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Finally, in paperback in one full volume, here are five classic novels from Douglas Adams' favorite Hitchhiker series. Hitchhiking the Galaxy Before the Earth is demolished for the galactic highway, Arthur Dent is rescued by The Prefect Ford, a researcher of the revised guide. Together they stick their thumbs to the stars and begin a wild journey through time and space. Restaurant at the End of the Universe On destruction at the hands of warmongers is a curious time to crave tea. This can only happen to the space-displaced Arthur Dent and his comrades as they race across the galaxy in a desperate search for a place to eat. Life, the Universe and All-Family Inhabitants of the Planet Krikkit tired of looking at the night sky? So they plan to destroy it. The universe, that is. Now only five people can prevent Armageddon: the mild-mannered Arthur Dent and his faithful crew. So long, and thanks for all the Fish Back on Earth, Arthur Dent is ready to believe that the last eight years have been just a figment of his stressed-out imagination. But wrapped in a gift aquarium with a mysterious inscription colludes to bring it back to reality. That's what I'm saying. Basically Harmless Just, when Arthur Dent makes a terrible mistake, starting to enjoy life, all hell breaks out. Will he be able to save the Earth from total destruction? Will he be able to save the Guide from the hostile capture of aliens? Will he be able to save his daughter from himself? WITH DROLL WIT, A KEEN EYE FOR DETAIL AND HEAVY DOSES OF UNDERSTANDING . . . ADAMS MAKES US LAUGH UNTIL WE CRY. -SAN DIEGO UNION-LIVELY, SHARPLY SATIRICAL, BRILLIANTLY WRITTEN . . . ROWS WITH THE BEST SET OF PIECES IN MARK TWAIN. -Atlantic Douglas Adams was born in 1952 and was educated in Cambridge. He was the author of five books in the Hitchhiker's trilogy, including Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy; Restaurant at the End of the Universe; Life, the Universe and All That; So Long and Thanks for All the Fish; and Mostly Harmless. His other works include Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency; Long Dark Tea-Time Soul; The Value of Liff and the Deeper Meaning of Liff (with John Lloyd); and the last chance to see (with Mark Carwardin). His last book was the best-selling book Salmon of Doubt, published posthumously in May 2002. What was he like, Douglas Adams? He was tall, very tall. He had an air of cheerful insecurities. He was wiped out by his sharp intellect and understanding of what he was doing with the puzzled gaze of a man who had crashed into a profession that surprised him in a world that had snunk him. And he got the impression that, on the whole, he was pretty happy about it. He was a genius, of course. It's a word that gets tossed around a lot of days and it's used to mean almost anything. But Douglas was a genius because he saw the world differently, and more importantly, he had to communicate with the world he saw. Also, once you've seen it in a way you could never go back to. Douglas Noel Adams was born 1952 in Cambridge, England (shortly before the announcement of an even more influential DNA, deoxyribonucleic acid). He was a self-described queer child who did not learn to speak until he was four years old. He wanted to be a nuclear physicist (I never did it because my arithmetic was so bad) and then went to Cambridge to study English, with ambitions that involved becoming part of a British writer/performer (of which Monty Python's Flying Circus members are the most famous example). When he was eighteen, drunk in a field in Innsbruck, hitchhiking across Europe, he looked up at the sky filled with stars, and thought: Someone wants to write Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy. Then he fell asleep and almost, but not quite, forgot about it. He left Cambridge in 1975 and went to London, where his numerous orders and execution projects usually mostly did not happen. He worked with former Python Graham Chapman writing scripts and sketches for unsuccessful projects (among them the show for Ringo Starr, which contained the embryo Starship Titanic) and with writer-producer John Lloyd (they pitched a series called Snow Seven and White Dwarfs, a comedy about two astronomers at the Observatory on Mount Everest-Idea for it to be a minimal casting, minimal set, and we're just trying to sell it. He maintained himself during this period with various odd jobs: he was, for example, hired a bodyguard for an oil-rich Arab family, a job that entailed dressing up and sitting in the hotel corridors during the night listening to ding the passing elevators. THE BBC radio producer (and acclaimed mystery author) Simon Brett commissioned him to write a sci-fi comedy for BBC Radio Four. Douglas originally imagined a series of six half-hour comedies to mimic the ends of Earth-funny stories that at the end of each, the world will end. In the first episode, for example, the Earth will be destroyed to give way to the space freeway. But, Douglas soon realized if you were going to destroy Earth, you need someone to whom it matters. Someone like a reporter, yes, a guide to the galaxy. And someone else... the man who was called Alaric B in Douglas's original proposal. At the last moment Douglas crossed Alaric B and wrote Arthur Dent over it. A normal name for a normal person. For those people listening to BBC Radio 4's 1978 show came as a revelation. It was funny-really witty, surreal, and clever. The series was produced by Jeffrey Perkins, and the last two episodes of the first series were written in collaboration with John Lloyd. (I was a kid who discovered the series by accident, like most listeners did-with the second episode. Unspeakably happy.) By now, Douglas had a real job. He was script editor for the long-term BBC SF Doctor Who series, in Tom Baker's days. Pan Books approached him about doing a book based on a radio series, and Douglas got a manuscript for Hitchhiker by The Galaxy in his editors at Pan a little late (according to legend they called and asked, quite desperately, where he was in the book and how much else he had to go. and we'll send the motorbike around to pick it up in half an hour). The book, a paperback, became an unexpected bestseller, as well as, less surprisingly, its four sequels. This spawned a best-selling text computer game. Hitchhiking through the Galaxy sequence used the tropes of science fiction to talk about things that concern Douglas, the world he observed, his thoughts on life, the universe, and all. As we moved into a world where people really think that digital clock was a pretty neat thing, the landscape became science fiction and Douglas, with relentless curiosity on scientific issues, instinct for explanation, and laser-sharp meaning, where the joke was, was in the perfect position to comment, explain, and describe that landscape. I read a lengthy newspaper article recently demonstrating that Hitchhiker's was in fact a lengthy tribute to Lewis Carroll (something that was to come as a surprise to Douglas, who disliked the Mute of Alice in Wonderland he read). In fact, the literary tradition that Douglas was the piece was, at least initially, the tradition of English humor Writing that gave us P. G. Wodehouse (which Douglas is often cited as an influence, although most people tend to miss it because Wodehouse doesn't write about spaceships). Douglas Adams didn't like writing, and he enjoyed it less as time went on. He was a bestselling, well-known and beloved writer who had no intention of being a writer, and who had little joy in the making of novels. He loved talking to the audience. He loved writing scripts. He enjoyed being at the forefront of technology and inventing and inexplicably enthusiastic about what was uniquely his own. Douglas's ability to miss deadlines has become legendary. (I love timing, he said. He died in May 2001. His death surprised us all, and left an a huge, Douglas Adams-sized hole in the world. We lost both the man (high, affable, tenderly smiling to the world, who puzzled and pleased him) and mind. He left behind a number of novels as often imitated as they were ultimately inimitable. He left behind such delightful characters as Marvin the Paranoid Android, Soshob Bibb, and Starbuck. It left sentences that will make you laugh with delight as they rewire the back of your head. And he made it look so simple. -Neil Gaiman, January 2002 (Long before Neil Gaiman was the author of bestselling novels as or graphic novels, such as Sandman's sequence, he wrote a book called Don't Panic, the story of Douglas Adams and Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy.) Galaxy.) the ultimate hitchhiker's guide to the galaxy leather bound classics hardcover

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