



From the maker of *The Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy*...

Sofas, electric monks, and saving humanity

Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency
Douglas Adams
Stoddart Publishing Co.
by Dragos Ruiu

Ultimately, sofas are important in this book too.

Just as in *The Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, and its subsequent sequels, prequels, TV shows, movies, records, computer games and whatever else they care to do with it, silliness abounds. And as Hemmingway would put it "And it was good . . ."

Now to those of you who don't know the meaning of '42', this will make no sense whatsoever. So for the sake of being polite, let's explain . . .

Once upon a time, (oh, say circa 1978) a radio show was broadcast (for the sake of argument, let's call it *The Hitch-Hikers Guide to the Galaxy* on a foreign radio network (make it BBC for now). It became enormously popular. So much so that the script writer published the adaptation of the radio play as two books.

After many re-printings and much forking over of green paper for the books by Hitch-Hiker cultists, the radio network (which also had a TV branch) made the story into a telly show. Soon that was not enough either, so an enterprising company named Infocom turned the whole thing into a bogglingly confusing but stunningly entertaining computer game.

All this furor managed to get the author (for now call him Douglas Adams) a god-like standing — somewhere near that of Bugs Bunny — in the Silliness Hall of Fame. Exploitative media types instantly recognized potential for profit. Sooo . . . to make a long story long, a movie is being made of the radio play, and Douglas Adams was given an advance of two million green pieces of paper to write two Dirk Gently books.

Dirk Gently's *Holistic Detective Agency* is the first of these books. (Or perhaps the second, but first published — but we can never be sure.) It has absolutely nothing to do with the Hitch-Hikers series and none of the characters in this book know of the cosmic importance of towels.

Douglas Adams calls this book a Ghost — Horror — Detective — Whodunnit — Time-Travel — Romantic — Musical — Comedy Epic. I call it great and reassuringly silly from the master of silliness.

This book has it all: Electric Monks, dodos, ghosts, and devastating secrets that threaten to bring humanity to a premature conclusion. The theme is familiar among Adams' books, will humanity get its ass saved by a concoction of oddball characters?

Will Dirk ever find how to do parlor tricks involving college salt cellars and ancient vases? Will multimillionaire and entrepreneur genius Gordon Way ever really cope with being dead? Will Anthem, the computer program that turns business graphs into music ever have version two finished?

Well you might find the answers to some of these questions in this book. Watch as a plethora of unrelated events that will confuse the beejesus out of you for the first half of the book all fit together into a weird, but stunningly complete mystery.

It all works. It makes a cyber-punk little piece of fiction that is stupefyingly hilarious. Through Adam's warped eyes, even the most aggravating annoyances of life take on a new and decidedly funny meaning.

Take Dirk himself. Now he is quite an extraordinary fellow, which he vehemently denies. He has quite a business. He finds deceased cats, sort of. And he gets paid



handsomely for it, sort of. He does charge his customers for the drinks necessary for struggling on in face of draining scepticism from the client — but as an added bonus, saving the human race from extinction comes at no charge.

Dirk's old school pal, Richard MacDuff, has other problems, not dealing with cats in any way whatsoever. The movers have managed to get his sofa stuck in the stairwell. It's absolutely impossible to get it out. It's a tedious bother going over it to get out every morning. And if that weren't bad enough, the police want him for the murder of his boss.

Really, go get this book. Start reading it. No don't stop. I know you're confused, but it will all make sense to you sometime (and you'll think "Oh like wow man, I get it!"). Yes, still keep reading it. Trust me, it will make sense.

And you will laugh . . .

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ATTENTION Faculty of Arts Undergraduate and Graduate Students

Nominations of student candidates for the 1987-88 Faculty of Arts Representative Council will be received from September 21 to noon on September 24. The elections will be conducted during the period September 28 to noon on September 30.

Total number of vacancies: 38, according to an established departmental representation formula for undergraduate and (where appropriate) graduate students, with provision for an equivalent number of alternates.

Eligible students: Any full-time undergraduate or (where appropriate) graduate student registered in a degree program in the Faculty of Arts is eligible to stand for election from the department of his/her primary concentration. Please note that a student standing for election from a given department must have been nominated by at least two other students from the same constituency in the same department, and that students will need their ID cards in order to vote.

Term of Office: 1 October 1987 to 30 June 1988.

Meetings: Council normally meets once a month throughout the academic session.

For additional information regarding nomination and election procedures, please consult the various departmental offices in the Arts Faculty.