G.'s every move.

85

INT. THE BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

85

The crew are thrown from one side of the pod to the other.

EDDIE

There seems to be something jamming my guidance systems. Impact minus 45 seconds. Call me Eddie if it'll help you relax.

(84 cont) EXT. SKY OVER MAGRATHEA - CONTINUOUS

(84 cont)

The H.O.G. streaks forward. The missiles are gaining.

ARTHUR

Computer! DO SOMETHING!!

(CONTINUED)

(84 cont) CONTINUED:

(84 cont)

EDDIE

Sure thing, fellah. Handing over manual control. Good luck!

Big swell of Muzak. The ship drops like a stone. THE MISSILES -- miss, then turn in a screeching curve.

(85 cont) INT. THE SAFETY POD -

(85 cont)

Zaphod tries to wrestle with three controls.

ZAPHOD

I can't do this without my other arm!

(84 cont) THE H.O.G. -- spirals wildly, missiles narrowly missing. (84 cont)

(85 cont) IN THE SAFETY POD - everyone is thrown. (85 cont)

(84 cont) IN THE SKY -- the missiles are dead ahead, shooting straight for us. (84 cont)

(85 cont) IN THE SAFETY POD-- (85 cont)

ZAPHOD

Did we lose them?

FORD

No. They're right behind us.

He looks down, sees the IMPROBABILITY DRIVE BUTTON.

ARTHUR

Look, why don't I just hit this thing?

ZAPHOD

NO! We're here! No telling where it will send us!

(84 cont) IN THE SKY--

(84 cont)

The missiles turn and accelerate high into the sky. A second set of boosters kick in on the missiles as they soar back toward the H.O.G. --- much, much faster.

(85 cont) ON THE BRIDGE--

(85 cont)

They all stare at the approaching missiles. Arthur looks at the drive button. Screw it. He flips open the glass lid.

ZAPHOD

NO!

Too late. ARTHUR HITS THE BUTTON.

WOOMF! Light blasts through the bridge. Morphing madness!

86 EXT. SPACE. - NIGHT

86

Empty for a moment. Then, the HEART OF GOLD reforms. A few beats later, a SPERM WHALE floats into frame followed by a BOWL OF PETUNIAS.

87

INT. THE BRIDGE - NIGHT

87

It coalesces back into shape out of chaos. The safety dome rises revealing our heroes standing in the exact same place they were - dazed.

ZAPHOD

Um...where are we?

TRILLIAN

Exactly where we were, I think.

ZAPHOD

And the missiles?

FORD

Have apparently turned into a bowl of petunias and a very surprised looking whale.

He points to the screen. The whale and petunias float by.

EDDIE

At an improbability factor of eight million, seven hundred and sixty-seven thousand, one hundred and twenty-eight to one against.

They all look to Arthur who shrugs. Zaphod nods his approval. Ford counts on his fingers -- are they even?

He waves it off, gives Arthur a little salute and moves on. Trillian looks to Arthur and musters a smile.

ARTHUR

I could really use a cup of tea.

88

EXT. SPACE - NIGHT

88

The H.O.G. arches away. The whale in mid-air, stops rising, starts falling.

GUIDE VOICE

It is important to note that suddenly, and against all probability, a sperm whale had been called into existence several miles above the surface of an alien planet. And since this is not a naturally tenable position for a whale, this innocent creature had very little time to come to terms with its identity as a whale before it then had to come to terms with suddenly not being a whale any more. This is what it thought as it fell.

The camera moves around the whale as it falls.

(CONTINUED)

84

CONTINUED:

84

WHALE (V.O.)

Ahhhh!!!! What's happening? Excuse me! Who am I? Hello? Why am I here? What's my purpose in life? What do I mean by who am I? What is this 'I' that I want to know what it is? Calm down, get a grip now ... ooh! This is an interesting sensation...

ANGLE: From below. The whale is wriggling a bit.

WHALE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Oh! This is an interesting sensation, what is it? It's a sort of... yawning, tingling sensation in ... well I suppose I'd better start finding names for things if I want to make any headway in what for the sake of what I shall call an argument I shall call the world, so let's call it my stomach! Good. Ooooh! It's getting quite strong now. And hey, what's this whistling roaring sound going past what I'm suddenly going to call my head? Perhaps I can call that ... wind! Is that a good name? It'll do. Perhaps I can give it a better name later when I've found out what it's for! It must be very important because there certainly seems to be an awful lot of it. Hey! What's this thing ... this ... let's call it a tail - yeah! Tail!

The whale thrashes its tail. Between the camera and the whale drops the bowl of petunias. It falls from sight.

WHALE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Hey! I can really thrash it about pretty good, can't I? Wow! Wow! Doesn't seem to achieve much but I'll probably find out what it's for later on. How. Have I built up a coherent picture of things yet? No. Never mind. Hey, this is really exciting, so much to find out about, so much to look forward to, I'm quite dizzy with anticipation ... Or is it the wind? There really is an awful lot of that now, isn't there?

It's eye tries to look down. Camera pulls back from the whale, abandoning it ...

WHALE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

And hey! What's this thing coming suddenly coming towards me very fast, so big and flat and round it needs a big wide-sounding name like ... ow ... ound...round ... ground! That's it, ground! I wonder if it'll be friends with me?

We hear a sickening thud o.s.

(CONTINUED)

84

CONTINUED:

84

GUIDE VOICE

Curiously, the only thing that went through the mind of the bowl of petunias as it fell was "Oh no, not again."

We hear the petunia vase SHATTERING.

GUIDE VOICE (CONT'D)

Many have speculated that if we knew why the bowl of petunias had thought that we would know a lot more about the nature of the Universe than we do now.

DISSOLVE TO:

89

EXT. HEART OF GOLD. MAGRATHEA SURFACE - DAY

89

The gang stand by A HUGE CRATER (the H.O.G. parked in the b.g.) -- a large whale carcass sits in the middle of it -- along with a few petunias. They all grimace.

BEYOND THE CRATER -- they see a formation of large rocks, aligned in a circle. It's the only structure in sight.

They walk toward it.

90

EXT. ROCK FORMATION - DAY

90

Arthur walks behind the others, his head down.

FORD (O.S.)

Hey...this looks familiar.

Arthur looks up, registers surprise.

THE ROCK FORMATION -- looks like Stonehenge - only newer. The rocks letters carved into them that read "DESIGN DEPARTMENT" "SHOWROOM" "EXECUTIVE OFFICES" "TOILETS"

FORD (CONT'D)

Must be portal doors.

ARTHUR

You mean -- the hippies were right?

In the middle of the circle sits a stone receptionist desk with a sign on it that says "OUT TO LUNCH."

Zaphod heads for the "To Design Department" stone. Trillian and Ford follow.

Zaphod feels around it, looking for a switch, a knob, anything. He must've hit something because the front of the stone suddenly slides open revealing a SWIRLING VORTEX THAT LOOKS LIKE A JET ENGINE.

ZAPHOD

Okay. In we go.

(CONTINUED)

90

CONTINUED:

90

ARTHUR

What?! Are you out of what's left of your mind? We can't step into that...that.

FORD

We gotta pick one, right? If it's not the right one, we come back and pick another. No biggie.

ARTHUR

Yes -- big biggie. What if that's the last door we ever step through? What if it rips us into tiny little atomic particle...thingies.

Trillian, who hasn't said a word since leaving Vogosphere, covers her ears - trying to block them out

ZAPHOD

It's the right one. I have a hunch.

ARTHUR

Ford..?

FORD

He's got good hunches. I say we go.

ARTHUR

Go with the hunch of a narcissist with half a brain who's wearing a ridiculous thinking cap!? Are you insane?!

ZAPHOD

Hey, I think I resent that.

ARTHUR

I don't care what you think you think...

They all start arguing over each other. We focus on Trillian -- Anger and frustration building, she covers her ears -- then screams....

TRILLIAN

AHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!!!!!!!!!!

And she takes off running for the door. Suicide? Bravery?

They turn just in time to see her jump into the vortex. She YELPS as her body is bent in half, twisted like a rung mop, then sucked inside.

Arthur is horrified, literally gasping for air. Ford is semi-impressed. Zaphod, unfazed.

ZAPHOD

That's supposed to happen...I think.

Ford shrugs, throws his towel around his neck like a scarf and dives through. Same thing. Bent, twisted...

(CONTINUED)

90

CONTINUED: (2)

90

ZAPHOD (CONT'D)

Hey, wait for me!

He runs after Ford, stops at the door, turns like he's about to board Air Force one, gives a salute, jumps in.

Arthur finally gets his legs to move, steps up -- but hesitates at the threshold, paralyzed with fear, unable to take a step. Then -- FFSSSSH - the door seals shut.

ARTHUR

No. No! NOOO!!!

He bangs on the stone, slides his hand around like Zaphod did, desperately looking for a way to open it. He collapses and buries his head in his hands.

MARVIN

I told you this would all end in tears.

CUT TO:

91

EXT. TEMPLE OF DEEP THOUGHT - MOMENTS LATER

91

Ford stands outside a stone doorway at the end of a cobblestone street. Zaphod's body falls to the ground next to him, untwists, unbends and snaps bolt upright beside them.

Trillian is already heading down the street toward the Temple. Ford and Zaphod hurry to catch up to her.

92

EXT. ROCK FORMATION - DAY

92

Arthur sits with his back against the stone, staring across the field at the beautiful double sunset. He looks over and sees THE TWO MICE FROM THE SHIP -- scurrying toward one of the giant stone doors. They slip through a crack beneath the stone. A FLASH OF LIGHT bursts through the crack. Arthur barely reacts, so drained of emotion.

ARTHUR

Life is full of paradoxes, isn't it?

MARVIN

Don't talk to me about life.

ARTHUR

Here I am, God knows how far from home...

MARVIN

Don't talk to me about God.

ARTHUR

...and this is where I see the most spectacular sunset I've ever laid eyes on. We only had the one sun at home. Planet called Earth.

(CONTINUED)

92

CONTINUED:

92

MARVIN

I know. You keep going on about it. It sounds awful.

ARTHUR

Oh no, it's beautiful. Or at least, it was...

MARVIN

Did it have oceans?

ARTHUR

Yes. Great wide rolling blue oceans.

MARVIN

Can't bear oceans.

Arthur looks up at Marvin.

ARTHUR

So this is how it will all end, then? Me, on a dead planet -- with a manically depressed robot.

MARVIN

You think you've got problems? What are you supposed to do if you are a manically depressed robot? No, don't bother to answer that, I'm fifty thousand times more intelligent than you and even I don't know the answer. It gives me a headache just trying to think down to your level.

SLARTIBARTFAST (O.S.)

Excuse me.

Arthur spins to see AN OLD, BEARDED MAN IN LONG ROBES.

ARTHUR

Aah!

He jumps, crab walks backwards away from the man.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Who are you?

SLARTIBARTFAST

My name is not important.

Arthur continues to scramble away from the man.

SLARTIBARTFAST (CONT'D)

You must come with me. Terrible events are afoot. You must come or you'll be late.

ARTHUR

Late? What for?

SLARTIBARTFAST

What is your name, Earthman?

(CONTINUED)

92

CONTINUED: (2)

92

ARTHUR

Dent. Arthur Dent.

SLARTIBARTFAST

Late as in "the late Dentarthurdent."
It's a sort of threat you see. Never been
much good at them myself, but I'm told
they can be terribly effective.

He motions to the stone that is marked "To Showroom."

SLARTIBARTFAST (CONT'D)

Your friends are safe. You can trust me.

ARTHUR

Trust a man who won't tell me his name?

SLARTIBARTFAST

My name? Very well...
(heaves a sigh, reluctant)
My name is...Slartibartfast.

Arthur reacts with a furrowed brow.

SLARTIBARTFAST (CONT'D)

I said it wasn't important.

Slartibartfast motions to the door. He looks to Marvin.

MARVIN

I could calculate your chances of survival
-- but you won't like it.

Arthur rises, cautiously moves over to Slarti's side.

SLARTIBARTFAST

I must warn you. We are about to pass
through, well, a sort of gateway thing. It
may disturb you. It scares the willies out
of me.

He puts his hand on a certain spot in the stone and
presses. The stone dissolves revealing once again the
jet engine swirling vortex. Slarti motions -- after you.

Arthur takes a deep breath -- and steps in.

ARTHUR

Whaa!

He is bent, twisted and sucked away. Slarti follows.

Marvin stands for a moment, then looks up to...

92a

THE SKY--

92a

where the fleet of Vogon ships has now arrived.

MARVIN

Funny how just when you think life can't
possibly get any worse, it suddenly does.

CUT TO:

93

INT. VOGON DESTROYER SHIP, BRIDGE - NIGHT

93

Kwaltz sits in his chair as they press forward. The GHOSTLY IMAGE of the recorded message appears.

GHOSTLY IMAGE

This is a recorded announcement as we're all out at the moment. The Commercial council of Magrathea thanks you for...

KWALTZ

Turn that off.

CUT TO:

94

INT. MAGRATHEA/PLANET SHOWROOM - DAY

94

Arthur is hunched over a litter bin, barfing.

SLARTIBARTFAST

I told you you might find it a bit disturbing.

ARTHUR

I have found this whole day a bit disturbing.

Arthur realizes he has his towel with him. He wipes his mouth with it, dabs his brow. Then he notices...

...THE ROOM -- which is like a car dealer's showroom only instead of cars there are models of various planets.

SLARTIBARTFAST

Did you know we built planets?

No. Arthur didn't know that. He looks perplexed.

SLARTIBARTFAST (CONT'D)

Fascinating trade. Doing the coastlines was always my favorite. Used to have endless fun doing all the little fiddly bits round fjords. But the Galactic economy collapsed, and seeing that custom-built planets are something of a luxury commodity...

(getting back on subject)

At any rate, there's been a terrible mix up with your planet. You must come with me or it's all going to blow up in our faces. The best laid plans of mice, you know...

ARTHUR

...and men.

SLARTIBARTFAST

Mmmm? What?

ARTHUR

The best laid plans of mice and men.

(CONTINUED)

94 CONTINUED: 94

SLARTIBARTFAST

I don't think men have got much to do with it.

Arthur looks confused. Slarti motions him to a door.

95 Arthur readies his towel at his mouth as Slarti hits a button. The door slides open and nothing happens. It's just a door that leads to a room where several TRANSPORT CARTS move past -- like a kids ride at Disneyland. They step into one. Slarti closes the little door. The cart MOVES through a curtain, out into DEEP SPACE. 95

PULL BACK - till the cart is no more than a speck being pushed forward by the longest telescoping arm in history.

96 INT. - PLANET FACTORY - NIGHT 96

The space is millions of miles across. Floating in it are half-finished planets, construction gantries around them.

SLARTIBARTFAST (CONT'D)

Welcome to our factory floor.

ON ARTHUR - who is positively blown away.

CUT TO:

97 INT. TEMPLE OF DEEP THOUGHT - CONTINUOUS 97

Ford, Zaphod and Trillian enter the dimly lit temple. They hear a faint, tinny sound. They follow it.

FURTHER DOWN THE CORRIDOR...

The sound gets louder. Tinny music. And laughter... Flickering light illuminates the end of the corridor.

ZAPHOD

This is it!

He quickens his pace. Trillian and Ford follow. They round the corner to find...

DEEP THOUGHT -- sitting there majestically. The TINNY MUSIC emanates from somewhere near him.

Zaphod takes another step in and now sees the source of the TINNY MUSIC.

Deep Thought is watching TV. A violent, stupid cartoon.

ZAPHOD (CONT'D)

Deep Thought...!

DEEP THOUGHT

Shhh. This is a good bit.

The cartoon continues. Zaphod enters, removes his thinking cap and reverently approaches. He kneels...

(CONTINUED)

97

CONTINUED:

97

ZAPHOD

Oh great Deep Thought...we have traveled long...and far. Have you calculated... the Ultimate Question? Of Life, the Universe and Everything?

DEEP THOUGHT

No.

ZAPHOD

No?

DEEP THOUGHT

I've been watching TV.

ZAPHOD

Oh...

Zaphod holds a smile but his world is slowly crumbling.

DEEP THOUGHT

I designed another computer to perform that great task.

ZAPHOD

Oh, right...I forgot.
(looking around)
Is it here?

DEEP THOUGHT

Not here. Another world.

ZAPHOD

It's on another world?

DEEP THOUGHT

It is another world. Or was.

ZAPHOD

Where?

DEEP THOUGHT

Ask your companion.

Zaphod turns to Ford. Ford looks confused.

DEEP THOUGHT (CONT'D)

Not him.

Zaphod looks to Trillian. She looks equally confused. Zaphod puts the thinking cap back on. Strains hard.

ZAPHOD

Okay -- you're sure you don't have the Question? Or a way to you, you know -- access it or something. I think I've done like a lot to get here...

(CONTINUED)

97

CONTINUED: (2)

97

DEEP THOUGHT

Shhhhhh...

Zaphod looks up. Deep Thought is shushing him?

DEEP THOUGHT (CONT'D)

The show's back on.

A robotic arm reaches out and turns up the volume.

Zaphod stands, turns to Ford and Trillian, smiles that smile -- but it's starting to look a bit crazed.

ZAPHOD

Great. This is just great. Let's go find something else for my entire life to be about.

He starts to march off. Ford grabs his arm.

FORD

Zaphod. The gun? The one Humma sent us for? We have to get it. You gave the guy your head.

ZAPHOD

I know. Why did I do that?

He pulls his thinking cap down -- all the way over his eyes. Ford rolls his eyes, turns...

FORD

Um...Deep Thought? We we're told you have a g...

Before he finishes the sentence, a PANEL in the wall slides open revealing a LARGE, SCARY LOOKING GUN. A robotic arm pushes it forward.

Ford goes over, takes it, carries it like it's nitroglycerin to Zaphod who's already walking away,

CORRIDOR LEADING AWAY FROM DEEP THOUGHT

Ford hands Zaphod the gun.

FORD (CONT'D)

Here. Take it. I don't do guns.

Zaphod takes it with a smile...

ZAPHOD

Thank you.

...and instantly points it at his head. Ford lunges for it. There's a struggle. Ford's trying to get Zaphod's finger off the trigger when CLICK! The trigger is pulled. Ford winces. But apparently, nothing has happened.

ZAPHOD (CONT'D)

Great! This is a bust, too!

(CONTINUED)

97

CONTINUED: (3)

97

FORD

Hey, man, you must be really frustrated. To go through all you did only to come here and get no answer, which means no fame and money, and you deserve that, man. Because you're great -- you're just really, really great.

Zaphod isn't sure what just happened. But he smiles anyway. Trillian, however, is onto something.

TRILLIAN

Give me that thing.

BACK TO:

98

INT. MAGRATHEA. PLANET FACTORY. CONSTRUCTION PLATFORM

98

The transport cart moves past two half-finished planets and on toward a 3rd planet. Construction gantries and clouds obscure our view.

SLARTIBARTFAST

The galaxy was a bit of a shambles, you see. Everyone enjoying themselves being singers and comedians and really creative and interesting things like that. No one doing the boring jobs.

ARTHUR

Oh, you had that problem, too?

SLARTIBARTFAST

In spades. So a species was genetically engineered to do the boring jobs. Tax inspectors, traffic wardens, government officials. We were commissioned to build a special planet for them. Problem was, some cleverdick made it so any time one of the creatures had an interesting idea it would get a hefty smack around the face.

ARTHUR

What? You did that? I've been there!

The cart lowers down toward the surface of the planet.

SLARTIBARTFAST

Then I gather you've met some of the inhabitants.

ARTHUR

The Vogons?

SLARTIBARTFAST

(shuddering)
Relentless blighters.

99a EXT. MAGRATHEA - DAY 99a

TWO MISSILES screech overhead and soar up toward...

THE VOGON SHIPS - descending from space. The missiles each hit a ship. They explode. Two more missiles fire, taking out two more ships. But several ships do land. Marvin watches from within the Stonehenge formation.

99 MARVIN 99

Life. Loathe it or ignore it, you can't like it.

BACK TO:

100 INT. CORRIDOR/TEMPLE OF DEEP THOUGHT - DAY 100

CLOSE ON ZAPHOD

ZAPHOD

...and you're right, I shouldn't be so upset 'cause life goes on and I should just go on with it, right?

PULL BACK TO REVEAL -- Ford is hesitantly aiming the gun at Zaphod.

TRILLIAN

Shoot him again.

Ford reluctantly pulls the trigger. CLICK.

ZAPHOD

Hitchhiking is good. Towels are good, too.

TRILLIAN

Brilliant.

FORD

Yeah. I kinda like this.

She take the gun from him.

TRILLIAN

A gun that makes people suddenly see things from your point of view. Useful tool for the deranged evangelist trying to convert the masses, eh?

She starts walking.

TRILLIAN (CONT'D)

We should get back. Arthur's waiting.

ZAPHOD

Who cares?

TRILLIAN

(spinning on him; pointed)

I do -- especially since we're both somewhat of an endangered species now.

(CONTINUED)

100

CONTINUED:

100

ZAPHOD

Why so edgy?

She can't believe he's asking this. She aims the gun, CLICK!

ZAPHOD (CONT'D)

Of course you're edgy, your planet's been blown up and you've been tooling around the Galaxy with the guy who signed the order

CLICK. She shoots him again.

ZAPHOD (CONT'D)

You actually wanted to know the Question because you always thought there was more to life, and now you're crushed because you find out there really isn't.

She's getting angrier and more hurt. CLICK.

ZAPHOD (CONT'D)

You've got no home, no family, no one to be with -- and you're stuck with me, another in a long line of men who doesn't appreciate you because he's too busy appreciating himself.

Hearing this puts a lump in her throat, causes her eyes to well with tears. She lowers the gun.

Zaphod shakes his head -- the effect wearing off. But he realizes what he said and doesn't like it.

ZAPHOD (CONT'D)

Give me that thing.

He grabs the gun, points it at her.

TRILLIAN

Won't affect me. I'm already a woman.

Before he can react, A BRIGHT LIGHT SHINES BEHIND THEM. They turn, shielding their eyes.

ZAPHOD

Uh oh -- oh. It's okay, it's only a couple of...

FLASH! KEEEOOW! They are engulfed in WHITE LIGHT.

BACK TO:

101

EXT. DEEP SPACE (FACTORY FLOOR) - CONTINUOUS

101

The transport cart continues toward the 3rd planet.

SLARTIBARTFAST

Here we are, then. Look familiar?

Arthur turns and looks. There before him is...

101a EARTH -- Arthur is thunderstruck...then confused. 101a

ARTHUR

So -- it wasn't destroyed?

SLARTIBARTFAST

Actually, it was. This is a back-up.
Earth Mark II.

ARTHUR

So you're saying you ... made the Earth?

SLARTIBARTFAST

Well, not me alone. It was a group
effort. I did my part, though. Ever heard
of a place, I think it's called Norway?

101b Arthur nods. The cart pushes through the clouds, towards 101b
Ayers Rock. A GUY ON A LADDER is painting it it's
familiar red color. Some of it is still primer grey.

SLARTIBARTFAST (CONT'D)

That was one of mine. Won an award you
know. Lovely crinkly edges. I was sorry
to hear about it being blown up. Shocking
cock up. The mice were furious.

ARTHUR

Mice? Who cares about bloody mice?

SLARTIBARTFAST

Are you a fan of plate tectonics?

Arthur looks up. Slartibartfast points down.

101c ANOTHER MAN pushes a button causing mountains to spring 101c
up noisily.

SLARTIBARTFAST (CONT'D)

Voila! Himalayas. Good, eh?

Arthur is working very hard to process all this.

101d JUMP CUT. They move through a forest where a man presses 101d
a lever making several MUSHROOMS pop up on the ground.

SLARTIBARTFAST (CONT'D)

Earthman, you must realize that the planet
you lived on was commissioned, paid for,
and run by mice. It was destroyed shortly
before the completion of the purpose for
which it was built. Ten minutes later, we
would have been free and clear. But we
gave them our standard ten million year
warranty and they have come here to
retrieve this back-up copy. And they've
brought you with them.

The transport cart flies out of forest toward the ocean.

(CONTINUED)

101d

CONTINUED:

101d

ARTHUR

They brought...I'm sorry, when you say "mice" do you mean the little white furry creatures with the cheese fixation?

SLARTIBARTFAST

These creatures you call "mice" are merely the protrusion into our dimension of hyper-intelligent pan-dimensional beings. The whole business with the cheese must've been a front. They were experimenting on you, you see. A vast computer program...

ARTHUR

Ah. I see where you're confused. You see -- we were experimenting on them.

101e

Over the ocean, a "Perfect Storm" wave rolls toward them.

101e

SLARTIBARTFAST

Oh, I gather they arranged for you to conduct some primitively staged experiments so they could prod your thinking here and there. But you were actually elements in the computer program. They really are very clever hyper-intelligent pan-dimensional beings.

(looking down)

Ah. They've nearly finished the oceans.

101f

They move toward the white cliffs of Dover. A man stands on a cliff holding a giant hose, water spewing from it.

101f

ARTHUR

So -- you're trying to tell me that mice designed and built Deep Thought...and Deep Thought designed the Earth...which was a giant supercomputer...that you built...to calculate the Ultimate Question. Only, Vogons destroyed it ten minutes before the program was completed?

SLARTIBARTFAST

That's bureaucracy for you.

ARTHUR

Actually, this explains a lot. All my life I've had this strange feeling that something was going on in the world, something big, something sinister ...

SLARTIBARTFAST

That's just perfectly normal paranoia. Everyone in the universe has that.

102

EXT. EARTH II. ENGLISH COUNTRYSIDE - CONTINUOUS

102

A & S swoop down and soar over the English countryside -- partially constructed; tall tree stocks with branch and leaves lying beside them, waiting to be attached. Men rolling out sod like a giant carpet, etc.

(CONTINUED)

102 CONTINUED: 102

SLARTIBARTFAST

I don't know, perhaps I'm old and tired, but I always think that the chances of finding out what's really going on are so absurdly remote that the only thing to do is say hang the sense of it and keep yourself busy. I'd much rather be happy than right any day.

ARTHUR

And are you?

SLARTIBARTFAST

No. That's where it all falls down of course.
(slowing the platform)
Here we are, then.

103 The platform slows to a stop. Arthur steps out and is stunned to see... 103

HIS HOUSE. It's partially constructed. The chimney lies intact on the ground, waiting to be hoisted up. A row of hedges lies on it's side beside a trench. But it's his house alright.

ARTHUR

Is this...?

Slartibartfast nods. Arthur, in a daze, stumbles toward the house.

103a INT. ARTHUR DENT'S HOUSE/MARK 2 - CONTINUOUS 103a

Arthur enters his house. There is no furniture, no photographs or books or any evidence of his existence there. He feels the walls, the countertops. He's home?

TRILLIAN (O.S.)

Arthur!

Arthur pokes his head around a wall to find...

104 FORD, ZAPHOD AND TRILLIAN -- sitting at an elegantly set table -- stuffing their faces with a meal fit for a king. 104

103a INT. ARTHUR DENT'S HOUSE/MARK 2 - 103a

ARTHUR

What -- what are you doing? What happened to you?

They talk while continuing to stuff food in their mouths.

FORD

Funniest thing. (*chew, chew*) Our hosts attacked us with Dismodulating Anti Phase Stun Mist (*chew, chew*) then brought us to this amazing meal as a way to make it up to us (*chew, chew*). Try the mutton. It's fantastic.

(CONTINUED)

103a

CONTINUED:

103a

ZAPHOD

(mouth full)

Zarking incredible.

They can't seem to stop eating, like they've been drugged.

ARTHUR

Hosts attack you --? And then you sit down for -- is that tea?

Arthur has spotted a TEA POT on the table. He hurries to it, feels it. Warm. He pours a cup, takes a sip, Closes his eyes, enjoying it.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Now that's a cup of tea.

FRANKY MOUSE (O.S.)

We're glad you like it, Earth creature.

He looks down and sees THE TWO WHITE MICE sitting on a silver platter.

BENJY MOUSE

After ten million years on Earth, and a rather large chunk of that time in England, it would be utterly humiliating if we didn't know how to make a decent pot of tea.

Arthur stares in shock...can't speak.

TRILLIAN

Arthur, these are our hosts. Benjy mouse and Franky mouse (*chew, chew*). They control a large sector of the Universe in our dimension (*chew, chew*). I'm sorry, I thought you were told about the mice...

ARTHUR

Yes. Yes, I was. I just wasn't quite prepared for the full reality of it.

He steadies himself on the table.

BENJY MOUSE

Sit, Earthman. Eat.

Benjy pushes his hand through the air, the chair at the end slides backward.

ARTHUR

In a moment, perhaps. I can't seem to let go of this table.

Slartibartfast steps forward.

(CONTINUED)

103a

CONTINUED: (2)

103a

SLARTIBARTFAST

Pardon the interruption, but I'll just be getting back to work now.

BENJY MOUSE

That won't be necessary, Slartibartfast.

ZAPHOD

(cracking up, like he's stoned)
Smarty fart blast?

BENJY/FRANKY

Eat!

ZAPHOD

Right.

BENJY MOUSE

It looks like we won't be needing the new Earth after all, now that we've found the only living native of the planet.

SLARTIBARTFAST

But...they've nearly finished the oceans.

FRAHKY MOUSE

That will be all, Slartibartfast.

Slarti, slightly hurt, backs away out of sight.

ARTHUR

I'm sorry, when you say "the only living native" -- do you mean me? What about her?

Benjy holds up a strand of hairs, same color as Trillian's.

BENJY MOUSE

We performed some rudimentary DNA tests on the ship. She's half-native. Her real father was a Blahardid, the hyper-intelligent yet carelessly nomadic race native to the planet Olbed, who apparently popped in to Earth for a one-nighter with a one Ms. Francis McMillan.

TRILLIAN

(looking up, mouth full)
Which explains a lot.

She goes back to eating. Arthur is taking this all in.

ARTHUR

So -- mostly harmless and me. That's it.

BENJY MOUSE

We're sorry to have stage managed you so shamelessly, but once we learned you were the only full-blooded Earthling in the universe, it was important that we get you here by any means necessary.

(CONTINUED)

103a

CONTINUED: (3)

103a

FRANKY MOUSE

We've spent a considerable amount of time on your planet trying to find this wretched Ultimate Question, and the thought of doing it all over again on account of those idiotic Vogons sickens me to no end. Which is why you're here.

BENJY MOUSE

Sit, Earthling. Sit.

Arthur goes to pull out the chair beside him.

BENJY/FRANKY

NOT THERE!

Arthur jumps. The others look up. Benjy and Franky cover their outburst with a smile.

BENJY MOUSE

This chair is much more - comfortable.

Benjy makes a motion. The chair he pushed out before slides over behind Arthur's knees, making him sit.

BENJY MOUSE (CONT'D)

Drink.

He slides the cup of tea over. Arthur takes a sip.

ARTHUR

Mmmm. This really is delicious.

BENJY MOUSE

Good. Glad you like it. Now -- to business.

Ford and Zaphod raise their glasses like drunken sailors.

FORD/ZAPHOD

To business!

Benjy and Franky fire them a look.

ZAPHOD

Sorry. Thought you were proposing a toast.

BENJY/FRANKY

EAT!

Ford and Zaphod eat. Benjy turns to Arthur. Smiles. No one notices, through the window, a row of Vogons cresting the hill.

BENJY MOUSE

About this Ultimate Question. You see, we've been offered a quite enormously fat contract to do the 5D TV chat show and lecture circuit, and quite frankly, we're very much inclined to take it.

(CONTINUED)

103a

CONTINUED: (4)

103a

FRANKY MOUSE

But - and here's the point - we have to have product. Which means we still need an ultimate question.

BENJY MOUSE

Or at least, one that sounds ultimate.

FRANKY HOUSE

Yes. Got to sound good.

ARTHUR

An Ultimate Question that sounds good...
From a couple of mice...for a chat show.

FRANKY MOUSE

And as it turns out, the chances are astronomically high that the structure of the question is encoded in your brain. Which is why we need it. More tea?

Franky tries to pour more tea. Arthur stops drinking, a little woozy. Did he hear them right?

ARTHUR

I'm sorry -- did you just say you need my brain?

BENJY MOUSE

Yes. To extract the question.

ARTHUR

You can't have my brain. I'm using it.

FRANKY MOUSE

Barely.

BENJY MOUSE

We can replace it if you think it's important. An electronic brain maybe.

FRANKY MOUSE

A simple one should suffice. Who would know the difference?

ARTHUR

I would!

FRANKY MOUSE

No, you wouldn't. We could program you not to.

Arthur tries to get up. Clamps spring up from the chair and wrap around his arms. A dome flips over from the back and slams down on his head. Arthur struggles.

ARTHUR

Ford! Zaphod! TRILLIAN!!

(CONTINUED)

103a

CONTINUED: (5)

103a

They're gorging on the food, half-lidded, out of it.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

What are they-- what's in the food?!
WHAT WAS IN THAT TEA!?

The platter the mice are standing on rises up, moves toward Arthur, ominous surgical instruments spring from it.

BENJY MOUSE

Don't worry. You won't feel a thing.

The mice on the platter move ominously toward Arthur. Arthur, still attached to the chair, backs away.

Scythes and rotating arms with circular saw blades shoot out -- ominous surgical equipment to remove his brain.

ARTHUR

Wait a minute, JUST WAIT A SODDING
MINUTE!!

The scythes and arms stop spinning. Arthur stumbles backwards and sits down in the chair. The others stop eating and listen.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

You want the question that goes with the answer "42" How about "What's six times seven?" Or "How many Vogons does it take to screw in a lightbulb?" Or here's one, "How many roads must a man walk down?"

BENJY MOUSE

Hey, that's not bad.

Through the opposite window (in much the same way bulldozers arrived in the opening) we see more Vogons arriving.

ARTHUR

Fine. Take it. There's plenty more where that came from because my head is filled, with questions, and I can assure you mate, no answer to any of them has ever brought me one iota of happiness. Confusion? Yes. Indecision? Loads. But happiness...?

He shakes his head.

BENJY MOUSE

We don't want to be happy. We want to be rich.

FRANKY MOUSE

Take his brain.

(CONTINUED)

103a CONTINUED: (6)

103a

Benjy steers the platter toward Arthur. He jerks his arms up. They break free of the shackles and hit the platter. The mice fly through the air and land on the table -- right beside the POV gun. They scramble to their feet.

BENJY MOUSE

Shoot him!!

They try to lift the POV gun but it's way too heavy.

Arthur, his butt still strapped in the chair, leaps over to the table and grabs the first thing he sees -- a leg of mutton. He raises it high. Benjy and Franky look up.

FRANKY MOUSE

Oh, shit.

Arthur brings the mutton down, squashing them flat.

The others instantly snap out of their food induced haze, Zaphod suddenly clutches his gut.

ZAPHOD

Ohhhh, I think I'm gonna be sick.

Arthur looks up and now he sees the Vogons marching down the hill toward the house. He leans over the table, bumping his teacup. IT SHATTERS TO THE GROUND.

105 ON THE HILL JUST BEYOND --

105

An ARMY OF VOGON POLICE march over it. Amongst them...

MARVIN -- marches as well, a gun held to his head.

MARVIN

(to the Vogon)

I must warn you, I'm feeling very depressed.

KWALTZ

Mr. President! We are here for your protection!

Zaphod appears at the front door and waves Presidentially.

ZAPHOD

Thank you!

106 The Police open fire. Zaphod and the others flee as the barrage of fire continues. Trillian drops the POV gun, goes back for it. Arthur stops her and pulls her behind the truck. Marvin catches a bullet in the back of his head -- sparks fly and he is thrown forwards! Is he dead?

106

BEHIND THE TRUCK --

FORD looks at MARVIN lying face down in the dirt -- his head emitting smoke.

(CONTINUED)

106

CONTINUED:

106

FORD

Okay -- that thing I said about not saving my life because we're even? Scratch that. Save at will.

TRILLIAN

We need that gun.

ZAPHOD

(campaign sound-byte)
We need tighter gun control!

FORD

We need his other head.
(an idea)
Okay -- I'll create a distraction.

He holds up his towel.

ARTHUR

(sarcastic)
Brilliant plan. I'm certain it will work.

FORD

(squinting at Arthur)
You know -- I think sometimes you say things that mean something other than what you're actually saying.

More gunfire erupts. Ford spins his towel until it's twisted and taught. He leaps up and runs towards...

107

...THE VOGON POLICE FORCE -- who see him coming, his towel held like he's going to whip someone on the ass.

107

FORD (CONT'D)

AHHHHHHHH!!!!

The Vogons are so caught off guard, they back away.

TRILLIAN

Now!

108

She and Arthur both run out toward the gun.

108

ARTHUR

I thought I was...what are you... get back... okay fine...

TRILLIAN

I thought I was...I'll get it... you already... fine, fine

They each grab the gun just as Questular realizes...

QUESTULAR

It's a towel! It's only a TOWEL!! GET HIM!!

The Police stop their retreat, raise their guns, move forward. Ford skids to a stop and runs back toward Arthur and Trillian, both clinging to the gun, running back toward the truck. GUNFIRE ERUPTS. A and T TRIP. The POV gun goes flying and lands in... MARVIN'S ARMS.

(CONTINUED)

108

CONTINUED:

108

The Vogon Police run in formation toward the gang. Ford looks back, sees the Vogons approaching. He looks forward, sees Marvin raising the gun.

FORD

Duck!

ZAPHOD

Where?

He looks to the skies just as Ford fans out his towel and uses it to bring Z, A & T to the ground just as...

MARVIN FIRES THE POV GUN,

Questular ducks. CLICK. The entire Vogon Police force is hit. They instantly stop. Their shoulders slump.

VOGON POLICE FORCE

(in unison)

Oh what's the point?

They turn their weapons on themselves and...

ANGLE ON FORD, ZAPHOD, ARTHUR AND TRILLIAN - turning their heads as we hear the weapons fire. They look up.

108a

All the Vogon Police lie motionless on the ground including Kwaltz. Questular is the last man standing.

108a

He marches toward them, patches of clump baldness on his head. He drops to his knees.

QUESTULAR

Shoot me. Please Zaphod. Shoot me.

Zaphod takes the gun, fires it at Questular. He rises -- and paints on a big smile.

QUESTULAR (CONT'D)

What am I so pissed off about? I'm great? I'm zarking incredible! Everyone loves me! WHOOO HOOO!!! Look at me...etc.

Questular runs towards a lake/blow hole, takes off his clothes and jumps in.

ZAPHOD

Marvin. You saved our lives.

MARVIN

I know. Wretched, isn't it?

QUESTULAR

(distant) Oh man! I love being me!!

They share a laugh. Arthur approaches Slartibartfast.

ARTHUR

Thank you.

(CONTINUED)

108a

CONTINUED:

108a

SLARTIBARTFAST

I've just been informed by some of the lads that since we're so near completion, we're going to go ahead and finish Earth. We can put it back exactly the way it was when you left, you know -- unless there's anything you'd like to change. Something you think your planet could do without?

Arthur thinks about it...looks around...slowly nods...

ARTHUR

Yes. Me.

He looks to Trillian who raises an eyebrow. Really? She smiles.

TRILLIAN

Let's go somewhere.

ARTHUR

Yes, You name it. I'll go.

ZAPHOD

I'm going to Humma's. He has my head...I think. Doesn't he? I'm so confused.

FORD

And I'm hungry. After we get your head let's grab a bite. I know this great restaurant at the end of the universe.

As they walk away, we CUT TO...

109

SLARTI'S FACTORY ELEVATOR -- where they all board.

109

SLARTIBARTFAST

Okay. Hold tight.

Everyone grabs the rail, except for Trillian who holds on to Arthur. SSSSSHHHHHHHHHVUMP! Up into the sky they go.

VOICE (O.S.)

Stand-by for commencement of life cycle.
All systems checked and cleared.
Commencing.

We hear KL-KLUNK. BZZZZZZZ... and watch nature burst into life - animals run - flowers bloom - waterfalls cascade - mountains rise in the mist - monkeys bathe in hot springs etc. Set to a wonderful, uplifting piece of music ("WHAT A WONDERFUL WORLD?").

Tilt up to the sky. The day turns to night. Stars appear. The Heart of Gold streaks through the stars.

the end