



**DON'T**

**PANIC**



**DOUGLAS ADAMS &  
THE HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE  
TO THE GALAXY**



**NEIL**



**GAIMAN**



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# APPENDIX I

## HITCHHIKER'S - THE ORIGINAL SYNOPSIS

### THE HITCH-HIKER'S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY.

Douglas Adams.

The show is a science fiction comedy adventure in time and space, which weaves in and out of fantasy, jokes, satire, parallel universes and time warps, in the wake of two men who are researching the New Revised Edition of the Hitch Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy, an electronic 'book' designed to help the footloose wanderer find his way round the marvels of the Universe for less than thirty Altairian dollars a day.

One of the men is an extraterrestrial who has spent some years living incognito on the Earth. When he first arrived the minimal research he had done suggested to him that the name Ford Prefect would be nicely inconspicuous. The other is an Earthman, ~~Arthur Dent~~ <sup>Arthur Dent</sup> who was a friend of Ford's for years without realising that he wasn't a perfectly ordinary human being.

The first episode tells of how Ford reveals the truth about himself to an incredulous ~~Arthur~~ <sup>Arthur</sup>, and how they both escape from a doomed Earth to begin their wanderings.

The story starts as <sup>Arthur</sup> Alesio is lying on the ground in the path of a bulldozer which is about to demolish his house to make away for a new by-pass. Having fought the plans at every level, this is his last ditch effort. He is arguing with a man from the council who is pointing out to him in a Godfatherly way that the bulldozer driver is a rather careless gentleman who isn't too fussy about what he drives over. In the middle of this confrontation Ford arrives in a rather anxious state and asks <sup>Arthur</sup> Alesio if he's busy at all, and if there's somewhere they can go and have a chat. <sup>Arthur</sup> Alesio, astonished, refuses to move. Ford is very insistent and eventually <sup>Arthur</sup> Alesio calls the man from the council and asks him if they could declare a truce for half an hour. The councilman very charmingly agrees and says that if he likes to slip away for half an hour he'll make sure they don't try and knock his house till he gets back, word of honour. Ford and <sup>Arthur</sup> Alesio repair to a nearby pub, where Ford asks <sup>Arthur</sup> Alesio how he would react if he told him that he wasn't from Guildford at all but from a small planet in the vicinity of Betelgeuse.

As soon as they're out of the way the councilman orders the demolition ceremony to start. A local lady dignitary makes a very moving speech about how wonderful life will suddenly become as soon as the bypass is built, and swings a bottle of champagne against the bulldozer, which moves in for the kill.

The sound of the crashing building reaches <sup>Arthur</sup> Alesio who is in the middle of not believing a word that Ford is telling him, and he charges back to his ex-house shouting about what a naughty world we live in.

At that moment the sky is suddenly torn apart by the scream of jets, and a fleet of flying saucers streak towards the Earth. As everyone flees in panic an unearthly voice rings through the air announcing that due to redevelopment of this sector of the galaxy they are building a new hyperspace bypass and the Earth will unfortunately have to be dismantled.

demolished. In answer to appalled cries of protest the voice says that the plans have <sup>been</sup> on public display in the planning office in Alpha Centauri for ten years, so it's far too late to start making a fuss now. He orders the demolition to start. A low rumble slowly builds into an earshattering explosion, followed by silence.

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~~Arthur~~ <sup>Arthur</sup> wakes, not knowing where he is. Ford tells him they've managed to get a lift aboard one of the ships of the Vagon Constructor Fleet. Not to worry about the Earth, he says, there are an infinite multiplicity of parallel universes in which the Earth is still alive and well. He explains how they got on the ship by producing a copy of an electronic book called the Hitch Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy. Under the entry marked 'Vagon Constructors' it gives detailed instructions as to the best way of hitching a ride from one of their ships - you have to play on Vagon psychology, which it describes. Ford explains that it's his job to research a new edition of the book, which is now a little out of date. Would ~~Arthur~~ <sup>Arthur</sup> like to accompany him in the task? ~~Arthur~~ <sup>Arthur</sup> only wants to get back to Earth, or at least, it's nearest equivalent. However, he is fascinated to browse through this strange book. He is suddenly appalled when he discovers ~~the~~ Earth's entry. Though the book is over a million pages long, the inhabitants of the Earth only warrant a one word entry - 'Harmless'. Ford, rather embarrassed, explains that the reason he had been on Earth was to gather a bit more material. He'd had a bit of an argument with the editor over it, but finally he'd been allowed to expand the entry to 'Mostly harmless'. They're very short of space.

~~Arthur~~ <sup>Arthur</sup> is stung to the quick. He agrees to go with Ford.

END OF EPISODE ONE.

### MITCH MIKER'S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY

Some suggestions for future development.

Each episode should be more or less self contained, but lead on quite naturally to the next one, perhaps with a 'cliff hanger'.

A narrative structure can be achieved by having short extracts read from the Guide itself, since much of its information would naturally be presented in the form of anecdote.

Ford and Aleric frequently have to subsidise their travels by taking odd jobs along the way; as well as strange new worlds they can visit parallel alternatives of Earth which are more or less the same, but not quite...; they find that many of the eccentric alien races they encounter epitomise some particular human folly such as greed, pretentiousness etc., rather in the manner of Gulliver's Travels.

In one episode they are hired by a fabulously wealthy but rather nervous man to act as 'internal body guards'. For this they are reduced to microscopic size in order to escort meals through his digestive system.

In another they encounter a race of dentists, exiled from their home planet for having pronounced that everything you can possibly eat or breathe, up to and including toothpaste, is bad for your teeth. They have been told not to return till they have ~~maximally~~ evolved an entirely new way of life that is both hygienic and fun.

In another episode they find themselves on an 'alternative' Earth which is receiving its first visitation from alien beings who announce that they have come to pay court at the home of the most intelligent life form in the Galaxy. After a lot of self satisfied parading by the humans it turns out that it was the dolphins the aliens actually had in mind.

The 'Guide' structure should allow for the almost unlimited development of freewheeling ideas whilst at the same time retaining a fairly simple and coherent shape and purpose.