

Mostly Harmless Study Guide

Mostly Harmless by Douglas Adams

(c)2015 BookRags, Inc. All rights reserved.



Contents

Mostly Harmless Study Guide.....	1
Contents.....	2
Plot Summary.....	3
Chapter 1 and Chapter 2.....	4
Chapter 3 and Chapter 4.....	7
Chapter 5 and Chapter 6.....	8
Chapter 7 and Chapter 8.....	10
Chapter 9 and Chapter 10.....	12
Chapter 11 and Chapter 12.....	14
Chapter 13 and Chapter 14.....	16
Chapter 15 and Chapter 16.....	17
Chapter 17 and Chapter 18.....	19
Chapter 19 and Chapter 20.....	21
Chapter 21 and Chapter 22.....	22
Chapter 23, Chapter 24 and Chapter 25.....	24
Characters.....	26
Objects/Places.....	29
Themes.....	31
Style.....	33
Quotes.....	36
Topics for Discussion.....	37



Plot Summary

Mostly Harmless by Douglas Adams centers around the potential breakdown of the Galaxy. The three main characters go on individual missions ruled by chaos and disorder. Arthur Dent searches for a new life, Ford Prefect fights the bad guys and Tricia McMillian boards an alien spaceship. The experiences of all three characters seal the fate of the Galaxy.

The novel opens with a computer program in complete meltdown mode on the Grebulon ship. The central mission module is damaged beyond repair. The crew's memories, identities and understanding are in the module. Therefore, they lose their minds.

In New York on Earth, Tricia McMillian travels from England to try to score an audition for a US morning news show. Tricia tells the story that she went to a party years ago and met a two-headed alien. He asked her to come with him, but she said she had to get her bag. She got her bag and he left forever. She feels this is a missed opportunity. In the audition, she leaves without her bag and she blows the audition.

Tricia goes back to England. There are marks on her lawn from a spaceship, but she does not believe this is the cause until the spaceship lands. She boards the ship with a video recorder. The spaceship experience is boring and the video is poor quality. The aliens on the ship have lost their minds. The Leader makes her reconfigure the computer to read his astrology chart for his planet, Rupert.

Ford Prefect breaks into the Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy headquarters. Things are out of place and it has lost its glamorous edge. Ford steals the editor-in-chief's identity card. He goes back into headquarters once more and packages a black discus that says Panic. He sends it to Arthur Dent.

Arthur Dent travels planet by planet trying to find his girlfriend who disappeared a year ago when they crashed on Lamuella. Instead, he finds out he has a daughter named Random and he must take care of her. She is a troublemaker. She steals the package from him, goes to the crash site on Lamuella and opens it. Inside is a bird that is the new Guide, which is comprised of nonsense and confuses hitchhikers throughout the Galaxy.

Random goes to Earth. Arthur and Ford go too. Random gets upsets because she says she does not fit in anywhere. Arthur feels better that he is back on his home planet. Ford realizes it is reverse engineering that controls the new Guide and that the Galaxy is in trouble. Far off in space, the Vogon Captain reads his astrology chart and plots to destroy Earth.



Chapter 1 and Chapter 2

Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 Summary

Mostly Harmless by Douglas Adams focuses on the chaos and potential destruction of the Galaxy. Arthur Dent travels from planet to planet in order to find a new life. Ford Prefect fights the corporate regime. Tricia McMillan has an alien encounter. All three lives help decide the fate of the Galaxy.

In chapter one, the history of the Galaxy is a confusing mess. People try to exceed the speed of light, but it is impossible to do. Only bad news travels faster. People continue to try to exceed the speed of light, especially when sending out battleships. In Galaxy history, real catastrophe began when planets started turning into useless things. In present time, a Grebulon ship moves through the black void. It makes a click, hum sound. The low-level supervising program and the higher-level supervising work together, but both cannot remember what they are supposed to be supervising. They look, but cannot find the answer. There is an error message. The central mission module is damaged. To replace the module must be done physically. There is a backup module. Robots try to install the backup module, but fall out of the ship and fly off into the void of space.

The computer tries to seal up the hole made by a meteorite, but the ship cannot detect the hole. After major frustration, the ship relaxes. The ship blanks out. The problem is the crew is in hibernation. The crew's memories, identities and understanding are in the ship's central module. The ship lands on a lonely and cold planet. The crew has lost their minds and do not know who is in control. But they find something to monitor and it is gold.

In chapter two, New York is too cold in wintertime and too hot in the summer. Spring in New York is just okay. Fall in New York is the worst because the air smells of fried goats. Tricia McMillan, a British television anchorwoman, loves Manhattan. It is a good career move for her. She is a rapidly rising anchor in Britain. Tricia missed a major opportunity in life. The TV station, NBS, needs a new anchorwoman for the U.S./A.M. breakfast show. She hears that a British accent may work on U.S./A.M., which is why she came to New York to audition. To make her TV station in Britain pay for the trip, she reports on a couple stories there. She has contacts and contact numbers. She waits in the hotel, but none of her calls are returned.

There is a message at the hotel front desk from Gail Andrews. But the clerk is stupid and confuses the message. Tricia cannot remember who Gail Andrews is. The note says "not happy." Tricia cannot figure out what the note means. Gail Andrews comes up behind her. Tricia goes to her room to freshen up and then meets Gail in the hotel bar. Gail is a famed astrologer to the late president, but people assume she advised him on political matters, which she denies. The operator tells Tricia he has another message for her and it does not make sense again.



Tricia mentally prepares to be tough with Gail. Gail should not be unhappy with her interview because Tricia gives her free publicity. Last week, astronomers found a tenth planet called Persephone, or Rupert for a nickname. Tricia follows this story. Gail has a book called *You and Your Planets*, which is why Tricia interviewed Gail. Even though people think Tricia is a fluff reporter, she has a prestigious degree in mathematics and a doctorate in astrophysics.

She leaves her bag in the room and decides not to go back for it. In the bar, Gail explains it is not she who is unhappy, it is Tricia. Tricia is shocked. Gail says Tricia seems very angry and unhappy. Tricia does not know what to say. Tricia finally says she has lost a whole other life. She tells Gail the story of when she met a guy at a party many years ago. He asks her to go off to another planet with him. She told him she needed to get her bag, and he said she didn't need it. So Tricia went upstairs to get her bag and when she came down, he was gone. She saw some type of light shoot up into the sky and disappear. The man was definitely from another planet because he had two heads. Gail is the first person who Tricia tells this story to. Tricia says she came close to marrying and is even thinking of getting pregnant from a sperm bank, but never can go through with it. It is too real, and that is why she is in television because nothing is real.

A chauffeur comes up to Tricia and says he has been looking for her. He is from NBS, the TV station that hosts *U.S./A.M.* He tells her one head boss wants a British accent and one does not. Tricia says she is ready to go and does not go to her room to get her bag. She apologizes to Gail and leaves the bar. An hour later, Tricia is depressed and she sees a note from Gail telling her it is not the end of the world. The chauffeur was right: one boss wants a British accent and one does not. Tricia left her bag in the room, which contains her contact lenses to read the script and teleprompter. She blows the audition because of this. She has yet to learn when to go back for her bag and when not to.

Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 Analysis

The Galaxy is a confusing mess. This symbolizes and foreshadows the characters' and inhabitants' feelings and personalities in the novel. For example, every character thus far lives in a state of confusion. The hotel clerk confusedly cannot relay even the simplest of messages to the guests. The chauffeur wanders around in a confused state trying to find Tricia. The two television bosses have a confused view of what anchor is best for their station. Tricia is confused about her life and why she keeps leaving behind her bag. The confusion seems to swallow the characters whole. However, the only one who does not seem to be in confusion is Gail, but Gail is an astrologer and can predict the future.

New York City symbolizes the melting pot of confusion. Even the city itself is a literal and figurative jumble of confusion. For instance, why does it smell like fried goats when it is hot in the city? The areas of New York are all jumbled together. The people in New York, such as the hotel staff and the people at the television station, run around in confusion. Tricia enters the world confused and stays confused.



Gail symbolizes the mother figure and sage of the novel. She is an understanding person, one who seems firmly planted on the ground, yet her head is literally up in the skies because she is an astrologer. Logic does not prevail in this world, but Gail's predictions from the stars are the only train of thought that makes sense so far. She also represents a mother-figure to Tricia because she tries to protect her and do therapy on her. Even at the bar, Gail seems to make Tricia tell her story to realize Tricia's impending mistake. Gail also sends her a caring note about Tricia's failed audition, which provides Tricia with a loving mother figure in a foreign land.

The idea of leaving behind the bag or not leaving behind the bag symbolizes a loss of opportunity. In both major life decisions for Tricia, she makes the wrong choice. These choices represent a loss of what could have been. Tricia cannot decipher what the correct choice is. This could symbolize a bad decision made in youth, or it could foreshadow a series of bad decisions to come. The question is will Tricia ever learn when it is okay to take her bag or not take her bag, thereby taking advantage of a great opportunity?



Chapter 3 and Chapter 4

Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 Summary

In chapter three, the concept of a parallel universe is not understandable to anyone. Also, a parallel universe is not necessarily a universe. It is what is known as WSOGMM or the Whole Sort of General Mish Mash. And this does not exist either. The Earth was hit by a neutrino. A neutrino is very small and it is not extremely important when it hits something. But the neutrino struck an atom, and the atom is part of a molecule, a gene and a plant that grows an extra leaf. The neutrino hit a clover. Because of WSOGMM, Tricia failed to leave with Zaphod Beeblebrox, the alien. No one researches the neutrino hitting the clover.

In chapter four, Tricia is tired from her flight from New York back to Britain. She feels the world is against her. There are marks on her lawn. Eric, the gardener, tells her the marks are from aliens. Tricia just wants to get him off her lawn so she can sleep. Eric says the aliens stole a neighbor's cat and brought it to their planet. The cat was a different color and had an opposite sleep pattern when it returned a day later. Tricia says the lawnmower causes the marks, but Eric insists it is aliens and to watch out for them. Tricia says okay and leaves to take a nap. She dreams of parrots. Upon waking, she decides to go to Stavro's, a nightclub where her media friends go, but she calls ahead and it is closed for a private party. She decides having a life plan is a waste. That night, an alien spacecraft lands on her lawn.

Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 Analysis

This idea of confusion continues onto chapter three. No one understands the concept of the parallel universe. It is simply not worth trying to understand. It is better to live in a world of confusion and accept it. Unexplainable things are classified as WSOGMM, or the Whole Sort of General Mish Mash. In other words, it is completely acceptable to stay in the state of confusion.

On the other hand, the logic of this world stems from outlandish explanations. As the reader sees in the aforementioned chapters, Gail Andrews provides logic as an astrologer. In chapter four, Eric Bartlett has a simple explanation for the marks on Tricia's lawn. They are from an alien spacecraft. It is an outlandish and somewhat crazy explanation that even Tricia, who has seen a two-headed alien a long time ago, does not believe. But crazy represents logical in this world. The crazier the explanation, the more it is correct and makes sense.



Chapter 5 and Chapter 6

Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 Summary

In chapter five, Tricia watches the alien spacecraft land on her lawn. Three figures stand and wave. One says they have been monitoring her. She asks if they are from Zaphod and they do not know what that is. They say they monitor everything on Earth. Tricia invites them indoors. She gets her video equipment and records them, but keeps the camcorder at her hip. She asks who they are and where they are from. They do not know. They are on a mission, but they do not know for what purpose. They come to bring Tricia back with them. They have lost their minds. They like the interview Tricia did with Gail Andrews. The aliens do not know their leader's name. The leader seized control and said something had to be done on Rupert, the tenth planet. The aliens are from Rupert. It is a cold and boring planet. They want Tricia to come to Rupert with them to recalculate their horoscopes in order to take account of the relative positions of Earth and Rupert. Tricia steps into the aircraft because she will get the exclusive and she can sell it. As she gets on the ship, a fourth alien greets her.

In chapter six, Ford Prefect looks for the ventilation shaft to break into the headquarters for The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy. It is one instructive guide that is distributed to beings all over the universe. Ford throws a towel over a robot and changes its chip so the robot is happy about everything. Alarms go off due to Ford's break-in, but the robot signals everything is fine and they stop. Ford breaks in because he does not want accounting to question him. The building is H-shaped and moves from planet to planet. It should be set up exactly the same way, but this one is not.

Researchers did research on how robots were trained by emotion. The robots were programmed to like herring sandwiches. They would grab a sandwich, drop it, grab it again and repeat this over and over. Each time the robots grabbed the sandwich, they were happy. The researchers discovered other emotions too.

Ford is unhappy because he sees beings he does not know in the distance. The décor has gone from over-the-top and glitzy to boring office decor. The robot says the Guide has been taken over. There is new management. Ford goes into the editor-in-chief's office. It is a new EIC named Vann Harl. Harl wants Ford to write restaurant reviews for the Guide. The new enterprise name is InfiniDim. Ford is shocked at all of these changes. Vann says the organization changes because of the future. Vann wants to sell billions and billions of one Guide billions of times.

Ford instructs the robot to kill. Vann is startled and hurls himself backward. He is knocked unconscious. Meanwhile, Ford takes his money and Ident-I-Eeze card. It identifies a person everywhere, such as at cash machines, etc. Ford instructs the robot to keep the rest of the security system happy for a little while. Ford runs out of the door, happy by the excitement of life.



Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 Analysis

Tricia leaves her bag behind again as she steps onto the alien ship. At this point, the reader does not know if this is a good or bad decision. But either way, it is a life changing opportunity, and this time she is sure to take it. However, Tricia does remember to bring a video recorder, so she can record her experiences on planet Rupert. Thus, Tricia may be successful after all because she remembers to take the video record with her to document the trip.

Ford Prefect is able to control the emotions of the robot. In this world, emotions dictate a robot's behavior and it is the human's responsibility to control it. This foreshadows that the emotions of many robots may spin out of control, thus Ford will become entrenched in a world of chaos. In the Galaxy, beings seem to thrive in chaos, as is Ford, who is excited by it. As said in chapter six, logic has certain drawbacks. The drawbacks here seem to be boredom and living in the mundane. The aliens also say to Tricia that Rupert, their home planet, is boring, which is why they love to monitor Earth. Logic continues to kill the natural order of the universe, while people and aliens thrive in complete chaos and confusion.



Chapter 7 and Chapter 8

Chapter 7 and Chapter 8 Summary

In chapter seven, Arthur Dent, the main character of *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* series, is on NowWhat, a planet that is depressing, cold and rainy. Everyone on there is unhappy. There is no reason to live there. Arthur is there to help find his way back to Earth. He uses the Guide to help him travel through the Galaxy. NowWhat is filled with NowWhattian boghogs, or creatures that bite at thighs. A year ago there was an accident in space. Arthur's longtime love, Fenchurch, disappeared into thin air. He has not seen her since. Things sometimes happen in space, and that is why Arthur thinks Fenchurch disappeared. At the hotel, a boghog attacks the bellhop, but Arthur hits it with a stick. The boghog then tries to attack Arthur, but the bellhop smashes it to death. Arthur says he is in the wrong place, and the bellhop says everyone says it is the wrong planet. Arthur responds it is the right planet, but the wrong universe.

In chapter eight, Ford does not believe he is a thief. Ford is disgusted by how Guide headquarters are now boring, instead of flashy. He uses Vann's identification card to enter. He names his happy, reprogrammed robot Colin. He finds the staff boring. Guide headquarters would set up every few years in a different place, and then in the middle of the night, it would move to a different planet. This move collapses the planets and their economies. Ford easily goes through doors until one door he reaches, he cannot open. No one is authorized to enter. Ford kicks the door open. This room is where reports are gathered from all over the Galaxy. The editorial process is done there. Ford goes into the computer terminal and enters a four-dimensional universe. He floats around and comes back out. Robots check his identity via Vann's identification card. He clears. While in there, Ford programs the computer to notice it hadn't noticed anything. The computer has a mental block. Ford debugs bits of code and installs new code. Ford and Colin take the elevator up to the twenty-third floor. Ford gets nervous because the elevator man says it is busy. Ford goes into Vann's office and starts to run.

Chapter 7 and Chapter 8 Analysis

The planet NowWhat symbolizes the mood of Arthur Dent. He has had a tough year of trying to find Earth and his girlfriend. It is almost certain that he will end up on a planet that represents depression and sadness. It also foreshadows that Arthur may be embarking on a self journey to sort out his emotions and his life. He needs to travel to planets that reflect his mood to go through the stages of loss and grieving. It seems he is far away from Earth, his home planet. It is also a planet that represents fun and happiness, but Arthur is not even close to finding his way there literally and symbolically.

Ford has skewed ethics, and these skewed ethics represent a person who is confused. Ford does not believe he steals, yet he actually does steal. He legitimizes every stolen item, which makes no sense, but to him, it makes perfect sense. He represents a Robin



Hood figure or someone who steals from the rich to give to the poor. Yet the reader is not sure if Ford's motivations are purely good or selfless. In fact, it seems that Ford is motivated by finding more money for himself. He has yet to share his stolen money with anyone for the good of society.



Chapter 9 and Chapter 10

Chapter 9 and Chapter 10 Summary

In chapter nine, Arthur is on Hawalius, a planet of oracles, seers and soothsayers. It is also known for its take-out pizza parlors. Arthur travels there to receive advice. He finds an oracle. He asks Arthur to tune the radio. The oracle is unhappy with the radio stations, saying they replace the oracles. Arthur recognizes a reporter's voice. Her name is Trillian Astra. But the oracle throws the radio to the ground. Arthur goes to the village. He finds a woman seer who swats at flies in front of a cave. She smells horrible. She does her dead goat-like animals. He helps her take her photocopy machine out into the sun because it is solar-powered. She hands the photocopies to him. It is the story of her life. He should read it and not make the decisions she made to end up alone in a stinky, old cave.

Arthur visits another village. He goes climbing poles, but nothing is up there. Each pole is around sixty feet high. There is a man sitting on pole. The man can move quickly from ground to pole. Arthur is amazed. He asks what advice the woman gave Arthur and he says she advised him to do the opposite of everything she has done. The man seer says to buy a beach house. The seer says Arthur is from Earth and Arthur is amazed again. The seer says he has his own view of things and Arthur has his own view of things. Arthur asks him for an individual prayer. The seer disappoints him by telling him nonsense.

Arthur begins to realize something is wrong with the Guide.

In chapter ten, Ford lunges into the editor-in-chief's office. There are big guys with rocket launchers. Vann Harl, the editor-in-chief, is there. He looks visibly shaken. A rocket shoots at Ford, but misses him. Colin falls out of the window. Ford does not know what to do. He leaps out of the window.

Chapter 9 and Chapter 10 Analysis

Arthur Dent continues his self-journey to Hawalius, a prophecy planet on which he seeks answers to his questions. He expects to find precise answers, but in turn, he only finds confusion and more mystery. The seers he meets provide him with no concrete answers to his life questions. Instead, they talk in gibberish and give advice that any layman can give. Thus, Arthur may begin to realize that the answers he seeks are from within him. The traveling from planet to planet will continue, but this occurrence on Hawalius foreshadows that he may be journeying for a long time until he starts asking some questions of himself.

Ford symbolizes a man who fights against the corporation. He will take any risk to fight against what Guide headquarters has turned into. Ford is driven by money and excitement, but he is also driven by the will to not let the corporation take over. This

foreshadows how Ford may have a large hand in restoring Guide headquarters to its rightful existence and with the proper staff.



Chapter 11 and Chapter 12

Chapter 11 and Chapter 12 Summary

In chapter eleven, Arthur queries the advice center to find a place to live that resembles Earth. He cannot rely on the Guide anymore, which is why he makes this inquiry. His options are grim, but then he finds Bartledan. He travels to the planet Bartledan. Bartledan has beings who closely resemble humans and Bartledan has oxygen. However, on the planet, the beings cannot hold a conversation because they do not know how to do so. The beings do not breathe either. They have a simple life of playing netball and reading their famous literature, which is really about nothing. Arthur grows frustrated with Bartledan. He remembers his crash from a year ago. He crashed in a forest. The spaceship crash caused a raging fire. Arthur was the sole survivor. He somehow knew back then that he would survive and live.

In chapter twelve, Ford tumbles slowly through the sky. He has just thrown himself out of a window. He has memories of his childhood. His towel, a regular towel, is his prize possession. Every hitchhiker receives a towel, and it is either decorated in a grand way or has computer chips in it. Ford's towel is just a normal towel. He holds onto it as he tumbles. The towel holds him up. He also holds onto Colin, his little robot. He passes by the floors of Guide headquarters, which are full of drones such as lawyers, editors and accountants. Every floor basically looks the same, but the thirteenth floor is dark. As a slug is about to launch a rocket at him, Ford pulls up on the towel and is on the thirteen floor ledge. He uses the identification card to break in the window. He loses a shoe in the process. He and Colin go in.

To replace air conditioning and heating, there was a special air system, which controlled the air inside. However, it was flawed and failed. The room looks like any other room to Ford. Colin shakes in fear over a circular, black discus that reads Panic. Marks and cracks grow on its surface right in front of Ford's eyes. The slug creatures that tried to kill him before are Vogons.

Chapter 11 and Chapter 12 Analysis

The Guide does not work properly anymore, which leaves many of the hitchhikers in the Galaxy stranded, such as Arthur and Ford. They usually consult the Guide, but now it is not possible because the Guide is not working. This foreshadows a complete breakdown of the Galaxy itself, if the Guide does not get fixed. Beings and creatures will not know where to go or how to do things. The Guide represents a type of authority and structure in the confusing Galaxy. Without it, beings will be lost literally and metaphorically.

Ford has his prize possession, which is his towel. It is pink and flowered, which is comical, but also shows the soft side of Ford. The reader has not seen a softer side of

this character. The towel symbolizes a type of nurturing or steady love, which is similar to a child carrying around a baby blanket. Even though Ford is tough and manly, he still needs his towel to help him get out of tricky situations and to give him a feeling of comfort.



Chapter 13 and Chapter 14

Chapter 13 and Chapter 14 Summary

In chapter thirteen, a spaceship lands on Lamuella. It is a planet where the beings hunt and feast. They love stories and they obsess over sandwich making. A year ago, Arthur crashed in the forest of Lamuella. The beings on Lamuella are scared of the spaceship that just lands. It opens and out comes Trillian Astra and her daughter, Random. Trillian is a beautiful human. Random is a plain girl. On Lamuella, there is an art to making sandwiches and the beings obsess over how to make the perfect sandwich. They hunt for the very best meat for the sandwiches. Arthur is on Lamuella. Trillian sees Arthur and tells him that Random is his daughter and it is time for him to take responsibility for her.

In chapter fourteen, Ford realizes he must get out of the room. And he must get the Guide out of the room. He packs the Panic disc and throws it down the mail chute. He tells Colin to go down after it and protect it. He tells Colin he will die a horrible death. Colin agrees happily. He dives in after it. The door bursts open. Ford hurls himself out the window again.

Chapter 13 and Chapter 14 Analysis

Lamuella represents a dual society. On one side of the planet, there is sandwich making and feasting all the time. The people obsess over the sandwiches, and that is their only concern. They also have not seen a spaceship, so they are a bit naïve as well. Lamuella is a fun place to which Arthur seems to escape. Yet Lamuella is where he crashed a year ago, in the deep, dark forest. Thus, on the other side of Lamuella, there is death and horrible memories. Arthur cannot escape his memories no matter how hard he tries. This foreshadows that Arthur will most likely be lured to the dark side of the planet where the crash took place.



Chapter 15 and Chapter 16

Chapter 15 and Chapter 16 Summary

In chapter fifteen, Arthur tries to get to know Random for three months. In the third month, a box arrives. Arthur is in shock about Random being his daughter. Trillian went to a DNA bank and received Arthur's DNA. Random is around ten years old, but she has moved backward and forward in time so much that Trillian does not know exactly what age she is. Arthur tells Random he does not love her, but he will try to love her. He does the best he knows how as a father. He makes her sandwiches, talks and walks with her. She has unpredictable mood swings. She has a television built into her wrist. The beings of Lamuella are captivated by it. Arthur explains what how his watch works. It is a regular watch.

Arthur and Random go for a walk. Random was born on a spaceship. She constantly travels and must wear an apparatus to breathe. She has a stone in her pocket.

Arthur and she sit down. His body is still injured from the crash. Random asks for an explanation of the watch again. He tells her it is from Switzerland, on Earth. Then she gets angry when he cannot answer exactly where Earth comes from. She stomps off and screams that Arthur does not understand. Arthur does not understand her rage and tries to run after her, but he has a bad leg. Random says Trillian wishes she could shut Random off and go on with her life. Random feels she makes Trillian's life more complicated.

Back in the village, Random takes apart Arthur's watch and apologizes profusely. The parcel arrives. Random wants to open it. Arthur says no. It is in care of Arthur and addressed to Ford. Arthur says anything to do with Ford is bad, and he knows this package contains something bad. Random plots to open the package when Arthur is not looking.

In chapter sixteen, the package is not there. Random is not there. Arthur runs out of his hut in search of them. Random has gone to the forest, where he crashed a year before. He never wants to go back there, but now he must. Random is in the forest with the package. It rains. There are creatures like squirrels in the forest who try to attack her. Random feels the stone in her pocket, but she does not use it. The creatures run off. A man shoots at Random. Arthur thrashes behind her, about two or three miles behind her. His light goes out. The man shoots someone standing behind Random. The shooting man and the person behind her are holograms, which are the remnants of the crashed spaceship's entertainment system. They act like ghosts haunting the forest. She stands over a great crater, the remains of the spaceship. She finds her father's copy of the Guide at the crash site. She feels better. She goes to the mouth of a cave and starts to open the package.



Chapter 15 and Chapter 16 Analysis

As Arthur is on a self-journey to discover the life he needs to live, his biggest discovery is Random. He tries to become a father quickly, but has no idea how to do so. Just as he figured out how to travel without the Guide, he must figure out how to be a parent without any instruction. However, Random is no help. She is mean, troublesome and unruly. Random represents everything Arthur is not. Random also represents a child acting out because she feels neglected and abandoned by her mother. The father-daughter relationship is supposed to be a stable one, but in this Galaxy of chaos, it is yet another thing that turns out to be confusing and hectic. It is up to Arthur to figure out how to be a good father, and if Random can be a good daughter.

The watch symbolizes Arthur's one last draw to Earth. It is made on Earth and only Earthlings can really understand what a watch is. It is the only material thing of Arthur's that survives the crash, and that represents more value to him than anything else. When Random rips apart the watch, this is symbolic, since she rips apart the life Arthur once knew. Now he must find a new life, as the old one does not exist in time or space.



Chapter 17 and Chapter 18

Chapter 17 and Chapter 18 Summary

In chapter seventeen, the Universe questions a large amount of missing matter. Some of that missing matter is the packaging from the mysterious package that Random opens. The black disc turns into a bird. The bird tests what volume she can hear. Suddenly, the air is all birds. The bird realizes it is too overwhelming for Random and stops the allusion. Random asks what the bird is. It says it is the Guide. It is known as WSOGMM or the Whole Sort of General Mish Mash. The Bird makes a huge, three dimensional image of Arthur in the sky. Two miles away, Arthur sees the image. He heads off toward it.

The bird says it proves that the image is no more there or here. It makes a solid image in Random's mind. Then there is an image of a woman going into a spacecraft. Random thinks it is her mother, but it is really Tricia McMillian. Then the bird shows the image of Earth, Random's home. Arthur sees the image from less than two miles away. He is amazed. The bird asks if Random wants to go to Earth. Random says she wants a spaceship to take her to Earth. It appears. Arthur, now a mile away, sees the ship, runs and trips and falls, hurting himself. But he limps and runs. Random thinks the ship is beautiful and sleek. The hatch opens. A man runs at her. She fingers the rock in her pocket. Arthur runs, but then realizes Random is up and away in the ship. He limps to a cave and finds his old Guide. He does not want to visit the crash site, but he does. He sits on a rock. It moves. It is a person.

In chapter eighteen, Arthur leaps to his feet. The man is curled up and lies on his side. He groans. It is Ford. They recognize each other. Ford asks who was the woman and Arthur says it was his daughter. Ford is surprised to hear he has a daughter and that she is Trillian's as well. Ford sent Arthur the package because he is the only one who will not open it. The circular disc, or the bird, is the new Guide. Ford bought a spaceship and flew there. Arthur explains he is the sandwich maker on Lamuella. Ford wants to leave Lamuella to find the Guide. Arthur wants to leave Lamuella to find Random. Ford says Random is caught up in temporal reverse engineering and it is extremely dangerous. Ford says he fell from the window into a jetcar. It is too lucky. He explains if someone has the Guide, then s/he thinks the Guide works for her/him when the person works for the Guide. The new Guide perceives everything. It has no filters. It goes against the norm of having a computer program with one key instruction, for example. The new Guide may overload and end. Ford saw the Vogons at Guide headquarters and thinks they are behind this. The Perfectly Normal Beasts start to stampede toward them.



Chapter 17 and Chapter 18 Analysis

The bird is an evil omen. It foreshadows the destruction of the Galaxy. Since the Guide gives order and structure to the Galaxy, the Vogons have taken it away by constructing a new Guide. When Arthur finds his original Guide, a piece of his good, old life is back with him. However, if the new Guide continues to prevail, the Galaxy may be doomed. The new Guide creates chaos by tricking the hitchhiker into thinking the Guide works for her/him, but in fact, it is reverse engineering. Everything happens too easily. It creates a Galaxy of chaos. Yet Arthur has the old Guide. This foreshadows the old Guide may help both of them in this time of crisis.

Ford's and Arthur's motivations are completely different. Ford is motivated to save the Guide and to save the Galaxy. Arthur is motivated to find and save his daughter on Earth. Fatherly love drives Arthur. This love is unconditional. No matter how badly Random acts, he still loves her and wants to save her. On the other hand, Ford is motivated to defeat the Vogons, and by the excitement of it all. Both men may end up in the same place, but have two vastly differing motivations for getting there.



Chapter 19 and Chapter 20

Chapter 19 and Chapter 20 Summary

In chapter nineteen, the Perfectly Normal Beasts thunder on the plains. Arthur and Ford have a hard time hearing each other over the Beasts' hooves. Ford suggests they should ride them out there. Arthur says they will be killed. There is a guy who claims Arthur kills him over and over again. One of the places is Stavromula Beta. Arthur says no one knows it. Ford does not know it either. Arthur says they must lure the Beast with a brightly colored cloth. Ford hands over his towel.

In chapter twenty, Arthur and Ford struggle to catch the attention of a Beast. Old Thrashburg, the elder of Lamuella, comes from behind them and tells them they need a pikka bird to attract the Beast. Old Thrashburg is sad because the sandwich maker, Arthur, will leave. Arthur says his apprentice can take over. They use the towel and the pikka bird. They hop on the Beast. Old Thrashburg says they must go see the domain of the King. They do not know what he is talking about. But they go in that direction.

Chapter 19 and Chapter 20 Analysis

Arthur and Ford set out on a journey. This will lead to the end of Arthur's self journey, but now he will end it as a concerned father, instead of a depressed boyfriend and lost traveler. Hopefully, this journey will lead Arthur to a new life and it will give him the motivation to start over, instead of dwelling in the past as he has been doing for this past year.



Chapter 21 and Chapter 22

Chapter 21 and Chapter 22 Summary

In chapter twenty-one, Tricia watches the tape of her alien experience. She sits in the editing office and puts a Do Not Disturb sign on the door. She originally wants to protect the scoop, but now she is embarrassed. She is exhausted from her journey to the planet Rupert. She quizzed her alien hosts, the Grebulons. They do not know anything because they have lost their minds. The trip is pretty boring. The video she shot is bad quality. She spent her time in the spaceship watching old television reruns.

On video, she watches the Leader greeting her. The Grebulons do not have names. He says he is her biggest fan. On video, he looks like a guy in a costume and makeup. Tricia thinks it is bad. They feed her McDonald's hamburgers. The Leader says they get things from Earth because they have a box number in New Hampshire. They also have an Amex card. She stops the video and thinks she is losing her mind and that she is sick. Maybe it was all a dream? The tape continues. The Leader reveals a giant computer screen of the Galaxy. He says they had great skills, but they lost them. He asks Tricia to calculate Rupert for them by recalculating. She can do this because she has degrees in math and astrophysics. She does it quickly. The Leader wants her to translate the information from Gail Andrews' book. She realizes she cannot prove a thing by watching the tape. She receives a call. Her boss says there is an alien spaceship at Regent's Park with a girl speaking English, throwing rocks and wants to repair a watch. Tricia goes. It is not a Grebulon ship. Tricia goes to interview the girl, and Random screams "Mother!" and throws rocks at Tricia.

In chapter twenty-two, Arthur and Ford are in the desert. They ride the Beast to The Domain of the King Bar & Grill. It is not the King they originally thought. It is a truck stop diner. There is a chrome with fins spaceship in front. Ford says he wants to buy it. He asks the bartender if it is for sale. He says to ask the large, fat bald man. The man gives it to Ford for free. The man is on stage, singing Elvis Presley hits. Ford and Arthur will go to Earth. When they check the old Guide, they see Earth is there. Arthur thinks it has been destroyed. Ford writes a review for the Guide to pay for their bill and the spaceship, since he uses the stolen identification card to pay for everything. They pay and go out to the ship. Its initials read E.P. Inside, Ford tells Arthur he asks the King if he was really abducted by aliens. Elvis says he left Earth on his own will. They fly into space.

Chapter 21 and Chapter 22 Analysis

Tricia does take the risk and goes on the alien spacecraft to Rupert. However, she has not found her two-headed alien that she met at a party years ago. Instead, she finds a bunch of aliens who have lost their minds and want her to configure their computer. Thus, she serves as a valuable asset to the aliens. This is in contrast to how she is

viewed on Earth. She is just anchorwoman. However, the trip gives her no satisfaction. It is boring and unoriginal, and worst of all the video is of bad quality and looks staged. Tricia yet makes another questionable decision and follows through with it. And again, she is not successful. Tricia has not evolved in her decision-making process and it is doubtful she will ever be successful.



Chapter 23, Chapter 24 and Chapter 25

Chapter 23, Chapter 24 and Chapter 25 Summary

In chapter twenty-three, another spacecraft arrives in London. It is Ford and Arthur's spaceship. It makes headline news. Arthur gets nostalgic because he realizes he is home. They check into a fancy hotel, turn on the television and see Random and Tricia. Arthur says Tricia is Trillian, but then realizes she is not. He says Trillian used to be Tricia. Ford tries to buy a zoo from room service. Arthur says it is complete chaos. Random keeps screaming at Tricia. Tricia cries and says she is not her mother and then says Rupert loses its mind. The television cuts her off. Ford calls the concierge to find out which clubs Tricia belongs to.

In chapter twenty-four, an alien being monitors Earth from an invisible zone. The mission was to monitor Earth secretly, but the computer tells him he will have a bad month. It is the Leader reading Tricia's astrology configurations. Rupert is almost hidden by the sun, nearly invisible from Earth. He is the Vogon Captain. A demolition order is in front of him. He has the agency tamper with the Guide through reverse engineering. That way he can destroy Earth. A bird raises his wings. It shows the image of Earth. The Captain sits back and watches.

In chapter twenty-five, Ford and Arthur jump out of a taxi. They enter Stavro's club. Arthur misses Lamuella. Trillian races toward him. It is actually Tricia, not Trillian. She knows his name though. Behind her is Random. Random holds a gun. She asks where she fits. She says she thought she would fit on Earth and that her mother does not know who she is. She says Trillian abandoned her. Trillian is there too. She says they must all leave. She explains she leaves Random to work because the Galaxy is in danger. Random says she wants to go home and fit in somewhere. Trillian says they all must leave because there is a missing spaceship and everyone on it has lost their minds. A man attacks Arthur. Random shoots him. This is Stavro Mueller Beta, who Arthur has been searching for. Peace comes over him.

Far away, the Vogon Captain watches the images collapse and the bird crumples. His ship goes off into the void.

Chapter 23, Chapter 24 and Chapter 25 Analysis

The absolute confusion takes over the Galaxy. It is a master plan all along. However, in this confusion, Arthur begins to feel at peace. He also feels at home. He realizes he should be here, on Earth again and with his daughter. He completes his self-journey by finding home again through his daughter. It is not the city of London that moves him deeply, although it does make him nostalgic. It is saving his daughter that truly moves him, and helps him understand who he is as a person. As the book ends, Arthur can

start a new life with his daughter on Earth. He can provide for her the home she has never had, and in doing so, he will start a new journey as a full-time father.



Characters

Tricia McMillian

Tricia McMillian is a British news anchor. She is pretty and looks the part of an anchorwoman. She looks like she may not be very smart, but she has a prestigious degree in mathematics and a doctorate in astrophysics. She travels to New York City to report on stories for her television station, but in reality, she wants to audition for an American morning news show called U.S./A.M. While in New York, she lives in a state of confusion because the hotel staff cannot relay messages to her. She has the audition, but fails it. She is very depressed, especially since she realizes she left her bag with her contact lenses in her hotel room. Thus, she could not read the teleprompter and fails the audition. This is the second time in her life when leaving or not leaving a bag affects her life opportunities. She does not know when to take or leave the bag.

She goes on a spaceship with aliens. She is not afraid, but instead, she embraces the idea as long as she can video record everything and is able to sell the story. The journey bores her and she receives no reputable material to sell. She is sad, frustrated and most importantly, she is not capable of making a good decision.

Tricia begins a break down, thinking she loses her mind when she returns to Earth. She begins to break down on camera. Tricia is a fragile character who is not capable of taking care of herself in the decision-making process. She is successful at her job, yet she is an unknown anchorman. She strives for more, to be more successful. When she has success in her grasp, her bad decision making skills causes her to lose this potential success.

Arthur Dent

Arthur Dent is the main character of The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy series. He is from Earth. A year ago, his girlfriend disappeared into hyperspace, so he continues to search for her. He also wants to get back to Earth. He travels from planet to planet. He is very unhappy that he cannot find Earth, and he cannot find his girlfriend. He searches out advice from oracles, but that fails. He tries to use the Guide, but something is wrong with it.

Arthur is very nice and polite. But when Trillian Astra comes to visit him and drops off their child, Random, he is in shock. His demeanor goes from sad and depressed to extremely worried and confused. He has no idea how to be a father, and he is in shock he even has a child.

The spaceship crash a year ago deeply affects Arthur. Not only is he physically hurt and damaged from the crash, but he is also emotionally scarred. He was the sole survivor,



who survived a fiery crash deep in the forest. The memory stays with him and leads him back to Lamuella, the planet where the crash happened.

When he returns to Earth, he is at peace. A calamity washes over him. He also feels nostalgic for a place he misses so much. His missing daughter motivates him to travel there. He transforms into a concerned, loving, caring and protective father. This is the opposite of how Arthur's journey began. It is on Earth again, he can begin to live a new life.

Ford Prefect

Ford Prefect is a man who breaks into the headquarters to The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy. He steals and loves to spend other people's money. Yet according to his twisted ethics, he does not believe he is stealing. He thinks he is merely doing the right thing. Ford like to takes major risks and be reckless. He is often involved in situations in which he escapes at the last minute by putting his life in danger; i.e., throwing himself out of a window. Ford loves the glamorous and flashy lifestyle. When Guide headquarters was over-the-top and displayed extreme wealth, he thought it was correct. But when the headquarters changes to a normal, plain office space, he feels depressed and frustrated by how the corporation has taken over. Ford's mission is to turn Guide headquarters back into the fun, entertaining and decadent place it once was.

Excitement drives Fords as well. He cannot stay focused in the mundane or boring. He must be involved in excitement at all times and cause excitement—even if that means risking his life or risking the life of someone else. Yet Ford also has a soft side because his prized possession is his pink, flowered towel. He treasures it like a child treasures a baby blanket. He needs this love and comfort even in the trickiest of situations.

Ford also understands how serious the problem is at Guide headquarters. He understands the Guide is not functioning properly and his quest is now to fix what is wrong. On his journey back to Earth, he befriends Arthur, who he has known for a long time. Ford helps Arthur to get back to Earth, but in the end, does so for his own motivations.

Gail Andrews

Gail Andrews is an astrologer. She was once the astrologer to the dead president, but she denies advising him politically. She tells Tricia she is unhappy and listens to Tricia's story of missed opportunity. She is a protector, sage and mother figure to Tricia.

Eric Bartlett

Eric Bartlett is Tricia's gardener. He says the marks on Tricia's lawn are from an alien spaceship. He is right. He warns Tricia of this, but she does not believe him.



Vann Harl

Vann Harl is the new editor-in-chief of The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy. He wants to sell billions and restructures the headquarters to be boring and office-like.

Fenchurch

Fenchurch is Arthur Dent's longtime love. She disappeared into hyperspace a year ago. Arthur continues to search for her.

Colin

Colin is the robot Ford changes the computer chip in. Colin is a security robot for The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy headquarters, and since Ford changed his chip, he is always happy to please Ford.

Old Thrashburg

Old Thrashburg is the village elder on the planet Lamuella. He tells stories to the villagers and advises Ford and Arthur how to catch a Perfectly Normal Beast.

Trillian Astra

Trillian Astra is a beautiful human reporter, who is famous throughout the Galaxy. She took Arthur Dent's DNA from the DNA bank and had their child, Random.

Random

Random is Arthur Dent and Trillian Astra's child. She should be ten years old, but she travels so much that time ages her greatly. She has a temper and dislikes her mother. She causes Arthur a lot of trouble. She wants to fit somewhere and call somewhere home.



Objects/Places

Grebulon ship

Grebulon ship has its central system fail and loses its direction and the identities, memories and understanding of its crew.

Santruginus V

Santruginus V is an intoxicating group of seas where the fish do not care what direction they swim.

U.S./A.M.

U.S./A.M. breakfast show is a morning news show that broadcasts from New York. It is much like Good Morning America or the Today Show.

WSOGMM

WSOGMM is the Whole Sort of General Mish Mash , or things that do not make sense and are not understandable to anyone.

Stavro's

Stavro's is a nightclub where media people hang out. It is owned by a Greek-German man named Stavro.

The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy

The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy is one, instructive guide on how to travel throughout the Galaxy. Its headquarters move from planet to planet, but the building itself stays exactly the same. The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy is the name of the first novel in this book series.

Ident-I-Eeze

Ident-I-Eeze is an identification card. It identifies a person when going to a cash machine, getting fingerprints, etc. It serves as absolute proof of identification of the individual.



NowWhat

NowWhat is a depressing, cold and wet planet. Everyone hates living there. Arthur Dent travels there on his way back to Earth.

NowWhattian boghogs

NowWhattian boghogs are disgusting and vicious creatures that bite people's thighs. They are found on the planet NowWhat.

Hawalius

Hawalius is a planet of oracles, seers and soothsayers. It is also known for its take-out pizza parlors. Arthur travels there to receive advice and help.

Bartledan

Bartledan is a planet that closely resembles Earth. It has oxygen and the beings look human. Yet the Bartledan beings cannot make conversation because they do not understand how to do so. They also do not breathe. They have a simple life of playing netball and reading their famous literature about nothing.

Lamuella

Lamuella is a planet where the beings hunt and feast. They listen to stories and obsess over sandwich making. Lamuella is where Arthur Dent crashed a year ago.



Themes

Confusion

Confusion is a theme in the novel. This world of confusion is set up in the first chapter. The Grebulon ship's computer system becomes confused about who should do what, overloads and blanks out. The identities, memories and understanding of the crew are also lost. This leads to confusion of identity and confusion of what planet they will eventually land on. On Earth in New York City, there is also much confusion, since Tricia is thrown into a world of confusion. Nothing works correctly. The hotel staff is confused and cannot relay simple phone messages. The television bosses are confused about their vision. Tricia is confused about life and why she is not getting an audition. Finally, when she does get the audition, it is through a confused chauffeur. And when she fails at the audition, she remains confused about how to decide when she should take her bag or not. Nothing seems to make sense in this world.

In fact, nothing is logical or understandable in this world. The concept of the parallel universe is not understandable to anyone. Even the researchers at the university do not understand this concept. All things unexplained are classified as WSOGMM, or the Whole Sort of General Mish Mash. When Ford enters The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy headquarters, it is supposed to be uniform on every planet. However, everything is redecorated and reorganized, even the staff. Thus, the confusion spreads to every part of the Galaxy, and the Galaxy is therefore controlled by it.

Self-journey

Self-journey is a theme in the novel. Arthur Dent goes on a notable self-journey due to his depression. The love of his life disappeared and he cannot find his home planet Earth. He tries in desperation to find both by traveling from planet to planet. He travels to NowWhat, which is a depressing, cold and wet planet. No one likes living or visiting there. This planet symbolizes Arthur's emotions about how he feels in the particular moment. It is on NowWhat that Arthur feels most drawn to his sadness and shares his story with the reader. He ventures to the planet Hawalius to receive advice by seers, but he finds out they know as much as him. He must look inside for the answers, but Arthur is not ready to do so. Instead, he travels throughout the Galaxy on a self-journey of emotions, trying to find how to set his life right again.

Tricia also goes on a self-journey. She regrets not having left a party with a two-headed alien a long time ago. It is her biggest regret and makes her sad. She travels to New York to try and make a life change for herself. But in doing so, she fails. The same thing that kept her from succeeding with the alien is the same thing that keeps her from getting this job. Simply put, Tricia does not know how to make the right decision. New York teaches her that she misses life opportunities because of this indecision. When she returns to England, she decides to get on a spaceship with aliens. She does not



hesitate to make this decision. Instead, she makes a firm decision, brings her video recorder and goes. Going to outer space takes Tricia on a self-journey to discover the woman she really is, and if she has broken the cycle of making bad decisions.

Do not follow logic

Do not follow logic is a theme in the novel. No matter what the situation, in this Galaxy, it is best not to follow logic. Tricia decides to follow logic on two major life decisions, and it ends up hurting her in the end. When logic is not followed in Tricia's life, it is successful. When she goes on the alien ship, she does not follow logic to get on a strange ship with aliens. She just goes. In New York, there is no logic surrounding the hotel she stays in or the city. Instead of accepting the confusion, she tries to be logical, and it ends up making her unsuccessful in her goal.

Tricia's gardener provides the most illogical answer of all. He says the marks on Tricia's lawn are those of an alien spaceship. Tricia thinks the logical explanation is a lawnmower. But the gardener insists on the alien theory. It is illogical, and Tricia's lawnmower theory makes more sense, but in the end, he is right. Aliens do land on the lawn.

In the Galaxy, the rule of not following logic is widely accepted. In fact, "now logic is a wonderful thing but it has, as the processes of evolution discovered, certain drawbacks" (Chap. 6, p. 60). The idea of the parallel universe has no logic and people should submit to the fact there is no logic to it. When Arthur Dent meets the seers on the planet Hawalius, there is no logic there either. The seers do not give advice that is logical and understandable. Instead, it makes no sense, but Arthur is supposed to learn by it. To follow logic and provide an understandable answer makes no sense to the seers. They provide answers the only way they know how, and that is to provide it in an illogical form. One seer tells Arthur to do the opposite of her, and another seer gives him silly prayers that mean absolutely nothing.



Style

Point of View

The novel is told from an omniscient, third person point of view. The reader receives many views from a multitude of characters this way, and all the perspectives are in third person. The third person point of view has the ability to give enough description to set up the Galaxy, including the various planets, for the reader. For science fiction, the reader must be immersed into a new world with different rules and places. The third person perspective allows the author to give general descriptions of the planets and their inhabitants. It enables the reader to receive a wide scope view of all the different places the characters travel. It also allows the reader to jump easily between characters and their points of view about each situation they encounter.

Yet there is a closer, third person point of view as well. This occurs when the characters relay their inner-most thoughts on a situation. The narration switches to a closer third person. For example, when Ford Prefect must run and dodge his way through Guide headquarters, the reader gets his inner perspective on what he will do next and how he plans to do it. This also occurs with Tricia and Arthur Dent, who are the main characters as well.

The story is told through exposition and dialogue. The exposition is used to tell about the planets, the Galaxy, Guide headquarters and the different people the main characters encounter. The author uses dialogue frequently. It is easily understandable and has few slang terms or author-created terms of a science fiction novel. The characters speak in dialogue freely to people on other planets, and no translation is necessary.

Setting

The setting of the novel takes place all over the Galaxy. The characters constantly travel. Tricia is in New York City, a place where temperatures are extreme. It smells like fried goat in the summer. New York has the regular shops and bustle of Manhattan as well. In the Manhattan hotel, everyone runs around in confusion. The next setting is England, which is a quiet place. Tricia has marks on her lawn from an alien spaceship. Other than that, it is normal, suburban England.

Ford breaks into The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy headquarters. It used to be flashy and glamorous. But now it is simply a boring office building. It is shaped like an H. It moves to another planet every few years. Arthur travels from planet to planet. He starts out on NowWhat, a planet that is cold, wet and depressing. It is filled with boghogs, or creatures that bite people's thighs. He then sets out for Hawalius, a planet with seers who can give him advice. One village smells badly and has a cave. Another village has almost sixty-foot poles that a seer and Arthur jump on and off of, and sit on. Arthur ends



up on Bartledan, which is a planet that closely resembles Earth. It has oxygen and the beings look human, but they cannot hold a conversation or breathe. Arthur finally ends up on Lamuella, a planet where the beings hunt and feast, listen to stories and obsess over sandwich making. It is also the planet where Arthur crashed a year ago. The site of the crash is haunted and has a dark, eerie feel in the midst of a forest with strange creatures.

All the main characters end up back on Earth in London. It is normal London, yet not much description is given. The only thing unusual is there is a huge alien spaceship in the middle of Regent's Park.

Language and Meaning

The language of the novel is very informal. It does not use complicated, science slang or terms. Every concept is clearly explained in simple terms. The language comes from the point of view of many characters, but they all speak in the same, understandable way. Even the aliens speak in a way anyone can understand. The characters speak in very simple terms. Only Arthur and Ford rarely swear. Difficult vocabulary words are interspersed through the novel.

Descriptions are not overly extensive. Places and people or aliens are described when necessary and the author provides enough description to understand the concept. To become immersed in this world, the reader must be given these descriptions to understand the world they inhabit. For example, the author provides descriptions of different planets to explain the differences between our Earth today and this society. For instance, it is still the same Manhattan, but it smells like fried goat and the temperatures are extreme. These descriptions give the reader insight into each place the characters visit or live.

The most interesting part of the language is how every character understands each other perfectly. No matter what planet, the language is the same. There is no need for translation. Thus, the language in the novel is universal in the Galaxy. This universality makes it easy for a reader to read along seamlessly, without having to stop and try to decipher an alien language, or science fiction slang. The author makes the choice for the characters to speak one language in this society, so the reader concentrates on the words and meaning, not trying to translate what each life form says.

Structure

The novel is comprised of twenty-two chapters. The chapters do not have specific names and are numbered. Chapter length varies from approximately two pages to twenty-two pages long. The chapters have short paragraphs with enough description to understand the Galaxy. The description is not extensive, and more on the minimalist side. The book has a very certain timeline. It follows the characters' lives as they travel throughout the Galaxy day by day, and only short spans of time of a few days or so move time along. The reader knows exactly where s/he is in the timeline.

The plot of the novel is simple and without subplots. The novel is about three main characters, Tricia, Arthur and Ford who travel throughout the Galaxy. Each goes on a mission for something different and hopes to be successful in the end.

The novel's pace is normal and moves moderately. It is neither fast-paced or slow. It is the right speed for a modern day, adult reader. It is a very easy read with some difficult vocabulary interspersed throughout the story. The novel rarely uses swearing and slang terms. In fact, a young adult reader could easily read this novel without having adult themes explored, such as sex and graphic violence. The plot engrosses the reader into the Galaxy, including Earth and other planets. Back story is virtually nonexistent except for a few explanations of the characters' lives. The novel is a relatively easy read and entertains as a whole.



Quotes

"And this is a pity because, if anybody had known anything about them, it is just possible that a most terrible catastrophe would have been averted—or, at least, would have had to find a different way to happen."

Chap. 1, p. 11

"Life will always find a way of hanging on in somewhere."

Chap. 2, p. 17

"Never go back for your bag."

Chap. 2, p. 29

"What I lost, I think, was a whole other life."

Chap. 2, p. 34

"Now logic is a wonderful thing but it has, as the processes of evolution discovered, certain drawbacks."

Chap. 6, p. 60

"Yes, it's the right planet, all right. Right planet, wrong universe."

Chap. 7, p. 80

"You see, the quality of any advice anybody has to offer has to be judged against the quality of life they actually lead."

Chap. 9, p. 105

"The Universe was what the Universe was, take it or leave it."

Chap. 11, p. 121

"We live in strange times. We also live in strange places: each in a universe of our own."

Chap. 15, p. 164

"You live and learn. At any rate, you live."

Chap. 16, p. 181

"It's so difficult to know what things are supposed to be when you suddenly turn up unexpectedly on a different world, which has a different culture, a different set of the most basic assumptions about life, and also incredibly dull and meaningless architecture."

Chap. 21, p. 233

"Options collapsed, possibilities folded into each other, and the whole at last resolved itself out of existence."

Chap. 25, p. 277



Topics for Discussion

Do you believe logic is the correct answer for everything? What are instances in which logic does not answer the question? In the novel, the characters live in a Galaxy of illogic. Could you live there? Why or why not?

Is Ford Prefect a hero or the bad guy? Are his ethics understandable, or do you find Ford to sway in his ethnics? Ford seems to fight the corporate world. Do you think these types of people are needed in society? Why or why not?

Why is self-journey so important for this novel? Besides Arthur's major self-journey, who else has one? Does Ford have any type of self-journey? Does his character evolve at all from beginning to end?

What is the significance of the name Random? Why does Trillian choose such a name for her daughter? Does the name have any significance to the person Random is or how she evolves as a character? Why or why not?

Arthur is a reluctant father figure. How does he embody the idea of a father figure and become a father by the end of the novel? Does Arthur turn into a good enough father? What do you think embodies the idea of fatherhood?

Many things cannot be understood in this novel. Is that an appropriate way to form a society, one in which nothing is understood? Could we live that way here on Earth? How do the characters in the novel embrace the idea of simply not understanding the principles and scientific theories of their Galaxy?

What does the ending with the Vogon Captain foreshadow? Do you think this world will ever allow order and logic, or will it always be ruled by chaos? What do you foreshadow for the main characters on their self-journeys and in regard to character development for the next novel?